

Exploring the Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE) Model's Role on EFL Learners' Communication Willingness

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Research Paper

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Abstract: The Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE) strategy emphasizes the critical role of communication and responsiveness in establishing a cohesive classroom community. By promoting a horizontal plane of communication, where teachers and learners engage as equals, the model seeks to demonstrate active listening and foster a culture that values diverse thoughts and opinions. This study investigates the impact of the Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE) model on the willingness to communicate among intermediate EFL learners. Sixty learners (30 in each group) enrolled in EFL perpetration courses in Tabriz university, Iran participated in the study. They were chosen according to their availability and performance in proficiency tests, then allocated randomly to experimental and control groups. The control group underwent conventional teaching methods, where the class environment was teacher-centered, lacking the emphasis on active student engagement seen in the Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE) model. On the other hand, the experimental group engaged with the Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE) model. Both groups underwent a pretest, taking Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire, and after ten instructional sessions, a posttest was administered. The WTC questionnaire employed in the study was developed by MacIntyre et al. (2001) to assess the participants' willingness to communicate in classrooms. Analysis of pretest and posttest scores revealed that the Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE) model significantly enhanced the willingness to communicate among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The normality of pretest and posttest data was confirmed through Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, with all significance values exceeding 0.05, indicating normal distributions. This finding offers practical insights for educators, curriculum designers and contribute valuable information for researchers interested in language teaching strategies, materials, and syllabus design.

Keywords: Classroom Culture, Communication and Responsiveness, Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE) Model, Language Teaching Strategies, Materials

Introduction

The pervasive influence of English as an International Language (EIL) in today's interconnected global society highlights the need for pedagogical approaches that foster learners' willingness to communicate in English across diverse contexts. As globalization propels English to the forefront as a lingua franca transcending geographical barriers, this phenomenon necessitates a paradigmatic shift within English Language Teaching (ELT) to accommodate the evolving needs arising from this linguistic globalism (Mackay, 2005). The emergence of EIL has precipitated a re-evaluation of pedagogical norms entrenched in native speaker-centric models, underscoring the significance of non-native speaker (NNS) norms alongside traditional native speaker paradigms. Consequently, EIL prompts L2 educators to

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embrace more inclusive, communicative teaching methodologies that enhance learners' willingness to engage in English interactions.

In this vein, the present study investigates the impact of the Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE) model - an innovative student-centered approach - on enhancing Iranian EFL learners' willingness to communicate in English. In Iran, while strides have explored various EIL facets within education (Zarei & Dobakhti, 2023), a comprehensive examination addressing EIL's implications for communicative pedagogy remains limited (Zohrabi & Bimesl, 2022). By holistically examining factors like native/non-native norms, ownership of English, novel varieties, and L2 teacher identity through the EIL lens, this study aims to shed light on effective instructional models, like FLE, for fostering EFL learners' willingness to communicate as pluralistic, competent English users.

Therefore, this research aims to address the gap in understanding by focusing on the willingness to communicate (WTC) of Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. It seeks to explore how the Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE) model impacts intermediate EFL learners' communication willingness. By adopting a comprehensive approach, the study aims to uncover the implications of WTC for pedagogy, language learning, and cultural inclusivity in the Iranian EFL context.

In this study, our primary focus is on the Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE) model and its impact on intermediate EFL learners' willingness to communicate (WTC). By investigating the components and outcomes of FLE in language learning contexts, we aim to provide insights into its effectiveness and potential for modifying learners' perceptions. Through targeted professional development interventions, we seek to contribute to the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) by offering practical recommendations and actionable implications for enhancing EFL pedagogy. Our study aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice by addressing the role of FLE in fostering linguistic diversity, intercultural communication, and effective language education. To fulfil our objectives, the present research tried to find answers to the following research question:

Research Question One: Does Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE) model have any significant effect on intermediate EFL learners' willingness to communicate?

