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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SENIOR LEARNERS’
IN-CLASS WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH,
INTRINSIC MOTIVATION, FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENJOYMENT,
CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT, AND TEACHER IMMEDIACY

INTRODUCTION

Currently, learning English in late adulthood is becoming more and more popular as it plays a vital role in eliminating social isolation, as well as providing a sense of independence in the contemporary world (e.g. Derenowski 111). Although one of the main motives to attend English courses is to improve communication skills, little is known about older adults’ actual willingness to communicate (WTC) in class (cf. Gabryś-Barker 164; Pawlak et al. 83).

Significantly, the concept of WTC is defined as “a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2 [second language]”, as proposed by MacIntyre et al., has been widely studied among younger adults and high school students indicating the numerous factors that influence learners’ communicative behaviours in foreign language (FL) classes (547) (e.g. Kang 280–90; Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Pawlak 73–133).¹ Undoubtedly, regardless of learners’ ages, “choosing to communicate or not may be one of the most important decisions a person can make” in a FL classroom context (MacIntyre 112).

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¹ Due to a very strict word limit and the detailed nature of the present study aims, see Borkowska 95–100 for literature review on WTC.

As regards older adults, they are mostly intrinsically motivated students who find learning English enjoyable and satisfying (cf. Kacelt and Klímová 6). Also, third-agers' motives to study a FL may be linked with instrumental motivation, as they wish to seek communicative opportunities while travelling abroad or establishing and maintaining a bond with grandchildren who are frequently unable to speak their mother tongue (Derenowski 130). Thus, it may be hypothesised that seniors' in-class WTC in English might be relatively high as speaking is viewed as the most crucial skill to practise. Similarly, owing to the fact that they place a very high priority on the real-life context of communication, as well as the social aspect of learning, tasks and topics regarding their own life experiences performed in dyads ought to generate higher levels of WTC (cf. Peng and Woodrow 856).

The literature of the subject has also shown that FL teachers, who are perceived as authorities, have to be aware of third-agers' self-deprecating views and age-related limitations that are thought to exert a negative impact on their learning (cf. Pfenninger and Singleton 1–68). Thus, prominence should be given to creating a friendly atmosphere and constant support in the FL classroom. Teacher immediacy (TI), which is referred to as verbal and nonverbal “communication behaviours that reduce physical and/or psychological distance between instructors and students” and which involves three dimensions, namely instructional immediacy (the instructor's professional roles and responsibilities), relational immediacy (instructor–students relationships) and personal immediacy (the teacher's personal attributes), is viewed as the most prominent factor fostering WTC in a FL (Zhang and Oetzel 224–35). What should also be noted is that a good classroom environment (CE) that includes a friendly FL instructor, as well as cooperative and supportive peers appear to be the source of positive emotions, for instance, foreign language enjoyment (FLE) (Dewaele and Dewaele 52–59). Positivity as such seems to be crucial while teaching a FL, however, it is of great value, particularly in the seniors' FL classroom since third-agers tend to choose only those social and learning activities which produce positive experiences and rewarding relationships that can fulfil their “emotional well-being” and achieve clearly specified communicative goals (Sigelman and Rider 439). Therefore, it is reasonable to hypothesise that older students' WTC may have a strong relationship with TI and FLE, as the teacher seems to shape readiness to active participation in a FL and promote positive emotions in class (cf. Dewaele and MacIntyre 259–66).

With this in mind, the purpose of the present study is to scrutinise seniors' in-class WTC in English and its relationship with the variables that appear to be fundamental in older adults' FL classroom, namely intrinsic motivation (IM), classroom environment (CE), teacher immediacy (TI), and foreign language enjoyment (FLE).

STUDY²

RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS

The primary objective of the present study was to examine in-class WTC in English among older adults, as well as to explore the relationship among WTC in English and other variables. More specifically, it aims to address the following questions:

1. What is the correlation among the third-agers' WTC, IM, FLE, CE, TI?
2. What is the correlation between WTC and the participants' age, as well as WTC and their English learning experience?
3. To what extent are the third-agers willing to communicate in English, both in meaning-focused and form-focused tasks inside the classroom?
4. Which statements of IM, CE, TI, FLE are the most eminent among seniors?

