**Classroom Research Report**

**Entitled**

**Enhancing Learners' Willingness to Communicate in English with Social Media**

การเสริมสร้างความเต็มใจในการสื่อสารด้วยภาษาอังกฤษของผู้เรียนโดยใช้สังคม

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**By**

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# ABSTRACT

This study puts an emphasis on the use of social media as a form of computer-assisted language learning activity, investigating its effects on willingness to communicate (WTC) in the target language, English, of Thai English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. The study, adopted the pseudo-empirical research design with a pre-test-post-test structure and a follow-up component, was carried out with 40 third year undergraduate students enrolled in a course of English for Information Technology 1 and 2 at Dhurakij Pundit University, Thailand. The data were collected by means of a quantitative technique (i.e. questionnaires). The questionnaire responses were then analyzed to provide the evidence of how willing they were to communicate in English. Comparison between participants' willingness to interact in English in class activities in general with their willingness to communicate in English in social media revealed that the level of WTC appeared to be enhanced by taking part in the social media, as positive perceptions of WTC, low anxiety when interacting in the target language, high self-perceived communicative competence, and high frequency of target language use, were reported. Interestingly, this effect was also confirmed in a follow-up study, indicating that language learners benefited from less stressful environments within the social media and, thus, was willing to use the opportunities provided to practice and use the target language.

In light of these findings, this study draws attention to the role and effectiveness of social media in encouraging target language use for authentic communication and willingness to use the language. The study offers some suggestions and concludes with implications of the results for further research and classroom practice.

# LIST OF ABBREVIATION

| | |
|---|---|
| APA | American Psychological Association |
| CALL | computer-assisted language learning |
| CLT | communicative language teaching |
| CMC | computer-mediated communication |
| DPU | Dhurakij Pundit University |
| EFL | English as a foreign language |
| ESL | English as a second language |
| ID | individual difference |
| IT | information technology |
| L1 | first language, native language, mother tongue |
| L2 | second or foreign language |
| SLA | second language acquisition |
| SMLL | social media language learning |
| SCT | sociocultural theory |
| TL | target language |
| WTC | willingness to communicate |
| ZPD | zone of proximal development |

## GLOSSARY

**Affective variables** are generally regarded as negative psychological factors, such as anxiety, low motivation, low self-confidence, boredom, and frustration, which may interfere with learner's language acquisition process. (see also affective filter hypothesis, low affective filters)

**Affective filter hypothesis** was proposed by Krashen (1981) to account for how learners' psychological variables, such as motivation, attitude, self-confidence, and anxiety, may influence their language acquisition. He argued that when affective filter is low enough (e.g., when they have high motivation, positive attitude, high self-confidence, and low anxiety), they are likely to acquire a language more successfully than when they it is not. (see also affective variables, low affective filters)

**Anxiety** is the term that encompasses the feeling of fear or apprehension associated with learning and/or using a second or foreign language (L2). The main focus of this study is communication anxiety. (see also communication anxiety)

**Authentic/Genuine communication** is the type of interaction that is natural and involves the use of target language in the real-world.

**Communicative language teaching (CLT)** is a method of language teaching which places an emphasis on learning through communication. Its primary goal is for learners to develop communicative competence.

**Communicative self-confidence** is a combination of low levels of anxiety, especially anxiety about L2 communication, and sufficient levels of self-perceived communicative competence in the L2. Self-confidence can be either 'state' or 'trait.' In this study the focus is on 'state' communicative self-confidence. (see also state communicative self-confidence)

**Communication anxiety** corresponds to the level of fear or anxiety associated with real or anticipated communication in the L2, and in language learning is also known as language anxiety. (see also anxiety and state communicative self-confidence)

**Computer-assisted language learning (CALL)** is the use of computers and other technologies in language instruction.

**Computer-mediated communication (CMC)** is the use of computers, including networked computers, as a means of interaction between learners and learners, learners and teachers, or learners and native speakers.

**English as a foreign language** (EFL) is learning English in a non-English speaking context, for example, a Thai person learning English in Thailand.

**English as a foreign language (EFL) learners** are people who learn English in a context where English is not used for everyday purposes (such as Thailand). EFL learners typically learn and practise the target language exclusively in the classroom setting. In the context of this study, this term is used to refer to tertiary-level Thai students.

**EFL tertiary context** refers to the context of 'English as a foreign language' learning and teaching in Thai universities.

**English as second language** (ESL) is learning English in an English-speaking environment for example, a Thai person learning English in England.

**First language (L1)** is the language that is first learnt by an individual. This language is also referred to as native language or mother tongue. In this study, Thai is the first language.

**Individual differences** are variations that are inherent in learners, including personality, aptitude, age, learning styles, learning strategies, and affective factors

(such as motivation, anxiety, and attitude) that affect their language acquisition process.

**Low affective filter** is the condition when learners have high motivation, positive attitude, high self-confidence, and low anxiety, enabling them to concentrate on language learning, use the target language, accomplish a task, receive comprehensible input, and acquire another language. (see also affective variables, affective filter hypothesis,)

**Risk-taking** is generally defined as an individual's tendency to use the L2 regardless of uncertain outcomes.

**Second language acquisition (SLA)** is the process of learning a second or foreign language (L2).

**Second or foreign language (L2)** is the language that is not an individual's first language or mother tongue (L1). (see also first language)

**Self-perceived communicative competence** is the belief that an individual has an adequate ability to communicate in a second or foreign language successfully.

**Sociocultural theory** is a theory of learning derived from the work of Vygotsky that emphasises the importance of social interaction among individuals and views learning as a mediated process in which they develop as they interact with the environment. The theory was enhanced and expanded in the language learning contexts to explain L2 acquisition, emphasising the role of social interaction during task completion in providing learners with opportunities to practise the language and learn from each other as more expert learners help less expert ones to acquire the TL.

**Social Media** refers to web-based and mobile applications that enable individuals to participate in, comment on, and share various media such as texts, images and video

and audio recordings as means of communicating with other users and the public online.

**Target language (TL)** is the language being studied by a learner. In this study, participants who are Thai are studying English, so English is the target language.

**Willingness to communicate (WTC)** is defined as an individual's readiness to engage in communication in the target language at a particular moment and situation.

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

We now live, work, communicate and interact with other people, entertain, learn, teach, and do various things in all aspects of our lives more conveniently. This is in large part due to a profound impact of computer technologies and a proliferation of technological innovations. Increasingly, modern technologies have been found to no longer perform only basic tasks, but they are also likely to serve as educational tools with the potential to provide learners with great learning benefits and meaningful learning experiences. Clearly, this trend is becoming to influence all domains of education, and the field of foreign/second language (L2) learning is no exception. Since the 1960s, technologies have been integrated into language instruction to facilitate language learning and to extend opportunities for making teaching and learning available beyond the language classroom (Reinders & White, 2010).

The role of technologies in language learning and teaching activities has grown over the years (see for example Blake, 2008; Chapelle, 2001, 2003; Levy, 1997; Thomas, Reinders, & Warschauer, 2013; Warschauer & Meskill, 2000). Additionally, a range of digital technologies available to complement pedagogical practices (for both in and outside the classroom, in traditional face-to-face instruction, and now in hybrid forms of blended learning) has become very diverse (for a recent review, see Lee, 2010; Stockwell, 2012). Recent developments have played a prominent role in learners' life and, in many ways, dramatically transformed traditional classrooms across the globe to ensure that learners are equipped for the demands of the 21$^{st}$ century. Thus, learners' and teachers' use of technologies has been the focus of a great deal of second language acquisition (SLA) research in general and of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) research in particular over the past decade.

In the digital age, technologies particularly associated with social media, such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter, wiki, and Instragram, to name a few, have been the central concern of a number of educators and teachers and been welcomed as indispensable tools to be utilized for educational purposes. With networking dimension, social media enable people to share various media such as images, audio recordings and video recordings via the Web and to initiate discussions about them. Obviously, social media have been used predominantly for entertainment. However, their educational potential is by no means small. When it comes to language education, especially in the area of CALL, social media technologies have been said to play a role in and offer great promise for language learning, as evidenced in journal articles and book chapters (e.g., Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Brick, 2011; Forlano, 2009) and academic publishing venues such as dedicated volumes (Lamy & Zourou, 2013; Lomika & Lord, 2009). There appear to be no consistent efforts carried out to study the use of social media as a tool for learning in the language classroom (Dieu, 2004), unfortunately. As language teaching and learning become technologised, using emerging technologies, and especially social media, can be a compelling activity both in classroom settings and informal language learning contexts.

Because social media technologies are relatively new and there are various forms of the tools, many teacher educators and administrators are still struggling to discover the best ways or best practices to effectively implement them to the curricular. Furthermore, many skeptical instructors have been requesting further evidence whether application of social media is worth their effort to learn how to use and whether and how the tools can be incorporated within everyday classrooms to help support their teaching and enhance their learners' language learning. In short, the case for social media in language education and pedagogy has yet to be explored, and a number of fascinating questions related to language learning and acquisition as a result of using social media are really needed to be answered through research.

While there is anecdotal evidence that using social media enable collaboration and authentic and meaningful communication in the L2, empirical evidence on whether and how they help lower affective variables appears to be limited. In this study, the focus was placed on social media and the positive affective impact, such as increased motivation, improved self-confidence, or reduced anxiety so that learners feel more willing to interact in TL while engaging with the features social media can offer. Learners' willingness to use English for communication should be, in my opinion, the issue that needs attention and investigation if the application of social media is for the benefits of learning a language.

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

When considering current language instructional approaches that influence language teaching practices in language classrooms in Thailand, communicative language teaching (CLT), a pedagogy which places an emphasis on learning through communication (Ellis, 2004), has been adopted to meet the national curriculum reforms and consequently to improve the quality of language teaching and learners' communicative competence. Nevertheless, the implementation in the EFL setting in Thailand has not been optimal (Khamkhien, 2010), with many teachers not being sufficiently experienced in CLT (Tantayanusorn as cited in Mackenzie, 2002, p. 62). It is thus difficult to lead to an increase in authentic interaction in the TL. Even if this approach is implemented appropriately, it may produce learners who are *capable* of communicating but do not actually *want* to use the TL for authentic communication (MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément, & Noels, 1998). More specifically, typical Thai learners appear to be reluctant to use English as a medium of communication in class and normally avoid communicating in English both inside and outside the language classroom, as reported in the literature (Bennui, 2008; Kamprasertwong, 2010) and as experienced on a daily basis by most of Thai teachers of English, including myself. Consequently, one area that I am particularly interested in is ways in which I, as a teacher, can encourage my learners to feel free to try and use the language as much as possible both in and, indeed, beyond the classroom.

Dörnyei (2003) points out that learners need to be not only *able* to communicate but also *willing* to engage in the act of L2 communication. As a result, language instruction to improve learners' communicative competence should be combined with opportunities to increase their willingness to communicate (WTC) or an individual's readiness to engage in communication in the target language at a particular moment and situation. The construct of WTC is a relatively new individual difference (ID) variable in SLA (Thomas et al., 2013) and it is viewed as both a facilitating factor of SLA (Ellis, 2004) and a non-linguistic outcome of the language learning process (MacIntyre, 2007). WTC has been proposed as a fundamental goal of L2 education (Dörnyei, 2001; MacIntyre et al., 1998). In their research on WTC, MacIntyre et al. (1998) have shown that motivation is not the final construct before learners engage in communication. In fact, learners may be highly motivated yet remain unwilling to communicate. More specifically, the WTC construct is a final step before L2 use (MacIntyre et al., 1998) and has been found to influence the frequency and amount of L2 communication (Clément, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Yashima, 2002). Learners with high WTC are more likely to use L2 in authentic communication (Kang, 2005) and to benefit from CLT (Ellis, 2004) than those with lower WTC. In essence, in order for CLT to be effective, learners must have WTC.

However, my own experiences as an EFL teacher at a university in Thailand, and my anecdotal observations of students' communicative behaviour both during class time and their own leisure time, have revealed that it is not unusual to find Thai EFL learners who do not participate in English even though they might want to (perhaps because they have no time) and who do participate but actually they do not voluntarily to do so (perhaps because teachers force them to do particular task or call them to contribute). Interaction in the L2 has been argued to play an important role in creating learning opportunities (Long, 1996) and facilitating the process of language acquisition (Swain, 1985). If learners are unwilling to use the TL to communicate with others, they will not learn the

language since they will not have a chance to use it. It is therefore important to investigate ways of increasing Thai EFL learners' WTC.

I was interested to investigate the use of social media at Dhurakij Pundit University (DPU) in which its English teachers are expected to help their learners make use of English and to teach the language through technologies because an increasing number of DPU learners are acquainted with the use of technology tools both for study and play (Vongvipanond, 2004). In my opinion, DPU was considered a suitable context to study because the institution has been placing a greater emphasis on English communication but is still unable to help its learners to become proficient English speakers even though they study the language for many years. Encouraging WTC is imperative in the Thai EFL context, and especially at DPU, because learners should be willing to use the language in order to improve their communication. In response to a) DPU's declared intention to investigate and support alternative ways of facilitating learners' success in language learning and to b) my enthusiasm for looking for ways to encourage WTC in English among my learners, conducting this study therefore posed an exciting challenge to me.

Hypothesising that social media could create a relaxed, non-threatening environment for language learners, thus potentially playing a role in enhancing their WTC, I was therefore interested in gauging how my learners felt about their own willingness to interact in English while engaged in a social media site. If I could find a way to connect the social media with my learners and use these public channels for the benefits of language learning, I would probably have an important resource, especially for ways to enhance learners' WTC.

## 1.2  Research Objective and Research Question

In this study, I would like to find out whether one example of social media, when used outside formal teaching contexts, would have an impact on my students' willingness to

use English for communication. To achieve this, the present study posed the following research question:

RQ1: Does engaging in social media enhance learners' willingness to communicate in English?

This study focused on the learner and was a form of "pure research" (Ellis, 2012, p. 3), conducted in a real classroom situation. The study mainly fell within the product (WTC levels) paradigm, and the research question was concerned with learners' perceptions of how they felt about how willing they were to interact with each other in English during social media participation. The study also emphasized in particular on informal language use when using social media outside the classroom. The social environment in which learners' WTC was to be examined in this study was Instragram which is a popular photo sharing application (see Chapter 3). The study's research question was deemed important because answering it could 1) inform new understanding of how social media in the form of Instragram influence learners' levels of WTC, and 2) encourage the application of that understanding to help learners actually communicate in English.

## 1.3 Theoretical Influences
As previously stated, the study put an emphasis on the use of social media in the form of Instragram to investigate its effects on learners' WTC in English. The theoretical basis for this effort was mainly influenced by SLA perspectives playing multiple roles from providing a pedagogical foundation for the use of social media, formulating the study's research question, developing methodology, to explaining the research findings in ways that allowed me to address my concerns specifically in language learning contexts.

The study applied the 'social media language learning' (SMLL) approach which applies social media channels to language learning to provides learners with opportunities to get involved in authentic, real-time interaction in the target language. This helps encourage

relevant use of the language, and, in turn, enables learners to develop communication skills.

The use of social media was implemented in this study on the basis of WTC perspective (i.e. generating learners' WTC should be a fundamental goal of L2 education (Dörnyei, 2001; MacIntyre et al., 1998). The use of social media was also influenced by the 'affective filter hypothesis' proposed by Krashen (1981). This hypothesis explains that psychological variables such as motivation, attitude, self-confidence, and anxiety play an important role in language acquisition. If learners have high motivation, positive attitude, high self-confidence, and low anxiety, the affective filter is low and thus they are more likely to be successful in language acquisition. Social media sites have been recognised in the literature to provide a low stress atmosphere, helping learners feel relaxed and motivated to use the TL (e.g. Antenos-Conforti, 2009; Lloyd, 2012). This can facilitate lowering of the affective filter and subsequently promote more communication and opportunities for learners to become willing to use the TL to communicate.

Finally, the study was influenced by WTC theory, which is generally recognised to be important for successful language learning. In order to answer the study's research question, the theory was adopted to conceptualise the nature of the research problem (i.e., students' unwillingness to use the TL), implementing the intervention (i.e., creation of less stressful language learning and use environments to encourage WTC), collecting data (i.e., design of questionnaires), and analysing them. Findings regarding the effects of social media on learners' WTC were interpreted in the view of WTC theory, suggesting that when learners interact in an environment which is non-threatening and conducive for authentic language use, they would develop their self-perceived communicative competence, decrease their anxiety, and consequently increase their willingness to practise and use the TL. Self-perceived communicative competence, anxiety, and other possible variables identified in the WTC model (see Figure 2.1) guided the analysis of learners' WTC in this study. In addition to WTC theory, interview findings were also interpreted through the lens of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory to help me develop a

deeper understanding of language learners and their WTC while engaged in social media. SCT maintains that social interaction and contexts in which learners communicate can contribute to language development. Addressing the issue of learners' development of WTC, as they engaged in social interaction during social media participation using the TL, within sociocultural theory was therefore considered useful for the study.

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it appears to be the first attempt in Thailand to provide empirical evidence of the effects of social media in the form of Instragram on WTC in English, and to identify specific implications for the implementation of the social media technologies in the traditional learning and teaching process in the field of Thai EFL education. The findings of this study may provide a starting point for language teachers interested in beginning or expanding the application of social media in their own pedagogical practice. The findings should also be valuable as supportive data for other studies, or future plans aiming to solve the current problems in light of low levels of WTC among Thai EFL learners, or indeed EFL learners in other contexts.

For Thai EFL teachers, the findings should also help raise their awareness of the potential benefits of new technologies and, in particular, social media, for their learners. It is hoped that this awareness can prepare them to think about the implications for using social media technologies to support learning and ways to align their teaching with new ways of learning with, through, or around the public channels. It is also hoped that this awareness can help develop Thai English teachers' better understanding of how social media technologies can be used to increase learners' WTC, which has been suggested as a crucial goal in L2 pedagogy (MacIntyre et al., 1998) .

The importance of this study also lies in its contribution to WTC research in that previous research works have been investigated in the western contexts and in the settings where the target language is learned as a second language, which may not be completely

applicable to Asian EFL learners. Some studies have been conducted in relation to the Korean (e.g., Jung, 2011; Kim, 2004), Japanese (e.g., Yashima, 2002; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004), Chinese (e.g., Peng, 2007; Wen & Clément, 2003), and Thai (e.g., Kamprasertwong, 2010; Pattapong, 2010) EFL contexts. They were, however, limited to exploration of variables that influenced WTC and relationships among variables underlying WTC, giving implications for the creation of less stressful learning environments to enhance WTC in general. Like my PhD thesis (Wattana, 2013), the current study took a step further by translating these implications into more specific action in order to provide learners with opportunities to develop their self-perceived communicative competence while reducing their anxiety so that they become willing to take risks and use the opportunities provided to practise and use the TL. If this study can support that social media in the form of Instragram has potential for WTC in English, the tools may be another significant part of the future of language education and the revolution in the field of CALL.

