

WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE IN A SECOND LANGUAGE

The Effects of Context, Norms, and Vitality

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Past research has focused primarily on second language (L2) acquisition as a tool for promoting intercultural communication. The social context model, for example, stresses the importance of contact, L2 confidence, and identity in acquiring a L2. The willingness to communicate (WTC) model, however, emerged from a concern with the functions of L2 use. This study combines these two models to consider both contextual and individual difference variables in L2 use. Participants were 130 Anglophone (majority) and 248 Francophone (minority) students attending a Canadian bilingual university. Path analyses supported a model in which context, individual, and social factors were all important determinants of L2 use, although patterns of relations differed depending on the ethnolinguistic vitality of the group. The importance of subjective norms was further confirmed as moderators of the relationship between L2 confidence and identity among Francophones. Results are discussed within the context of current models of intergroup communication.

Keywords: *willingness to communicate; language norms; language use; ethnic identity; intergroup contact; second-language confidence*

Second language (L2) use is one of the most effective avenues toward improving and promoting intercultural communication in a multicultural society (Clément, 1984; Gudykunst & Mody, 2002). Research has,

AUTHORS' NOTE: *This research was supported by a research grant from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, awarded to the first and third authors, and by a doctoral fellowship from the same agency to the second author. We would like to thank Antonietta Floccari for her assistance in data collection and recruitment of the participants, Leslie Donovan for her editorial assistance, and the anonymous reviewers for their very useful comments on a draft of the article. Correspondence concerning this article can be sent to Richard Clément, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON, Canada, K1N 6N5; e-mail: rclément@uottawa.ca.*

JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY,

Vol. 22 No. 2, June 2003 190-209

DOI: 10.1177/0261927X03252758

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however, focused primarily on L2 acquisition and less on actual L2 use (Clément & Kruidenier, 1983; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Giles, Garrett, & Coupland, 1989). The social context model (Clément, 1980), for example, emphasizes the importance of contact and linguistic L2 confidence in L2 acquisition. It does not, however, identify those variables implicated in L2 usage, which should be the ultimate goal of any language learner. The willingness to communicate (WTC) model proposed by MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1998) attempts to rectify this situation. It encompasses some of the variables concerned with L2 acquisition (i.e., L2 confidence), but focuses on WTC, the most immediate determinant of L2 use. This article describes an attempt to merge the WTC and contextual models in a study of the frequency of L2 use among Francophones and Anglophones sharing the same institutional milieu. Furthermore, normative influences, a contextual variable missing from the above models, are introduced here.

THE WTC MODEL

L2 research has taken psychological, educational, linguistic, and communicative approaches to explaining why some individuals seek, whereas others avoid, L2 communication (Brown, 1991; Skehan, 1989; Tucker, Hamayan, & Genesee, 1976). Although research pertaining to these approaches has been characteristically conducted independently of one another, the WTC construct offers an opportunity to integrate them. WTC was first introduced into the literature by McCroskey and Baer (1985) with reference to native language use. It is conceptualized as the probability of initiating conversation when given the choice to do so (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). MacIntyre et al. (1998) adapted WTC to the L2 situation in a model that is intended to explain individual and contextual influences in the choice to initiate L2 communication. The taxonomical model traces L2 usage through a number of layers of influence ranging from WTC (Layer 2) as the most immediate behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1988) preceding usage (MacIntyre, Babin, & Clément, 1999) to the social and individual context (Layer 6) as the most remote influence. Intermediate layers include situated antecedents such as communicative confidence (Layer 3), motivational propensities tied to the group and to the interlocutor (Layer 4), and the affective-cognitive context (Layer 5), which includes intergroup attitudes, communicative competence, and aspects of the social situation. The model does not, however, explicitly deal with situations in which status-based linguistic accommodation and other social pressures might create L2 use against the personal preference of the speaker.

Past research has shown that two of the strongest predictors of WTC are individual characteristics—communication anxiety and perceived communication competence (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre, Clément, Baker, & Conrod, 2001; McCroskey & Richmond, 1991)—and

these are the focus of the present research. Communication anxiety corresponds to the level of fear associated with actual or anticipated communication (McCroskey, 1977). Perceived communication competence is the belief that one can communicate effectively in a given situation (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990). Although actual competence might influence communication, it is the perception of competence that will ultimately determine the choice of whether to communicate. In the WTC model, these two variables are combined into the single construct of L2 confidence (Layer 3), borrowed from Clément (1980).

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT MODEL

Clément's (1980; Clément & Kruidenier, 1985) social context model does not deal with L2 usage, but describes the interrelations among interethnic contact, L2 confidence, L2 competence, and L2 identity. The model proposes that frequent and pleasant contact with the L2 group will ultimately lead to variations in L2 confidence. L2 confidence, composed of perceptions of communicative competence and low levels of L2 anxiety, is, in turn, associated with increased communication competence in the L2, increased identification with the L2 group, and increased psychological adaptation (Noels & Clément, 1996; Noels, Pon, & Clément, 1996).