PARTICIPANTS

The informants were 79 students of five Third Age Universities (TAUs)³ who had been regularly attending English courses for seniors in their TAUs. The participants personal data are presented in table 1.

Table 1. The seniors' personal data

Gender		Place of residence			Education	
male	female	village	town up to 50,000 residents	town/city with more than 50,000 residents	tertiary	secondary
7 (9%)	72 (91%)	4 (5%)	45 (57%)	30 (38%)	57 (72%)	22 (28%)

² The present study in one out of five individual studies included in my unpublished doctoral research project.

³ Kraków, Leszno, Nowy Targ, Rabka-Zdrój, and Zakopane.

When it comes to the participants' age, the data analysis revealed that 69% of the students reported being between 61–70 years of age. Also, 53% declared having studied English between 3–7 years throughout their life; whereas 57% reported to have been attending English courses for seniors between 1–3 years. As regards the older learners' knowledge of other foreign language(s), 81% declared knowing at least one other (than English) foreign language, whereas 19% knew only English. Russian was known by 62% of the participants, while 33% admitted knowing German.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT AND PROCEDURE

The instrument adapted in this study was a questionnaire which included demographic information, questions concerning the duration of learning English throughout the subjects' life and during English courses for third-agers, as well as the knowledge of foreign language(s) other than English. The questionnaire comprised five scales (WTC, IM, FLE, CE, TI), and responses to the items were given on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*I strongly disagree*) to 6 (*I strongly agree*).

In order to measure seniors' WTC in English, an in-class WTC in English scale was used (Peng and Woodrow 866–67). The aim of this scale was to scrutinise older adults' WTC in English, both in meaning-focused and form-focused tasks (table 6).⁴ The original tool included six statements referring to meaning-focused exercises, and four items concerning form-focused activities (table 6). One item (item 3) was modified, as the present researcher intended to adapt it to third-agers' language classroom settings in terms of topic and real-life communication. In addition, one item concerning translation was eliminated, and a new statement (item 4) based on the present author's observation in the actual didactic practice was constructed.

The IM scale was proposed by Noels et al. (442). This 9-item tool was adapted to identify the senior learners' intrinsic motivation to learn English (table 7). The scale originally referred to French, and thus, this language was changed into English (e.g. item 8). The main question to all items was changed to "Why are you learning English in your senior age?" Five original items were used, and four items were excluded because they were unsuitable in the case of third-agers. In order to adapt the scale to specific seniors' motives to learn English, four new statements were added (statements 1, 4, 5, 7).

⁴ The items of all five scales used in the study are presented in the section Study Results and Discussion (Tables 6–10).

The FLE scale (table 8) was designed to reflect the various private and social aspects of FLE (Deweale and MacIntyre 273). This tool was used with a view of exploring seniors' perceptions of their English learning process in the classroom context. The original scale included 21 items, and seven of them were used in the present study (items 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11). Three statements were modified and paraphrased (items 4, 5, 10). In order to examine whether English could be viewed as a hobby, one new item was added (item 3).

The next scale, CE (table 9), aimed to provide information about task orientation, group cohesion, and teacher support (Fraser et al., qtd. in Fraser 14). In the current study, task orientation, which is recognised as the significance of completing exercises, was excluded as the main purpose was to scrutinise how relationships between the older learners and their peers (group cohesiveness), as well as between the seniors and the teacher (teacher support) affected in-class WTC. Four items measuring group cohesiveness were used (statements 1–4). As regards teacher support, one item was excluded, and two new statements were constructed (item 7 and 8).

The TI Scale (table 10) was applied to estimate instructional immediacy, relational immediacy, and personal immediacy (Zhang and Oetzel 240–41). As it was the present author's intention to focus on the classroom context, personal immediacy was eliminated from the study. Thus, nine original statements were used: four items concerning instructional immediacy (items 1–4) and five referring to relational immediacy (items 5–9).

Taking the procedure into account, the questionnaire was written in Polish, and distributed as pen-and-paper surveys in the towns which were either administered by the present author or sent by post. An online version prepared in Google forms and shared as a link was available for the seniors from the cities. The present researcher had been given consent from the chair of the TAUs, and all the subjects were informed that all the data would be gathered and analysed only for research purposes.