Although the context of this investigation is the EFL classroom in Thailand, the findings can be applied to language classrooms in English as a second language (ESL) settings where learners need to improve their confidence or alleviate their anxiety for increased interaction and higher WTC levels both inside and outside the classroom. The findings will also be practically useful for language teachers in different settings, and applicable to a wide range of language educational contexts, and in exploiting the features and environments offered by social media to promote learners' WTC levels. In addition, the findings can make a valuable contribution to the field of CALL as a whole by informing different ways we can use CALL in the form of social media technologies to revolutionize the lesson.

# CHAPTER 2
# REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the existing literature pertaining to the key areas of interest in the study. Overall, it contains three main sections. The first section discusses the construct of willingness to communicate (WTC), the WTC model, and previous attempts to engender learners' WTC in the English as a second language (ESL), English as foreign language (EFL), and Thai EFL contexts. The second section reviews the use of social media in computer-assisted language learning (CALL), along with potential benefits and impact of various types of social media technologies on second language acquisition (SLA) and other aspects related to WTC. Gaps in previous studies which motivated this study are presented in these two sections.

In language learning contexts, maximizing second or foreign language (L2) use for meaningful and effective interaction, both inside and outside of the classroom, is a primary concern to language teachers who aim to develop their learners' communicative competence. However, learners should not only be given opportunities to interact in the L2, but they should also be willing to make use of these opportunities because 'a lack of willingness inhibits effective interaction and language production' (Freiermuth & Jarrell, 2006, p. 190). Willingness to communicate (WTC) has attracted recent attention in L2 research (Ellis, 2004). It has been argued as an important concept in describing, explaining, and predicting individual's L2 communication (MacIntyre et al., 1998), as well as a key element to determine a successful L2 learning process and acquisition (MacIntyre, 2007). The concept is discussed below.

## 2.1 Willingness to Communicate in the Second or Foreign Language

WTC as a SLA concept emerged from the earlier work on unwillingness to communicate (see Burgoon, 1976), predispositions toward verbal behaviour (see Mortensen, Arntson, & Lustig, 1977), and shyness (see McCroskey & Richmond, 1982). When originally

introduced in first language (L1) communication by McCroskey and Baer (1985), WTC was primarily concerned with trait-like predisposition which remains stable within an individual over time, and across communication situations and types of receivers. From this perspective, WTC was conceptualized as "the probability of initiating communication, given the opportunity" (McCroskey & Baer, 1985, p. 420).

However, when later applied in the L2 communication, WTC was used to explain that communicative competence alone is not necessarily sufficient to allow learners to communicate effectively in the L2, but a number of individual and situational variables also influence their tendencies to initiate or engage in L2 communication (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Therefore, WTC in the L2 was not only conceptualized as a trait, but also a state level which is changeable across situations. From this perspective, MacIntyre and his associates presented a conceptualization of WTC in the L2 as "a readiness to enter into the discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2 [second language]" (p. 547). Kang (2005) focused on the dynamic nature of WTC and further proposed a definition of WTC in the L2, specifying that this readiness to engage in L2 communication "can vary according to interlocutor(s), topic, and conversational context, among other potential situational variables" (p. 291).

### 2.1.1 Willingness to Communicate Model

In their adaptation of WTC to L2 communication contexts, MacIntyre and his colleagues (1998, p. 547) developed a heuristic model (see Figure 2.1) to account for variables that might have an impact on individuals' WTC in the L2 and eventual use of that language. The authors proposed that WTC in the L2 is subjected to various linguistic, communicative, and psychological variables with situational influences (Layer I, I, III) and enduring influences (Layer IV, V, VI). As learners move up the pyramid, they will feel more ready to communicate and actually make use of the L2.

At the top of the pyramid, which is regarded as the final step before starting to communicate in the L2, the first three layers (communication behaviour, behaviour intention, and situated antecedents) are composed of situation-specific influences (L2 use, willingness to communicate, desire to communicate with a specific person, and state communicative self-confidence), which are viewed as transient and dependent on the time and place in which they occur. WTC is therefore measured via these influences. At the bottom of the pyramid, it proposes three layers (motivation propensities, affective-cognitive context, and social and individual context) of enduring influences based on six variables: interpersonal motivation, intergroup motivation, self-confidence, intergroup attitudes, social situation, communicative competence, intergroup climate, and personality. Compared with the top of the pyramid, these influences are regarded as more stable and predictable in most situations.
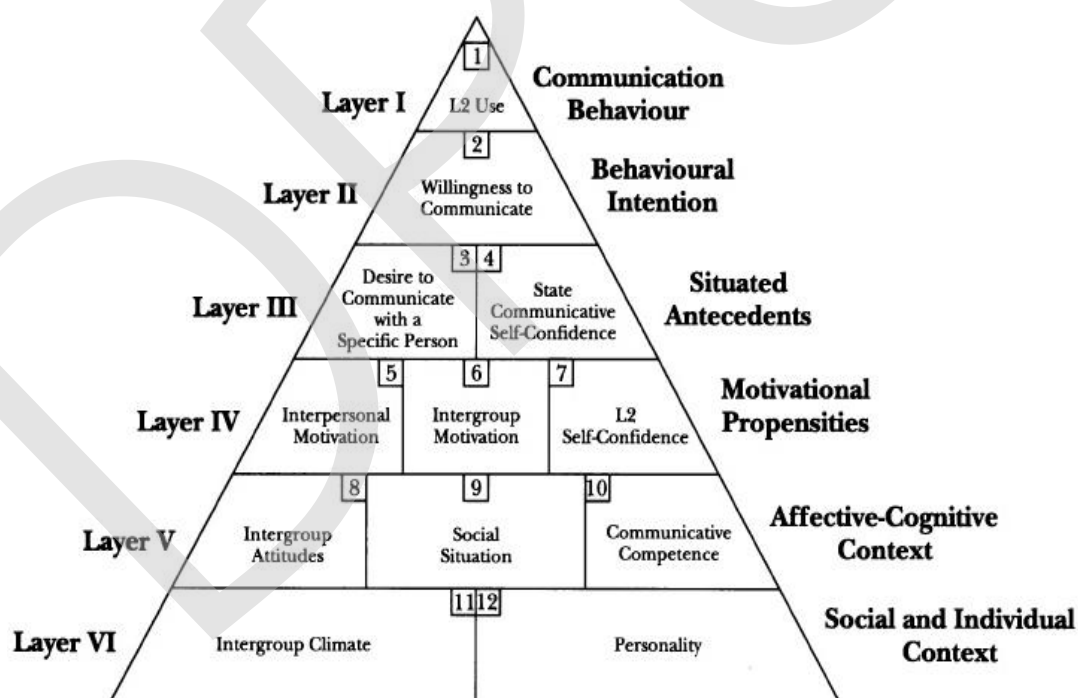


*Figure* 2.1 Heuristic models of variables influencing WTC

From "Conceptualizing Willingness to Communicate in a L2: A Situational Model of L2 Confidence and Affiliation," by Peter D. MacIntyre, Zoltán Dörnyei, Richard Clément, and Kimberly A. Noels, *Modern Language Journal*, 82(4), p. 547. Used with permission from John Wiley and Sons

MacIntyre et al.'s model clearly provides an in-depth overview of the individual and contextual variables underlying WTC through its multi-layered construction, and their model is commonly cited in the WTC literature. Many studies (e.g., Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Clément et al., 2003; Peng, 2007; Wen & Clément, 2003; Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004) have been conducted in relation to the pyramid model in various learning contexts and from both quantitative and qualitative measures, and more recently and frequently, a combination of the two approaches. Overall, they have revealed compelling findings that generally supported or were consistent with the model, particularly in terms of identification of variables that influence L2 WTC and correlation of WTC with various variables. The section that follows discusses the most significant variables in the pyramid model which have been convincingly shown in past studies to strongly predict L2 WTC.

### 2.1.2 Engendering Willingness to Communicate

The construct of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) is a seen as a final step before actual L2 use (MacIntyre et al., 1998). An increase in WTC has been found to offer positive effects on L2 learning and acquisition; L2 learners with high levels of WTC are more likely to benefit from communicative language teaching (Ellis, 2004), interact in the L2 more frequently (Clément et al., 2003; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Yashima, 2002), have more potential to practise in the L2 (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Conrod, 2001; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Peng & Woodrow, 2010), are more inclined to take risks using the L2 to communicate (Oxford, 1997), have more opportunities for authentic L2 use, become more active and autonomous learners (Kang, 2005), acquire higher levels of language fluency (Derwing, Munro, & Thomson, 2008), and generally achieve greater language proficiency (MacIntyre et al., 2001; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Yashima, 2002), and, as a result, show more improvement in communication skills (Yashima et al., 2004). Accordingly, engendering WTC in the L2 has been suggested by scholars such as MacIntyre et al. (1998) and Dörnyei (2001) as a crucial goal for L2 pedagogy. In particular in the Southeast Asian context in which this study was conducted, WTC seems to be a good predictor of L2 interaction, more so than motivation alone. The relationship

between WTC and motivation is a complicated on space and time constraints do not allow me to offer a detailed discussion here. Instead, I refer the reader to MacIntyre, et al. (2001) and Dörnyei (2001). In summary, however, WTC is related to but separate from constructs such as motivation and affect. For example, a more motivated learner *may* be more likely to be more willing to communicate, but this is not necessarily so. Affective barriers may impact on motivational levels, as well as WTC, but not necessarily in the same ways. In other words, the constructs interact, but the main distinguishing factor of WTC is its emphasis on a commitment to L2 production; encouraging L2 speaking in particular is a major concern to many teachers in Thailand (the setting for my study).

One measure of a success of a language programme is thus its ability to encourage WTC among its students. Consequently, research has pointed to instructional strategies, specific learning environments, and tasks conductive to the fostering of WTC.

Noon-ura (2008), for example, provided examples of practical strategies to help students develop their WTC in the L2 in the classroom. These include enabling students' interest in L2 affairs and cultures, creating a safe environment which reduces students' anxiety and boosts their confidence in using the L2, building on students' knowledge, having students complete tasks in pairs to prepare themselves before working in a large-group setting, using authentic materials, and providing different kinds of activities and tasks. Other studies (Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004) have indicated that international posture predicted L2 WTC, thus suggesting that using materials that raise learners' awareness of international affairs in L2 learning could be effective in enhancing WTC in EFL learners.

Pattapong (2010) showed that giving feedback and prompts, creating alternative environment, and clarifying for understanding are teacher characteristics that can encourage learners' WTC in class. Cao (2006) also stressed that teachers can help maximize learners' WTC in the L2 by deliberately choosing tasks that will motivate and engage learners. However, as learners' attitudes toward tasks and activities can influence

their WTC in the classroom, Dörnyei and Kormos (2000) suggested that in order to enhance students' WTC, it is important that teachers ensure their students hold positive attitudes to the language tasks they are asked to perform.

Kang's (2005) findings suggested that in order for students to be willing to interact in class using English, teachers should 'provide the factors facilitating WTC as much as possible, instead of focusing on one factor at the expense of other facilitating factors' (p. 290). In response to this, Aubrey (2010, 2011) investigated several important factors teachers should consider and can manipulate to improve students' WTC and encourage meaningful interaction during class. The author found that by cultivating group cohesiveness, lowering students' anxiety, making the lesson topic interesting and relevant to students, facilitating student acceptance of the communicative language teaching approach, and instilling an international posture in students, students exhibit higher WTC and are more likely to participate in class.

In Wang's (2011) small scale study carried out with a Year 7 Japanese language classroom in New Zealand, she provided some preliminary evidence that task-based language teaching (TBLT) could facilitate WTC. In a series of five task-based lessons over seven weeks, it was found that learners who had been reluctant to use Japanese in class use more Japanese both during the task and outside of the context of working on the task and a greater willingness to respond in the target language to teacher questions. The interview findings also suggested that the tasks appeared to reduce learners' communication anxiety and thus developed their perceived communication competence. Interestingly, these learners reported that they had 'fun' while playing games, suggesting that the 'fun' aspect could contribute considerably to their WTC.

Many studies (e.g., Cao, 2006; Compton, 2004a; Lu & Hsu, 2008) showed the importance of creating a supportive communication environment that lowers students' anxiety levels while increasing their self-perceived communicative competence to

generate greater WTC and thus increased L2 interaction. Technology, and in particular CMC has been widely investigated as a source of creating this desired atmosphere. Compton (2004b), for example, revealed that chatting helped students to feel confident and, in consequence, willing to participate orally in class discussions. However, the impact of chat on WTC varied from learner to learner and was dependent on a number of factors, particularly the topics of discussion and the attitudes of their partners. Chat transcripts of these students indicated that some showed a high level of WTC as they made a lot of contributions in both number of words and turns. In addition, journal entries by some students, especially those with low levels of oral proficiency and low sate communicative self-confidence, indicated that chatting helped them to feel more prepared and organize their ideas, thus leading to improved perception of their communicative competence and confidence before participating in a speaking task.

A study by Jarrell and Freiermuth (2005) also examined the use of Internet chat in the language classroom as a means of interaction and a medium to motivate learners and increase their WTC. The authors revealed that the majority of their students preferred chat to face-to-face interaction and that they were generally motivated to communicate in English using Internet chat. They also concluded that chat was a potentially motivating tool because it appeared 'to increase students' WTC' (p. 70). In a related study, Freiermuth and Jarrell (2006) further explored the use of chat as a means to complete tasks in small groups and investigated the effects the tool had on Japanese university students' WTC through a comparison with students solving the same tasks in face-to-face settings. Consistent with previous research in CMC (Kelm, 1992; Kern, 1995; Warschauer, 1996), the results of this study showed the benefits of chat on increasing students' intrinsic motivation and reducing their anxiety and inhibition to communicate in the target language. That is, data gathered from the post-test questionnaire and an analysis of the discourse produced by students showed that the majority of students who participated in this study produced a greater amount of language output, experienced more intrinsic motivation to communicate in English and less anxiety about

communication, and, importantly, were more willing to communicate as a result of using chat in class.

Similar results were reported in a more recent study by Kissau, McCullough, and Pyke (2010). Six post-secondary students in the study completed an online course in French. A questionnaire showed that they did not appear to perceive themselves to be less anxious or more confident in their abilities to communicate in French than at the beginning of the course. Although their questionnaire results were inconclusive and nonsignificant due to the small sample size, the researchers found a steady increase in students' language output during the course. In addition, the interview data did give convincing evidence that students felt the online environment had helped to reduce their L2 anxiety, increased their perceived competence, and encouraged their continuous active participation in French. These results were irrespective of students' proficiency levels; both non-native and heritage learners had similar experiences.

Although CMC appears to be helpful in increasing WTC, certain conditions need to be provided by the instructor for this to occur. Compton (2004a, 2004b), for example, showed that it is important that teachers provide their students with adequate constructive input on the chat sessions to keep them on task and prepared to share their ideas in class. The nature of the chat tasks also needs to be carefully considered, with those tasks involving an authentic need for communication generally being more successful. Finally, learners' input on the tasks and their attitudes to the use of technology for speaking practice need to be carefully considered. Designing tasks carefully and providing clearly defined task objectives have also been found to be important to ensure the successful application of CMC in enhancing students' WTC (Freiermuth & Jarrell, 2006; Jarrell & Freiermuth, 2005).

Recently, CALL in the form of computer games appears to have potential for encouraging some aspects of the variables influencing WTC. This is evident in a pilot

study (Reinders & Wattana, 2011) which investigated the use of commercial MMORPG 'Ragnarok Online' in a real English classroom setting, and the effects gameplay had on learners' interaction and WTC in English. Fourteen university students were engaged in three computer game sessions implemented as part of the course. They were also asked to complete questionnaires eliciting their WTC level during gameplay. In addition to learners' significantly increased L2 interaction, their responses to questionnaires and interviews indicated that the level of WTC was likely to be enhanced by taking part in the game. These findings were congruent with subsequent investigations (Reinders & Wattana, 2012, 2013, in press; Wattana, 2013) which looked more closely at the impact of gameplay on TL use and learners' experiences and which also found that games did improve Thai EFL learners' willingness to use English for communication.

Despite the considerable attention for the role of online interaction in lowering affective variables, less effort has been expended on investigating other forms of informal communication environments, particularly social media, on learners' WTC. Social media technologies used in a variety of areas of education and are emerging as a new topic in the field of CALL have been claimed to have features that are likely to have positive impact on language learning (e.g. Meskill & Quah, 2012) and they appear to have potential for encouraging some aspects of the variables influencing WTC in the L2 (Lloyd, 2012). I will therefore review some research into the use of social media in language learning, and particularly, the potential benefits and impact of social media on SLA and WTC. I acknowledge the potential use and effectiveness of social media in education in various settings (for a recent review, see DavisIII, Deil-Amen, Rios-Aguilar, & Canche, 2012; Guy, 2012). However, my study is grounded specifically in the field of language learning and limited to the investigation into the potential of social media for merely one language aspect, WTC in English. Therefore, the focus of literature on the use of social was particularly on L2 education, as discussed below.

**2.2 Social Media and Language Learning**

A variety of social media, emerging in various forms to bring people together as communities: blogs (e.g. WordPress), social networks (e.g. Facebook), Microblogs (e.g. Twitter), Wikis (e.g. Wikipedia), Video Podcasts, RSS Feeds, and Photo sharing (e.g. Instragram), means there are now ample opportunities and new ways for learner to improve their language learning and skills. A number of educators therefore have been discovering how social media could supplement their teaching and enhance their students' learning. Among different forms of social media, blogs have been used in various ways for language learning. A feature possibly intriguing for language learning is the opportunities for users to comment on other peoples' blogs and have people post comments on their own. The literature suggests that the development of a language is not normally a fundamental goal of the person participating in a blog but a blog is considered as a place which can provide a platform for reflecting on the language that is being written within it. When implemented in writing classes, blogs have been found to increase participation and motivation to use the L2 (Lee, 2010) because they are intended not only for a sole instructor but rather for a broad, real audience. While blogging presents pedagogical potential with regards to increasing levels of participation, the tool have been found to help develop a user's language competence (Dieu, 2004).

In Thorne's (2009) study, a number of trends with respect to blogging and language learning was reported. Blogs used within language classrooms he has observed can produce encouraging written production of L2 output along with increased scores on standardized assessment measures showing significant language development. According to Thorne, the use of blogs also enables teachers to assess written language learning in a relatively accessible way. It is also argued that blogs allow students to produce the L2 fluently in ways that they can create fluent sets of sentences from sentences that previously would stand alone. Blogs is also pointed out by Thor to allow students to write in paragraphs and to use different tenses with more confidence to discuss topics within their blogs.