Review of the Related Literature

Classroom discourse, extensively explored by researchers and scholars (Walsh, 2011; Strobel Berger, 2012; Lloyd et al., 2016), involves both linguistic and non-linguistic components, encompassing all forms of verbal exchanges within the educational environment (Tsui, 2008). Its significance was underscored by Behnam and Pouriran (2009), highlighting researchers' and language teachers' focus on comprehending its influence on language acquisition. Described as the oral application of language within the classroom (Behnam & Pouriran, 2009), Classroom Discourse represents the interaction between educators and learners (Jocuns, 2012), profoundly shaping learners' linguistic development. Derakhshan et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of classroom discourse in allowing students and teachers to collaboratively build understandings and interpretations during live interactions. Moreover, Jahedi and Ismail (2020) noted that classroom discourse plays a role in shaping how students perceive and develop their social identities within the context of the classroom environment.

Differentiating from discourse in other contexts, Classroom Discourse is shaped by the social roles of teachers and learners (Behnam & Pouriran, 2009). Crucial elements within Classroom Discourse, such as interaction inside the classroom, the FLE model, the Initiating-Response-Feedback (IRF) model, and Teacher talk time, hold significant importance (Rim & Zineb, 2020). In traditional classrooms, teachers exert dominance, control topics, and decide turn allocation, leading to authoritative discourse, marked by closed questions and predetermined decisions (Skidmore, 2000). Conversely, nontraditional classes witness increased student participation, self-selection, and topic expansion, mitigating teacher dominance (Khalili, et al., 2024; Skidmore, 2000; Rezaie & Lashkarian, 2015). The distinction between traditional 'authoritative discourse' and nontraditional 'internally persuasive discourse' underscores the evolving nature of Classroom Discourse (Bakhtin, 1981, as cited in Skidmore, 2000).

Classroom interaction, pivotal for language learning, occurs between teachers and learners or among learners, fostering understanding and enhancing speaking skills (Farrokhi, et al., 2023; Hall & Walsh, 2002). Havik and Westergård (2020) stressed the importance of classroom discourse, as it provides crucial information and input for learning, allows students to practice actively using the language, and promotes an open and participatory learning process. Rezaee and Farahian (2012) highlighted its role in enabling students to express their thoughts and viewpoints, promoting cooperative learning. According to Goronga (2013), classroom interaction serves as an active method to involve students in the teaching and learning process. Additionally, Sert (2015) defined classroom talk and interaction as socio-interactive practices that aid in co-constructing understanding and knowledge through language-based interactions.

In the realm of classroom interaction, two main forms exist: Student-Student Interaction and Teacher-Student Interaction. Student-student interaction entails the sharing of notes, ideas, and mutual acknowledgment among students, fostering active skill development and collective knowledge acquisition (Mackey, 2005). It reinforces learning as students discuss content with peers, facilitating understanding and meaning negotiation (Paula, 2002, cited in Bicha 2016). Teacher-student interaction, on the other hand, happens as the teacher interacts with one or multiple students, discussing content, posing queries, providing guidance, and offering corrections or explanations during student discussions. This engagement helps students understand the information given to them, comprehend their responsibilities in the classroom, and build relationships with the teacher (Hall & Walsh, 2002). Teachers, by questioning, explaining, negotiating meaning, or providing feedback, utilize models such as FLE or IRF (Rem & Zineb, 2020).

Initiation-Response-Feedback model, (IRF) denoting the sequence in Classroom Discourse, was introduced by Sinclair & Coulthard (1975). The framework suggests that the function of IRF sequences is to manage the class and hold students' attention (Noviana & Ardi, 2015)

Criticism arose regarding this traditional IRF/IRE pattern for its failure to encourage interaction, primarily because the teacher dominates the initiation and feedback, leaving students with only the response move. Rather than promoting interactive discourse among students, this pattern frequently results in teachers adopting a traditional approach referred to as the Initiate Response-Evaluate model (Gonzalg, 2008; Moss & Brookhart, 2009).