Once the questionnaires were collected and coded, Microsoft Excel was used to calculate the total means for all the items. Also, standard deviations, which determine the amount of dispersion away from the mean, were calculated. This was followed both by tallying Cronbach's alpha for each scale. Also, a statistical analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS v26. Basic descriptive statistics with Shapiro-Wilk's test for the normality of distributions, *t* test for independent samples, as well as Pearson's *r* and Spearman's *rho* correlations were performed. The significance level was set to $\alpha = 0.05$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

BASIC DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

As presented in table 2 below, the internal reliability for WTC was acceptable ($\alpha = 0.78$), and for CE was good ($\alpha = 0.88$). Cronbach's alpha values calculated for IM, FLE, TI were characterised by a highly reliable internal consistency.

Also, in order to investigate the distributions of the measured quantitative variables, the basic descriptive statistics were analysed together with the Shapiro–Wilk's test for the normality of distributions.

Table 2. Basic descriptive statistics and test for the normality of distributions

Scale	α	M	Me	SD	$Sk.$	$Kurt.$	$Min.$	$Max.$	W	p
WTC	0.78	4.01	4.10	0.77	-0.41	0.23	2.10	5.50	0.98	0.128
IM	0.90	5.01	5.00	0.78	-0.71	-0.03	3.00	6.00	0.92	<0.001
FLE	0.92	5.20	5.27	0.69	-1.11	1.01	3.00	6.00	0.91	<0.001
CE	0.88	5.34	5.56	0.55	-1.04	0.77	3.67	6.00	0.92	<0.001
TI	0.95	5.66	6.00	0.50	-1.46	1.14	4.11	6.00	0.72	<0.001

Note. M = mean; Me = median; SD = standard deviation; $Sk.$ = skewness; $Kurt.$ = kurtosis; $Min.$ = minimal value; $Max.$ = maximal value; W = Shapiro–Wilk's test result; p = significance; α = internal reliability; $N = 79$.

The result of the Shapiro-Wilk's test turned out to be statistically significant for the vast majority of the analysed variables. This means that these distributions differed from the Gaussian curve which indicates the most common distribution function for independent, randomly generated variables. Nevertheless, the value of the skewness in no case exceeded the conventional absolute value of 2. Thus, the distributions of the factors may be considered sufficiently close to the normal distributions to perform parametric statistical tests.

The data suggested that the seniors' responses and attitudes about their language instructors were quite similar indicating that they placed great weight on both interaction with peers during English classes and teacher support during the process of learning English (cf. Gabryś-Barker 166). Much in a similar vein, the subjects gave prominence to positive emotions

that learning English in-class might arouse, such as pride, interest and joy. In essence, the students' perceptions about in-class WTC were rather diverse. This may derive from the fact that the seniors' in-class communicative behaviours mostly hinge upon their own learning experiences and their teachers' classroom management (Zhang et al. 230)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS: ANSWERS

1. *What is the correlation among the third-agers' WTC, IM, FLE, CE, TI?*

As illustrated in table 3, only positive and statistically significant correlations among the five variables were revealed.

Table 3. Pearson's *r* correlations coefficients between measured scales

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. WTC	–	0.36**	0.54***	0.53***	0.45***
2. IM		–	0.74***	0.55***	0.50***
3. FLE			–	0.81***	0.73***
4. CE				–	0.86***
5. TI					–

Note. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$; $N = 79$.

The strongest correlation was found between CE and TI which is rather unsurprising, as the teacher played a powerful role in creating a laid-back classroom environment that may foster close relationships with students (e.g. Derenowski 156). Also, another strong and positive correlation was reported between CE and FLE. This finding might suggest that the third-agers found learning enjoyable and interesting in the classroom context. A high-degree of correlation was found between FLE and IM, as well as FLE and TI indicating that the language instructors were capable of conducting inspiring classes, and their verbal and non-verbal behaviours boosted the participants' positive emotions about the process of learning (cf. Pfenninger and Polz 10). Additionally, as elucidated by Deweale and Deweale, FLE may be viewed as a "state-like" factor which means that "teachers have to work hard to create the optimal emotional climate in their classroom to allow learners to enjoy the class" (57).