Hui-Ju Wu and Pai-Lu Wu (2011) found trends with the use of blogging and language learning. In this study, the authors asserted that blogs help with language learning. That is, blogs help to develop vocabulary, increase reading speed, and develop proper use of grammar and enhanced reading comprehension. Blogs help produce better sentence fluency, a higher vocabulary, better sentence fluency and an awareness of looking for grammar mistakes in their writing. Furthermore, blogs can give learners the confidence to write more sentences and to use different and more tenses. Other affective response or attitudinal effects of using social media for language education were addressed in many studies. In Bosch's (2009) study, for example, it was revealed that Facebook allows students to overcome their shyness in asking questions outside the classroom, and they feel unrestrained by boundaries between lecturers and themselves, creating a good rapport in some ways

This chapter has reviewed the literature pertaining to the key areas of interest in the study. While increasing L2 interaction is a primary concern to language teachers, it has been suggested that learners should be also willing to interact. WTC is hypothesised to be important for SLA. Language teachers are therefore encouraged to take these factors into consideration and to engender WTC among their students for successful language learning and acquisition. Among a variety of technologies recently employed in the language classroom as CALL activities, social media appear to have potential for development of language skills, especially reading and writing, and encouraging some aspects of the variables (e.g. motivation, attitudes) influencing WTC in the L2. Existing CALL research, however, has not yet given much attention to issues of the potential of social media for enhancing learners' WTC. The empirical evidence of the effects of gameplay on WTC in the L2 is provided in the present study.

A full description of the methodology of this study is given in the following chapter.

# CHAPTER 3
# METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used in the study. It is divided into six sections. First are the research questions and the operationalisations of the variables and concepts the study investigated. Second is an explanation of the study's design and procedures. Third is information about the research context and the study's participants. Next, the chapter deals with a thorough description of the intervention and how it was incorporated. The next section focuses on the research instruments, including their reliability and validity. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the data collection and analysis methods and how these aligned with the study's research question.

## 3.1  Research Questions and the Operationalisations of the Relevant Concepts

The main aim of this study was to investigate the effects of social media on learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) in the target language (TL), English, in the context of 'English as a Foreign Language' (EFL) learning in Thai tertiary education. The following research question guided me through the process of this investigation:

RQ1: Does engaging in social media enhance learners' willingness to communicate in English?

This study focused on the learner and was a form of  "pure research" (Ellis, 2012, p. 3), conducted in a real classroom situation. The study primarily fell within the product (WTC levels) paradigm, and the research question was concerned with learners' perceptions of how they felt about how willing they were to interact with each other in English during social media participation. Additionally, the phenomenon investigated was of both pedagogical (i.e. incorporating new technologies in language teaching in ways that are both pedagogically effective and meaningful to learners) and theoretical (i.e. whether engaging in social media helps enhance learners' WTC) significance.

The independent variable in the study, namely engaging in social media, was operationalised as a form of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) activity. For the purpose of my study, the focus was on one social media genre (i.e. Instragram) since it might have been difficult to talk about social media in general due to differences in content formats (i.e. texts, video recordings, or photographs), platforms (i.e. web-based or mobile technologies), types of interaction (i.e. synchronous or asynchronous), and number and patterning of participants (one to one, one to many, or many to many), for example. Aspects relating to the effects of the social media on EFL learners' levels of WTC in English were observed. Existing operationalisations of the study's dependent variable, WTC, was discussed in detail in Chapter 2. The following sections then describe how I operationalised this concept in order to establish the methodology of my own study.

WTC was defined, in the second language (L2, see Glossary) communication setting, as individual's "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2 [second language]" (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547). Building on this, in this study I operationally defined WTC as an *individual's readiness to engage in communication in the target language at a particular moment and situation*. Such readiness could be understood and determined through a) perceptions of willingness to use English for communication, b) feelings about communication in English, in terms of communicative self-confidence, and c) frequency of communication in English. Communicative self-confidence is a combination of low levels of anxiety, especially anxiety about L2 communication, and sufficient levels of self-perceived communicative competence in the L2. Anxiety about communication corresponds to the level of fear or anxiety associated with real or anticipated communication (McCroskey, 1977). Self-perceived communicative competence is the belief that an individual has an adequate ability to communicate in the L2 successfully (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990).

Perceptions of willingness to engage in English communication, communicative self-confidence, and frequency of English output were the focus of the present study because they a) have been hypothesized to be enhanced by a non-threatening environment (like, for example, in social media), b) have received substantial attention from researchers conducting empirical studies on this construct, and c) have been consistently found to be vital for prediction of individual's WTC, and, in turn, for contribution to successful L2 interaction and, ultimately, language acquisition. Section 3.5 provides more details on the measurement used for the investigation.

## 3.2  Design and Procedures

The study was conducted in one intact class - a very common situation in language classroom research (Nunan & Bailey, 2009), and no specific experimental and control groups are involved. However, it should be noted that my study aimed to move away from the determination of the superiority of one setting over another. In other words, the main aim here was to investigate how EFL learners felt willing to communicate in English during *social media* participation, and how this differed from their general WTC expressed in their *language class*. The study employed a pseudo empirical research design with a pre-test-post-test structure and a follow-up component in which a single baseline WTC measurement was obtained, an intervention was administered, and two repeated measurements were collected.

During class time at the beginning of the course, all participants were informed about the study. They were given a Participant Information Sheet and asked to sign a Consent Form (see Appendix A), in accordance with the requirements for research that involves human subjects (Mutch, 2005). Given participants' language proficiency, I provided a translation of the Information Sheet and the Consent Form in their first language, Thai, so that it was understandable to them. In addition, as being both the teacher and researcher, impartiality was valued and coercion was completely avoided. More specifically, participation was purely voluntary. Participants were made aware of their rights by being informed that

they might withdraw from participating or decline to answer particular questions at any time without penalty and without affecting their grades. After the consent was given, participants were asked to complete a pre-survey questionnaire (see Appendix B).
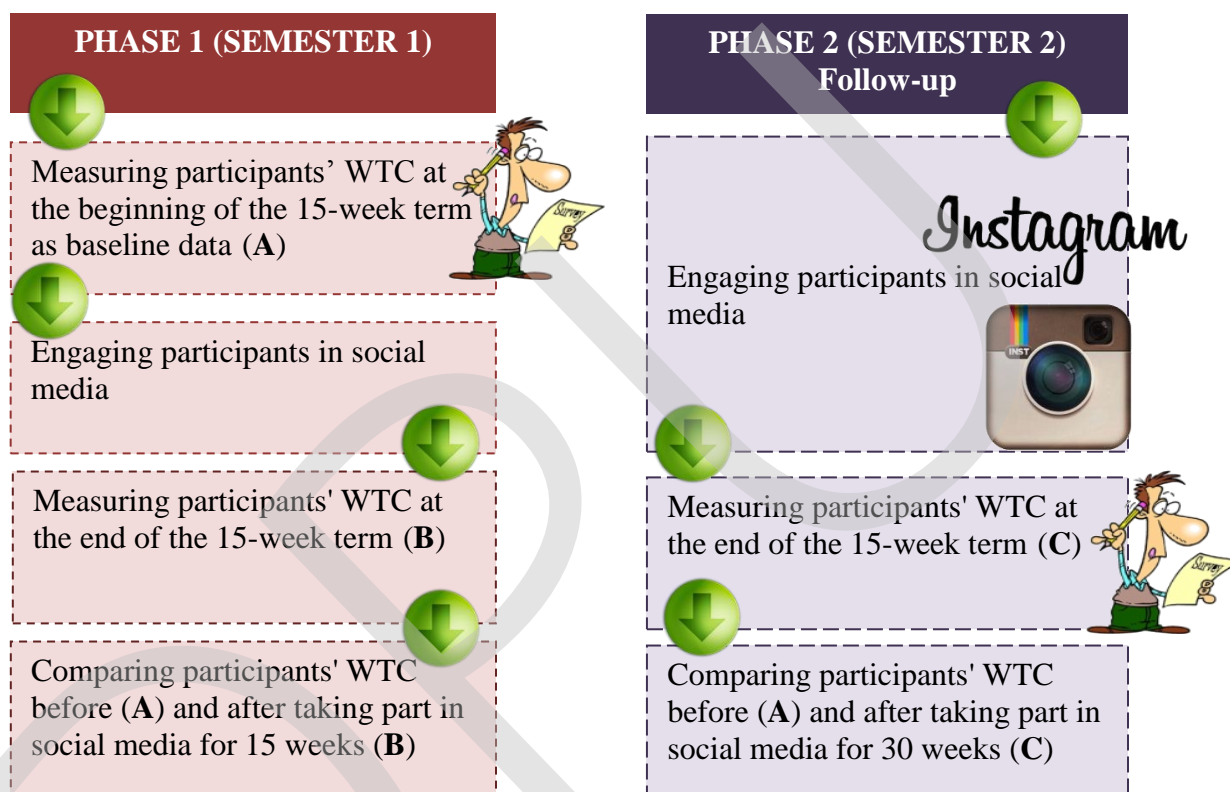


*Figure 3.1* Research design and procedures

During the first stage, the study involved discovering participants' levels of willingness to use English to communicate beforehand. In other words, in the first two weeks of the course, participants were asked to complete the first set of WTC questionnaire (see Section 3.5.2, and Appendix C), allowing me to ascertain how willing they were to communicate in English particularly inside the language *classroom,* the setting which is likely to be the only place for TL exposure and use for most Thai EFL learners. The information on how participants felt willing to use English in *class* was then used as baseline data for comparisons with participants' WTC in English in *social media.* The study then involved engaging participants in social media throughout the semester 1 of the academic year 2013 (the procedures for implementation of social media are discussed

in detail in Section 3.4). Following the final social media participation, another set of WTC questionnaire (see Appendix D), in which participants were asked more specific questions relating to their WTC in social media, was distributed. A comparison between the willingness to interact in English in *class* in general and within *social media* was then investigated to examine differences and, thus, the intervention effects on learners' WTC.

In the second stage, the same participants were engaged in the same social media throughout the semester 2 of the academic year 201 and they were followed-up to increase the overall effectiveness of the research effort and to ascertain whether there were long-term effects of social media on learners' WTC. A representation of the research design and procedures of this study is provided in Figure 3.1.

## 3.3    The Research Context and Participants

This section is mainly concerned with two matters: the first is the setting in which the study took place, and the second deals with detailed information about the study participants.

### 3.3.1 The Research Context

The study was carried out during a 15-week course of English for Specific Purposes 1- IT (LA217), which ran from August 2013 to November 2013, and English for Specific Purposes 2- IT (LA218), which ran from January 2014 to May, 2014. The courses were offered to third-year undergraduate students from the School of Information Technology at Dhurakij Pundit University. The courses were designed and taught by me, the teacher who was also the researcher. The focus of the courses lay primarily in all-round skills development (i.e., reading, listening, speaking, writing, and grammar) and practical English communication skills practice, guided by the commercial textbook 'Oxford English for Information Technology' (Glendinning & McEwan, 2006) featuring specialist content in IT and activities designed for pair and group work. The classes met for two sessions of one and half hours per week and were mainly taught in English.

### 3.3.2 Participants

A convenience sampling method was used to collect prospective participants. The study was conducted with the 40 students of LA217, offered in the semester 1, and LA218, offered in the semester 2. All participants were third-year students majoring in IT. Their participation was voluntary and in no way affected their course grades. Moreover, no incentive was offered. In addition to using convenience sampling as the primary means of participant selection, the participants were selected for this study for other two reasons. Firstly, because of their qualifications, they were expected to be experienced in engaging social media, and the results of the study would therefore be less likely to be affected by novelty and training effects. Secondly, like all typical EFL learners in Thai university, many of LA217 and LA218 students appeared to possess certain characteristics reflecting their low WTC, especially their lack of confidence in using English, as reported in the pre-survey questionnaire.

Participants completed a pre-survey questionnaire (see Appendix B). Twenty-three of the participants were male and 17 were female, aged between 20 and 25. All participants had attended three general English courses as compulsory courses during three consecutive semesters of the academic years 2011 and 2012, when participants were in their first and second year respectively. Then, in their third year at the university, they were required to enroll in LA217 in the first semester and LA218 in the second semester of the academic year 2013. Participants had different English language proficiency levels, as indicated by their grades obtained from a previous language course. The reason for this range of proficiency levels was that the courses were only offered once during the academic year.

Responses to a pre-survey questionnaire showed that participants had fairly homogenous language backgrounds; all of them were native Thai speakers without experience of living or working in an English-speaking country. The majority had studied English since they entered elementary school. At the time of the study, participants reported that they had studied English for an average of 14 years. However, most indicated that their use of

and exposure to the TL was limited and took place exclusively in the English classroom. Approximately 68 percent (n = 27) of the participants reported that they had no other contact at all with English apart from formal classes, while about 33 percent (n = 13) indicated that they were occasionally exposed to the TL outside the classroom through authentic media, in particular by watching movies in English. When participants were asked to evaluate their abilities to communicate in English, 72.5 percent of them (n = 29) rated themselves as being 'poor', while 25 percent of them (n = 10) rated their level as 'fair' and only 2.5 percent of them (n = 1) rated their level as 'good.' Therefore, these self-ratings could reflect that this study's participants generally had a low level of English communication skills.

Responses to a pre-survey questionnaire also indicated that participants were similar with regard to social media-related habits and experiences. All the participants had previous experience using social media, particularly Facebook, Twitter, and Instragram which was the focus of this study. It was therefore reasonable to expect minimal novelty and training effects. The important information in relation to this aspect is summarized in Table 3.1

**Table 3.1**

Information about Participants' Social Media-Related Habits and Experiences

| Years of social media using | **Mean** 4.15 years | **Range** 4 – 5 |
|---|---|---|
| Time spent each day using social media | **Mean** 9.33 hours | **Range** 3 – 18 |
| **Number of participants having experience in using social media** | 40 Social networking (e.g. Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn)<br>22 Blogging (e.g. WordPress, Blogger, Tumblr)<br>31 Micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter )<br>40 Video sharing (e.g. YouTube)<br>40 Photo sharing (e.g. Instragram)<br>27 Document sharing (e.g. Google Drive, Dropbox) | |

Furthermore, 92.5 percent (n = 37) of participants perceived using social media as being helpful to English learning, particularly for language skills practice and opportunities for authentic TL use. However, only 7.5 percent (n = 3) of them thought that the tool could not help them to learn English if their participation was solely in their native language and the people they interacted with were Thai. In addition, the pre-survey results revealed that participants, in general, held relatively positive expectations of the development of L2 communication during social media participation ($M$ = 4.49, $SD$ =. 486), as reported in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2**

Participants' Expectation of the Development of L2 Communication in Social Media

| Statement | Mean | Std. Deviation | [a]Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **14.** I think that some social media can increase the amount of communication in English. | 4.72 | .452 | Strongly agree |
| **15.** I think that some social media help me improve my writing. | 4.08 | .730 | Agree |
| **16.** I think that some social media help me improve my reading. | 4.18 | .712 | Agree |
| **17.** I think that communicating in a social media environment is less anxious than in the classroom. | 4.68 | .572 | Strongly agree |
| **18.** I think that some social media could be motivating for me to practice communicating in English. | 4.73 | .452 | Strongly agree |
| **19.** I think that some social media provide opportunities to interact in English with native speakers. | 4.52 | .640 | Strongly agree |

*Note.* [a]The interpretation was based on the following criteria: 4.50-5.00 = Strongly agree, 3.50-4.49 = Agree, 2.50-3.49= Neutral/ No opinion, 1.50-2.49 = Disagree, 1.00-1.49 = Strongly disagree

## 3.4  Intervention and How It Was Implemented

In this study, the intervention involved the use of Instragram, online photo sharing and social networking service which enables users to take picture and then share them on social networking sites. Instragram has been said to deliver educational benefits. Generally, it helps provide authentic learning opportunities. Most importantly, it can promote linguistic intelligence which is all about developing students' language skills. That is, when a user uploads pictures, his friends and followers can view them. Likewise, teachers can upload pictures and share them with their students and ask them to make observations or provide specific types of feedback. Clearly, this encourages students to use their language skills.
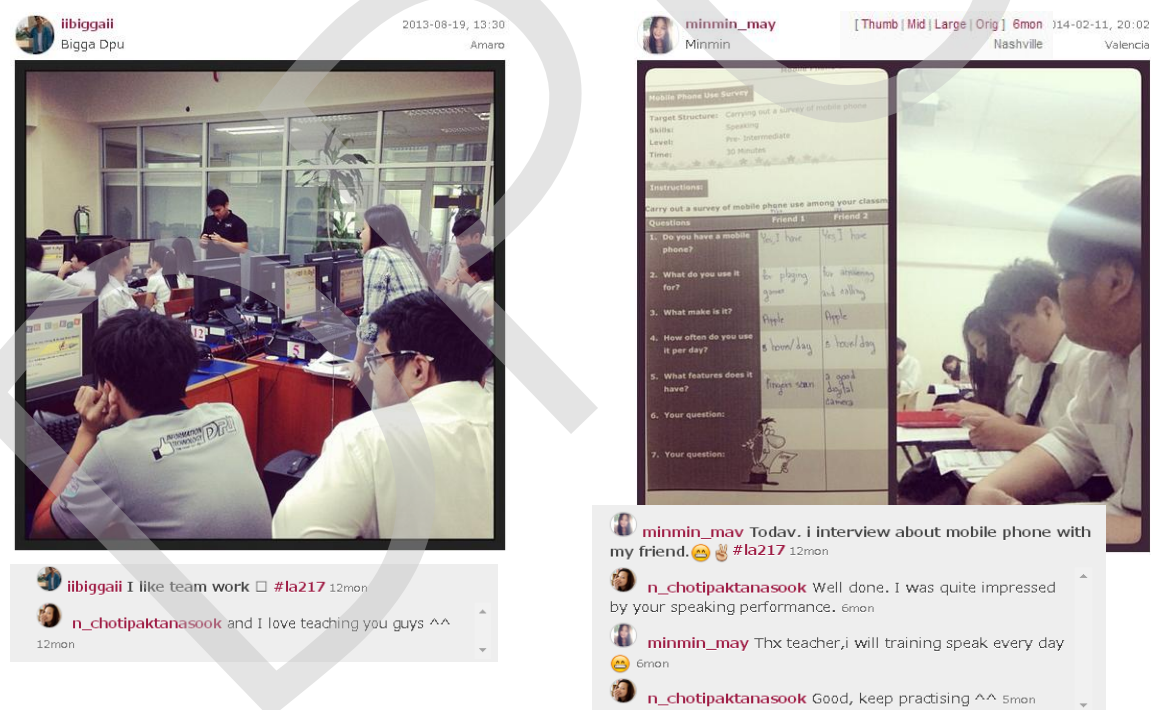


