

Effect of Oral Communication Strategies (OCSs) on Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in Classroom Context and Real-life Context

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Abstract

Sine the birth of Pakistan, learning and teaching of English has faced significant hurdles. ESL teaching and learning in Pakistan have failed especially in equipping our ESL students to speak ESL. Most of the research studies conducted on the topic hold that ESL learners in Pakistan lack oral communication skills even after they have been taught English as a compulsory subject up to the intermediate and graduation levels (Coleman, 2010; Ghani, 2003). The oral communication strategies OCSs are said to be “verbal and non-verbal approaches that are used when there is a failure in the process of communication resulting from ability factors or lack of competency” (Canale & Swain, 1980). The Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in ESL is considered to be the intention to initiate communication with other people (MacIntyre et al., 1998). This study aims at exploring the effect of oral communication strategies (OCSs) on willingness to communicate in classroom context (WTC^{CR}) and willingness to communicate in real life context (WTC^{RL}) of the ESL students. The participants of the current study are the Pakistani ESL learners, who study at the Masters and BS level. 1140 ESL learners took part in the study from 10 different Pakistani universities. This is a quantitative and correlational study. The current study falls under non-experimental type and survey method was employed in this study to gather required information. The SPSS-20 was used in the analysis of data. To find out the influence of OCSs on the WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL} of the ESL students, some statistical tools were applied, including crosstab with simple percentage, Chi-square test, Pearson Correlation coefficient, ANOVA and regression analysis. The study findings indicate that there is very strong positive effect of overall usage of oral communication strategies on WTC^{CR} and positively significant effect on WTC^{RL} of the learners.

Keywords: Oral Communication Strategies (OCSs); Willingness to Communicate (Classroom Context) WTC^{CR}; Willingness to Communicate (Real Life Context) WTC^{RL}; ESL.

Introduction:

Teaching and learning of English has never been an easy task to Pakistani ESL teachers and students. With the different measures that have been implemented in this respect, little success has been realized particularly in ensuring that our ESL students speak in ESL. The

reason for this difficulty can be attributed to Pakistan being a country where different languages are spoken. This implies that Pakistan can certainly be called a multilingual nation where ESL students are not likely to get a chance to speak English language either in the classroom or outside. This has led to the poor performance of the ESL students in Pakistan, particularly those in the government institutes, in speaking English. English is more frequently employed in Pakistan as a means of written communication and to a certain degree, it is rather successful. But with oral communication things are very disappointing (Coleman, 2010; Ghani, 2003; Ghani et al., 2008; Schofield, and Mamuna, 2003).

A lot should be done in the field of ESL education and teaching to improve the oral communication skills of English language learners. In this connection, the research paradigm should be as diverse as possible. In Pakistan, there are no extensive research opportunities or facilities that exist. This is especially so when we refer to the area of ESL education and teaching. Mansoor (2003): says that one of the biggest problems that are present with regards to these aspects of language planning in education in Pakistan is that there is no research that is being conducted (p.18). This research paper seeks to broaden the horizons of ESL research basing on oral communication. Second language learners in Pakistan do not speak English. The results of the study conducted in this area have shown that ESL students are deficient in the skills of oral communication even though they have studied English as a compulsory subject in school over a period of 12-14 years, hence they are pathetic in terms of applying English language in oral communication skills. This is attributed to the lack of effective pedagogical use of OCSs and low level of WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}. Tarone et al. (1976) define OCSs as a problem-solving behavior of the learners when they are communicating in the target language. On the other hand, WTC is characterized by "intention and desire to initiate communication" (MacIntyre et al., 1998). There are two forms of WTC which are referred to as WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}. The main aim of the study is to examine the frequency of using OCS, according to the scale known as Oral Communication Strategies Inventory created by Nakatani (2006) and its impact on WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL} of ESL students.

Significance of the Study

English is spoken as a second language in Pakistan, and it occupies an extremely important position within the country's education system due to the fact that it has a very rich background in the fields of administration, education, science, technology, and business. In other words, it could be said that the objective behind the teaching of English as a foreign language is not only to help the learners develop a willingness to use English Language in and outside classroom which is termed as Willingness to Communicate inside Classroom i.e. WTC^{CR} and Willingness to Communicate in Real Life i.e. WTC^{RL}. The aim is to prepare learners to use English language for communicative purposes effectively. But this very objective of teaching English as L2 turns out to be a complete fiasco in Pakistan, where, according to Ghani (2003):

It is not something new that there has been low standard of English in our country. Rather, the problem of not being able to express oneself in the English language or understand the English language, although having studied it for 7-11 years, is an old problem. In the Urdu medium school system, it becomes difficult to find any student who can speak English (p.111).