The data analysis also showed a moderate correlation between WTC and FLE, as well as between WTC and CE. What this basically means is that an engaging classroom environment may have had the potential to enhance the level of readiness to communicate, and a constant friendly atmosphere helped older learners “to develop a rewarding feeling about speaking” (Peng and Woodrow 857). It may also be deduced that the moderate correlation coefficient obtained between WTC and TI indicates that the teacher may boost students’ WTC by encouraging active involvement in the class (Deweale and MacIntyre 261). Likewise, the weakest relationship reported between WTC and IM may have resulted from the fact that motivation as such is considered to be a trait-like factor that seems to be rather stable in the process of learning (MacIntyre et al. 550–51). Apparently, the seniors were highly motivated students, and their WTC hinged upon more transient variables that changed at a particular time and situation (cf. MacIntyre 116–18). Due to the fact that they are interested in developing spoken English at an advanced age, they are eager to communicate frequently inside the classroom (Grotek 134).

2. *What is the correlation between WTC and the participants’ age, as well as WTC and their English learning experience?*

When it comes to the relationship between the in-class WTC in English and the subjects’ age, table 4 illustrates that there was no statistically significant correlations between these two variables.

Table 4. Spearman’s *r* correlations coefficients between WTC and the participants’ age

	Age
WTC	0.10

Note. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$; $N = 79$.

As regards the correlation between WTC and the duration of learning English throughout the senior learners’ lives and during the English courses for seniors, Spearman’s rank-order correlation revealed that the relationships between WTC and the length of learning English were, yet again, statistically insignificant (table 5).

Table 5. Spearman's r correlations coefficients between WTC and duration of learning English

	WTC
Duration of learning English throughout the whole life	0.01
Duration of learning English at the TAU	0.06

Note. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$; $N = 79$.

It may be concluded at this point that a possible explanation for the insignificant relationships between WTC and learner-internal factors appeared to be of no more or less importance in case of seniors' WTC and their communicative behaviours in class (cf. Dewaele and Dewaele 34).

3. *To what extent are the third-agers willing to communicate in English, both in meaning-focused and form-focused tasks inside the classroom?*

Table 6 shows the means and the standard deviations for all individual items of the In-class WTC in English scale.

Table 6. The means and the standard deviations for in-class WTC in English

	No.	Item	M	SD
meaning-focused tasks	1.	I am willing to do a role play standing in front of the class in English (e.g., ordering food in a restaurant).	4.18	1.13
	2.	I am willing to give a short self-introduction without notes in English to the class.	4.30	1.20
	3.	I am willing to give a short speech in English to the class about my family without notes.	4.23	1.09
	4.	I am willing to translate a question from English into Polish out loud before giving an answer in English.	3.49	1.52
	5.	I am willing to ask the teacher in English to repeat what he/she just said in English because I didn't understand.	4.71	1.31
	6.	I am willing to do a role play at my desk, with a peer (e.g., ordering food in a restaurant).	4.53	0.88
form-focused tasks	7.	I am willing to ask my peer sitting next to me in English the meaning of an English word.	3.91	1.64
	8.	I am willing to ask my groupmates in English the meaning of word I do not know.	3.59	1.57
	9.	I am willing to ask my groupmates in English how to pronounce a word in English.	3.47	1.48
	10.	I am willing to ask my peer sitting next to me in English how to say an English phrase to express the thoughts in English.	3.70	1.30
		Total	4.01	1.28

Clearly, WTC in meaning-focused exercises was much higher than in tasks concentrating on form. This result confirms the fact that seniors placed weight on enhancing communicative skills during language classes (e.g. Jaroszewska 258). They primarily appreciated opportunities to interact with a peer in dyads as it provides room for students to build and maintain social bonds (cf. Grotek 136). Likewise, pair work gives learners a sense of confidence and comfort since it is less anxiety-provoking than teacher-oriented tasks (e.g. Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Pawlak 169–83). Kang points out that the partner's support might be a source of security which inhibits "the fear of losing face" resulting from making mistakes (284). The subjects were also willing to ask the teacher questions in English when they had not understood him or her which may be associated with the fact that age-advanced students tend to view the teacher as an authority whose instructions need to be followed in the classroom context (Derenowski 124).