To promote greater learner interaction and reduce teacher dominance in the class, Lloyd et al. (2016) suggested the Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE) model as a substitute for the conventional Initiate-Respond-Evaluate (IRE) pattern. Unlike the IRE model, the FLE model prioritizes students, creating a student-centered environment that positions the teacher as a facilitator, fostering horizontal communication (Lloyd et al., 2016; Rim & Zineb, 2020). The FLE model promotes reciprocal information exchange, enabling students to actively participate in the process of teaching and learning (Rim & Zineb, 2020). The proposed FLE model aligns with the idea of creating a sense of community within the classroom through discourse (Haney et al., 2011; Meltzoff, 1994). It emphasizes the importance of bidirectional communication and mutual enterprises, encouraging students to become equal and active agents in the learning process (Bennett-Conroy, 2012; Haney et al., 2011; Meltzoff, 1994; Dobakhti, et al., 2023a). The model aims to establish horizontal communication, fostering an environment where teacher and students engage in a reciprocal exchange of information, valuing each other's voices (Meltzoff, 1994; Lloyd et al., 2016).

In this context, Redding's (2014) Personal Competency Framework, emphasizing metacognitive competency and self-regulation, complements the FLE model, contributing to students' growth as learners. In the FLE model, the Facilitate stage serves as the initial phase, wherein the teacher transitions into a community builder responsible for devising strategies to encourage student discourse and establish a sense of equality within the classroom (Lloyd et al., 2016). The subsequent Listen phase involves active listening by both teacher and students, fostering respect and formative assessment opportunities (Cazden & Beck, 2003). The Engage phase, occurring concurrently with listening, allows students to demonstrate thinking through dialogue, promoting authentic tasks and communication skills needed for global citizenship (Moss & Brookhart, 2009; Dobakhti, et al., 2022; Richardson & St. Pierre,

2005; Lloyd et al., 2016). The FLE model, presented as a cyclical and recursive process, encourages teachers to move away from the traditional IRE model and adopt a progressive approach to classroom discourse (Rim & Zineb, 2020).

In the area of second language acquisition, the significance of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) is substantial, as language learners often aim for proficiency to communicate effectively (Brown, 2001). Communicative language teaching (CLT), focusing on authenticity and real-life scenarios, highlights the necessity of interaction among students, teachers, and peers (Brown, 2001). Successful implementation of CLT hinges upon students' motivation and their readiness to initiate interaction (Heng, 2014).

Several researchers contend that cultivating Willingness to Communicate (WTC) stands as a primary aim in second language instruction due to its significance in facilitating effective interaction and language expression (McIntyre et al., 2003; McCroskey & Richmond, 1990). WTC, described as an individual's inclination to start conversations and actively participate in communication, plays a crucial role in promoting and instigating effective language interaction (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990).

Class size is recognized as a factor influencing WTC, with smaller classes associated with increased academic benefits, student morale, and satisfaction (Glass & Smith, 1980). While some advocate for the advantages of smaller classes, others argue that larger classrooms can promote communication and interaction through peer-teaching and group tasks (Hess, 2001). However, the challenge remains in creating an ideal environment for negotiation through interaction, where smaller classes may enhance student interaction (Khazaei et al., 2012).

MacIntyre et al. (1998) constructed an extensive framework for WTC, incorporating multiple facets to forecast, portray, and elucidate students' willingness to communicate in a second language. This model perceives WTC as the probability of participating in communication when the occasion arises, acknowledging enduring and transient situational impacts. Additionally, their pyramid model delineating the twelve factors impacting WTC in second language communication highlights the intricate character of this concept (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

The investigation of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in second language acquisition (SLA) is extensively addressed in academic literature. MacIntyre et al. (1998) suggested that a primary objective within second language pedagogy involves nurturing WTC among learners, encouraging a proactive desire to pursue opportunities for communication. Class size emerges as a crucial factor influencing WTC, with smaller classes being associated with improved academic performance, higher student morale, and overall satisfaction (Glass & Smith, 1980). While smaller class settings show advantages, contrary views, such as those presented by Hess (2001), suggest that larger classrooms might encourage increased communication and interaction through peer-teaching. The success of negotiation through interaction in classrooms heavily depends on the actual speaking time of students, a factor that might be more achievable in smaller class settings (Wells & Chang-Well, 1992).