Thus, both the WTC and the social context models present L2 confidence as a central construct. The presence of this common element raises the possibility that shared processes might underlie usage, competence, and identity. Figure 1, therefore, merges the two models, incorporating contextual and individual difference variables. Frequency and quality of L2 contact are at the onset of the model leading into L2 confidence (social context model). L2 confidence, in turn, predicts identification with the L2 group (social context model) and willingness to communicate (WTC model) in the L2, which is further influenced by the presence of subjective norms. The extent of L2 identification and WTC will ultimately determine actual L2 usage.

ETHNOLINGUISTIC VITALITY

As described above, no distinction due to status or vitality is hypothesized under the WTC model. Vitality theory and research (Harwood, Giles, & Bourhis, 1996), however, show important relations between the ethnolinguistic status of a group and language behavior. Groups characterized as having low vitality (from the point of view of their numbers), socioeconomic status, and institutional representations are hypothesized to be less likely to behave as a distinctive entity (Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977). When assessed as a subjective impression, ethnolinguistic vitality follows, more often than not, the same patterns

as more objective assessment (cf. Harwood et al., 1996, for review). Clément (1986) has shown the systematic correspondence between subjective and objective assessments of vitality on the same population as used here.

When examining the subjective vitality literature, it is evident that vitality bears a strong relation to cross-cultural communication (e.g., Bourhis, 1984), language attitudes (Genesee & Bourhis, 1988), language usage and bilingualism (Allard & Landry, 1994; Clément, 1980), and identity (Clément & Noels, 1992; Noels & Clément, 1996). The most salient finding of these studies is that the language of the highest vitality group is the one that predominates, whether from the point of view of interpersonal situations or in terms of collective language shifts.

Although recognizing the complexities of the relation between vitality and language outcomes, vitality research (Harwood et al., 1996) has been mostly concerned with absolute differences in language characteristics between groups of differing vitality. The issue of whether these groups would evidence different processes has received little empirical attention. On that specific question, however, Noels and Clément (1996) found that different processes linked L2 confidence and identities among Canadian Francophone and Anglophone students sharing the same campus. Specifically, the Francophone minority group showed an erosion of their first language (L1) identity with greater L2 confidence, whereas the Anglophone majority group did not. The present study did not examine L1 identity, but these results support the existence of different processes and this, with the relative absence of process-oriented research on vitality, buttresses the need for comparative analyses. Following the method used by Noels and Clément (1996), the model depicted in Figure 1 will, therefore, be applied to minority and majority groups and compared in view of assessing its generality via invariance analysis, with the possibility of customizing the final solution to the specific groups under study.

SUBJECTIVE SOCIAL NORMS

The hypothesis that groups with different vitalities might differ in terms of communication processes rests on the notion of the influence of a social context permeating interpersonal interactions. Whereas intergroup interactions might have important consequences for L2 usage, intragroup aspects have received relatively little attention. Landry and Allard (1992, 1994; Landry & Bourhis, 1997) have underlined repeatedly the importance of the individual's personal network of communication in orienting and defining ethnolinguistic vitality. Of importance here are the relations with members of one's own ingroup in counterbalancing the influence of contact with the outgroup. One

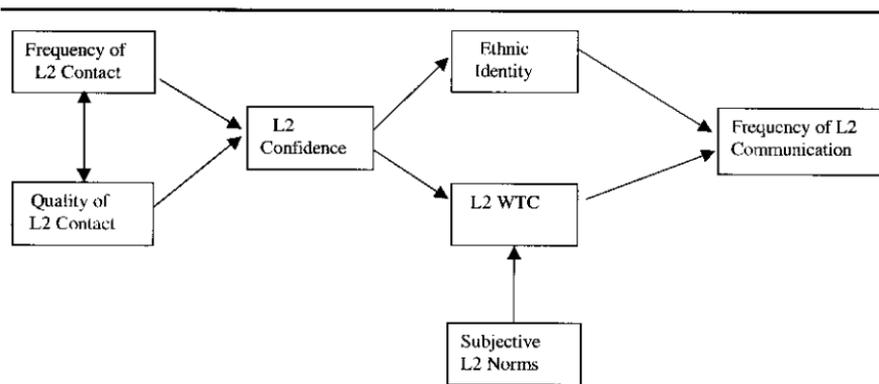


Figure 1. Proposed Model of Second Language (L2) Communication.

Note. WTC = willingness to communicate.

significant psychological substrate of the ingroup network is represented by social norms. These correspond to the belief that significant others want us to perform a particular behavior.

The influence of norms on behavior was introduced by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) in their theory of reasoned action. The theory argues that to predict behavioral outcomes, it is necessary to look at intentions to perform the behavior. According to Fishbein and Ajzen, attitudes toward the behavior and subjective norms have a direct influence on individual intentions to perform a particular behavior. Given that individuals are more likely to perform a behavior of which others approve (MacIntyre et al., 2001), the belief that significant others support engaging in L2 communication might be sufficiently motivating to do so. As illustrated in Figure 1, the intention to communicate in the L2 (WTC) would, therefore, be enhanced to the extent that one perceives normative pressure to communicate in the L2. As for the difference in normative pressure reported by the two groups, it would be expected that the minority group, because of its status, would exceed the majority group significantly.