English language instruction in Pakistan has become 'text-based' (Ghani, Mahmood & Akram, 2008, p. 2) and the text-based teaching approach for English language has developed such an evaluation and syllabus design process which totally discourages communicative aspects of English language instruction as a second language. The consequence of this practice is that even when an enthusiastic teacher adopts an interactive and communicative teaching approach to instruction of ESL (English as Second Language), he would encounter utter failure because Grammar Translation Method (GTM) remains the sole requirement of text-based teaching and evaluation in English language subject and a teacher who adopts another approach would meet failure in his ESL instruction, and his students would perform poorly in the written annual examinations. It is a fact that proficiency in using a second language as spoken language is a skill which should be learned like any other human skill. However, English is taught not as a language skill but as a subject itself and "purely as a subject" (Schofield, & Mamuna, 2003, p. 3). Although English as a subject is undergoing changes with each passing day and its exam pattern and marking system have also gone through numerous changes; still there has not been any remarkable change in the teaching and learning process of the speaking skill of English in the educational system of Pakistan. Traditional method of teaching grammatical, vocabulary and composition exercises cannot be enough for the students to speak the language effectively.

Statement of the Problem

It does not only take a long time before L1 learners acquire speaking skills, but also it is a very long process in case of ESL learners in Pakistani ESL context. In this context, an assumption could be made that this would have happen because of improper use of oral communication strategies (OCS) as well as lack of willingness to communicate (WTC) by the ESL learners in their classroom and real-life contexts (WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}). Regarding the discussion above concerning the ESL teaching and learning process occurring in the context of Pakistan, there is certainly the need to have a new ESL teaching and learning strategy that will take into account the role of OCS and WTC in enhancing WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL} in ESL learners in Pakistan. Speaking skills development in the case of ESL learners relies on the successful application of Oral Communication Strategies (OCS) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) by them in the classroom and real life situations WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}.

In Pakistan, English language is being imparted as a compulsory subject in all Government as well as private institutions till graduation level. However, owing to the desperate performance of the students in the practical aspect of spoken English, it is incumbent upon the universities of this country to make available courses in "Communication Skills" as courses of English language even after graduate level. In this context, it is pertinent to mention that teaching of such courses is primarily taken up by the faculty of the department of English in most of the Pakistani Universities. Nevertheless, these courses are as well failing because of the following two reasons. To begin with, the permanent teachers of the department of English only like teach English literature or linguistics. Secondly, just for the intermediate level and graduation level programs, the teachers that have been hired to conduct classes are not either competent enough to teach oral communication skills. The reason is that no standard syllabus and curriculum exists that can be used to guide the teachers on how to prepare lessons and how to design assessment plans to teach these

courses. Once again, in these situations, speaking skills are neglected and content-based knowledge is the main object of interest of these visiting teachers. Thus, the result is obvious and it remains the same; there is no productive effect seen after teaching English to the students in post-graduate and BS levels. Accordingly, the speaking skills have been given a priority in the current study. It must be seen as a productive step in this direction towards improving the current state of affairs in the field of use of OCSs of ESL students in order to enhance the levels of WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}.

Research Questions

As far as research questions for this study are concerned, the following were considered in order to lay out the path for the research:

1. Does the use of OCSs affect the WTC^{CR} of Pakistani university students?
2. Does the use of OCSs affect the WTC^{RL} of Pakistani university students?

Research Approach and Research Procedure

This study employed the quantitative and correlational approach. The selection of the quantitative approach is justified by employing the survey questionnaire technique of collecting data and discussing the outcomes of its analysis.

Population

All the students that were studying at the university level in Pakistan comprised the target population in the present research. The population had been studying English as a second language (ESL) as an essential course in their schools and colleges for 12-14 years.

Sample

Sample was selected by means of random sampling technique and the respondents were selected from 10 universities located in all provinces of Pakistan. Six departments were selected from each university and 20 students from each department to collect data. Thus, the size of the sample was; 10 universities, 60 departments, 1200 students.

Tool of Research

The survey questionnaire was in the form of a self-reporting survey that was used to obtain the data needed in the study in a Likert scale format. The questionnaire was divided into three parts:

Part A: Part A of the survey questionnaires was used to gather the necessary data to compute the frequencies of usage of OCSs (identified by the Oral Communication Strategies Inventory, OCSI) as suggested by Nakatani (2006).