***Figure 3.1*** The use of Instragram in LA217 course (picture used with permission of the participants)
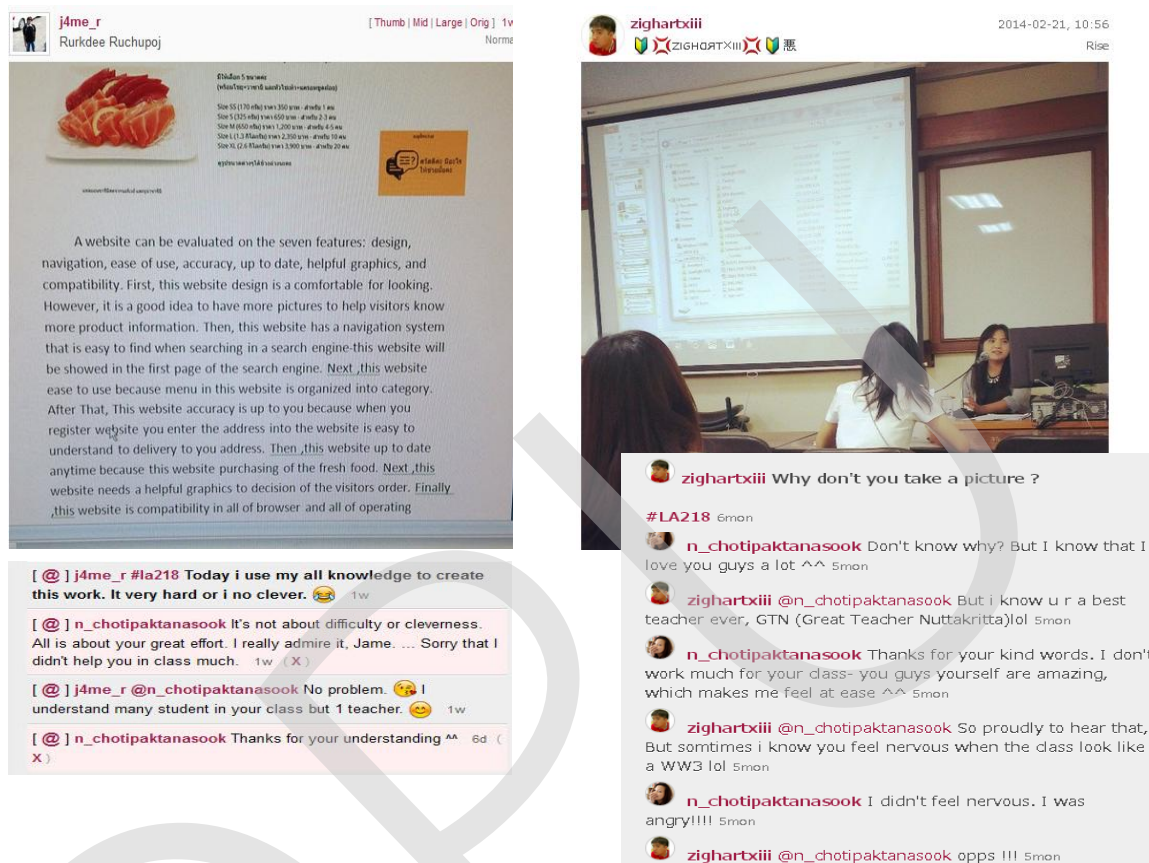
*Figure 3.2* The use of Instragram in LA218 course (picture used with permission of the participants)

In this study, a major pedagogical objective for using this type of social media was to give participants opportunities to reflect on their learning experience. Participants were therefore required to take pictures during class time and share them with a one-sentence summary of their learning experience. The other objectives of using social media in my teaching practice were to motivate participants to use the TL outside the classroom and, in turn, enhance their WTC in English. In addition to one-sentence summary, participants were then required to give responses to my and their friends' comments in English. Figures 3.1 and 3.2 are examples of how Instragram was used in this study.

Thai students are notoriously shy and reticent about communicating in English (Bray, 2009; Kamprasertwong, 2010) and have learning practices that may affect how they engage in genuine interaction in the TL, as indicated in Chapter 1. When asked to take part in in-class activities, Thai EFL learners typically remain silent, avoid eye contact with the teacher, and, importantly, speak their first language so much, although they aim to improve their English. Lack of participation in English in class is often caused either by limited abilities of learners to communicate in English or by the artificial nature of the classroom settings. Therefore, when asked to communicate in English about particular situations, it is important that language learners be involved in activities promoting meaningful, authentic TL use. Asking and answering questions, giving explanation, responding, agreeing and disagreeing, expressing opinions, or socializing, for example, are all tasks that require authentic settings. It was these settings that I felt a social media environment could offer to great advantage. By encouraging participants to take part in social media, they are likely to concentrate on the TL use, and develop their willingness to engage in TL interaction.

During the first phase of the study, social media were integrated into my own teaching in two stages: pre-implementation and implementation. Meanwhile, the second phase involved only the implementation stage. A detailed description is given in the sub-sections that follow.

Pre-Implementation: The preparation stage involved familiarizing me with the use of Instragram, serving the study in discovering any difficulties students might experience. Subsequently, Instragram was briefly introduced to participants in the first week of the course. Participants were given a demonstration of how to use the tool, together with an explanation of why it was to be used. Participants were then requested to follow my own Instragram and their classmates' and provide their user names for me and other friends to follow.

Implementation: After finishing each session of the course, participants were required to engage in Instragram and share their learning experience from the course, together with the picture taken during class time. They were also asked to respond to my comments and give their comments on other friends' posting. Participants were reminded that their participation in the social media was not graded. They were simply encouraged, but not forced, to use the TL to interact in the social media when they felt that they were ready and willing to do so. Consequently, any attempts to engage in TL interaction could be regarded as a demonstration of participants' WTC. Additionally, participants were informed that it was okay if they made language mistakes, since the focus of the use of social media was on fluency rather than accuracy. As a result, I expected participants to feel minimal pressure during TL use while engaging in the social media. Eventually, some questions were raised to ensure that participants understood what they were meant to do in social media.

## 3.5    Measurement Instruments

This section presents descriptions and properties (i.e., reliability and validity) of the instruments, namely a pre-survey questionnaire, and two sets of WTC questionnaires, which I used to obtain factual and baseline data.

### 3.5.1 The Measurement of Participants' Profile

A pre-survey questionnaire was developed by me in an attempt to collect a broad profile of participants and to ensure a homogenous sample of typical Thai EFL learners. The questionnaire was written in English and later on translated into Thai, participants' native language.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part of the questionnaire included eight items asking about participants' demographic characteristics (e.g. age and gender), relevant language background (e.g. How long have you studied English?), as well as their self-assessment of communication in English (e.g. How would you rate your English

communication skills?). The second part involved a) five items asking the participants to describe their personal social media-related habits and experiences (e.g. How long have you been using social media?) and b) one item asking them if they thought using social media was helpful to learn English and why (i.e. Using social media is helpful to learn English because _____.). The third part consisted of six items eliciting participants' expectation of the development of their L2 communication when they engaged in a social media environment. Participants were asked to rate statements such as 'I think that some social media can increase the amount of communication in English,' using the following Likert scale: (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral/No opinion, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly agree.

The Thai version of the questionnaire was handed out to all participants during a meeting arranged at the beginning of the course. The questionnaire was completed in the meeting and collected immediately. The questionnaire is included in Appendix

### 3.5.2   The Measurement of Learners' Willingness to Communicate

In order to answer the study research question (Does engaging in social media enhance learners' willingness to communicate in English?), participants' WTC in the TL was measured using questionnaires gauging their a) WTC in the classroom, administered first prior to the social media participation for baseline data, and their b) WTC in social media, administered after the final social media participation at the end of the semester 1 and again at the end of the semester 2. The questionnaires (see Appendices C and D) were adopted and adapted from my PhD thesis (Wattana, 2013), and were based on 1) my operational definition of the construct of WTC and 2) on the review of the literature identifying the variables believed to contribute to individuals' WTC. The question items were modified from previous WTC studies (Cao & Philp, 2006; Freiermuth & Jarrell, 2006; Léger & Storch, 2009; MacIntyre et al., 2001; MacIntyre et al., 1998) which were shown to have strong content validity.  Although the questions in the two sets of questionnaires were slightly different, in order to reflect their focus on either the *classroom* or the *social media*, the questionnaires were kept as similar as possible to

measure the WTC construct (i.e. how willing participants were when communicating in English).

Questionnaires were piloted with another small group of students. Test-retest reliability estimates, determined by administering the same instrument twice to students within a two-week interval between administrations, yielded satisfactory stability and reliability. The Pearson's correlation (2-tailed) ($r$) of the first set of WTC questionnaire was .87 ($p < .001$) while the second set was .91 ($p < .001$). A Pearson's correlation of .70 or above is generally considered as sufficient test-retest reliability (Larson-Hall, 2010). As a result, the obtained test-retest reliability estimates appeared to suggest that both sets of WTC questionnaires were reliable instruments and, consequently, had sufficient quality to be used in the present study

**Table 3.3**

Willingness to Communicate Questionnaires

| Measures | Number of Items | Internal Reliability ($\alpha$) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Set 1 | Set 2 |
| Perceptions of willingness to use English for communication | 5 | .895 | .874 |
| Communicative self-confidence | 10 | .812 | .836 |
| • Anxiety | 5 | .732 | .800 |
| • Perceived communicative competence | 5 | .616 | .698 |
| Frequency of communication in English | 5 | .852 | .869 |

Two sets of questionnaires were employed to investigate EFL learners' WTC in English. They composed of commonly investigated communication-related measures: a) self-perceptions of willingness to use English for communication, b) communicative self-confidence, as well as c) self-reported frequency of communication in English. The overall reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha$)) of the first set of the questionnaires was .891 and of the second set .914. Table 3.3 lists the measures employed and the number of items in each measure, and reports Cronbach's alphas as evidence of internal

consistency reliability of each measure. Although Cronbach's alphas indicated in most scales were not particularly high, the number of items on the questionnaire was fairly low, and internal reliability was therefore considered to be satisfactory.

The first section of the questionnaires was composed of five items concerning learners' perceptions associated with their willingness to use English in each communication situation either during *class* time or in *social media*. Example items were: how willing are you to… 'Talk to my friends in English.' The items were mainly selected and adapted from MacIntyre et al.'s (2001) WTC scale to include communication tasks common to *EFL classes* and *online environments*. Responses to the items on a 5-point Likert scale were anchored with '1 = Very unwilling' and '5 = Very willing.' It should be noted that the middle value labelled 'Neutral' was included in this 5-point scale to elicit honest responses from some participants who might not have had experience in or strong feelings about particular communication tasks. High scores were interpreted as high levels of WTC.

The second section of the questionnaires included ten items asking participants to report their communicative self-confidence in a *classroom* setting and in *social media*. The items were selected and modified from previous studies examining language and communication anxiety (e.g. Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; McCroskey & Richmond, 1982), and self-perceived competence (e.g. Compton, 2004b; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). Participants were asked to indicate on another 5-point Likert scale the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements indicative of anxiety and self-perceived communicative competence levels (where 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly agree). Similar to the scale of perceptions associated with WTC in section one, a neutral point was added in order to increase the reliability of the scale. That is, the results would not necessarily be accurate if some respondents wanted to remain indecisive, but were compelled to either 'agree' or 'disagree' by a forced-choice response scale without middle neutral or undecided choice.

The number of choices on the communicative self-confidence scale was fairly balanced to preserve a continuum of positive and negative statements with which the respondent was likely to agree or disagree. This was expected to avoid the problem of biasing the results and to improve reliability, as anyone who answered 'agree' all the time would tend to answer inconsistently. Based on the arbitrary weighting method proposed by Best and Kahn (2006, p. 331), positively worded items (e.g. 'I feel comfortable sharing my ideas/feelings/opinions with my friends in English.') were given a weight of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively for scoring purposes, while negatively worded items (e.g., 'I feel nervous about using English while participating in social media.') 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (see Table 3.4).

**Table 3.4**

Scoring Favourable and Unfavourable Statements

| Favourable Statement | | Scale Value | Unfavourable Statement | | Scale Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | = | 5 | Strongly agree | = | 1 |
| Agree | = | 4 | Agree | = | 2 |
| Neutral / No opinion | = | 3 | Neutral / No opinion | = | 3 |
| Disagree | = | 2 | Disagree | = | 4 |
| Strongly disagree | = | 1 | Strongly disagree | = | 5 |

Responses for items with negative meanings were reversed before summing for the total and the average scores of all the ten items representing participants' level of communicative self-confidence, which in turn revealed the overall impact of participation in each setting on participants' WTC in English. 'Low' scores indicated 'low' levels of communicative self-confidence, while 'high' scores signified 'high' levels of communicative self-confidence. In addition, 'high' scores for anxiety items reflected 'low' levels of anxiety, and vice-versa. On the contrary, 'high' scores for perceived communicative competence items suggested 'high' levels of perceived communicative competence, and vice-versa. 'Low' levels of anxiety combined with 'high' levels of self-perceived communicative competence led to 'high' levels of communicative self-confidence, and, in turn, indicated participants' 'high' levels of WTC.

The third section of the questionnaires involved a direct measure of frequency of TL use in *class* and *social media*. Five self-reported frequency of communication items asked participants to reflect on how often they used English in each situation (e.g. 'I use English to communicate with my friends.'), using a 5-point scale (from '1 = Never' to '5 = Always'). These five items were selected and adapted from previous WTC studies (Yashima et al., 2004). In general, WTC has been shown to influence the frequency and amount of the TL use. 'High' scores therefore implied participants' willingness in English communication engagement in the *classroom* and the *social media*.

## 3.6 Data Collection and Analysis

Data were mainly obtained from a) participants' responses to the questionnaire measuring their willingness to communicate in English in a language *classroom* context, and b) participants' responses to the questionnaire assessing their willingness to interact in English when engaged in *social media* over a 15-week period of semester 1 and then over another 15-week period of semester 2. Questionnaire data yielded findings on the effects of Social media on EFL learners' WTC.

Data collected from the questionnaires was computed using SPSS to obtain descriptive statistics for the measures of central tendency (i.e. means (*M*) and standard deviations (*SD*)) of the responses to the Likert Scale items, revealing to what extent participants accepted each statement. If the questionnaire findings demonstrated participants' a) 'positive' perceptions of WTC in English, b) 'high' levels of communicative self-confidence (i.e. the combination of 'low' anxiety and 'high' perceived communicative competence), and c) 'high' frequency of target language use, this could suggest their 'high' levels of willingness to engage in English communication, and vice versa.

An inferential statistic called paired-samples t-test was subsequently performed to determine the effects of participation in social media on EFL learners' WTC in the TL. Paired-samples t-tests are frequently used in second language studies for comparison of

two variables obtained from the same group, or when the same participants are measured at two different times (Larson-Hall, 2010). In the case of my study, in the first phase, participants' responses to items gauging how willing they were to communicate in English in the *classroom*, which was the baseline data, were compared to participants' responses to the items pertaining to their willingness to interact in English in *social media*. The comparison, presented in means and computed using a paired-samples t-test with alpha set at .05, was used to see if there were any significant differences between WTC in the *classroom* and the *social media*. Similarly, in the second phase where participants were followed-up, participants WTC levels in *social media* at the end of the course of semester 2 were measured again and then compared with those expressed in the *classroom* at the beginning of the course of semester 1. The comparison between the two means obtained from the same participants therefore allowed a conclusion about whether engaging in social media still resulted in any statistically significant differences in WTC levels. In order for differences to be considered significant, the criterion level for significance was, again, set at 0.05.

Nevertheless, statistical significance levels obtained from the comparison do not provide the final answer because they do not provide sufficient information to examine the size or importance of an effect. An additional measure was therefore necessary. APA recommends that an effect size measure be reported with each statistical test. There is a wide variety of effect size measures, but Cohen's *d* (1988), which is most commonly used in conjunction with the t-test (Larson-Hall, 2010), was employed in the present study to complement the p-value, providing information about the magnitude of the impact of social media on EFL learners' WTC. Cohen's *d* was calculated by comparing the difference between the means of WTC expressed in *social media* and in the *classroom*, divided by their standard deviations. In this way *d* values were obtained and presented in the findings to convey an indication of the magnitude of the influence of social media on EFL learners' WTC in English. Guidelines for interpreting the *d* value vary according to different academic fields and research purposes. Following Cohen's

(1992) standard criteria, this study's analysis interpreted sizes of 0.2 as a 'small' effect, around 0.5 a 'medium' effect, and 0.8 a 'large' effect.

In the following chapters, results pertaining to participants' WTC questionnaire responses and statistical analyses are reported.

# CHAPTER 4
# FINDINGS: THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE

This chapter presents the results for the study's research question: Does engaging in social media enhance learners' willingness to communicate in English?

First, I describe participants' responses to WTC questionnaire (Set 1) completed at the start of the study, asking about their perceptions of WTC, their communicative self-confidence, and their perceived use of English as the target language (TL) in the *language classroom*. These responses were useful to give an indication of participants' general willingness for English communication in the *classroom*, prior to the intervention. Next, I report participants' responses to WTC questionnaire (Set 2) completed after the final social media participation of the semester 1 (i.e. after the 15-week period), asking more specific questions relating to WTC in English while participating in *social media*. A comparison between participants' WTC in *class* and their WTC in *social media* is then made to reveal any differences and, in turn, establish whether social media played a significant role in Thai EFL learners' WTC.

After that, I report on the repeated measures of participants' responses to the same WTC questionnaire (Set 2) completed after the final social media participation of the semester 2 (i.e. after another 15-week period). A comparison between participants' WTC in *class* and their WTC in *social media* is made again to show any differences and, in turn, provide evidence of whether there were any long-term effects of social media on EFL learners' WTC in English.

## 4.1 Learners' WTC in English in the Classroom

The subsections that follow report participants' responses to the first set of WTC questionnaires which were completed prior to the intervention and elicited participants'

general willingness to engage in English communication in the language *classroom*. This questionnaire was composed of commonly investigated communication-related measures: a) perceptions of willingness to use English for communication, b) state communicative self-confidence, and c) frequency of communication in English. Cronbach's coefficient alpha (α) was used to calculate the reliability of the questionnaire and was .891, suggesting that the questionnaire, as a whole, was within the acceptable level. See section 3.5.2 for details of the measurement.

### 4.1.1 Perceptions of WTC in English in the Classroom

The first section of the first set of WTC questionnaire asked participants to rate their perceptions associated with their WTC in English on a scale from 1 ('very unwilling') to 5 ('very willing') in a range of communication tasks they normally engage in during class time. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for this scale was .895. The means of the responses was calculated and then interpreted according to the scale below (Table 4.1). The cutoff points were set at a range (interval) of 0.5 for the first and last, but 1 for those in between, based on the nature of the curve of normal distribution in which the intervals of the two tails are narrower than those of the middle, as advised by a statistical expert (D. Matee, personal communication, July 4, 2014). Table 4.1 displays the scale rating used to interpret the level of willingness to communicate in English.