In addition to their direct effects, subjective norms might have an indirect or moderating effect (Fiske & Taylor, 1991) on behavior. In the current context, it is proposed that norms favoring L2 usage moderate the relationship between L2 confidence and L2 identity. In their study of the same groups as those involved in this research, Clément and Noels (1992) noted that although minority group members showed greater identification with the majority group than did the majority with the minority group in private situations, this was not true in more public settings. This ran contrary to Edwards's (1985) contention that more private situations might protect minority group members from acculturative pressures relative to more public ones because they involve less possibility of contact with members of the majority group.

Clément and Noels (1992), however, interpreted their results as being due to qualitative aspects of the private-contact situation. Specifically, they proposed that the private situations might entail greater outgroup identification for the minority group members because those situations are less normatively controlled than the more public ones. Following attribution theory (e.g., Kelley, 1971), their usage of the L2 in those situations would therefore be self-attributed to personal dispositions and not to external normative pressures, as they would be in public situations. Given fewer opportunities to use the L2, the majority group would, however, not show the moderating effects of normative beliefs.

Applied to the context of the current study, the findings and conclusions described above suggest that the perception of norms favoring L2 use would moderate the relationship between L2 confidence and identity. Specifically, under high normative influence, there should be little relationship between L2 confidence and identity. Under low normative influence, however, the relationship should be positive. Furthermore, given our expectation that normative pressures should be stronger on the minority group than on the majority group, the moderating role of perceived norms should be more evident for the minority group than for the majority group.

THE PRESENT STUDY

This study was conducted with the participation of Francophone and Anglophone students attending the University of Ottawa, a bilingual (French/English) university located in Canada, a country in which successive governments have promoted for 30 years an ideology favoring bilingualism and multiculturalism. The city of Ottawa is the federal capitol of the country and represents in its institutions and culture the tradition of bilingualism that is supported by law and various governmental programs. The University of Ottawa's charter defines it as a bilingual institution with a special mission to support minority Francophones. It is, however, located in Ontario, a unilingual (English) province. According to Statistics Canada (1996), Francophones make up only 6% of the population of Ontario and 39% of the city of Ottawa. The university, as well, is composed primarily of Anglophone students, with only 34% Francophone students. In the midst of the provincial, national, and even North American pressures supporting the English language and the clear minority status afforded the Francophones, it nevertheless asserts the equality of both language groups and provides a setting for contact between their members.

In summary and within the above context, the first goal of the study is to merge the WTC and social context models into one model that encompasses contextual and linguistic influences on L2 communication.

The model will be tested for both the Anglophone (high ethnolinguistic vitality) and Francophone (low ethnolinguistic vitality) groups and the resulting solutions compared.

The second goal of the study is to examine the differences in L2 contact, normative pressures, L2 confidence, WTC, identity, and frequency of L2 use between the two groups. The Francophones are the minority group. It is, therefore, expected that, compared to Anglophones, they will have more contact with their L2 group; higher L2 WTC, L2 identity, L2 confidence, and frequency of L2 use; and report more normative pressure to use the L2.

The final goal of the study is to test the interaction between L2 confidence and L2 norms in predicting L2 identity. It is predicted that L2 norms will moderate the relationship between confidence and identity. Those high in L2 confidence and low in perceived normative pressure are expected to have the strongest identification with the L2 group, particularly if they belong to the minority group.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

The participants were 248 Francophone (65 males, 178 females, and 5 students who did not indicate their sex) and 130 Anglophone (42 males, 86 females, and 2 students who did not indicate their sex) students from the University of Ottawa. Of the 378 participants, 80% were 20 years of age or younger.

MATERIALS

The data for the present study were collected using a six-part questionnaire, which was presented in English to the Anglophone students and in French to the Francophone students. Following a consent form, students responded to items pertaining to the following scales:

Willingness to communicate. Twelve items from McCroskey and Baer (1985) assessed the average percentage of time that students would choose to communicate in their L2 (French $\alpha = .94$, English $\alpha = .94$) in a variety of situations—for example, “talk in a large meeting of friends.”

Situated ethnic identity. Identification was assessed with a 5-point scale, which followed each of 16 everyday situations following the approach proposed by Clément and Noels (1992). The scale assessed the extent of identification with the L2 group in each of these situations. The response scale was anchored at one end by *not at all Francophone* and at the other end by *very Francophone* for the Anglophone group and, for the Francophone group, by *not at all Anglophone* and *very Anglophone*, re-

spectively. The reliability of the scales was high for both groups (Anglophone L2 Identity, $\alpha = .94$; Francophone L2 Identity, $\alpha = .94$).