Part B: The required data to determine the WTC^{CR} levels of the participants was collected by using Part B: Modified WTC^{CR} Scale based on Pattapong (2010).

Part C: The required data to determine the WTC^{RL} levels of the participants was obtained with the help of Part C: Modified WTC^{RL} Scale that is based on McCroskey, & Richmond (2013).

Analysis of Data

The gathered data was analyzed using SPSS (version 20). The process of analyzing the data

obtained is illustrated below; research questions based data analysis using simple percentages, Pearson Chi-square, correlation co-efficient, ANOVA and regression co-efficient. Some of the survey questionnaires provided by the respondents were incomplete, filled up carelessly and found to be invalid and hence were not included in the data analysis. Hence, 1140 respondents constituted the sample of this study.

Research Question 1

Does the use of OCSs affect the WTCCR of Pakistani university students?

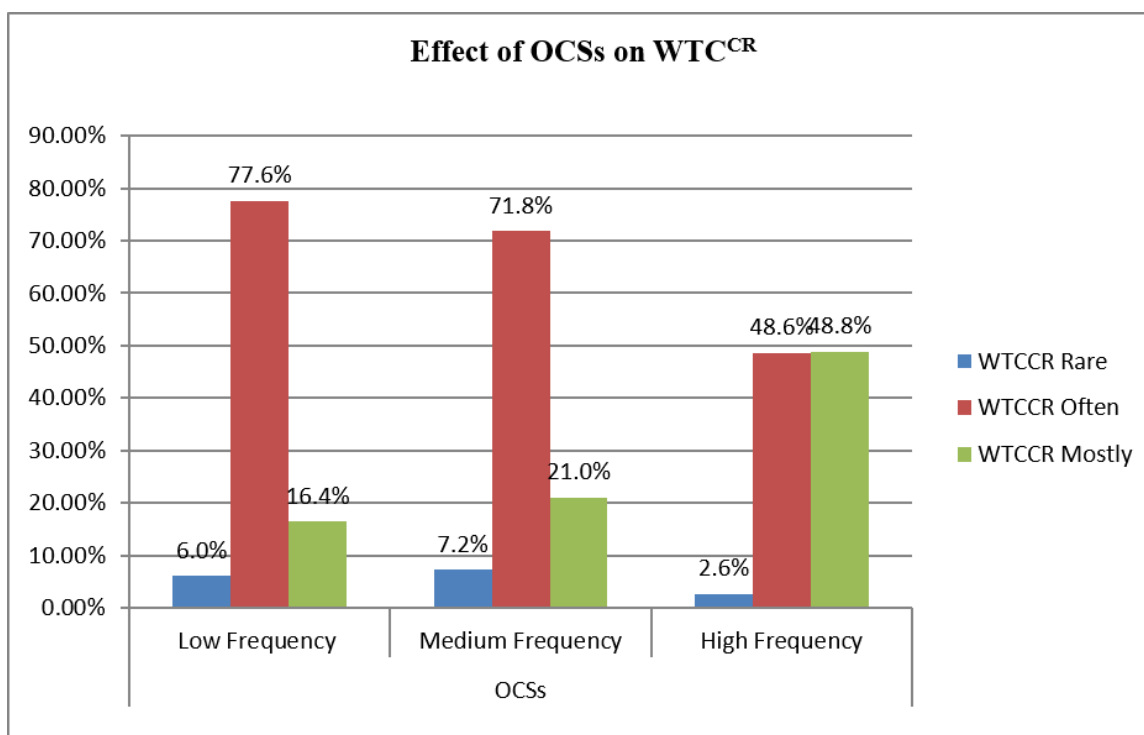
Effect of OCSs on WTC^{CR}

Table 1: Effect of OCSs on WTC^c P-Value=0.000** P-Value=0.000** P-Value=0.000**

		Low Frequency	Medium Frequency	High Frequency	Total	Chi- Square
WTC ^{CR}	Rarely	4	44	12	60	104.94**
		6.0%	7.2%	2.6%	5.3%	
	Often	52	438	225	715	
		77.6%	71.8%	48.6%	62.7%	
	Mostly	11	128	226	365	
		16.4%	21.0%	48.8%	32.0%	
	Total	67	610	463	1140	
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