McCroskey and Richmond (1990) introduced the concept of WTC in first language communication, framing it as a personality trait linked to an individual's readiness to engage in conversation. MacIntyre et al. (1998) expanded this concept, creating a comprehensive WTC model integrating various dimensions like social, psychological, linguistic, educational, and communicative aspects. Their definition of WTC is the likelihood of engaging in communication when the opportunity arises, representing a state of preparedness in specific contexts (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Moreover, their pyramid model, outlined in the same study, elucidates twelve variables influencing WTC in second language communication, categorized as either situational or enduring factors (Zohrabi & Jafari, 2020).

The complexity of WTC in second language contexts, as highlighted by MacIntyre et al. (1998), is influenced by proficiency levels and various situational contextual factors, as proposed by Kang (2005). Hu and Wang (2023) viewed willingness to communicate (WTC) as encompassing both situational factors and more lasting individual characteristics. They built upon and expanded previous models aimed at understanding people's willingness to communicate in their native languages. The pyramid model proposed by MacIntyre et al. (1998) outlines the situational and enduring variables that

influence WTC, highlighting the interplay between contextual elements, motivational factors, and personality traits. WTC originated from unwillingness to communicate as a personality trait (Burgoon, 1976) and evolved into a trait-like predisposition (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990). Perceived communicative competence and communication apprehension emerge as primary factors that predict WTC (McIntyre et al., 2001; Baker & McIntyre, 2000). Different models, such as the pyramid model, capture the dynamic nature of WTC, influenced by various factors affecting the probability of choosing to communicate (Azmand & Zamanian, 2014).

Methodology

Participants

The participant selection process was conducted meticulously to ensure a diverse and representative sample to reflect the population of intermediate EFL learners. Initially, a broad population of 200 learners enrolled in EFL preparational courses in the University of Tabriz was identified. Through a stringent randomized sampling formula, some 90 participants (44 males and 46 females) aged between 19 to 30 were selected for further evaluation.

These 90 individuals underwent an extensive assessment process involving two crucial instruments: the Nelson English Proficiency Test (Nelson 400 A) and a customized version of the Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire. The proficiency test, adapted from Fowler and Coe (1976) adapted from Cao and Philp (2006), encompassed a comprehensive range of grammar and vocabulary-based multiple-choice questions, providing a holistic evaluation of the participants' language competencies. Simultaneously, the questionnaire, adapted from MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Conrod (2001), meticulously assessed the participants' willingness to engage in English communication across various classroom contexts.

Following the initial assessment, 60 participants were selected for the study based on their scores, specifically targeting individuals whose scores ranged within one standard deviation above and below the mean. This selection approach aimed to ensure a well-rounded representation encompassing various proficiency levels and communication tendencies, while also maintaining an equitable gender distribution, consisting of 26 male and 34 female participants. Subsequently, the final cohort was evenly divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group, providing a foundation for conducting a comparative study.

Instruments

Nelson English Proficiency Test

The Nelson 400 A test, utilized in this research, comprises a series of 50 multiple-choice items meticulously designed to assess participants' language skills necessary for effective communication in an English-speaking environment. With 25 questions dedicated to testing grammatical understanding and another 25 focusing on vocabulary comprehension, this test provided a comprehensive evaluation of the participants' linguistic proficiency. Its adaptation from Fowler and Coe's seminal work (1976) ensured the validity and the reliability of the assessment tool.

Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire

The tailored questionnaire, adapted from MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Conrod's research (2001), delved into the intricate facets of participants' inclinations towards engaging in English communication within classroom settings. Comprising 27 items across speaking, reading, writing, and listening domains, this instrument employed a nuanced 5-point Likert scale to capture participants' degrees of willingness to communicate. Through this comprehensive questionnaire, a deep understanding of the

participants' comfort levels and propensities to actively engage in English discussions and activities within the classroom was attained.

Willingness to Communicate Observation Sheet

In addition to the Nelson English Proficiency Test and the Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire, the study employed a WTC Observation Sheet to systematically capture participants' actual behaviors related to willingness to communicate within classroom contexts. This observational tool facilitated the detailed recording of participants' verbal and non-verbal communication, and engagement levels (number of the times they were engaged with the materials or discussions) during classroom activities.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was designed and executed across multiple phases to ensure methodological rigor, reliability, and validity of the findings.

Initial Assessment Phase

This phase involved the administration of the Nelson English Proficiency Test and the adapted Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire to the initial cohort of 90 participants. This phase aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the participants' language proficiency levels and their inclination towards English communication within classroom contexts.

Participant Selection Criteria

Following the post-assessment, 60 participants exhibiting scores within one standard deviation above and below the mean were chosen for the subsequent stages of the study. This criterion was implemented to encompass individuals across various proficiency levels and communication inclinations, thereby promoting a comprehensive representation within the study's sample.

Experimental and Control Group Formation

The group of 60 participants was evenly split into two distinct segments: an experimental group and a control group, with each group consisting of 30 participants. This strategic division facilitated a comparative study between the effects of the experimental intervention (FLE model) and traditional teaching methods on participants' willingness to communicate.

Observation Sessions and Intervention Implementation

The study's experimental phase involved a month-long intervention period for the experimental group, during which the Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE) model was strictly implemented. This model emphasized active participation, discourse-building, and community engagement within the classroom setting. Active participation entailed various student-centered activities such as group discussions, role-plays, and collaborative projects, where students took on active roles in generating ideas, sharing perspectives, and interacting with peers. Meanwhile, the control group continued with conventional teaching methods, serving as a comparative baseline.

Observation Data Collection

The study involved meticulous observations conducted using the WTC Observation Sheet, which systematically captured participants' actual behaviors related to willingness to communicate within classroom contexts. This observational data served as a crucial source of information to measure and compare the effectiveness of the interventions.

Comparative Analysis and Post-Intervention Assessment

After the intervention phase, a post-observation session was conducted to observe and analyze the behavioral patterns, engagement levels, and communication tendencies displayed by the participants in both the experimental and control groups. The primary objective of this comparative analysis was to identify noticeable differences and effects brought about by the implementation of the FLE model intervention.

Data Analysis

The data underwent a comprehensive and multi-layered analysis, encompassing quantitative methodologies to derive conclusive findings (Dobakhti, 2020). The collected data, including proficiency test scores, questionnaire responses, and observational data, underwent rigorous statistical analysis using tools such as Kolmogorov–Smirnov tests to ascertain the normality of the data distribution. Inferential statistical methods like independent sample t-test and chi-square analyses were employed to gauge the significance and impact of employing the FLE model on participants' willingness to communicate.

Results**Restatement of the Research Question**

The effect of Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE) model on the students' willingness to communicate as well as the question of how much it contributes to the prediction of learners' willingness to communicate becomes pertinent. The study aimed to address the following question:

RQ: Does Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE) model have any significant effect on intermediate EFL learners' willingness to communicate?

Results of the Normality Test

Determining the normality of data holds significance for numerous statistical tests as these tests often rely on the assumption of data being normally distributed for accurate parametric analysis. Therefore, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test were utilized in this study to assess the normality of the data.

To begin with, the normality tests for the Nelson Proficiency Test showed Kolmogorov-Smirnova $p=0.200$ and Shapiro-Wilk $p=0.055$, both greater than 0.05, indicating a normal distribution of the data. The same normality test was conducted on data from the Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire and the Willingness to Communicate Observation Sheet, and the results are illustrated in the following tables.