**Table 4.1**

The Interpretation Scale of Mean Scores for the WTC Level Perceived by Participants

| Range of Mean Scores | | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| 4.50 - 5.00 | = | Very willing |
| 3.50 - 4.49 | = | Somewhat willing |
| 2.50 - 3.49 | = | Neutral |
| 1.50 - 2.49 | = | Somewhat unwilling |
| 1.00 - 1.49 | = | Very unwilling |

The overall mean of 2.30 with a standard deviation of .66 indicated that participants perceived themselves to be somewhat unwilling to engage in communication situations in

the classroom, using the TL. As indicated in Table 4.2, participants showed strong unwillingness to ask and answer questions in English ($M$ = 1.32, $SD$ = .72). They also generally showed a low level of WTC as they were somewhat unwilling to communicate their ideas/feelings/opinions ($M$ = 2.15, $SD$ = 1.07), and to read comments/feedback given in English. ($M$ = 2.67, $SD$ = 1.11). Additionally, when talks and explanations should be done in English, participants were neutral about their willingness to talk to their classmates ($M$ = 2.52, $SD$ = 1.32) and explain things in English ($M$ = 2.85, $SD$ = 1.00).

**Table 4.2**

Participants' Perceptions of WTC in English in the Classroom (N = 40)

| Communication tasks | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1  Talk to my friends in English. | 2.52 | 1.32 | Neutral |
| 1.2  Communicate ideas/feelings/opinions in English. | 2.15 | 1.07 | Somewhat unwilling |
| 1.3  Ask and answer questions in English. | 1.32 | .72 | Very unwilling |
| 1.4  Read comments/feedback given in English. | 2.67 | 1.11 | Somewhat unwilling |
| 1.5  Give explanations in English | 2.85 | 1.00 | Neutral |
| **Overall Mean** | **2.30** | **.60** | **Somewhat unwilling** |

**4.1.2 Levels of Communicative Self-Confidence in the Classroom**

The second section of the first set of WTC questionnaire dealt with participants' feelings about communication in terms of communicative self-confidence when using English in class. The question items probed participants' anxiety and self-perceived communicative competence degrees to indicate their communicative self-confidence and, in turn, their WTC in the TL. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for this scale was .812. The alpha levels for the five anxiety items and five e self-perceived communicative competence items were .732 and .616 respectively. Again, participants were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale, with the anchors 1 ('strongly disagree') to 5 ('strongly agree'), to mark the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements indicative of state anxiety

and self-perceived communicative competence. The favourable and unfavourable statements were interpreted using the scale in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3**

The Interpretation Scale of Mean Scores for Favourable and Unfavourable Items

| Favourable Statements | | | Unfavourable Statements | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4.50 - 5.00 | = | Strongly agree | 1.00 - 1.49 | = | Strongly agree |
| 3.50 - 4.49 | = | Agree | 1.50 - 2.49 | = | Agree |
| 2.50 - 3.49 | = | Neutral/No opinion | 2.50 - 3.49 | = | Neutral/No opinion |
| 1.50 - 2.49 | = | Disagree | 3.50 - 4.49 | = | Disagree |
| 1.00 - 1.49 | = | Strongly disagree | 4.50 - 5.00 | = | Strongly disagree |

Overall, participants showed low levels of state communicative self-confidence, as indicated by low average scores of the ten items ($M = 1.65$, $SD = .18$, see Table 4.4), which in turn suggested that they generally were not very willing to use English to communicate in the classroom. According to Table 4.4, low average scores for anxiety items ($M = 1.69$, $SD = .18$) signify that participants suffered from high levels of anxiety when it came to communicating in English during class time. Particularly, they were afraid of making mistakes ($M = 1.62$, $SD = 1.05$) and felt extremely nervous about using English while participating in class activities ($M = 1.42$, $SD = .63$). Participants also felt uncomfortable sharing their ideas/feelings/opinion in English with their classmates ($M = 1.82$, $SD = .98$), which corresponds with the perception that that they were somewhat unwilling to do so ($M = 2.15$, $SD = 1.07$, see Table 4.2). In addition to language production, participants were also worried about their communicative comprehension. Specifically, the results showed that participants were worried that they would not understand what their classmates said in English ($M = 1.75$, $SD = .87$). Finally, when asked about relaxation when using English in class, they did not think that communicating in English in class relaxing ($M = 1.87$, $SD = .72$).

**Table 4.4**

Participants' Levels of Communicative Self-Confidence in the Classroom (N = 40)

| | Statements | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Anxiety items** | | | | |
| 2.1 | I am not afraid of making mistakes. | 1.62 | 1.05 | Disagree |
| 2.3 | I am worried that I will not understand what my friends say in English.* | 1.75 | .86 | Agree |
| 2.4 | I feel nervous about using English while participating in class activities.* | 1.42 | .63 | Strongly agree |
| 2.7 | I feel comfortable sharing my ideas/ feelings/opinions with my friends. | 1.82 | .98 | Disagree |
| 2.9 | In general, I find communicating in English in classroom situations relaxing. | 1.87 | .72 | Disagree |
| | *All anxiety items* | *1.69* | *.18* | *Disagree* |
| **Self-perceived communicative competence items** | | | | |
| 2.2 | I find it difficult to communicate in English.* | 1.40 | .84 | Strongly agree |
| 2.5 | I can say what I want to say in English. | 1.50 | .81 | Disagree |
| 2.6 | I think my friends cannot understand me because of my poor English.* | 1.87 | .85 | Agree |
| 2.8 | I know the words required for communicating in English. | 1.50 | .87 | Disagree |
| 2.10 | I think participating in class activities help me develop my fluency (i.e. with little hesitation and pauses). | 1.75 | .63 | Disagree |
| | *All perceived communicative competence items* | *1.60* | *.19* | *Disagree* |
| | **Overall Mean** | **1.65** | **.18** | **Disagree** |

*Note.*    *Responses for these items were reversed.

The fact that participants suffered from high levels of anxiety regarding communication in English was found to influence the way they perceived their communicative competence. That is, anxious individuals were likely to perceive their communicative competence to be low. The results in Table 4.4 showed low averaged scores for self-perceived communicative competence items ($M$ = 1.60, $SD$ = .19) which suggested participants' low levels of self-perceived communicative competence when engaged in communication in English in the classroom. Participants strongly perceived that communicating in English was difficult ($M$ = 1.40, $SD$ = .84) and thought that they could

not say what they wanted to say in English ($M$ = 1.50, $SD$ = .81) and that they did not know the words required for English communication ($M$ = 1.50, $SD$ = .87). They also perceived themselves to have poor English, which might negatively affect their interlocutors' comprehension ($M$ =1.87, $SD$ = .85). Moreover, participants did not believe that class activities helped develop their fluency ($M$ = 1.73, $SD$ = .63).

To sum up, the combination of participants' high levels of anxiety and low levels of self-perceived communicative competence apparently reflected their low communicative self-confidence. The fact that participants did not feel competent enough consequently suggested their low level of willingness to engage in TL communication in the classroom.

### 4.1.3 Frequency of English Use in the Classroom

The third section examined participants' reflections on the frequency of their TL use in class. They were asked again to report how often they had engaged in communication in English on a 5-point scale, corresponding to 1 = 'never', 2 = 'rarely', 3 = 'sometimes', 4 = 'often', and 5 = 'always'. The scale was shown to be highly reliable, with an alpha coefficient of .852. The level of reported TL communication frequency was interpreted using the scale in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5**

The Interpretation Scale of Mean Scores for English Communication Frequency

| Range of Mean Scores | | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| 4.50 - 5.00 | = | Always |
| 3.50 - 4.49 | = | Often |
| 2.50 - 3.49 | = | Sometimes |
| 1.50 - 2.49 | = | Rarely |
| 1.00 - 1.49 | = | Never |

Overall, participants' responses reflected their low frequency ($M$ = 1.67, $SD$ = .27) of TL use in the classroom (see Table 4.6). Interestingly, participants reported that they rarely used English when participating in class activities ($M$ = 2.02, $SD$ = .80), which may in

fact be their only chance to speak English. When considering specific English classroom communication behaviour, it was found that participants rarely used English to communicate with their classmates ($M = 1.87$, $SD = .75$), check meanings ($M = 1.55$, $SD = .63$), engage in simple interactions ($M = 1.60$, $SD = .54$). Unsurprisingly, participants never used English to ask questions ($M = 1.32$, $SD = .57$). As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, WTC has been shown to influence the frequency and amount of the TL use. The reported English communication frequency therefore suggested participants' low willingness to engage in the act of TL communication in the classroom.

**Table 4.6**

Participants' Frequency of English Use in Class (N = 40)

| Communication tasks | | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.1 | I use English to communicate with my friends. | 1.87 | .75 | Rarely |
| 3.2 | I use English to check meaning. (e.g. "What does it mean?" "I don't understand.") | 1.55 | .63 | Rarely |
| 3.3 | I use English to ask questions. | 1.32 | .57 | Never |
| 3.4 | I use English for simple interactions. (e.g. How are you today?) | 1.60 | .54 | Rarely |
| 3.5 | I use English only when I participate in class activities. | 2.02 | .80 | Rarely |
| | **Overall Mean** | **1.67** | **.27** | **Rarely** |

**4.2 Learners' WTC in English in Social Media (Phase 1, after a 15-week Period)**

In this section, participants' responses to the second set of WTC questionnaire, which included questions relating to WTC in English in social media and which were completed after the last social media participation of semester 1 (i.e. after the 15-week period), are reported. This, thus, helps to reveal how willing participants were to use the TL to communicate in social media. Like the first set of WTC questionnaire, the second set of questionnaires contained three measures: 1) perceptions of WTC in English and 2) communicative self-confidence, and 3) the frequency of TL use. The overall reliability

coefficient of this set of questionnaires was .91. The findings obtained from this set of questionnaires are then compared with those from the first set to test for significant differences in WTC levels between the two settings and, in turn, to establish whether social media played a significant role in Thai EFL learners' WTC.

### 4.2.1 Perceptions of WTC in English in Social Media I

The first section of the second set of WTC questionnaires examined participants' perceptions of their WTC in English while engaged in communication tasks common to a social media environment. They were asked to rate their perceptions on a scale from 1 ('very unwilling') to 5 ('very willing'). The Cronbach alpha measurement of internal consistency was .874.

**Table 4.7**

Participants' Perceptions of WTC in English in Social Media I (N = 40)

| Communication tasks | Mean | SD | Interpretation[a] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 Talk to my friends in English. | 4.22 | .69 | Somewhat willing |
| 1.2 Communicate ideas/feelings/opinions in English. | 4.05 | .67 | Somewhat willing |
| 1.3 Ask and answer questions in English. | 3.62 | .62 | Somewhat willing |
| 1.4 Read comments/feedback given in English. | 4.25 | .63 | Somewhat willing |
| 1.5 Give explanations in English | 4.15 | .69 | Somewhat willing |
| **Overall Mean** | **4.05** | **.25** | **Somewhat willing** |

*Note*.   [a]See Table 4.1 for an interpretation scale.

Table 4.7 presents participants' perceptions of their WTC in English while engaged in communication situations in social media as a form of CALL in this study. Taken as a whole, participants' perceptions towards WTC were positive as they perceived that they were somewhat willing to use the TL for both talking and comprehending when interacting in social media ($M = 4.05$, $SD = .25$). Specifically, they perceived that they were somewhat willing to talk to other uses ($M = 4.22$, $SD = .69$), communicate ideas/feelings/opinions ($M = 4.05$, $SD = .67$), ask and answer questions ($M = 3.62$, $SD =$

.62), read comments/feedback (*M* = 4.25, *SD* = .63), and give explanations (*M* = 4.15, *SD* = .69).

The mean scores of participants' perceptions associated with their WTC in English in *class* and *social media* were compared. As shown in Table 4.8, it became obvious that participant perceived themselves to be more willing to communicate in social media than in the classroom. They generally perceived themselves to be somewhat willing to use English during social media participation (*M* = 4.05, *SD* = .25) whereas somewhat unwilling to do so in class (*M* = 2.30, *SD* = .60). An examination of the individual communication tasks mean scores also revealed that there was a difference in participants' perceptions, indicating that they were more willing to interact in English in communication situations in *social media* than they were in the *classroom*.

**Table 4.8**

Difference in Participants' Perceptions of WTC in English in the Classroom Social Media I (N = 40)

| Communication tasks | | Classroom | | Social Media I | | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | M | Interpretation | M | Interpretation | |
| 1.1 | Talk to my friends in English. | 2.52 | Somewhat unwilling | 4.22 | Somewhat willing | +1.70 |
| 1.2 | Communicate ideas/feelings/opinions in English. | 2.15 | Somewhat unwilling | 4.05 | Neutral | +1.90 |
| 1.3 | Ask and answer questions in English. | 1.32 | Neutral | 3.62 | Somewhat willing | +2.30 |
| 1.4 | Read comments/feedback given in English. | 2.67 | Somewhat unwilling | 4.25 | Somewhat willing | +1.58 |
| 1.5 | Give explanations in English. | 2.85 | Neutral | 4.15 | Somewhat willing | +1.30 |
| | **Overall Mean** | **2.30** | **Somewhat unwilling** | **4.05** | **Somewhat willing** | **+1.75** |

**4.2.1.1 Statistical Analysis**

A paired-samples t-test was performed to determine the difference between participants' perceptions of WTC in English in the classroom and social media. An alpha level of .05 was used as a significance criterion for all statistical tests, as is standard practice. Cohen's *d* (1988) was subsequently calculated to indicate the effect size. Overall, the paired-samples t-test results confirmed that participants exhibited significantly more positive perceptions about their WTC in English in social media ($M = 20.30$, $SD = 2.71$) than they did during class time ($M = 11.52$, $SD = 4.47$), $t(39) = 16.85$, $p < 0.001$. The effect size was large ($d = .76$). Results are shown in Table 4.9.

**Table 4.9**

Paired Samples T- Test for Mean Scores of Participants' Perceptions of WTC in English during Class Time and Social Media I (N = 40)

| Perceptions of WTC in | Mean (SD) | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Effect size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Lower | Upper | | | | |
| Social media I | 20.30 (2.71) | | | | | | |
| | | 7.72 | 9.82 | 16.85 | 39 | .000 | *d* = .76 |
| Classroom | 11.52 (4.47) | | | | | | |

**4.2.2 Levels of Communicative Self-Confidence in Social Media I**

The second section measured participants' overall communicative self-confidence while engaged in communication in English in social media on a 5-point Likert scale, with response anchors ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). The levels of anxiety about using English and self-perceived communicative competence which participants experienced during social media were used to indicate their communicative self-confidence which, in turn, reflected their WTC levels. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for this scale was .836. The alpha level for anxiety items was .800 and for items in self-perceived communicative competence was .698. Generally, participants reported low levels of anxiety and high levels of perceived communicative competence.

Overall, the combination of low anxiety and high perceived communicative competence reflects their high levels of communicative confidence ($M$ = 4.38, $SD$ = .31), as indicated in Table 4.10.

Keeping in mind that a high averaged score for anxiety items indicates a low level of anxiety, findings in Table 4.10 show that participants were less anxious when it came to communicating in English during social media ($M$ = 4.62 $SD$ = .08). Most importantly, participants reported that they were not nervous about using English while participating in social media ($M$ = 4.70, $SD$ = .46) and found communicating in social media relaxing ($M$ = 4.65, $SD$ = .48). They also claimed that they were not anxious about both production of communication and communicative comprehension while engaged in TL communication in social media. In other words, they were not afraid of making mistakes ($M$ = 4.52, $SD$ = .55), felt relaxed about sharing their ideas/feelings/opinions with their friends in social media ($M$ = 70, $SD$ = .46), and were not worried about understanding what was said in English during social media participation ($M$ = 4.55, $SD$ = .55).

Bearing in mind that a high averaged score for perceived communicative competence items suggests a high level of perceived communicative competence, the findings from the questionnaire reveal that participants perceived themselves to be quite confident in their abilities to communicate in English while engaged in TL communication in social media ($M$ = 4.15, $SD$ = .27), as indicated in Table 4.10. Participants believed that participating in social media helped them develop their fluency ($M$ = 4.32, $SD$ = .57). They also expressed positive views of their abilities to communicate in English successfully in social media. That is they did not find it difficult to communicate in English ($M$ = 4.55, $SD$ = .50), perceived themselves to have abilities to say what they wanted to say in English ($M$ = 4.00, $SD$ = .67) and to know the words required for communicating in English ($M$ = 4.00, $SD$ = .59). They also regarded their English as not too poor for their friends to understand ($M$ = 3.90, $SD$ = .87).

**Table 4.10**

Participants' Levels of Communicative Self-Confidence in Social Media I (N = 40)

| Statements | | Mean | SD | Interpretation[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Anxiety items** | | | | |
| 2.1 | I am not afraid of making mistakes. | 4.52 | .55 | Strongly agree |
| 2.3 | I am worried that I will not understand what my friends say in English.* | 4.55 | .55 | Strongly disagree |
| 2.4 | I feel nervous about using English while participating in social media.* | 4.70 | .46 | Strongly disagree |
| 2.7 | I feel comfortable sharing my ideas/feelings/opinions with my friends. | 4.70 | .46 | Strongly agree |
| 2.9 | In general, I find communicating in English in social relaxing. | 4.65 | .48 | Strongly agree |
| | *All anxiety items* | *4.62* | *.08* | *Strongly Agree* |
| **Statements** | | **Mean** | **SD** | **Interpretation[a]** |
| **Perceived communicative competence items** | | | | |
| 2.2 | I find it difficult to communicate in English.* | 4.55 | .50 | Strongly disagree |
| 2.5 | I can say what I want to say in English. | 4.00 | .67 | Agree |
| 2.6 | I think my friends cannot understand me because of my poor English.* | 3.90 | .87 | Disagree |
| 2.8 | I know the words required for communicating in English. | 4.00 | .59 | Agree |
| 2.10 | I think participating in social media help me develop my fluency (i.e. with little hesitation and pauses). | 4.32 | .57 | Agree |
| | *All Perceived communicative competence items* | *4.15* | *.27* | *Agree* |
| | **Overall Mean** | **4.38** | **.31** | **Agree** |

*Note.*   *Responses for these items were reversed.
[a]See Table 4.3 for an interpretation scale.

In summary, participants were found to demonstrate high levels of communicative confidence while engaged in social media, using the TL. They reported that they were not anxious about using English to communicate and perceived that they were competent enough to communicate with others in English. The findings, therefore, suggested that participants were willing to communicate in English during social media participation.

Table 4.11 displays the level of self-confidence participants felt to communicate in English in the *classroom* and the *social media*, as well as any increase or decrease

between the mean scores obtained from the two sets of WTC questionnaire. Obviously, there were some differences in the overall communicative self-confidence of participants when interacting with each other using the TL during social media, compared to their classroom interaction. There were also other differences with respect to the levels of anxiety and perceived communicative competence when English was used to interact with each other in social media.