As far as form-focused activities are concerned, the seniors' responses were more heterogeneous. It is fairly evident that opinions about the tasks concentrated on grammar generated a diverse picture of the older students who mostly have a preference to engage in real-life interactions (cf. Gabrys-Barker 166). This supports the view that FL lessons should not be grammar-oriented because third-agers tend to focus on improving meaningful communication (cf. Pawlak et al. 83). Hence, it may be deduced that grammar instructions should be restricted to the necessary minimum (Ramírez Gómez 53).

5. Which statements of IM, CE, TI and FLE are the most eminent among seniors?

As regards the most important aspects of the third-agers' motives of learning English at an advanced age, the data are depicted in Table 7.

Table 7. The means and the standard deviations for IM

No.	Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1.	Because I enjoy the feeling of acquiring knowledge about the English community and their way of life.	4.37	1.31
2.	Because it has a positive influence on my brain and memory.	5.53	0.75
3.	For the satisfied feeling I get in finding out new things.	5.35	0.77
4.	For the pleasure I experience when I can use English abroad.	5.23	1.06
5.	For the satisfaction I feel when I communicate in English during classes.	4.94	1.11
6.	For the pleasure I get from hearing English spoken by English people/ foreigners.	4.82	1.13

7.	For the high I experience when I can use newly learnt vocabulary.	5.11	0.96
8.	For the enjoyment I experience when I grasp a difficult construct in English.	4.92	1.10
9.	For the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult exercises in English.	4.81	1.22
	Total	5.01	1.05

Crucially, the highest mean was obtained in item 2, “Because it has a positive influence on my brain and memory.” The participants’ responses were the most homogenous here. This finding is rather unsurprising since older adults seek “the opportunity to engage in stimulating mental activities” (Słowik-Krogulec 198). It is worthwhile mentioning that FL learning involves complex mental processes, and thus, it has a beneficial effect on brain plasticity, and working memory capacity (Pfenninger and Singleton 1–68). Also, the next highest means reported both in items 3 and 4 support the view that learning English may lead to self-realisation that may improve life satisfaction, the quality of later life, as well as transform “older learners’ attitudes towards their learning potential” and boost their self-esteem (Ramírez Gómez 108).

When it comes to FLE, the respondents mainly appreciated the fact that their peers were nice, and that they formed a tight group (Table 8). Such viewpoints are in line with Peng and Woodrow’s study in which cohesion appeared to be a fundamental element of the FL classroom as learners “who share feelings of cohesiveness may be psychologically closer to each other and perceive the classroom as a more pleasant community” (856). As a result, there seems to be no pressure that might result in increasing the level of anxiety, and eliminating the readiness to engage actively in FL communication (Dewaele and Dewaele 30).

Table 8. The means and the standard deviations for FLE

	No.	Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
private	1.	I don't get bored during English classes.	5.56	0.75
	2.	I enjoy English classes.	5.53	0.71
	3.	Learning English is my hobby.	4.61	1.16
	4.	I learn to express myself better in English.	5.25	0.84
	5.	I've learnt and I'm learning interesting things during English classes.	5.14	0.84
	6.	In class, I feel proud of my accomplishments.	4.67	1.13
	7.	Making errors is part of the learning process.	5.41	0.86

social	8.	The peers are nice.	5.53	0.64
	9.	We form a tight group.	5.28	0.93
	10.	We like telling jokes during classes.	5.15	1.06
	11.	We laugh a lot.	5.05	1.17
		Total	5.20	0.91

The highest mean was also reported in item 3, and a slightly lower mean was obtained in statement 2 where the participants admitted enjoying English classes. As pointed out by Deweale and MacIntyre, the core of enjoyment in the FL classroom, is “the match between the challenge of the activity and the skill of the learner” as this approach sustains language students’ interest and motivation (257). As far as FLE-social is concerned, the seniors’ answers in item 8 were the most homogenous with the standard deviation amounting to 0.64. This may suggest that the relationships between the peers were of much significance for the older participants, and Kacelt and Klímová remark that learning a FL brings older adults “subjective feelings of happiness, satisfaction and positive motivation and thus positively affects their mental health and expands their social networks” (7).