Table 1*Results of Normality Test for Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire*

Tests	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Willingness-Post	.072	90	.200	.984	90	.343

Table 1 shows that the value of Kolmogorov-Smirnova for willingness to communicate is $p=0.200$ which is greater than 0.05. The result of Shapiro-Wilk test for willingness to communicate also indicates that the significant value ($p=0.343$) is greater than 0.05. It can therefore be concluded that the data collected from willingness to communicate was distributed normally.

Table 2*Results of Normality Test for Willingness to Communicate Observation Sheet*

Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a		Shapiro-Wilk			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Pretest	Experimental	.070	30	.062	.962	30	.321
	Control	.082	30	.112	.843	30	.275
	Total	.063	60	.080	.991	60	.455
Posttest	Experimental	.047	30	.099	.809	30	.113
	Control	.096	30	.095	.899	30	.387
	Total	.049	60	.082	.958	60	.320

Table 2, Normality of the pretest and posttest data was also tested using Kolmogorov- Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. As it can be observed in Table 3, the results of both Kolmogorov- Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests indicate that the total values in the pretest are $p=.080$ and $.455$, respectively. The result also shows that the total values in the posttest are $p=.082$ and $.320$, respectively. As it can be seen, all significance values in both pretest and posttest are greater than 0.05. Since Significance values in both normality tests far exceeded the predefined 0.05, it can be concluded that the data obtained from both tests have normal distributions.

Results of Descriptive Statistics

The 90 people who took the Nelson test also filled the Willingness to communicate Questionnaire test, the descriptive statistics of which are given in Table 3.

Table 3*Descriptive Statistics of Students Performance on Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire*

Groups	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Willingness-Post	90	3.03	.621	1.74	4.33

Ninety students participated in the Nelson Proficiency Test, with sixty individuals scoring within one standard deviation of the mean score, ranging from 31 to 41 (mean = 36.24, Std. Dev = 4.854). The descriptive statistics reveal that both the experimental and control groups had similar performance levels, with mean scores of 35.60 (SD = 3.08) and 35.20 (SD = 2.78), respectively. The scores for both groups ranged from 30 to 40.

From the total of 90 participants, 60 were selected for the study based on their scores falling within the range of 31 to 41, considering one standard deviation above and below the mean. Thirty participants were excluded from the data analysis as their scores fell below 31 or above 41. Also, an independent samples t-test was run to compare groups in terms of homogeneity. The result is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4*Independent Samples t-test for Equality of Means in Willingness to Communicate Observation Sheet*

			Mean	Std.	Error 95%	Confidence	Interval	of	the
			Difference	Difference	Difference	Lower	Upper		
T	df	Sig.							
Pretest	-.553	58	.582	-2.16667	3.91880	-10.01099	5.67766		

As shown in Table 4, an independent samples t-test was conducted to assess the equality of means in the Willingness to Communicate Observation Sheets from both groups. The results indicated a mean difference of -0.553 ($t(58) = -0.553, \alpha = .05, p = .582$), suggesting no significant difference between the control and experimental groups in terms of language proficiency before the treatment sessions.

Analysis Related to the Research Question

Results of Willingness to Communicate Observation Sheet

The research question investigated whether Facilitate- Listen- Engage (FLE) model has any significant effects on Iranian intermediate EFL Learners' Willingness to Communicate. The descriptive statistics of participants' performance on Willingness to communicate Sheet at the beginning of the study was taken from students in both control and experimental groups. The results of the pretest scores are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of Students' Performance on Willingness to Communicate Observation Sheet pre-test

Willingness to communicate	N	Control		Experimental		
		Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Pre-test	30	41.23	12.563	30	43.40	17.403

Exploring Research Question

To investigate whether the Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE) model has a notable impact on the willingness to communicate among Iranian intermediate EFL learners, an analysis was conducted. This involved comparing the means of pre-test and post-test scores within both the control and experimental groups using a paired samples t-test. The findings of this analysis are outlined in Table 6.

Table 6

Results of Paired Sample t- test for Experimental and Control Groups on Willingness to Communicate Observation Sheet

95% Confidence Interval of the Difference							
Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig
Experimental	-16.133	6.067	-18.398	-13.867	-14.565	29	.000
Control	-7.233	4.825	-9.035	-5.431	-8.210	29	.000

The findings revealed a substantial variance between the experimental group participants in their performance on the pre-test and post-test ($t(29) = -14.565, p < 0.05$). Similarly, a notable difference was observed among the control group participants ($t(29) = -8.210, p < 0.05$). Consequently, the hypothesis of mean equality in both pretest and posttest scores for both the experimental and control groups is upheld.

To assess the comparative improvement between groups from the pretest to the posttest, an independent samples t-test was employed to compare their posttest scores. Initially, Table 7 displays the descriptive statistics concerning students' scores on the post-test as a preliminary step in this analysis.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of Control and Experimental Groups on Willingness to Communicate Observation Sheet Posttest

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Posttest	Experimental	30	59.53	16.136
	Control	30	48.46	14.308

Table 7 presents the post-test mean score of 59.53 for the experimental group and 48.46 for the control group. A comparison between these post-tests mean scores and the pre-test mean scores, also outlined in Table 9, demonstrates a significant increase in the average scores. This difference in means is visually depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Mean comparisons from pretest to post-test on WTC Observation Sheet

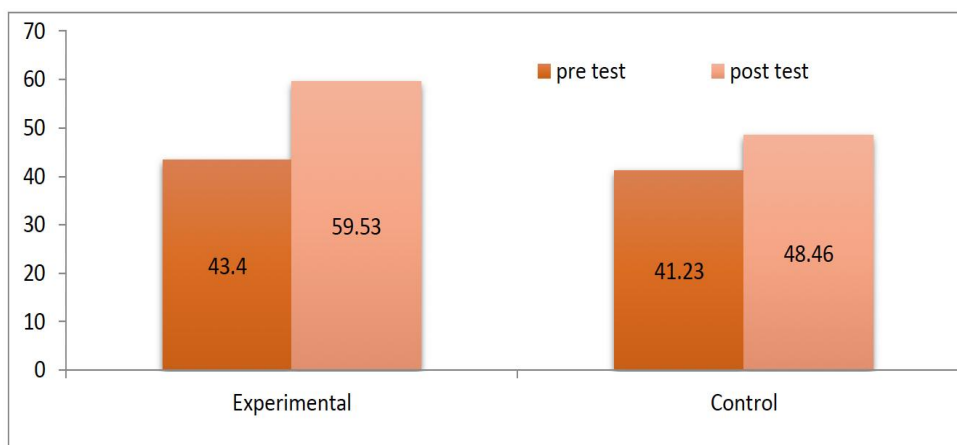


Figure 1 depicts the mean comparisons between the control and experimental groups in their pretest and posttest results. As evident from the figure, both the control and experimental groups showed improvement in their Willingness to Communicate Sheet scores in the posttest. In order to assess whether this progress achieved statistical significance, the researcher conducted an independent samples t-test, the outcome of which is presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Independent Samples t-test between the Control and Experimental Groups on Post-test

Levene's test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
F	Sig.	T	df	Sig.	Mean Difference	Std. Difference	Lower	Upper
.177	.676	-2.811	58	.007	-11.066	3.937	-18.948	-3.184

As shown in Table 8, a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups ($t(58) = -2.811, p < 0.05$) was evident in their post-test performance. Despite both groups displaying enhancements in the post-test, the experimental group demonstrated superior performance compared to

the control group. This suggests that the treatment implemented for the experimental group was effective, signifying a noteworthy impact of the Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE) model on the willingness of Iranian intermediate EFL learners to communicate.