P-Value=0.000**

As can be seen from Table 1, there were 1140 respondents taken into consideration. Out of 1140 respondents, 67 persons were taken into account with respect to 'low frequency' of usage of OCSs. Among those 67 respondents, 6.0% of them were rarely, 77.6% were often and 16.4% mostly willing to communicate in class room (WTC^{CR}). Similarly, out of 610 respondents who were using OCSs in medium frequency, 7.2% seldom, 71.8% often and 21.0% mostly were willing to communicate in classroom (WTC^{CR}). Further, out of 463 respondents who were using OCSs in 'high frequency', 2.6% seldom, 48.6% often and 48.8% mostly were willing to communicate in class room (WTC^{CR}). Hence, altogether it was concluded that 5.3% rarely, 62.7% often and 32.0% mostly were willing to communicate in class room (WTC^{CR}) owing to OCSs. The results of Chi Square test suggested that there was high level of significance of OCSs with WTC^{CR}, since the value of p was 0.000, which is lower than the level of significance 0.01.



Graph 1: Effect of OCSs on WTC^{CR}

Table 2: Correlation Co-efficient and ANOVA between OCSs and WTC^{CR}

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Correlation Co-efficient
Regression	38756.882	1	38756.882	78.321	.000**	0.254**
Residual	563136.131	1138	494.847			
Total	601893.013	1139				

Predictors (Constant): OCSs

Dependent Variable: WTC^{CR}

As the results obtained with the help of $F = 78.321$ and $P\text{-value} = 0.000$ provided by the ANOVA Table 2 show, the level of significance between the independent variable (OCSs) and the dependent variable (WTC^{CR}) is high. The two variables have a positive high correlation coefficient of 0.254 and $P\text{-Value} = 0.000$.

Table 3: Regression Co-efficient between OCSs and WTCCR

	Unstandardized			
	Co-efficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error
(Constant) OCSs	54.409	4.088	13.308	.000**
	.335	.038	8.850	.000**

Predictors (Constant): OCSs
Dependent Variable: WTC^{CR}

Table 3 indicates that WTC^{CR}= 54.409 on average and the P-value=0.000. This implies that there is a high significance effect of use of OCSs by the Pakistani university students WTC^{CR}. The WTC^{CR} will increase to 0.335 (P-value=0.000) with every unit level change of the usage of OCSs.

Research Question 2

Does OCSs use influence the WTCRL of Pakistani university students?

Effect of OCSs on WTC^{RL}

Table 4: Effect of OCSs on WTCRL

	Low Frequency	Medium Frequency	High Frequency	Total	Chi- Square
WTC ^{RL}	Rarely	6	87	64	157
		9.0%	14.3%	13.8%	13.8%
	Often	50	409	260	719
		74.6%	67.0%	56.2%	63.1%
	Mostly	11	114	139	264
		16.4%	18.7%	30.0%	23.2%
	Total	67	610	463	1140
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

P-Value=0.000**

As shown in Table 4, it can be observed that out of all the 1140 respondents, 67 use OCSs on low frequency. Among these 67 respondents, 9.0% are 'rarely' willing to communicate in real life (WTC^{RL}), respectively. Number of 610 respondents use OCSs on 'medium frequency'. Out of these 610 respondents, 14.3, 67.0 and 18.7 rarely, often and mostly willing to communicate in real life (WTC^{RL}) respectively. Moreover, number of respondents who use OCSs on 'high frequency' is 463. Out of these 463 respondents, 13.8%, 56.2% and 30.0% rarely, often and mostly willing to communicate in real life (WTC^{RL}) respectively. Overall, 13.8%, 63.1% and 23.2% rarely, often and mostly willing to communicate in real life context. In reference to the impact of OCSs on WTC^{RL}, it can be seen that there is highly significant impact as p-value according to Chi-Square Test.