**Table 4.11**

Difference in Participants' Levels of Communicative Self-Confidence in the Classroom and the Social Media I (N = 40)

| | Statements | **Classroom** | | **Social Media I** | | **Difference** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **M** | **Interpretation** | **M** | **Interpretation** | |
| **Anxiety items** | | | | | | |
| 2.1 | I am not afraid of making mistakes. | 1.62 | Disagree | 4.52 | Strongly Agree | +2.90 |
| 2.3 | I am worried that I will not understand what my friends say in English.* | 1.75 | Agree | 4.55 | Strongly Disagree | +2.80 |
| 2.4 | I feel nervous about using English while participating in class (social media)* | 1.42 | Strongly agree | 4.70 | Strongly disagree | +3.28 |
| 2.7 | I feel comfortable sharing my ideas/ feelings/ opinions with my friends. | 1.82 | Disagree | 4.70 | Strongly agree | +2.88 |
| 2.9 | In general, I find communicating in English in classroom (social media) relaxing. | 1.87 | Disagree | 4.65 | Strongly agree | +2.78 |
| | *All anxiety items* | *1.69* | *Disagree* | *4.62* | *Strongly agree* | +2.93 |
| **Perceived communicative competence items** | | | | | | |
| 2.2 | I find it difficult to communicate in English.* | 1.40 | Strongly agree | 4.55 | Strongly disagree | +3.15 |

*(continued)*

**Table 4.11** *(continued)*

| | Statements | Classroom | | Social Media I | | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **M** | **Interpretation** | **M** | **Interpretation** | |
| **Perceived communicative competence items** | | | | | | |
| 2.5 | I can say what I want to say in English. | 1.50 | Disagree | 4.00 | Agree | +2.50 |
| 2.6 | I think my friends cannot understand me because of my poor English.* | 1.87 | Agree | 3.90 | Disagree | +2.03 |
| 2.8 | I know the words required for communicating in English. | 1.50 | Disagree | 4.00 | Agree | +2.50 |
| 2.10 | I think participating in class (social media) help me develop my fluency. | 1.75 | Disagree | 4.32 | Agree | +2.57 |
| *All perceived communicative competence items* | | *1.60* | *Disagree* | *4.15* | *Agree* | +2.55 |
| | **Overall Mean** | **1.65** | **Disagree** | **4.38** | **Agree** | **+2.73** |

### 4.2.2.1 Statistical Analysis

Findings in Table 4.12 show that participants had lower levels of anxiety when it came to communicating in English in social media ($M = 23.12$, $SD = 1.88$) than they did during class time ($M = 8.50$, $SD = 3.01$). This difference was statistically significant ($t(39) = 29.34$, $p < 0.001$), with a very large effect size ($d = .94$). The difference between the anxiety participants felt during class time and during social media had the largest influence on participants' state anxiety levels in this analysis.

**Table 4.12**

Paired Samples T-Test for Mean Scores of Participants' Levels of Anxiety when Communicating in English during Class Time and Social Media I (N = 40)

| Anxiety in | Mean (SD) | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Effect size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Lower | Upper | | | | |
| Social media I | 23.12(1.88) | | | | | | |
| | | 13.61 | 15.63 | 29.34 | 39 | .000 | $d = .94$ |
| Classroom | 8.50(3.01) | | | | | | |

As shown in Table 4.13, levels of perceived communicative competence participants felt in social media ($M = 20.77$, $SD = 2.21$) differed from those felt during class time ($M = 8.02$, $SD = 2.35$) and again, this was statistically significant ($t(39) = 28.71$, $p < 0.001$). The effect size ($d$) of .94 was very large.

**Table 4.13**

Paired Samples T-Test for Mean Scores of Participants' Levels of Perceived Communicative Competence Felt during Class Time and Social Media I (N=40)

| Perceived Communicative Competence in | Mean (SD) | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Effect size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Lower | Upper | | | | |
| Social media I | 20.77 (2.21) | | | | | | |
| | | 11.85 | 13.64 | 28.71 | 39 | .000 | $d = .94$ |
| Classroom | 8.02 (2.35) | | | | | | |

Participants' communicative self-confidence average scores for each environment were compared. Generally, they reported higher levels of communicative self-confidence while engaged in social media ($M = 43.90$, $SD = 3.72$) than during class time ($M = 16.52$, $SD = 5.10$), as presented in Table 4.14. There was a statistically significant difference ($t(39) = 31.86$, $p < 0.001$), with a very large effect size ($d$) of .96.

**Table 4.14**

Paired Samples T-Test for Mean Scores of Participants' Levels of Communicative Self-Confidence Felt in Class Time and Social Media I (N=40)

| Communicative Self-Confidence in | Mean (SD) | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Effect size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Lower | Upper | | | | |
| Social media I | 49.90 (3.72) | | | | | | |
| | | 26.63 | 29.11 | 31.86 | 39 | .000 | *d* = .96 |
| Classroom | 16.52(5.10) | | | | | | |

### 4.2.3 Frequency of English Use in Social Media I

The third section of the second set of WTC questionnaire examined participants' reflections on how often they used the TL in social media. They were asked again to report how often they had engaged in communication in English on a 5-point scale, corresponding to 1 = 'never', 2 = 'rarely', 3 = 'sometimes', 4 = 'often', and 5 = 'always'. The scale was shown to be highly reliable, with an alpha coefficient of .869.

**Table 4.15**

Participants' Frequency of English Use in Social Media I (N = 40)

| Communication tasks | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3.1 I use English to communicate with my friends. | 4.20 | .72 | Often |
| 3.2 I use English to check meaning. (e.g. "What does it mean?" "I don't understand.") | 4.00 | .71 | Often |
| 3.3 I use English to ask questions. | 3.57 | .63 | Often |
| 3.4 I use English for simple interactions. (e.g. How are you today?) | 4.20 | .64 | Often |
| 3.5 I use English only when I participate in social media. | 4.07 | .69 | Often |
| **Overall Mean** | **4.00** | **.25** | **Often** |

*Note*.    ᵃSee Table 4.5 for an interpretation scale.

Generally, participants' responses reflected their high frequency (*M* = 4.00, *SD* = .25) of TL use in the social media (see Table 4.15). Participants claimed that they often use English only when they participated in social media (*M* = 4.07, *SD* = .69) to

communicate with their friends ($M$ = 4.20, $SD$ = .72), check meanings ($M$ = 4.00, $SD$ = .71), ask questions ($M$ = 3.57, $SD$ = .63), engage in simple interactions ($M$ = 4.20, $SD$ = .64). This reported frequency could reflect participants' high willingness to engage in communication in English in social media.

The mean scores of participants' self-reported TL use in *class* and *social media* were compared. As shown in Table 4.16, it was clear that the frequency of TL use in the latter environment was greater than the former.

**Table 4.16**

Difference in Participants' Self-Reported Use of English in the Classroom and Social Media I (N = 40)

| Communication tasks | | Classroom | | Social Media | | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | M | Interpretation | M | Interpretation | |
| 3.1 | I use English to communicate with my friends. | 1.87 | Rarely | 4.20 | Often | +1.70 |
| 3.2 | I use English to check meaning. | 1.55 | Rarely | 4.00 | Often | +1.90 |
| 3.3 | I use English to ask questions. | 1.32 | Never | 3.57 | Often | +2.30 |
| 3.4 | I use English for simple interactions. | 1.60 | Rarely | 4.20 | Often | +1.58 |
| 3.5 | I use English only when I participate in social media. | 2.02 | Rarely | 4.07 | Often | +1.30 |
| | **Overall Mean** | **1.67** | **Rarely** | **4.00** | **Often** | **+1.75** |

**4.2.3.1 Statistical Analysis**

Apparently, the results shown in Table 4.17 confirmed that participants used English in social media ($M$ = 20.05, $SD$ = 2.77) more frequently than they did in class time ($M$ = 8.37, $SD$ = 2.65), $t(39)$ = 29.11, $p < 0.001$. The effect size was very large ($d$ = .90).

**Table 4.17**

Paired Samples T- Test for Mean Scores of Participants' Self-Reported Use of English during Class Time and Social Media I (N = 40)

| Frequency of English use in | Mean (SD) | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Effect size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Lower | Upper | | | | |
| Social media I | 20.05 (2.77) | | | | | | |
| | | 10.86 | 12.48 | 29.11 | 39 | .000 | $d = 0.90$ |
| Classroom | 8.37 (2.65) | | | | | | |

## 4.3 Learners' WTC in English in Social Media (Phase 2, after a 30-week period)

In this section, participants' responses to the second set of WTC questionnaire, which included questions relating to WTC in English in social media and which were repeatedly administered after the last social media participation of semester 2 (i.e. after the 30-week period), are reported. The findings obtained are then compared with those collected at the beginning of the course (see section 4.1) to ensure significant differences in WTC levels between the two settings and, in turn, to find out whether there were long-term effects of social media on learners' WTC.

## 4.3.1 Perceptions of WTC in English in Social Media II

According to Table 4.18, participants' perceptions towards WTC in general remain positive as they perceived that they were somewhat willing to use the TL for mast communication tasks. A dramatic change is that they were very willing to give explanations in English during social media. ($M = 4.50$, $SD = .50$).

**Table 4.18**

Participants' Perceptions of WTC in English in Social Media II (N = 40)

| Communication tasks | Mean | SD | Interpretation[a] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 Talk to my friends in English. | 4.40 | .59 | Somewhat willing |
| 1.2 Communicate ideas/feelings/opinions in English. | 4.22 | .57 | Somewhat willing |
| 1.3 Ask and answer questions in English. | 4.02 | .42 | Somewhat willing |
| 1.4 Read comments/feedback given in English. | 4.50 | .50 | Very willing |
| 1.5 Give explanations in English | 4.32 | .47 | Somewhat willing |
| **Overall Mean** | **4.29** | **.18** | **Somewhat willing** |

*Note*.    [a]See Table 4.1 for an interpretation scale.

The mean scores of participants' perceptions associated with their WTC in English in *class* and *social media* after 30-week period was compared. As indicated in the Table 4.19, despite long-term engagement in social media, participant still perceived themselves to be more willing to communicate in social media than in the classroom, and the differences were shown to be positive.

**Table 4.19**

Difference in Participants' Perceptions of WTC in English in the Classroom Social Media II (N = 40)

| Communication tasks | | Classroom | | Social Media II | | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | Interpretation | M | Interpretation | |
| 1.1 | Talk to my friends in English. | 2.52 | Somewhat unwilling | 4.40 | Somewhat willing | +1.88 |
| 1.2 | Communicate ideas/feelings/opinions in English. | 2.15 | Somewhat unwilling | 4.22 | Somewhat willing | +2.07 |
| 1.3 | Ask and answer questions in English. | 1.32 | Neutral | 4.02 | Somewhat willing | +2.70 |

*(continued)*

**Table 4.19** (continued)

| Communication tasks | | Classroom | | Social Media II | | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **M** | **Interpretation** | **M** | **Interpretation** | |
| 1.4 Read comments/feedback given in English. | 2.67 | Somewhat unwilling | 4.50 | Very willing | +1.83 |
| 1.5 Give explanations in English. | 2.85 | Neutral | 4.32 | Somewhat willing | +1.47 |
| **Overall Mean** | **2.30** | **Somewhat unwilling** | **4.29** | **Somewhat willing** | **+1.99** |

### 4.3.1.1 Statistical Analysis

Overall, the paired-samples t-test results still confirmed that participants expressed significantly more positive perceptions about their WTC in English in social media after a 30-week period ($M = 21.47$, $SD = 1.92$) than they did during class time ($M = 11.52$, $SD = 4.47$), $t(39) = 17.86$, $p < 0.001$. The effect size was large ($d = .82$). Results are shown in Table 4.20.

**Table 4.20**

Paired Samples T- Test for Mean Scores of Participants' Perceptions of WTC in English during Class Time and Social Media II (N = 40)

| Perceptions of WTC in | Mean (SD) | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Effect size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Lower** | **Upper** | | | | |
| **Social media II** | 21.47 (1.92) | | | | | | |
| | | 8.82 | 11.07 | 17.86 | 39 | .000 | $d = .82$ |
| **Classroom** | 11.52 (4.47) | | | | | | |

### 4.3.2   Levels of Communicative Self-Confidence in Social Media II

After another 15-week period of the engagement in social media, participants still reported their low levels of anxiety ($M = 4.72$, $SD = .05$) and high levels of perceived communicative competence levels ($M = 4.31$, $SD = .19$). This clearly reflects

participants' high communicative confidence ($M$ = 4.52, $SD$ = .25), and, in turn, their great willingness to communicate in English in social media, as indicated in Table 4.21 below.

**Table 4.21**

Participants' Levels of Communicative Self-Confidence in Social Media II (N = 40)

| Statements | | Mean | SD | Interpretation[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Anxiety items** | | | | |
| 2.1 | I am not afraid of making mistakes. | 4.67 | .47 | Strongly agree |
| 2.3 | I am worried that I will not understand what my friends say in English.* | 4.65 | .48 | Strongly disagree |
| 2.4 | I feel nervous about using English while participating in social media.* | 4.77 | .42 | Strongly disagree |
| 2.7 | I feel comfortable sharing my ideas/feelings/opinions with my friends. | 4.77 | .42 | Strongly agree |
| 2.9 | In general, I find communicating in English in social relaxing. | 4.75 | .43 | Strongly agree |
| | *All anxiety items* | *4.72* | *.05* | *Strongly Agree* |
| **Statements** | | **Mean** | **SD** | **Interpretation[a]** |
| **Perceived communicative competence items** | | | | |
| 2.2 | I find it difficult to communicate in English.* | 4.60 | .49 | Strongly disagree |
| 2.5 | I can say what I want to say in English. | 4.22 | .47 | Agree |
| 2.6 | I think my friends cannot understand me because of my poor English.* | 4.17 | .59 | Disagree |
| 2.8 | I know the words required for communicating in English. | 4.15 | .53 | Agree |
| 2.10 | I think participating in social media help me develop my fluency (i.e. with little hesitation and pauses). | 4.45 | .50 | Agree |
| | *All Perceived communicative competence items* | *4.31* | *.19* | *Agree* |
| | **Overall Mean** | **4.52** | **.25** | **Strongly agree** |

*Note*.    *Responses for these items were reversed.
             [a]See Table 4.3 for an interpretation scale.

Table 4.22 shows the level of self-confidence participants felt to communicate in English in the *classroom* and the *social media*, as well as remarkable increase between the mean scores obtained from different periods. The repeated measurement confirmed that there

were some differences in the overall communicative self-confidence of participants when using the TL during social media, compared to their classroom interaction. It was also asserted that there were also other differences in terms of the levels of anxiety and perceived communicative competence when English was used for communication in social media.

**Table 4.22**

Difference in Participants' Levels of Communicative Self-Confidence in the Classroom and the Social Media II (N = 40)

| Statements | | Classroom | | Social Media II | | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | M | Interpretation | M | Interpretation | |
| **Anxiety items** | | | | | | |
| 2.1 | I am not afraid of making mistakes. | 1.62 | Disagree | 4.67 | Strongly agree | +3.05 |
| 2.3 | I am worried that I will not understand what my friends say in English.* | 1.75 | Agree | 4.65 | Strongly disagree | +2.90 |
| 2.4 | I feel nervous about using English while participating in class (social media)* | 1.42 | Strongly agree | 4.77 | Strongly disagree | +3.35 |
| 2.7 | I feel comfortable sharing my ideas/ feelings/ opinions with my friends. | 1.82 | Disagree | 4.77 | Strongly agree | +2.95 |
| 2.9 | In general, I find communicating in English in classroom (social media) relaxing. | 1.87 | Disagree | 4.75 | Strongly agree | +2.88 |
| | *All anxiety items* | *1.69* | *Disagree* | 4.72 | *Strongly Agree* | *+3.03* |

*(continued)*

**Table 4.22** (continued)

| Statements | Classroom | | Social Media II | | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | Interpretation | M | Interpretation | |
| **Perceived communicative competence items** | | | | | |
| 2.2 I find it difficult to communicate in English.* | 1.40 | Strongly agree | 4.60 | Strongly disagree | +3.20 |
| 2.5 I can say what I want to say in English. | 1.50 | Disagree | 4.22 | Agree | +2.72 |
| 2.6 I think my friends cannot understand me because of my poor English.* | 1.87 | Agree | 4.17 | Disagree | +2.30 |
| 2.8 I know the words required for communicating in English. | 1.50 | Disagree | 4.15 | Agree | +2.65 |
| 2.10 I think participating in class (social media) help me develop my fluency. | 1.75 | Disagree | 4.45 | Agree | +2.70 |
| *All perceived communicative competence items* | *1.60* | *Disagree* | *4.31* | *Agree* | *+2.71* |
| **Overall Mean** | **1.65** | **Disagree** | **4.52** | **Strongly agree** | **+2.87** |

### 4.3.2.1 Statistical Analysis

When statistical analysis was performed, participants, again showed lower levels of anxiety while communicating in English in social media ($M = 23.62$, $SD = 1.44$) than they did during class time ($M = 8.50$, $SD = 3.01$). This difference was statistically significant ($t(39) = 31.21$, $p < 0.001$), with a very large effect size ($d = .95$).

**Table 4.23**

Paired Samples T-Test for Mean Scores of Participants' Levels of Anxiety when Communicating in English during Class Time and Social Media II (N = 40)

| Anxiety in | Mean (SD) | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Effect size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Lower | Upper | | | | |
| **Social media II** | 23.62(1.44) | | | | | | |
| | | 14.14 | 16.10 | 31.21 | 39 | .000 | *d* = .95 |
| **Classroom** | 8.50(3.01) | | | | | | |

Similarly, participants appeared to feel more competent in their communicative competence social media (*M* = 21.60, *SD* = 1.80) than they did during class time (*M* = 8.02, *SD* = 2.35) and again, this was statistically significant (*t*(39) = 32.52, *p* < 0.001). The effect size (*d*) of .95 was very large.

**Table 4.24**

Paired Samples T-Test for Mean Scores of Participants' Levels of Perceived Communicative Competence Felt during Class Time and Social Media II (N=40)

| Perceived Communicative Competence in | Mean (SD) | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Effect size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Lower | Upper | | | | |
| **Social media II** | 21.60 (1.80) | | | | | | |
| | | 12.73 | 14.41 | 32.52 | 39 | .000 | *d* = .95 |
| **Classroom** | 8.02 (2.35) | | | | | | |

Consequently, participants in general still reported higher levels of communicative self-confidence while engaged in social media (*M* = 45.22, *SD* =2.99) than during class time (*M* = 16.52, *SD* = 5.10). There was a statistically significant difference (*t*(39) = 34.81, *p* < 0.001), with a very large effect size (*d*) of .96.