Discussion

The main aim of this study was to determine the influence of the facilitate-listen-engage (FLE) model on the readiness of Iranian intermediate EFL learners to communicate. Although both the experimental and control groups showed improvement, the experimental group displayed higher scores in assessments, crediting their progress to the implementation of the facilitate-listen-engage (FLE) model. The observed increase in scores pertaining to willingness to communicate from pre-test to post-test underscored the positive influence of the facilitate-listen-engage (FLE) model on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' readiness to engage. Notably, statistical analysis indicated a significant disparity between the experimental and control groups in their post-test performance, with the experimental group surpassing the control group. Thus, the efficacy of the experimental group's treatment became apparent, signifying that the use of the facilitate-listen-engage (FLE) model significantly enhanced the willingness of Iranian intermediate EFL learners to communicate.

Correspondingly, the findings echo De Saint Léger and Storch's (2009) affirmation that learners' willingness to communicate is affected by their perceived oral ability, highlighting an increase in classroom communication as learners gain self-confidence in their second language. Hence, this study aligns with our own research, emphasizing the impact of communication and students' active oral participation in the classroom. Specifically, the FLE model, designed as an oral discourse, aims to foster inclusivity among all students while actively engaging them in the learning process, reinforcing the notion of every classroom member's value.

Moreover, MacIntyre et al. (2001) emphasized that increased communication within the classroom correlates with a higher likelihood of communication beyond it. Similarly, in this study, heightened student engagement in class discussions corresponded with increased communication during classroom interactions. The study's outcomes resonate with the idea that this model's applicability spans various content areas and grade levels. The teacher's facilitation role initiates discourse, engaging students in bidirectional communication during the Listen phase. Subsequently, the Engage phase promotes rich discussions, nurturing a sense of community and empowering students to assert themselves as knowledgeable and adept communicators within the classroom environment.

Additionally, as highlighted by Lloyd, Kolodziej, and Brashears (2016), the FLE model fosters an environment where students interact reciprocally with the teacher, enabling increased active participation among learners. This underscores that the FLE model accommodates all learners, encouraging their involvement in class activities, thereby indicating its effectiveness comparable to more active learning strategies. Notably, the application of the facilitate-listen-engage (FLE) model significantly enhanced Iranian intermediate EFL learners' willingness, offering opportunities for integrating target language structures in their oral expressions. This model ignites students' inclination to engage in interactions, regardless of their proficiency level's relevance to the tasks at hand.

Furthermore, this outcome resonates with MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) L2 WTC model, emphasizing the value placed on each classroom member's voice and their role as active recipients and contributors to new knowledge. The study aligns with MacIntyre et al.'s (2001) assertion that social support, particularly from peers, fosters increased group cohesion within the classroom, facilitating enhanced L2 WTC beyond classroom boundaries and cultivating positive attitudes toward forming friendships with native speakers of the second language. In summary, the study emphasizes that increased communication within the classroom, coupled with the validation and respect for students' ideas and comments, leads to heightened communication tendencies among learners, reflecting the broader principles highlighted by prior scholarly work in this field.

Conclusion and Implications for Future Studies

This study highlights the positive impact of the Facilitate-Listen-Engage (FLE) model on enhancing Iranian intermediate EFL learners' willingness to communicate. The experimental group exposed to the FLE model intervention demonstrated significantly improved willingness to communicate compared to the control group. These findings align with previous research emphasizing the effectiveness of student-centered approaches that foster active engagement, reciprocal communication, and a supportive classroom community.

While the study offers valuable insights, further research is needed to explore the FLE model's potential across diverse educational settings, learner proficiency levels, age groups, and cultural contexts. Longitudinal studies examining its long-term effects on communicative competence and language proficiency would provide a more comprehensive understanding. Qualitative investigations into learners' and instructors' perceptions and experiences with the FLE model could yield insights for implementation and modifications.

Additionally, future research could explore integrating the FLE model with other instructional strategies, technological tools, language skills, or content areas. Comparative studies examining the FLE model against other communicative approaches would contribute to a deeper understanding of its relative strengths and limitations, informing instructional decision-making and curriculum design in EFL contexts.

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