Taking group cohesion into account, item 1 and 2 were perceived as being the most vital (Table 9).

Table 9. The means and the standard deviations for CE

	No.	Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
group cohesiveness	1.	I work well with other class members.	5.22	0.71
	2.	I am friendly to members of this class.	5.41	0.63
	3.	I make friends among the students in this class.	4.72	1.03
	4.	I help other class members who are having trouble with their work.	4.94	0.94
teacher support	5.	The teacher is patient in teaching.	5.71	0.51
	6.	The teacher provides a timely response to students' concerns.	5.56	0.69
	7.	The teacher praises the students.	5.42	0.78
	8.	The teacher creates a positive and supportive atmosphere during classes.	5.63	0.74
	9.	The teacher asks questions that solicit viewpoints or opinions.	5.42	0.86
		Total	5.34	0.77

It is plausible to think that the participants tended to have a good cooperation with their peers, which can be treated as a motivating tool that promotes good communicative task performance (cf. Zhang et al. 232). The data

analysis in the second category, teacher support, showed that the third-agers placed emphasis on the educator's patience, and the ability to create a positive and supportive atmosphere during classes. Derenowski underscores that owing to decreased self-confidence and self-esteem, seniors "should feel continuous support and trust from the foreign language teachers throughout the whole foreign language process" (21).

As presented in Table 10 below, the seniors demonstrated very consistent views about their teachers because the means for the items were rather similar.

Table 10. The means and the standard deviations for TI.

	No.	Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
instructional immediacy	1.	The teacher is committed to teaching.	5.65	0.75
	2.	The teacher is well-prepared in teaching.	5.71	0.64
	3.	The teacher is passionate about teaching.	5.63	0.72
	4.	The teacher answers questions earnestly.	5.77	0.42
relational immediacy	5.	The teacher understands students.	5.52	0.80
	6.	The teacher treats students fairly and equally.	5.52	0.77
	7.	The teacher respects students.	5.66	0.60
	8.	The teacher does not hurt students' self-esteem.	5.65	0.62
	9.	The teacher encourages students.	5.54	0.75
		Total	5.66	0.67

The highest means obtained in items 2 and 4 confirm the fact that seniors give priority to the instructor's professionalism (cf. Grotek 142). As far as the rapport between the teacher and the students is concerned, the highest means were reported in statements 7 and 8. What needs to be remembered is that older participants attend FL classes mainly because they wish to spend time together in a comfortable atmosphere that may boost their well-being and self-confidence (Pfenninger and Polz 5). The seniors paid due attention to the educator's commitment and passion towards teaching as well. This lends some support to the fact that both patience and professional commitment are considered to be the most desirable characteristic features of language instructors working with third-agers on a daily basis (Jaroszewska 266).

The data demonstrate that learner-external factors seem to be of paramount relevance in shaping seniors' WTC in English. Both the teacher, as the key figure, and cooperative peers might generate positive emotions and a

relaxed atmosphere that encourage and motivate third-agers' communicative behaviours in the English classroom setting.

CONCLUSIONS

Clearly, the present study shed some light on the nature of age-advanced learners' in-class WTC in English and its correlations with various factors. Importantly, the data revealed only the positive correlations between the variables, which essentially means that all factors had the potential to shape WTC among the older adults.

The strong correlation between WTC and CE, as well as between WTC and FLE suggests that a laid-back environment and a supportive atmosphere may facilitate WTC and generate positive attitudes towards English learning. Likewise, the relationship between CE and TI indicate that the teacher played a pivotal role in reducing the distance and fostering close bonds between and with students which, in turn, had a potent influence on the seniors' positive emotions. Also, FLE had a strong correlation with the IM. This seems to suggest that FLE could boost the third-agers' intrinsic reasons to learn English. What is more, this study's findings confirm the fact that seniors place weight on boosting communicative skills during classes, as they were more eager to speak English in meaning-focused tasks preferable in dyads than in form-focused, grammar-oriented exercises. Older learners typically pay little attention to accuracy favouring meaningful communication since their ultimate goal is gaining the ability to take part in out-of-class interactions.

Although this study has demonstrated a better understanding of senior learners' in-class WTC in English, it is not without limitations. Even though the present author asked their consent to conduct the study in various TAUs in Poland, only members of five TAUs were eager to participate. It may be hypothesised here that a bigger sample size could have contributed to gaining a more detailed picture of the variables affecting the in-class WTC in English and the possible significant data might have indicated the importance of the demographic factors in shaping senior learners' WTC.

As regards the pedagogical implications, third-agers expect a positive classroom environment and an empathic teacher who is likely to be professional with respect to their potential struggles with the English learning process. Such an approach may not only enhance group cohesion but also facili-

tate seniors' well-being and eliminate the potential sense of isolation as they become a part of group characterised by common learning aims and motivation. Bearing in mind the fact that third-agers tend to manifest low self-esteem and self-stereotyping, teacher support and positive reinforcement are imperatives that draw older adults' attention to a feeling of communicative success in English which, surely, leads to self-achievement in late adulthood.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SENIOR LEARNERS' IN-CLASS WILLINGNESS
TO COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH, INTRINSIC MOTIVATION, FOREIGN LANGUAGE
ENJOYMENT, CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT, AND TEACHER IMMEDIACY

Summary

The primary objective of this paper is to explore age-advanced learners' in-class willingness to communicate (WTC) in English, as well as to determine the relationship between WTC, intrinsic motivation (IM), foreign language enjoyment (FLE), classroom environment (CE), and teacher immediacy (TI). The instrument used was a questionnaire comprising biodata items and five adapted scales.

The statistical analysis revealed that the third age students' WTC was higher in meaning-focused tasks than in form-focused, which indicates that the older adults paid due attention to dyadic activities based on authentic communication. The strongest and most positive correlation was found between CE and TI, suggesting that the teacher played a crucial role in creating a supportive classroom environment. Moreover, the data showed a moderate correlation between WTC and FLE, WTC and CE, as well as WTC and TI. This basically means that, in order to boost the older learners' WTC, a language instructor ought to provide room for establishing bonds between their students, which, in turn, may produce positive emotions that encourage learners to engage in active classroom interactions.

Keywords: seniors; willingness to communicate; English

ZWIĄZEK POMIĘDZY GOTOWOŚCIĄ KOMUNIKACYJNĄ W JĘZYKU ANGIELSKIM
W KLASIE WŚRÓD OSÓB W PÓZNEJ DOROSŁOŚCI, WEWNĘTRZNĄ MOTYWACJĄ,
RADOŚCIĄ, ŚRODOWISKIEM KLASOWYM I BLISKOŚCIĄ NAUCZYCIELA

Streszczenie

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest przedstawienie wyników badania dotyczącego gotowości komunikacyjnej (GK) w języku angielskim seniorów oraz analiza jej związku z wewnętrzną motywacją (WM), środowiskiem klasowym (ŚK), bliskością nauczyciela (BN) oraz radością (R) płynącą z uczenia się języka obcego. Instrumentem była ankieta zawierająca informacje biograficzne, jak również pięć zaadoptowanych skal. Analiza dowiodła, iż seniorzy komunikują się chętniej w ćwiczeniach komunikacyjnych opartych na znaczeniu niż w zadaniach związanych z formą gramatyczną, co pokazuje ogromne znaczenie interakcji komunikacyjnej w klasie. ŚK oraz BN mają najsilniejszy związek, co sugeruje, że nauczyciel odgrywa znaczącą rolę w klasie językowej dedykowanej seniorom. Ponadto, umiarkowane korelacje między GK a R, GK a ŚK oraz GK a BN oznaczają, iż nauczyciel językowy powinien dążyć do wzmocnienia więzi między starszymi studentami, jak również dbać o generowanie pozytywnych emocji, co w rezultacie pomaga zwiększyć poziom ich GK.

Słowa kluczowe: seniorzy; gotowość komunikacyjna; język angielski