**Table 4.25**

Paired Samples T-Test for Mean Scores of Participants' Levels of Communicative Self-Confidence Felt in Class Time and Social Media II (N=40)

| Communicative Self-Confidence in | Mean (SD) | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Effect size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Lower | Upper | | | | |
| **Social media II** | 45.22 (2.99) | | | | | | |
| | | 27.03 | 30.36 | 34.81 | 39 | .000 | *d* = .96 |
| **Classroom** | 16.52(5.10) | | | | | | |

### 4.3.3   Frequency of English Use in Social Media II

It is apparent that participants' responses suggested their high frequency (*M* = 4.32, *SD* = .23) of the use of English in the social media (see Table 4.26). The most observable was that participants reported that they always used English only while engaged in social media (*M* = 4.52, *SD* = .50). This could therefore reflect participants' great willingness to interact in English during social media participation.

**Table 4.26**

Participants' Frequency of English Use in Social Media II (N = 40)

| Communication tasks | | Mean | SD | Interpretation[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.1 | I use English to communicate with my friends. | 4.52 | .50 | Always |
| 3.2 | I use English to check meaning. (e.g. "What does it mean?" "I don't understand.") | 4.30 | .46 | Often |
| 3.3 | I use English to ask questions. | 3.92 | .47 | Often |
| 3.4 | I use English for simple interactions. (e.g. How are you today?) | 4.45 | .50 | Often |
| 3.5 | I use English only when I participate in social media. | 4.42 | .50 | Often |
| | **Overall Mean** | **4.32** | **.23** | **Often** |

*Note*.   [a]See Table 4.3 for an interpretation scale.

The mean scores of participants' self-reported TL use in *class* and *social media* after 30-week period were compared. As shown in Table 4.27, it was obvious that the frequency of English in *social media* was far greater than in the *classroom*.

**Table 4.27**

Difference in Participants' Self-Reported Use of English in the Classroom and Social Media II (N = 40)

| Communication tasks | | Classroom | | Social Media | | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | M | Interpretation | M | Interpretation | |
| **3.1** | I use English to communicate with my friends. | 1.87 | Rarely | 4.52 | Always | +2.65 |
| **3.2** | I use English to check meaning. | 1.55 | Rarely | 4.30 | Often | +2.75 |
| **3.2** | I use English to ask questions. | 1.32 | Never | 3.92 | Often | +2.60 |
| **3.4** | I use English for simple interactions. | 1.60 | Rarely | 4.45 | Often | +2.85 |
| **3.5** | I use English only when I participate in social media. | 2.02 | Rarely | 4.42 | Often | +2.40 |
| | **Overall Mean** | **1.67** | **Rarely** | **4.32** | **Often** | **+2.65** |

### 4.3.3.1 Statistical Analysis

The paired-samples t-test results helped confirm that participants used English in social media ($M = 21.62$, $SD = 1.79$) more frequently than they did in class time ($M = 8.37$, $SD = 2.65$), $t(39) = 35.00$, $p < 0.001$. The effect size was very large ($d = .90$). Results are shown in Table 4.28.

**Table 4.28**

Paired Samples T- Test for Mean Scores of Participants' Self-Reported Use of English during Class Time and Social Media (N = 40)

| Frequency of English use in | Mean (SD) | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Effect size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Lower | Upper | | | | |
| **Social media** | 21.62 (1.79) | | | | | | |
| | | 12.48 | 14.01 | 35.00 | 39 | .000 | $d = 0.94$ |
| **Classroom** | 8.37 (2.65) | | | | | | |

The findings reported here will be further discussed in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 5
# DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This final chapter discusses the findings and draws a number of conclusions. The chapter begins with a restatement of an overview of the entire study. The chapter then summarises key findings reported in Chapter 4, with interpretations linked to previous and recent literature, and possible explanations for the findings found in the study. This is then followed by a discussion of the study's limitations and recommendations for future research. The chapter concludes with implications that can be drawn from the findings for second/foreign language (L2) pedagogy, and computer-assisted language learning (CALL) material/activity design.

## 5.1 Summary of the Study

Learners' reluctance to use the language both inside and outside the classroom is a problem commonly faced by most language teachers, particularly in contexts where English is used and learnt as a foreign language. While Thai teachers of English using the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach are attaching great importance to communication and producing learners who are 'able' to communicate in the target language (TL), they are also eager to have learners who are 'willing' to use the language. This is because in order for CLT to be effective and for learners to learn another language, they must have willingness to communicate (WTC) which is likely to lead to increased opportunities for language practice and authentic language use.

Given the emphasis on the engendering of WTC as a fundamental goal of language instruction, finding ways to encourage WTC in English is worth investigating. The potential of social media for language learning has been widely recognised in the literature. Underlying this study was therefore the hypothesis that social media would offer the possibility for encouraging some aspects of the variables influencing WTC in the TL. This study is an attempt to investigate this assumption, providing answers to the

following research question: Does engaging in social media enhance learners' willingness to communicate in English?

This study is a quantitative investigation, employing a pseudo empirical research design with a pre-test-post-test structure and a follow-up component in one intact EFL class and involving 40 third-year students. Participants' typical willingness to use the language in the classroom setting was examined beforehand to provide baseline data. Participants were then asked to participate in social media offered as CALL activities. Participants' WTC in English during social media were repeatedly measured. A comparison between the levels of willingness to interact in English in a traditional language classroom and within social media was subsequently done. The findings obtained from WTC questionnaires are summarised below.

## 5.2 Summary of key Findings and Interpretations

The study's research question asked about the effects of social media on Thai EFL learners' WTC in English. In general, the data gathered from the questionnaires revealed significant differences in learners' WTC in two conditions (classroom versus social media), leading to the conclusion that social media had positive impact on language learners' confidence, anxiety, and perceived communicative competence, as well as their willingness to interact in the TL.

The descriptive findings from the first WTC questionnaire showed that participants were generally reluctant to interact in the TL in class. The findings from the first part of the questionnaire showed that participants perceived themselves as unwilling to engage in communication tasks in English. The findings from the second part of the questionnaire showed that participants lacked confidence to use English to communicate in class, evidenced by their high level of anxiety and low level of self-perceived communicative competence. In other words, participants experienced considerable anxiety when it came to communicating in English during class time; they reported, among others, feeling

worried about making mistakes, nervous about using the TL, afraid if they could not understand what the interlocutors said, and uncomfortable sharing their feelings and opinions. Regarding self-perceived communicative competence, participants, among others, did not perceive themselves competent enough to say and understand things in English, and did not seem to believe that class activities helped develop their fluency. The findings from the third part of the questionnaire showed that participants rarely used English in class, particularly, to ask or answer questions. Together, these findings show that Thai EFL learners had low WTC in English inside the language classroom.

The findings above are in line with other studies reporting low WTC in English among Thai EFL learners (Kamprasertwong, 2010; Mackenzie, 2002; Pattapong, 2010). The findings also generally confirm earlier anecdotal evidence and survey findings for typical Thai EFL learners' characteristics reflecting their low WTC; they are reluctant to use English (Bennui, 2008; not confident in their English speaking skills (Boonkit, 2010; Grubbs, Chaengploy, & Worawong, 2009; Tananuraksakul, 2011); unmotivated to participate in class activities in English (Maneekhao & Tepsuriwong, 2009); too shy to use English to interact with their classmates (Wiriyachitra, 2001); anxious about using English (Bunrueng, 2008; Tasee, 2009); and afraid of making mistakes (Learning English: Suan Dusit Poll as cited in Brown, 2006). Participants' low WTC in English in class (as self-reported in the first WTC questionnaire) was also reflected in their low participation in the class activities (which was observed by me during class time). Moreover, the findings from the first WTC questionnaire conform to empirical evidence that many EFL/ESL students, especially in Asian contexts, generally demonstrate low willingness to engage in oral activities in language lessons (e.g., Jung, 2011; Peng, 2007).

MacIntyre et al. (1998) point out the importance of relationships between individuals as a factor influencing WTC. Many studies (e.g., Cao, 2006; Kang, 2005; Y. J. Wang, 2011) also suggest that WTC can be enhanced through familiarity with interlocutors and tasks, teacher support, and sufficient opportunities to participate in class. However, the

participants in this study reported having low willingness to contribute to class activities, despite the fact that all the participants knew each other very well (as they were enrolled in the same courses for their major); that they were allowed to choose who they were going to work with; that they were very familiar with many communicative activities; and that these communicative activities have been shown to ensure active participation.

Participants' low class participation, despite their familiarity with the members of the group, appears to be in agreement with Dörnyei and Kormos (2000) who suggest that when learners feel comfortable in a certain social situation, they feel no social pressure to participate actively. Even when engaged in supposedly communicative activities, participants' low WTC may be attributed to their low motivation to learn the language. It should be noted that, in Thailand, English is a compulsory foreign language subject, so Thai EFL learners attend the class merely to pass the subject and to complete communicative tasks for class participation scores (rather than for improvement of their English performance), as anecdotally reported by Thai teachers of English. Accordingly, the participants in this study may not have felt particularly willing to use the language during class time, and thus would have been unlikely to become proficient English speakers − despite the fact that they study the language for many years. In addition, participants' insufficient English proficiency may lead to their low WTC in classroom situations. That is, when they did not know particular words or how to construct certain sentence structures, this difficulty would prevent them from expressing what they really wanted to say in English. Additionally, the lack of WTC in class is probably due to the face-to-face nature of classroom interaction. Interpreted from a cultural perspective, it is possible that participants did not want to use English in the presence of their peers in face-to-face classes because of their shyness, extroverted personality, and, especially, face concerns, which is always the case in Asian EFL contexts (Pattapong, 2010; Peng, 2007). Furthermore, participants' reluctance to interact in English in class may be due to physical characteristics of the classroom environment, such as a large class size and an atmosphere that may not make them feel comfortable enough to use the language. This

indicates that the class environment is unlikely to be conducive either to WTC or to opportunities for TL interaction among learners. A relaxing and safe learning environment to promote learners' willingness to interact in the TL is therefore necessary.

The findings of participants' WTC in English during class time contrast with those for their WTC in social media. By the end of the social media participation of both phases of the study, participants reported an increase in their willingness to interact in the TL while engaging is social media; feeling enthusiastic about talking to their friends, communicating their feelings, asking and answering questions, reading comments, and giving explanation. Participants also reported becoming confident to use English to communicate in social media, demonstrating a low level of anxiety and a high level of self-perceived communicative competence. In terms of anxiety, they were not afraid of making mistakes and were not nervous about using English. They also found communication during social media relaxing. For their self-perceived communicative competence, participants felt quite confident in their English ability and felt that social media helped them develop their TL fluency. In addition, the findings from the third part of the questionnaire indicated that they generally showed an increasing level of WTC as they more frequently produced TL output in social media. Taken together, these findings show that Thai EFL learners had high WTC in social media environment.

Many studies have reported the potential benefits of technologies for increasing learners' WTC, reducing their anxiety and inhibition to communicate in the TL, increasing their perceived competence, and encouraging TL output (e.g., Compton, 2004b; Freiermuth & Jarrell, 2006; Jarrell & Freiermuth, 2005; Kissau et al., 2010). The findings of this current study seem to confirm the usefulness of online interaction as activities for engendering learners' WTC.

Using a paired-samples t-test for questionnaire findings, I found the differences in participants' WTC questionnaire responses to be significant and with large effect sizes,

meaning participants were less anxious and felt more competent about their TL use in social media, and thus were more willing to interact in English than in class. This allows me to draw the conclusion that the participants in this study had a greater WTC in social media than in class. This is consistent with previous CALL studies which also reported that learners interacting online were more willing to communicate than those engaging in face-to-face interaction (e.g., Freiermuth, 1998; Freiermuth & Jarrell, 2006; Lloyd, 2012).

In this study, participants reported that they were unwilling to use English to talk to each other in the classroom. However, this was not the case in the social where participants appeared to use the TL to communicate for a variety of communication purposes, and an overall greater WTC was noted. One likely explanation for participants' changes in their WTC is that social media in general provide direct connection with various real-life communication situations (i.e. exchanging information) and meaningful tasks that require the use of the TL. In addition, the language commonly used by me and other participants is English. Participants may have seen the need to use the TL to communicate with each other, to take risks in guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words, and to read and comprehend other friends' discourse. Thus, participants were willing to communicate using the TL.

Much research has found that the affective variables (such as anxiety, low self-confidence, lack of motivation) experienced while communicating in the L2 are lowered in online environments (deHaan, 2005; Peterson, 2010). This was true in this study as the questionnaire findings indicated that participants generally felt less anxious about using the TL in social media, which MacIntyre et al. (2011) and MacIntyre and Charos (1996), for example, believe to lead to increased WTC.

In the current study, social media was found to play an important role in the reduction in anxiety about TL use. Perhaps participants experienced social media as comfortable, which could be resulted from a low language-related anxiety setting in which accuracy and complexity were not necessary to engage in the spontaneous interaction. In addition to the issue of anxiety, it is important to stress that the majority of the participants reported that they felt competent about their TL use in social media, despite their limited language proficiency. This is interesting, as in the short period (30 weeks) of time, participants would have been unlikely to improve their productive (and receptive) skills very much. Clearly, there may be certain aspects of social media that make participants feel they are achieving better. One likely explanation of this is the fact that social media allowed participants to communicate through language, and when they were able to understand each other, this could them a sense of success. Another explanation for participants' increased self-perceived communicative competence is the fact that while engaging in social media, the focus of communication was on the meanings, not on the language forms, and that interaction within social media encouraged spontaneous use of language. As a result, participants would have tried all they could to complete the communications tasks without paying attention to the accuracy of the language. In this circumstance, social media appeared to reduce participants' communication anxiety and, consequently, enhance their fluency. Because of the increased frequency and fluency of communication, participants may have felt that they were competent in their TL use. According to MacIntyre et al. (1998), learners who perceive their communicative abilities as high are likely to gain confidence in using the TL, and thus show a high level of WTC.

In conclusion, the findings of this study showed that Thai EFL university learners were not very willing to communicate in English inside the classroom. Nevertheless, they generally demonstrated higher willingness to do so as a result of participating in social media. The tool appears to allow language learners to engage in authentic TL interaction in a social environment underpinned by sociocultural principles, while at the same time developing WTC levels among themselves. From a WTC perspective, the findings of this

study indicate that social media may be effective tools for offering language learners opportunities to increase their perceived communicative competence while reducing their anxiety in ways that lead them to become more willing to use the opportunities provided to practise and use the TL. However, the effects of social media on WTC may differ considerably from learner to learner; some aspects of social media perceived by particular learners as beneficial for the development of their WTC may not have proved valuable for other learners who prefer other technologies or traditional class activities. A possible reason for the differences in the effects of social media on participants is their perceptions towards communicative experience in social media and towards the role social media play in WTC. This suggests that social media alone do not necessarily contribute to an increase in WTC.

## 5.3 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Although the study showed favourable conclusions, as a result of the fact that the research was classroom based in nature, there are some limitations that I would like to acknowledge. This section provides a critique of the research method employed and suggestions for how future studies could be improved

Firstly, the fact that my study involved only one group of participants limited my ability to learn about their level of WTC in a different setting and to confidently argue that the study findings are attributable (solely) to the participation in social media. There is a possibility, for example, that any changes in participants' WTC could also be observed in the case of participants non-social media contexts. Nevertheless, I tried to be very careful about making claims about the intervention effects by carefully examining participants' questionnaire responses. In my opinion, further research is definitely warranted if it uses true experimental study design to provide more empirical evidence, or if it measures participants' WTC in other settings to establish if social media has a lasting effect beyond the social media itself.

The measurement of WTC is another limitation to the quality of findings of this study. Importantly, the study used parametric statistical tests (i.e., Paired-Samples T-Test) for attitudinal data of WTC. However, I just realised later that non-parametric tests are appropriate inferential statistics for Likert Scale's ordinal data. I reran the analysis with Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed-Ranks Test (a non-parametric test used as an alternative to Paired-Samples T-Test) and found both tests yielded nearly identical results. I would argue that the parametric statistical hypothesis could be employed in my study because it did not increase the chance of erroneous conclusions. The claim that it is possible to analyse the Likert data, using parametric statistics, is well supported (see Norman, 2010).

In addition, participants' increased WTC levels can be viewed as their reactions to the novelty of using social media for language learning/use purposes. I tried to minimise the novelty effect by conducting my study with IT students (who are all fluent computer users and regular social media user). However, the fact that something new was integrated into the course, and that participants had never used English in social media may in itself have added a degree of excitement and may have affected their responses. Since Thai EFL learners have rarely been found very enthusiastic to communicate in English in their traditional class, I cannot help but feel that it is the excitement of using English in the social media that led to greater WTC to the participants of this study, and that the novelty effect may be visible in the findings.

Another possible limitation of my study is the fact that participants had very different proficiency levels. It is possible that students at different stages of development feel differently, either about communicating during class time, during social media, or both, which may affect the way they feel willing to interact. However, I feel that using an intact class helped increase the ecological validity of my study. The participants were part of an existing group and thus represent an actual and 'real' community of learners that teachers (at least in Thailand) would be likely to face. If, as a group, these learners feel more comfortable communicating in social media than in class, that is potentially useful

information for their teachers. Nonetheless, future studies could employ a more strictly empirical design and control for factors such as proficiency levels. In addition, further investigation is necessary to identify the impact of individual differences (such as motivation, attitude, gender, learning styles) on the use of social media, and to determine if there are certain (personality types of) learners for whom the use of social media is more suitable than others, or ways of ensuring that social media are used in a way that is more inclusive.

The fact that the researcher was also the teacher can be considered as another limitation. My interest in the potential role of social media for authentic TL use and motivational benefits may have impacted on the way I implemented social media into the lesson. However, it is worth pointing out that being teacher-researcher could help me develop a better understanding of participants and obtain some insider perspectives in ways that are difficult to achieve from being just a researcher. In addition, it is important to note that several attempts were made to guard against a negative impact as a result of my teacher-researcher role.

Finally, my study did not specifically investigate language acquisition in social media, thus preventing me from making claims about the role played by social media in SLA. Although this study has found that social media help to increase learners' WTC (which many scholars believe valuable for promoting SLA), this has yet to be investigated in my data. Although my current data allows me to do so, this was beyond the scope of my study and was not, as a result, examined. I hope that future studies will continue on from here and investigate other types of social media and their effects to other aspects of SLA such as fluency of TL interaction. Other aspects of communication (e.g., communicative competence, communication strategies, and certain linguistic features) and other learning scenarios which are deemed useful for language learning are also essential to investigate.

**5.4 Implications**

This study described the potential effects of social media on learner's willingness to interact in the TL. Overall, the findings of this study provide a number of implications for language teaching pedagogy.

The study has several implications for English language teaching. The most obvious implication is, perhaps, that social media can be adapted for use in real language learning and teaching situations. Thus, this encourages a move from an entertaining to a language educational use of social. However, it should be noted that it is not as simple as inserting a type of social media in the curriculum and hoping that it will increase learners' WTC or enhance certain aspects of language learning. For technologies like social media to work, teachers should plan carefully and have a clear objective of using social media in their teaching and understanding of the benefits of social media for language learning before starting the implementation. It is also crucial for teachers to have the ability to apply the technology, create materials and activities using that technology, and teach with the technology (Reinders, 2009). At a practical level, this implies the need for the specific training for teachers.