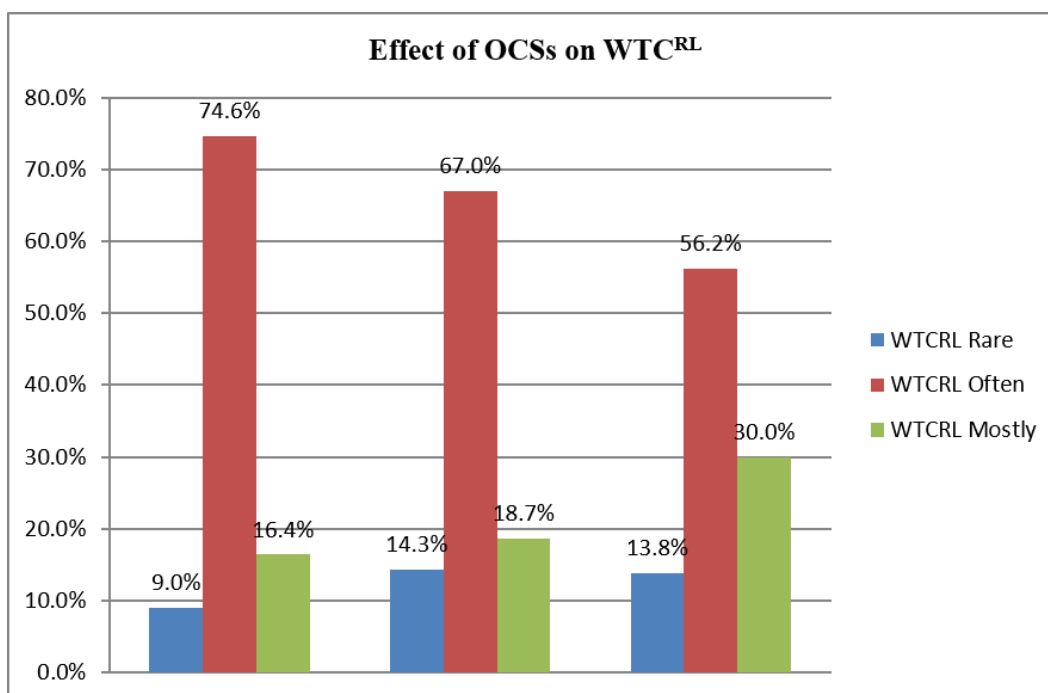


Table 5: ANOVA and Co-efficient of correlation between WTCRL and OCSs.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Correlation Co-efficient
Regression	796.603	1	796.603	4.574	.033*	0.063*
Residual	198176.541	1138	174.145			
Total	198973.144	1139				

Predictors (Constant): OCSs

Dependent Variable: WTC^{RL}

Based on ANOVA table 5 below, F=4.574 and P-Value=0.033, which means that the effect of

the independent variable (OCSs) on the dependent variable (WTC^{RL}) has a statistically significant effect. The correlation between the two variables, OCSs and WTC^{RL}, is positive and significant, and is P-value equal= 0.063*.

Table 6: Regression Co-efficient between OCSs and WTC^{RL}

	Unstandardized		T	Sig.
	Co-efficients			
	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error
(Constant) OCSs	33.140	2.425	13.664	.000**
	.048	.022	2.139	.033*

Dependent Variable: WTC^{RL}

From the Table 6 below, it can be seen that WTC^{RL} is 33.140 (P-value = 0.000) on average which is different from zero. The significance of the value signifies that there is significant usage of OCSs among Pakistani university students. A unit level increase in OCSs leads to a 0.048 (P-value = 0.033) increase in WTC^{RL}.

Discussion on Findings

Research Question 1

The chi-square test and p-value have helped in the conclusion that the overall use of OCSs had a very beneficial effect on WTC^{CR}. The f-statistics value and the correlation coefficient with their corresponding p-values of the ANOVA table have resulted in the conclusion that the overall usage of OCSs had a very highly positive effect on WTC^{CR}. The values of coefficient of regression and their respective p-values have concluded that there was a highly positive significant impact of OCSs on WTC^{CR}.

Research Question 2

Based on the results of the Chi-Square test and the p-value, it can be stated that there is a positive significant effect of OCSs on WTC^{RL}. Moreover, from the findings from the ANOVA table due to F-test statistics and p-value of the correlation, it can be conclude that there is a significant effect of OCSs use on WTC^{RL}. In addition, the coefficient of regression with its p-value indicates that there is a positive significant effect of use of OCSs on WTC^{RL}. OCSs have had positively significant impacts on WTC^{RL}.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The effectiveness of OCSs on WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL} among ESL students was seen. OCSs were seen to influence WTC^{CR} highly significantly and WTC^{RL} also significantly. So, it can be said that more efforts should be made in order to enhance the level of WTC^{RL} as compared to WTC^{CR}. These efforts would help increase the use of OCSs, which in turn would enhance the levels of WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}.

Recommendations are stated within the context of programs for raising awareness on the use of OCSs and WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}, methodologies for teaching English as a Second Language (ESL), classroom environments and teaching facilities, curriculum and syllabus design, material development, and assessment of students' performance.

1. The results and findings obtained from this research show that the use of OCSs is crucial. It is imperative not only to encourage the use of the English language in oral communication by the students but also to raise the awareness of the students on OCSs. Such awareness regarding OCSs will not only increase confidence of the students but also their use of these strategies. In the same way, increased level of WTC^{CR} would be a result. The idea of OCSs has been discussed by Dornyei (1995), Nakatani (2005), and Kongsom (2009). Creating such an awareness regarding OCSs will enable students to use ESL for oral communication.
 2. Oral communication takes a center stage in the problem between OCSs, WTC and CLT (Communicative Language Teaching). That is, CLT can be more appropriate as compared to the DM (Direct Method) and the classical GTM (Grammar Translation Method) in teaching languages. This demands that the syllabus of the English language to be used in the Second Language should be redefined according to the CLT approach with special focus being laid on the application of the language in oral communication. A new set of SLOs (Students Learning Outcomes) should be devised which will help in introducing OCSs to the students. The inclusion of OCSs in the ESL syllabus would become fruitful as per the suggestion of various researchers (Dornyei, & Thurrell, 1994; Dornyei, 1995; Cohen, 2014; Kongsom, 2009). With the inclusion of OCSs in the syllabus, there will be an increase in the level of WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}.
 3. The developers of teaching materials can take into account the results of this study while creating a textbook for the education and training of OCSs, WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}. The writers of teaching materials can also take into account the results of this study while creating a textbook aimed at increasing the level of WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}.
 4. Oral communication skills must be considered by the ESL assessment and evaluation system. Mark allocation for OCSs ranging between at least 10 and 30 must be made in the scheme of studies for ESL. Mark allocation can be made taking OCSs, WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL} into consideration. This can be useful for both ESL teachers and students since they will know about which aspect of OCSs they need to pay attention to and how they can prove their competence in oral communication skills through the use of the concepts of OCSs, WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}.
 5. The students should be trained on the practical use of OCSs. The findings of this study can be utilized by ESL teachers to come up with strategies of enhancing the use of OCSs by the students. To accomplish this, a special training course must be developed, which pays special attention to the concepts of OCSs, WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}. Such a training program should make it possible for ESL teachers to use the OCSs within classroom as well as other social settings. Professional and training courses of the ESL teachers must incorporate some special topic regarding OCSs, WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}. Special exercises should be devised to train the ESL teachers to use OCSs. This way, the ESL teachers would be equipped with effective teaching skills and knowledge pertaining to the use of OCSs, which would help them to boost the use of OCSs and levels of WTC among Pakistani ESL learners.
 6. There is a need on the part of Government of Pakistan that the institutions should be provided with language laboratories. These laboratories should be well equipped with
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necessary materials along with computer and internet facility. These laboratories will provide students with an interactive learning environment where OCSs may be taught in the most effective way. Not only the use of OCSs will increase but also the level of WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL} will be enhanced as well as the use of ESL.

Limitations of the study and Research Gap

As a common practice, suggestions for future studies are based upon new concepts, challenges faced by researcher while doing his/her study and some limitations that are always present in any research study. In addition, any area beyond the scope of current research can be termed as a gap in research, and it serves the purpose of providing continuous research in that particular area. In this research project, the following research gaps have been identified by the researcher:

1. The present research study has employed closed-ended questionnaire as a research instrument in collecting data. Other kinds of research instruments may be considered in carrying out research in the realm of OCSs and WTC, such as observation, interviews, speaking task test battery or open-ended survey questionnaire.
2. The present research study is of descriptive nature. In this way, an experiment-based research design for the purpose of teaching and training of OCSs to raise WTC may be used for future research studies.
3. In terms of syllabus planning, the material used in this research may prove useful in developing a course module for teaching and training of OCSs.
4. As this research focuses on two types of WTC i.e. WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}, other types of WTC may be identified for conducting research, such as WTC at the workplace and WTC before the interview committee.
5. The effect of OCSs was examined with respect to WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}; however, researcher can conduct research programs focusing on the effects of OCSs on other variables such as academic performance of ESL learners, their motivation levels, language anxiety etc.
6. In this research study, the researcher concentrated on the influence of OCSs on ESL learners in relation to WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL} whereas another study can be carried out in relation to the use of OCSs by ESL teachers and its influence on WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}.

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