Frequency and quality of contact with the second language group. Six items (see Clément, 1986; Labrie & Clément, 1986) assessed on a 7-point Likert-type scale the frequency ($\alpha = .90$) and quality of contact ($\alpha = .92$) the participants experienced with members of the L2 group, including intimate relations, family, and school. Each frequency scale was followed by a scale assessing the quality of contact in each of the six situations.

Subjective L2 norms. The 12 WTC scale items were presented, and the participants were asked to indicate on a 9-point scale the degree to which they felt that communicating in the L2 was important to significant others in their lives. The anchors were *unlikely* and *likely*. The two groups were asked about either communicating in English (Francophone, $\alpha = .98$) or in French (Anglophone, $\alpha = .98$).

Frequency of L2 communication. Items from the WTC scale were adapted to measure the frequency of communicating in the L2 for each of the 12 situations, using a 7-point scale with the anchors *never* and *many times*. The reliabilities for both the Anglophones ($\alpha = .93$) and Francophones ($\alpha = .96$) were high.

L2 confidence. A measure of L2 confidence was computed by combining measures of L2 anxiety (reversed) and perceived L2 competence. The L2 anxiety scale included 12 items adapted from the WTC scale that assessed the average percentage of nervousness that students felt in communicating in the L2 (Anglophones, $\alpha = .96$; Francophones, $\alpha = .92$). The anchors were *nervous* and *relaxed*. The measure of perceived L2 competence was obtained through the use of the same 12 items, but it assessed the average percentage of time that the students felt competent using the L2 (Anglophones, $\alpha = .99$; Francophones, $\alpha = .92$). The anchors were *incompetent* and *competent*.

PROCEDURE

Students were recruited from introductory psychology classes at the University of Ottawa. Participation was voluntary and had no bearing on the course grade. Those who did not wish to participate were permitted to leave the classroom. Once participants consented, they were given the class period to complete the questionnaires.

RESULTS

Four sets of analyses were conducted on the data. The first analysis assessed the extent to which the proposed model fits the data for Anglophones and Francophones separately. The second analysis tested the invariance of the model across the two groups. The third analysis compared the amount of L2 contact, quality of contact, frequency of L2 communication, L2 WTC, L2 identity, L2 confidence, and subjective L2 norms that Anglophones and Francophones experienced. The final analysis tested for an interaction between L2 subjective norms and L2 confidence in predicting identity.

Table 1
Goodness of Fit Statistics Related to L2 Communication Models

Model	χ^2	<i>df</i>	CFI	GFI	RMSEA
Anglophone					
Initial	77.87	13	.88	.87	.20
Final	17.46	10	.99	.96	.07
Francophone					
Initial	141.15	13	.83	.87	.20
Final	23.09	10	.98	.98	.07
Invariance					
Initial	56.91	30	.98	.96	.05
Final	45.38	28	.99	.97	.04

Note. CFI = comparative fit index; GFI = goodness of fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

INITIAL TEST AND MODIFICATION OF THE PROPOSED MODEL OF L2 COMMUNICATION

The proposed model, tested separately for Anglophones and Francophones, was presented in Figure 1. To test this hypothetical model, separate path analyses were first performed separately on the Anglophone and Francophone samples using EQS 5.7b (Bentler, 1998). In addition to providing goodness of fit indices, this software provides parameters guiding the modification of the tested model until it achieves the best possible fit.¹ Specifically, the Lagrange Multiplier test reveals which paths should be added to the model, whereas the Wald test identifies paths to be deleted.

ANGLOPHONES

The proposed model did not initially produce an adequate goodness of fit to the data (see Table 1). Examination of the modification indices, which were obtained using the Lagrange Multiplier (LM) test, suggested that three paths, depicted by dotted lines in Figure 2, be added to improve the model.

The first path was from frequency of L2 contact to Francophone identity. Given that this path is consistent with previous research (Noels & Clément, 1996), it was added to the model. The second path was from subjective L2 norms to L2 confidence, and the third path was from L2 subjective norms to Francophone identity. Because both could be supported theoretically (see discussion below), they were added to the model. The addition of these paths reduced the chi-square value and significantly improved the model. No new paths were suggested. The Wald test for dropping parameters was then performed. The results suggested removing the nonsignificant path from L2 norms to L2 WTC. Results of the LM test then suggested the addition of a path

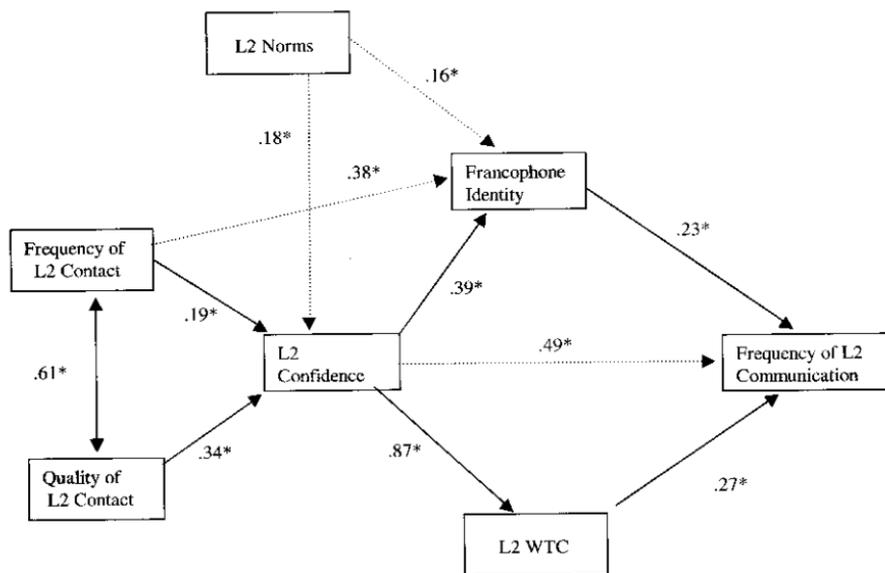


Figure 2. Proposed Model of Second Language (L2) Communication Among Anglophones.

Note. Paths added to the model are represented by dotted lines. L2 = French.

from L2 confidence to frequency of L2 communication. When the nonsignificant path was dropped and this new path added, there was a significant improvement to the fit of the model, $\Delta\chi^2_{(3)} = 60.41, p < 0.05$. The final solution suggested no further deletion or addition.

FRANCOPHONES

The proposed model did not initially produce an adequate fit to the data (Table 1). Examination of the modification indices, obtained using the Lagrange Multiplier (LM) test, recommended three paths be added, the first two of which were also added in the Anglophone solution. The first path (see Figure 3) was from frequency of L2 contact to Anglophone identity. The second path was from L2 subjective norms to Anglophone identity; and the third path was from quality of L2 contact to L2 WTC.

With these paths added, the chi-square value was reduced, and the model demonstrated a better fit to the data. The Wald test was then performed to verify any paths that should be dropped from the model. As with the Anglophone model, it was recommended that the nonsignificant path from subjective L2 norms to L2 WTC be removed. The subsequent LM test suggested a new path to be added from L2 confidence to frequency of L2 communication, as for the Anglophones. The addition of this path further reduced the chi-square and made an

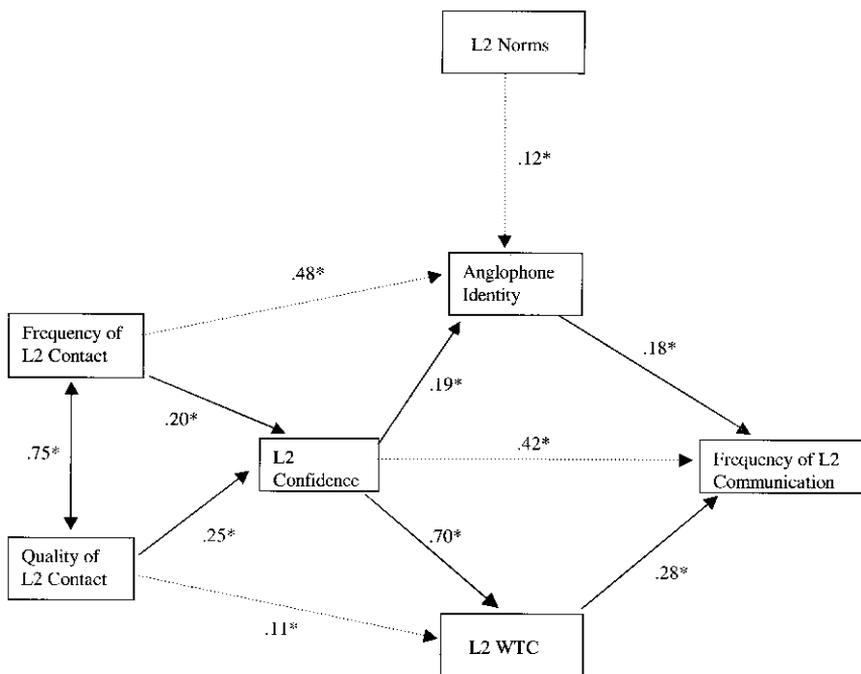


Figure 3. Proposed Model of Second Language (L2) Communication Among Francophones.

Note. Paths added to the model are represented by dotted lines. L2 = English.

improvement of the fit of the model to the data, $\Delta\chi^2_{(3)} = 118.06, p < .05$. No further modifications to the final model were suggested.

MULTIGROUP INVARIANCE

The test of multigroup invariance is meant to evaluate the extent to which the solution obtained for each group is comparable. Thus, still using EQS 5.7b (Bentler, 1998), this procedure was applied to the two final best-fitting models reported in Table 1. The 10 paths that were identical for both Anglophones and Francophones were constrained to be equal across both groups. The initial results are summarized in Table 1. The goodness of fit was acceptable. The LM test for releasing constraints, however, revealed that all but two constraints were equal across groups. The path between L2 confidence and identity and that between L2 confidence and WTC were noninvariant across the two groups. In both cases, the path coefficient for Francophones was significantly lower than the path coefficient for Anglophones. These two constraints were allowed to differ between the two models and the results are provided in Table 1 (final model). This test, therefore, reveals that

Table 2
 Summary Table of the Effects of Ethnolinguistic Vitality

	Anglophones		Francophones		<i>F</i> (1, 376)
	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	
Frequency	3.12	1.12	4.08	1.87	26.99**
Quality	3.57	2.40	4.60	2.07	18.76**
L2 Norms	42.03	2.84	49.45	2.06	4.47*
L2 C	100.82	4.41	153.40	3.19	93.2**
L2 WTC	52.39	2.46	76.04	1.78	60.48**
L2 ID	1.89	0.09	2.90	0.07	73.87**
L2 Frequency	44.12	2.28	65.62	1.65	58.42**

Note: Frequency = frequency of second language (L2) contact; Quality = quality of L2 contact; L2 C = L2 confidence; WTC = willingness to communicate; L2 ID = identification to the second language group; L2 Frequency = frequency of communication in the second language.

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.001$.

there are a number of similarities, but also substantive differences, between the models tested for these two groups.

DIRECT EFFECTS OF ETHNOLINGUISTIC VITALITY

A one-way MANOVA was performed to test for differences between Anglophones and Francophones on the variables included in the analysis. The factor was ethnic group (Anglophone vs. Francophone), and the dependent variables were frequency of L2 contact, quality of L2 contact, subjective L2 norms, frequency of L2 communication, L2 WTC, L2 identity, and L2 confidence. At the multivariate level, there was a significant effect of ethnic group, $F(7, 370) = 16.842$, $p < 0.001$. At the univariate level (Table 2), results show that Francophones indicated higher frequency and quality of L2 contact, L2 confidence, L2 identity, L2 norms, L2 WTC, and frequency of L2 communication than the Anglophones.

THE MODERATING ROLE OF L2 NORMS

To test for a moderating role of L2 norms in the relation between L2 confidence and L2 identity, a multiple regression was performed separately for the Anglophones and the Francophones. For this analysis, the criterion was L2 identity and the predictors were L2 confidence, L2 norms, and their product. As suggested by Aiken and West (1991), the scores for L2 confidence and L2 norms were centered to avoid problems of multicollinearity that might occur when interactions of independent variables are entered into the prediction equation. Among Anglophones, when all three variables are entered into the equation, the results

reveal a multiple correlation of .603; a significant regression equation, $F(3, 129) = 24.00, p < .001$; a significant coefficient for L2 confidence, $B = .575, p < .001$; a nonsignificant coefficient for L2 norms, $B = .074, p = .506$; and a nonsignificant coefficient for the L2 confidence by L2 norm interaction, $B = -.115, p = .509$, indicating the absence of a moderating effect for L2 norms among Anglophones. Among Francophones, when all three variables are entered into the equation, the results show a multiple correlation of .452; a significant regression equation, $F(3, 247) = 20.87, p < .001$; a significant coefficient for L2 confidence, $B = .750, p < .001$; a nonsignificant coefficient for L2 norms, $B = .256, p = .247$; but a significant coefficient for the L2 confidence by L2 norm interaction $B = -.649, p = .012$, indicating a moderating effect of L2 norms among Francophones. This significant interaction is depicted in Figure 4. For those reporting relatively high normative pressure to use English, Anglophone identification is virtually the same regardless of English L2 confidence levels. Under low normative pressure, however, those with high L2 confidence indicated higher identification with Anglophones than those with low L2 confidence. In fact, the extent of identification to Anglophones increases under low normative pressure among those with high L2 confidence but decreases in those with low L2 confidence.

DISCUSSION

The first goal of this research was to assess the validity of an integrated model derived from Clément's (1980) social context model of L2 competence and MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) WTC model. The final solutions obtained here were, in part, consistent with the proposed model of L2 communication. Frequency and quality of contact with the L2 group were intercorrelated, and both predicted L2 confidence. L2 confidence was related to WTC and identity, with both predicting frequency of L2 use. It can, therefore, be concluded that our attempt at merging the contextual model of L2 competence and the WTC model of L2 use was successful, indicating a common root to the two processes. Meaningful differences found between Anglophone and Francophone students, as well as between the proposed and final models of L2 use, however, suggest important elaborations of the initial theoretical conjecture. These differences are best explained by two important context variables. The first is the ethnolinguistic vitality of the groups, which determines the availability and nature of L2 group contact. The second is the bilingual context of the institution in which the two groups evolve, a context that governs the extent of volitional control participants have in choosing (or not choosing) to use the L2.

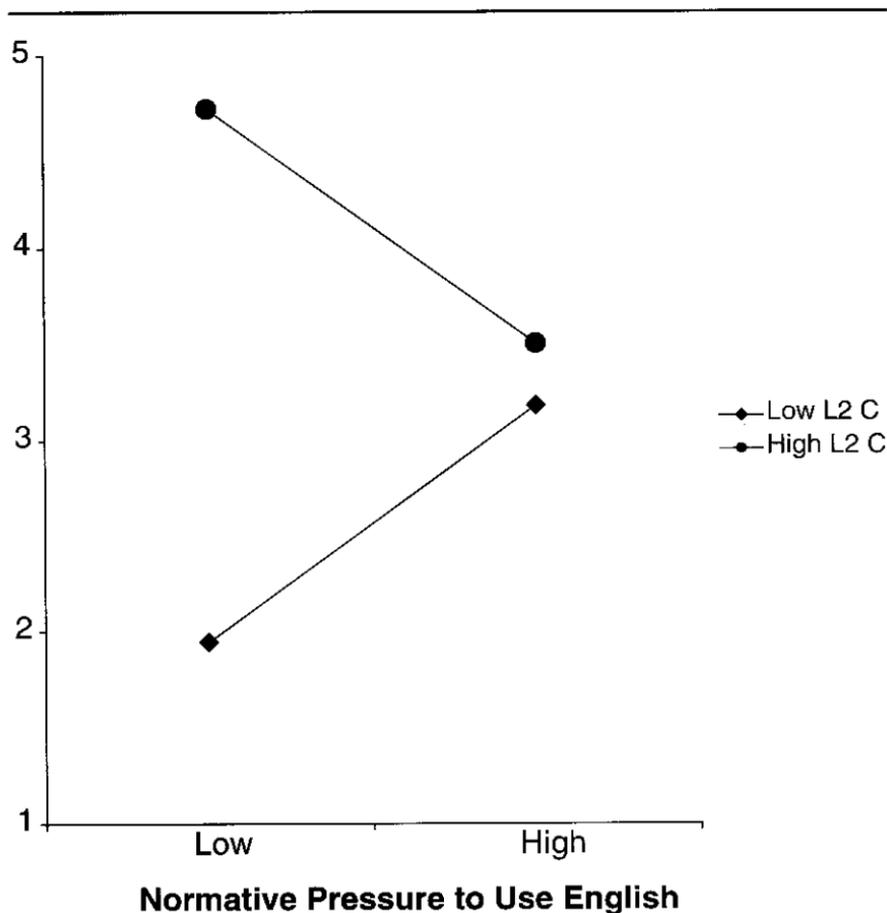


Figure 4. Mean Anglophone Identity as a Function of the Moderating Effects of Subjective Norms on Second Language (L2) Confidence.

Note. L2 C = L2 confidence in English.

THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNOLINGUISTIC VITALITY

The influence of ethnolinguistic vitality is first evident in the MANOVA results comparing Francophones and Anglophones on subjective norms, contact, L2 confidence, WTC, and identity. Francophones indicated a higher frequency and quality of L2 contact, L2 confidence, WTC, L2 subjective norms, and L2 identity than did Anglophones. Given that Francophone students represent the lower vitality group, it is reasonable to argue that the context provides them with greater opportunities for L2 group contact and more pressure to use the L2. The lower vitality group further can expect more occasions to use the L2, thus promoting L2 proficiency. The result is that Francophones experience higher L2 confidence. In fact, the high negative skewness ($-.461$) of Francophones' L2 confidence in using English

is suggestive of virtually effortless ability to speak English.² This native-like ease in speaking the L2, combined with frequent and pleasant contact as well as norms favoring the use of the L2, are natural precursors to the students' willingness to use English and their identification to the Anglophone group. In these respects, ethnolinguistic vitality can be seen to have a direct effect on social and communication aspects of interethnic communication that conforms to past results and theoretical expectations (Harwood et al., 1996).

In addition to mean differences, the effects of ethnolinguistic vitality are further seen in the significant variations obtained in the path solutions pertaining to the two groups. These, concerning antecedents and consequences of L2 confidence, can for the most part be attributed to the pronounced L2 confidence shown by the minority group. As a consequence of such confidence, language and communication aspects appear less important as mediators, a phenomenon previously noted by Noels and Clément (1996) concerning patterns obtained with a French minority group. In the present case, the diminished importance is shown for the minority group by a smaller path coefficient between L2 confidence and WTC than is the case for the majority and by a direct path from quality of contact to WTC exclusive to the minority group. As concerns identity and language usage, this suggests a postlinguistic stage of contact among minority members in which the issue of subjective competence and anxiety—the components of L2 confidence—no longer have the impact that they had on communication and identity, precisely because of the development of L2 confidence.

A similar explanation pertains to the effect of L2 confidence on identification with the L2 group. The test of invariance found that the relationship between L2 confidence and identity is significantly weaker among Francophone students. As was suggested, the Francophones' high level of L2 confidence is an indication that they speak English with little effort. As a result, their use of English might operate primarily to facilitate communication with Anglophones and not necessarily to implicate their identification with that group. Among the majority group members, who show less L2 confidence, communication skills are strongly linked to L2 identification.

Adding to the complexity of the relationship between identity and L2 confidence, the moderating effect of subjective norms created what appears to be a discounting effect (Kelley, 1971) among the Francophone minority. In attribution theory, this effect occurs when the presence of multiple, plausible causes for behavior mine the extent to which behavior can be attributed to any one cause in particular (cf. McClure, 1998; Morris & Larrick, 1995). Consistent with the hypothesis inspired from Clément and Noels (1992), the effect of L2 confidence on identity is most evident in the presence of low normative pressure. In that condition, high L2 confidence is associated with greater L2 identification than low L2 confidence. When there is greater normative

pressure to speak English, however, identification with the Anglophone group is not related to the level of L2 confidence. This suggests that when normative pressure to communicate is high, communication behavior is attributed to that external factor and does not impact the identity process to the same extent as when pressure is low and communication is under the individual's control.

Normative pressures are also implicated among Anglophones but not Francophones in directly determining L2 confidence. For Anglophones, having the support of significant others decreases anxiety and increases perceptions of competence. Frequency and quality of contact are shown to have the strongest impact on L2 confidence, but when there is little opportunity for contact with the L2 group, subjective norms, as support, would serve as an additional source of L2 confidence among high vitality group members.

The differential ethnolinguistic vitality of the groups considered here, therefore, entails processes that are appreciably different. Our results support the interpretation that the main points of impact of ethnolinguistic vitality are L2 confidence and perceived normative pressures. The interplay of these constructs is fundamental to the explanation of the functional divergences observed among minority and majority group members. The development of L2 confidence among the minority implies its lesser role as a mediator of the effects of contact on identity and communication. Furthermore, normative influences modulate the impact of perceived competence on identity, whereas that relation is direct in the case of the majority group. Taken together, these results suggest that, among minority group members, the role of anxiety-related processes might be more contextually determined than is the case for majority groups.

THE INFLUENCE OF VOLITIONAL CONTROL

Buttressing further the issue of normative influence, the more immediate context of an officially bilingual contact setting represents a second source of influence on L2 usage. Normative expectations of the institutions might influence the extent to which L2 usage is under volitional control. It will be remembered that WTC represents the decision to communicate when given the choice to do so. In everyday interactions, both in L1 and L2, often situations are encountered in which one is able but unwilling to communicate. Given that students participating in this study are attending a bilingual university where they repeatedly might not be given the choice of whether or not to communicate in the L2, WTC might not always be a factor in L2 use. The WTC model does not address such situations, but the social context model does. In the present data, the path from L2 confidence directly to L2 use in both groups suggests some independence between being willing and being able to communicate. In situations where one lacks volitional

control over the language of communication, L2 confidence appears to have a direct influence on L2 use.

Other discordant results might also be attributed to institutional norms. It was expected that, for both groups, normative pressures would increase WTC and ultimately L2 use. Unexpectedly, normative pressures only indirectly impacted L2 use through identity and not WTC among both Anglophones and Francophones. These findings are, however, consistent with those of Miller and Prentice (1996), who have argued that subjective norms directly impact self-esteem and identification. For both groups, the perception of normative pressure to speak in the L2 would make identification with the L2 group more likely and, as a consequence, entail seeking more active contact in the L2. At the same time, however, and only for the minority group, the interaction with L2 confidence suggests that high normative pressures would only promote identification for the less confident group. In an institutional context favoring bilingualism, norms, therefore, appear to be at once a global promoter of a L2 identification and a specific counterweight to low L2 confidence for the minority group members.

In conclusion, the present study demonstrates the possibility as well as the benefits of merging models of L2 acquisition and use. Taking into consideration both contextual and linguistic variables provides a more complete illustration of the complex processes underlying L2 communication. The discussion further emphasizes the importance of taking into account two aspects of the context in which L2 communication occurs. First, the ethnolinguistic vitality of the group determines the extent of opportunities for L2 contact, which has a direct impact on variables implicated in L2 use. When ethnolinguistic vitality is low, as is the case with the Francophones in our sample, the opportunity for L2 contact is far greater than when vitality is high. This impacts directly L2 confidence, which, as the pivotal aspect of the model, modulates the different processes found among minority and majority group members. This implies that other theories and models hinging on anxiety constructs (cf. Stephan, Stephan, & Gudykunst, 1999) could be usefully tested in interethnic interaction contexts involving minority and majority group members operating under institutional language norms.

Second, the context, considered at the institutional level, further brings with it the issue of volitional control. When the participants are not given the choice to use the L2, their communication behavior relies more heavily on their L2 confidence and pressures from significant others. Such findings suggest that, in the absence of volitional control, WTC might not be relevant to L2 use. The implementation of bilingual language policies in institutions should, therefore, heed the consequences of the imposition of communication norms. These might indeed thwart the operation of individual willingness to communicate and, eventually, the impact of the many factors shown to support it.

NOTES

1. Comprehensive information regarding goodness of fit statistics provided by EQS can be found in Byrne (1994) and Byrne and Campbell (1999).
2. The skewness of the Anglophones' L2 confidence was .240.

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