The study has shown that social media participation helped encourage greater WTC. The implications of these findings are therefore useful in providing a basis for improving the teaching of oral skills, in general, and in designing CALL materials/activities and learning environment, in particular. The findings presented in this study may motivate language teachers to improve their teaching approach by adopting social media to provide their learners with more TL interaction opportunities, while, at the same time, creating an environment conducive to their actual engagement that may also encourage their willingness to use the TL beyond the classroom context. If learning a language is learning to communicate, the primary aim of language learning and teaching should be to establish meaningful communication. This can be achieved by learner commitment, together with dedication, passion, and collaboration of curriculum designers, CALL material designers,

those involved in developing language learning and teaching policies, and, especially, of language teachers. Since there is the need for the use of technologies in language education, and there is the indication from this study that social media have a role to play in the language classroom, social media may serve as excellent activities and deserve a place in the curriculum.

What this study has, then, shown is that social media are able to make learners feel more confident, less anxious, and more competent, in ways that make them feel more willing to communicate in the TL. It appears that for the participants in this study, the environment offered by social media was conducive to encouraging WTC to a significantly greater degree than the classroom environment. Apparently, participants found the environment in the social media 'safe' enough to use the TL. They confirmed this in their questionnaire responses, which showed that they did not feel embarrassed or anxious about making mistakes when using English during social media participation. Participants also felt that engaging in social media and communicating in English went together and that they were therefore less conscious of themselves. At the curriculum and material design level, teachers should tap into these 'safe' benefits of social media to create activities, materials, and learning environments, in which learners feel more willing to communicate, and thus use more TL.

Furthermore, participants' responses on their WTC in English during class time indicated their low agreement with the statement that face-to-face class activities help develop their fluency. Despite the use of CLT approach to improve the quality of language teaching and learners' communicative competence in the Thai EFL setting, this findings may reflect the fact that the communicative activities provided have not been conducted effectively enough to enhance language fluency. When asked about social media, however, participants said that they thought social media participation did help develop fluency, despite no specific instructions. In contexts where English (and other languages) are taught as a foreign language, and where students have limited access to opportunities

for TL production, social media can possibly play a role. This may be particularly the case in situations where the teachers themselves are non-native speakers and less experienced in CLT (Tantayanusorn as cited in Mackenzie, 2002, p. 62) to implement this teaching approach optimally (Khamkhien, 2010).

Using social media for improving WTC is still a new area in language education particularly in Thailand, with a great deal of potential to facilitate many aspects of SLA. It is hoped that the findings reported here have made a modest contribution to this developing area, either by giving a better understanding of the effectiveness of social media for language learners or by escalating the on-going investigation in this area. The evidence provided in this study suggests that it is time to take the advantages of what social media can offer for language education and to use them meaningfully to help foster language acquisition.

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**Appendix A**

**Information Sheet and Consent Form**

<div align="center">**Information Sheet for Participants**</div>

**Project title:** Enhancing Learners' Willingness to Communicate in English with Social Media

**Introduction**

You are invited to consider participating in this research project that looks at the effects of social media on Thai English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in English.  This information sheet describes the purpose and nature of the study and your rights as a participant in the study.

**Explanation of the study**

I will be looking at your perceptions of communication taking place in a social media environment, which could suggest implications for your WTC in the target language (i.e. your readiness to use English to communicate when there is an opportunity to do so). As part of the study, you will first be given a pre-survey questionnaire and WTC questionnaire (Set1). Then, you will be asked to engage in one type of social media, Instragram, which will be used to give you opportunities to reflect on your learning experience and to motivate you to use the target language outside the classroom and, in turn, enhance you WTC in English. In this study, you will be required to take pictures during class time and share them with a one-sentence summary of your learning experience and to give responses to my and your friends' comments in English.

While engaging in social media, your participation will be observed and I would like your permission to use it for this research. When finishing the end of the course, you will be given a WTC questionnaire (Set2) to complete. Your responses to questionnaire will be analysed after the grades have been assigned.

The results of the study can provide some recommendations to language teachers as to whether or not they should use social media to promote willingness to interact in the target language. Since little research in this field has been done in Thailand, the results of the study are likely to inform the use of technology in EFL classrooms in Thai Higher Education.

**Confidentiality**

Pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity. All of the information collected will be confidential and will only be used for research purposes. This means that your identity will be anonymous; in other words, no one besides the researcher will know your name. Whenever the data from this study are presented or published, your name will not be revealed unless your permission is obtained. The data will be securely stored in a locked cabinet and on a password-protected computer, and only the researcher will have access to it.

**Your participation**

Participating in this study is strictly voluntary. Your participation or non-participation will in no way affect your grade. You may withdraw the participation at any time or decline to answer particular questionnaire without penalty, as well as without prejudice to your grade. Any questions about the project may be directed to me whose contact details are provided below:

Dr. Nuttakritta Chotipaktanasook
English Department
Faculty of Arts, 8th Floor, Building 5
Dhurakij Pundit University
110/1-4 Prachachuen Road, Laksi, Bangkok 10210, Thailand
Tel: 02-9549000 Ext 107
Email: nuttakritta.cho@dpu.ac.th

The decision to participate or not is yours. If you are happy to participate, please sign and return the attached consent form to me. Please retain this information sheet. Thank you for your consideration in this project.

Yours sincerely,
N. Chotipaktanasook

**Project title:** Enhancing Learners' Willingness to Communicate in English with Social Media

## Consent Form

I understand the aims and purposes of the research study undertaken by Dr. Nuttakritta Chotipaktanasook. The study has been explained to me and I understand the information that was given to me on the information sheet.

I understand that my involvement will include engaging in one type of social media, Instragram, and completing questionnaires.

I understand that all information will be treated in strictest confidence, that participants will remain anonymous and that no information will be given to other researchers or agencies without my consent. I understand that within these restrictions, the results of the study can be made available to me at my request and that I can request additional information at any time.

I understand that the study will be carried out as described in the information statement, a copy of which I have retained. I realise that whether or not I decide to participate is my decision and will not affect my grade
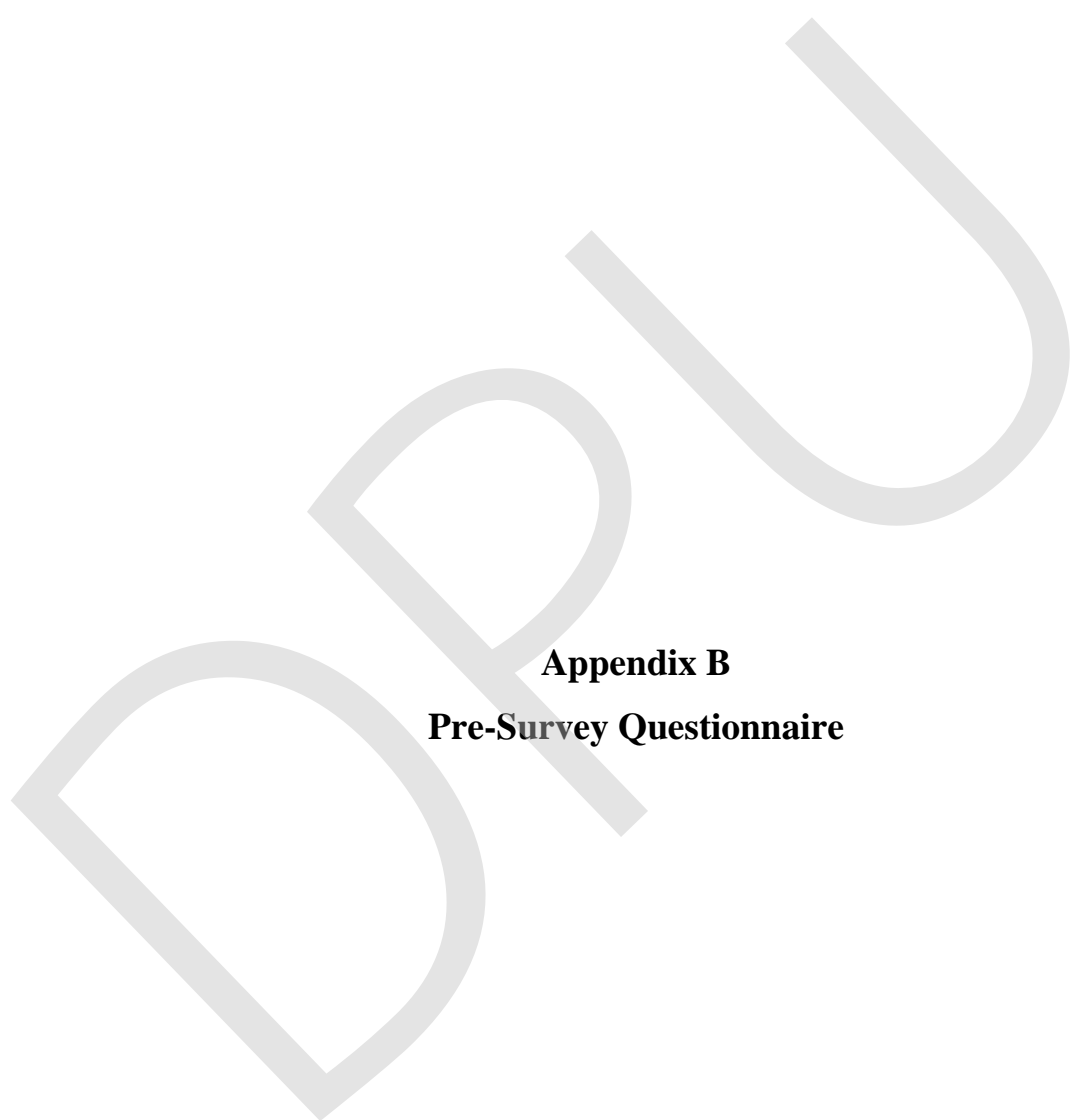
I am aware that I can withdraw from the study at any time and I do not have to give any reason for withdrawing. I have had all questions answered to my satisfaction.

I have read the information sheet and consent form. I agree to participate in the study.

Name:      _____

Signed:      _____

Date:      _____

**Appendix B**

**Pre-Survey Questionnaire**

# PRE-SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

This survey is designed to gather your demographic data and information regarding your language background, self-assessment of English communication, familiarity with social media, and your expectation of the development of English communication in social media environment. This is not a test so there are no right or wrong answers. Please answers truthfully to guarantee the success of this study. Although I ask for your name, I do so only because I want to associate your answers to this questionnaire with your other data. Your answers will be treated confidentially.

## SECTION 1

**Instructions:** Please provide the most appropriate answers to each question.

1. Name: _____
2. Age: _____ years old
3. What is your gender? ( ) Male ( ) Female
4. How long have you studied English (in years)? _____
5. Have you ever been in an English speaking country? ( ) Yes, Reason _____ ( ) No
6. In addition to in the English classroom, do you use English in your daily life?
   ( ) Yes       ( ) No (Go to Question 8)
7. How do you use English in your daily life? How often? (You can select more than 1 answer)

( ) Watching English movies _____    ( ) Listening to English music _____
( ) Online chatting in English _____    ( ) Writing email in English _____
( ) Reading English newspapers/magazines/books/articles _____
( ) Talking to foreigners _____      ( ) Other (Please specify) _____

8. How would you rate your English communication skills (i.e. abilities to share information with others and comprehend what others are saying)?
   ( ) Very Good     ( ) Good    ( ) Fair      ( ) Poor

## SECTION 2

**Instructions:** Please provide the answer that best describes your personal social media-related habits and experiences.

9. Have you ever used social media? ( ) Yes ( ) No (Go to Question 13)
10. How long have you been using social media (in years)? _____
11. On average how much time do you spend each day on social media (in hours)? __
12. Which social media do you normally use? (e.g. Facebook, Instragram, Blogs, Twitter, etc.) _____
13. Complete **ONE** of the following sentences:
    Using social media is **helpful** to learn English because _____

    _____

    Using social media is **NOT helpful** to learn English because _____

    _____

# PRE-SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

## SECTION 3

**Instructions:** The following items elicit your expectation of the development of English communication in social media. Please put a tick (√) in the box that best represents how much you agree or disagree with each statement. The numbers correspond to the following responses:

(1) Strongly disagree
(2) Disagree
(3) Neutral/No opinion
(4) Agree
(5) Strongly agree

| Statement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **14.** I think that some social media can increase the amount of communication in English. | | | | | |
| **15.** I think that some social media help me improve my writing. | | | | | |
| **16.** I think that some social media help me improve my reading. | | | | | |
| **17.** I think that communicating in a social media environment is less anxious than in the classroom. | | | | | |
| **18.** I think that some social media could be motivating for me to practice communicating in English. | | | | | |
| **19.** I think that some social media provide opportunities to interact in English with native speakers. | | | | | |

THIS IS THE END OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

**Appendix C**

**Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire Set 1**

# WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE QUESTIONNAIRE SET 1
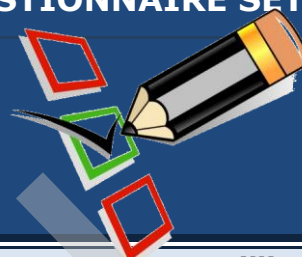


This questionnaire contains three sections for measuring your **willingness to communicate** in the target language (English) particularly **inside the language classroom**. It should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Please answer truthfully to guarantee the success of this study. Your answers will be treated confidentially and only the researcher will have access to the information you provide. Although I ask for your name, I do so only because I want to associate your answers to this questionnaire with your other data. Remember, you are telling the researcher about your communication in a classroom context. There are no right or wrong answers.

**Name**: _____ **Gender** ( ) Male ( ) Female

## SECTION 1: PERCEPTIONS OF WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE

**Instructions:** Below you will read a number of different communication tasks in which you might engage **in the language classroom**. I would like you to tell me how willing you would be to do each of these *in English*. By 'willing' I mean 'showing strong readiness' so please put an "X" in the box that describes the level of your willingness, using the following scales.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very unwilling | Somewhat unwilling | Neutral | Somewhat willing | Very willing |

| Communication Tasks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Talk to my friends in English. | | | | | |
| 2 Communicate ideas/feelings/opinions in English. | | | | | |
| 3 Ask and answer questions in English. | | | | | |
| 4 Read comments/feedback given in English. | | | | | |
| 5 Give explanations in English. | | | | | |

## SECTION 2: COMMUNICATIVE SELF-CONFIDENCE

**Instructions:** I am interested in your anxiety about communication and self-perceived communicative competence when communicating **in English in the classroom**. Put an "X" in the box that represents the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement, using the following scales:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral/No opinion | Agree | Strongly agree |

| Communication Tasks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 I am not afraid of making mistakes. | | | | | |
| 2 I find it difficult to communicate in English. | | | | | |
| 3 I am worried that I will not understand what my friends say in English. | | | | | |
| 4 I feel nervous about using English while | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | participating in class activities. | | | | | |
| **5** | I can say what I want to say in English. | | | | | |
| **6** | I think my friends cannot understand me because of my poor English. | | | | | |
| **7** | I feel comfortable sharing my ideas/feelings/ opinions with my friends in English. | | | | | |
| **8** | I know the words required for communicating in English. | | | | | |
| **9** | In general, I find communicating in English in classroom situations relaxing. | | | | | |
| **10** | I think participating in class activities help me develop my fluency (i.e. with little hesitation and pauses). | | | | | |

## SECTION 3: FREQUENCY OF ENGLISH USE

**Instructions:** I am interested in the frequency of communication **in English in the classroom**. Please put an "X" in the box that describes how often you use the target language, using the following scales:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |

| | Statements | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I use English to communicate with my friends. | | | | | |
| 2 | I use English to check meaning. (e.g. "What does it mean?" "I don't understand") | | | | | |
| 3 | I use English to ask questions. | | | | | |
| 4 | I use English for simple interactions. (e.g. How are you today?) | | | | | |
| 5 | I use English only when I participate in class activities. | | | | | |

THIS IS THE END OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

**Appendix D:**

**Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire Set 2**

# WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE QUESTIONNAIRE SET 2



This questionnaire contains three sections for measuring your **willingness to communicate** in the target language (English) particularly **during social media participation**. It should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Please answer truthfully to guarantee the success of this study. Your answers will be treated confidentially and only the researcher will have access to the information you provide. Although I ask for your name, I do so only because I want to associate your answers to this questionnaire with your other data. Remember, you are telling the researcher about your communication in a classroom context. There are no right or wrong answers.

**Name**: _____ **Gender** ( ) Male ( ) Female

## SECTION 1: PERCEPTIONS OF WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE

**Instructions:** Below you will read a number of different communication tasks in which you might engage **in social media**. I would like you to tell me how willing you would be to do each of these *in English*. By "willing" I mean "showing strong readiness" so please put an "X" in the box that describes the level of your willingness, using the following scales.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very unwilling | Somewhat unwilling | Neutral | Somewhat willing | Very willing |

| Communication Tasks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  Talk to my friends in English. | | | | | |
| 2  Communicate ideas/feelings/opinions in English. | | | | | |
| 3  Ask and answer questions in English. | | | | | |
| 4  Read comments/feedback given in English. | | | | | |
| 5  Give explanations in English. | | | | | |

## SECTION 2: COMMUNICATIVE SELF-CONFIDENCE

**Instructions:** I am interested in your anxiety about communication and self-perceived communicative competence when communicating **in English in social media**. Put an "X" in the box that represents the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement, using the following scales:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral/No opinion | Agree | Strongly agree |

| Communication Tasks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1**  I am not afraid of making mistakes. | | | | | |
| **2**  I find it difficult to communicate in English. | | | | | |
| **3**  I am worried that I will not understand what my friends say in English. | | | | | |
| **4**  I feel nervous about using English while | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | participating in social media. | | | | | |
| **5** | I can say what I want to say in English. | | | | | |
| **6** | I think my friends cannot understand me because of my poor English. | | | | | |
| **7** | I feel comfortable sharing my ideas/feelings/ opinions with my friends in English. | | | | | |
| **8** | I know the words required for communicating in English. | | | | | |
| **9** | In general, I find communicating in English in social media relaxing. | | | | | |
| **10** | I think participating in social media help me develop my fluency (i.e. with little hesitation and pauses). | | | | | |

## SECTION 3: FREQUENCY OF ENGLISH USE

**Instructions:** I am interested in the frequency of communication **in English in social media**. Please put an "X" in the box that describes how often you use the target language, using the following scales:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |

| Statements | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  I use English to communicate with my friends. | | | | | |
| 2  I use English to check meaning. (e.g. "What does it mean?" "I don't understand") | | | | | |
| 3  I use English to ask questions. | | | | | |
| 4  I use English for simple interactions. (e.g. How are you today?) | | | | | |
| 5  I use English only when I participate in social media. | | | | | |

THIS IS THE END OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION