Comparing Iranian EFL Learners' Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate in Regular and Virtual Class

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Abstract:

Virtual learning points to an electronic learning condition where, contrasting conventional learning, there are no real classmates, and there is no temporal and special limitation. The present research was conducted to inquire the connection between EFL learners' anxiety and willingness to communicate (WTC) in online and regular classes and compare them with each other. To this end, 80 Iranian EFL learners (48 female and 32 male) whose degree of proficiency was intermediate took part in the research. They enrolled in online and regular classes and the number of participants in each group was similar. Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT), WTC Questionnaire, and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) were the instruments used in this study. The participants enrolled in a 15-session English course which was continuously observed by the researcher. The upshot of the research proclaimed that there was a noteworthy and negative connection between the participants' anxiety and WTC either in online or regular classes. The outcomes of the research also showed that the participants in the online class had a lower degree of anxiety and a significantly higher degree of WTC. The outcomes of the research can have implications for the field of TEFL in general and psycholinguistics and online education in specific.

Key words: Education, Learning, Communication, Applications, Technology.

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مقارنة قلق متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية كلغة أجنبية واستعدادهم للتواصل في الصفوف الدراسية العادية والافتراضية

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الملخص:

يشير التعلم الافتراضي إلى حالة التعلم الإلكتروني و الذي يكون على النقيض من التعلم التقليدي، حيث لا يوجد زملاء حقيقيون كما في الصف الدراسي التقليدي، وكذلك لا توجد قيود زمنية محددة. تهدف الدراسة الحالية لمعرفة العلاقة بين قلق متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية كلغة أجنبية واستعدادهم للتواصل في الصفوف الدراسية عبر الإنترنت والصفوف التقليدية ومقارنتها مع بعضها البعض. ولأجل تحقيق هذه الغاية، شارك في هذه الدراسة ٨٠ متعلماً إيرانياً للغة الانكليزية كلغة أجنبية، و كان عدد المشاركين (٤٨ أنثى و ٣٢ ذكراً) ممن كانت درجة كفاءتهم متوسطة. لقد كان عدد الذين سجلوا في هذه الصفوف الدراسية التقليدية وعبر الانترنت متساوياً وكذلك كان عدد المشاركين في كل مجموعة متشابهاً. تم استخدام اختبار أكسفورد السريع لتحديد مستوى المشاركين ، وكذلك استخدام استبيان الاستعداد للتواصل، ومقياس القلق في الصفوف الدراسية باللغة الانكليزية حيث كانت هي الأدوات المستخدمة في هذه الدراسة. وقد التحق المشاركون بدورة اللغة الانكليزية المكونة من ١٥ جلسة والتي تمت مراقبتها بشكل مستمر من قبل الباحث. أعلنت نتيجة البحث أن هناك علاقة سلبية وجديرة بالملاحظة بين قلق المشاركين الاستعداد للتواصل سواء في الصفوف الدراسية عبر الإنترنت أو الصفوف الدراسية التقليدية. و قد أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أيضاً أن المشاركين في الصف الدراسي عبر الإنترنت لديهم درجة أقل من القلق ودرجة أعلى في الاستعداد للتواصل. يمكن أن يكون لنتائج هذه الدراسة آثار على مجال تدريس اللغة الانكليزية كلغة أجنبية بشكل عام وعلم اللغة النفسي والتعليم عبر الإنترنت بشكل خاص.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعليم، التعلم، الاتصال، التطبيقات، التكنولوجية.

Comparing Iranian EFL Learners' Anxiety and Willingness

to Communicate in Regular and Virtual Class

1. Introduction

Virtual learning points to an electronic learning condition where, contrasting conventional learning, there are no real classmates, and there is no temporal and special limitation. With the development of technology and the Internet, e-learning has gained a unique condition in the area of education (Zhang, 2013). With the more and more growth of technology, virtual method was applied by educators to help learners learn better and easier. Virtual learning supply instigating chances for both expanding the influence of education and decreasing its price, and improving the quality of teaching and learning (Warni, 2016).

Anxiety is a critical psychological variable in common instruction. Previous study signifies that it acts a crucial or even infuential role in settling educational success status (Ellis, 2008). There is a common agreement that second language anxiety is widespread in second language students; it is directly joint to social talking and mostly has a weakening function in L2 study. Low-anxious students generally outperform in the objective language than their high-anxious counterparts (Legac, 2007).

Horwitz (1986) asserted that students who deal with language anxiety become on guard, prefer to stay receptive in the group, and get reluctant to take part in the discussion. Therefore, learners are unable to process information in L2 and display weak performance. The result may be weak students in group discussion for most of the anxious language students. Students are incapable to motivate themselves to partake effectually in the group (Zhang & Head, 2010).

The final objective of numerous methods and approaches in the second language (L2) teaching may be to empower students to impart in a second language (Mehrgan, 2013). The degree to which a learner shows a willingness to communicate (WTC) has surged a great deal of interest in the literature. WTC was defined initially by McCroskey and Baer (1985) as a quirk-like identity that was taken as constant in different contexts. However, regarding L2 conditions, WTC is explained by MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément, and Noels (1998) as "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons using an L2" (p. 547).

WTC can be related to many factors in which anxiety is one of the most important ones (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2002). According to Birjandi and Tabataba'ian (2012), WTC had a reverse association with students' anxiety and by increasing their anxiety their WTC decreases. EFL learners' anxiety is also related to the learning situation and class atmosphere (Jackson,

Comparing Iranian EFL Learners' Anxiety and Willingness

to Communicate in Regular and Virtual Class

2011). The occurrence of COVID-19 which is an infectious and very contagious disease caused by Coronavirus encouraged so many jobs to change to the online form. One of the areas which were considerably affected by COVID-19 was education and online English classes became very popular. It can be noted that the atmosphere in regular and online classes can be different which can affect the language learners' anxiety and consequently their WTC. As a result, this research was carried out to examine this issue. The answers to the following research questions were pursued in this research.

Q1. Is there a meaningful difference between Iranian EFL students' anxiety in regular and online classes?

Q2. Is there a meaningful diversity between Iranian EFL students' WTC in regular and online classes?

Q3. Is there a meaningful connection between Iranian EFL students' WTC and anxiety in both online and regular classes?

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Online Classes: Pros and Cons

Tallent-Runnels et al. (2006) assert that virtual classes are programs that are presented entirely on the Internet. Web-based instruction apply the Internet and communication technologies, apart from the Internet as an investigation instrument to taking virtual classes. The term online education is further employed to explain any schedule transported to learners, not necessarily be in the same class. The lessons can be taught by messenger applications, virtual programs, and conference lectures for online learning.

In comparison with regular instruction, virtual education has dominances and disadvantages. virtual schedules enable students to deal with the class stationery and tasks in their own place; providing copious possibilities to drill written reports (Warnock, 2009); elevating common inference of education and cooperative question resolving (Garrison, 2017); and promoting students' reflective and critical thinking skills (Garrison, 2017). Along with the advantages, international learners can take a virtual class in their own residence country and take advantage of the original informatiom (Hsieh & Liou, 2008) and the academic custom of the residence country (Xing, Wang, & Spencer, 2008), devoid of being present.

Comparing Iranian EFL Learners' Anxiety and Willingness

to Communicate in Regular and Virtual Class

The disadvantages of virtual learning consist of prolonged comprehension of instructional technology by school teachers because of inadequate managerial, educational, and high-tech help (Lawrence, Haque, King, & Rajabi, 2014; Shebansky, 2018); greater dropout levels in entirely virtual settings compared with mixed or real classes (Harker & Koutsantoni, 2005); learners' deficiency of inspiration due to vague or late teachings and response (Karkar-Esperat, 2018); and learners' observed feel of separation from their classmates and instructor (Starr-Glass, 2014), that might be worsened by humane dissimilarities in courses inscribing first language (L1) and L2 speakers (Yim, 2011).

2.2. L2 Communication Willingness

Willingness to communicate in a second language (L2WTC) that stands for the intellectual design to exert L2 (MacIntyre, 2007), is a crucial notion throughout various areas of L2 learning and correspondence. The prominent concept emerges from the part of interreaction in language improvement (Molberg, 2010). Kang (2005) maintains that by the increase of interaction higher language improvement and wisdom occur. WTC is commonly considered as the central goal of L2 application (Yu, Li, & Gou, 2011). Furthermore, McIntyre (2007) states that the option to begin a conversation in any L2 is as an important helper of language application, and of its own accord, maybe a crucial indication of language activity. Further significantly, the willingness to seize chances to use an 0l2 shows a rate of triumph in language instruction. In addition, "being willing to communicate is part of becoming fluent in a second language, which often is the ultimate goal of L2 learners" (MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010, p. 1).

EFL teachers have always endeavored to improve their learners' communicative skills by designing some tasks and activities to satisfy this important need. However, some language learners are not interested in participating in these activities because of the lack of WTC in them. One of the important factors which are believed to have a gloomy impact on language learners' WTC is their anxiety which is covered in the following part.

2.3. Language Anxiety

It is the biasedly displeasing perception of alarm upon the prepared for happenings, like the perception of forthcoming dying (Roy-Byrne et al., 2008). Anxiety differs from fear, which is a reaction against actual or understood instant danger, while anxiety is the anticipation of forthcoming danger (Roy-Byrne et

al., 2008). Anxiety is a sense of fear, disquiet, and concern, normally generalized and concentrated as an over reply to a condition that is just biasedly looked at as threatening, (Tsakanikos, Bouras, Costello, & Holt, 2007).

Language anxiety is considered to have effect on students' L2 education. Referring to Horwitz (1986), Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) is "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the (foreign) language learning process" (p. 128). In this kind of anxiety, second language students undergo fluster and anxiety when educating or applying L2. Students subjected to L2 interaction inclined to take away from communication and attempt the routes to get away educational assignments. So, students are incompetent of fulfilling knowledge in L2 and display impoverished presentation (Zhang & Head, 2010). Weak in-class communication by most anxious language learners can be concluded.

Anxiety has been reported to have many negative impacts on learning. Since learning a foreign language is concerned with being exposed to unfamiliar chunks, structures, vocabularies, accents, and more importantly, a new culture, the notion of anxiety would gain more and more importance (Farjami & Amirian, 2013). Therefore, the notion of anxiety has attracted much curiosity in English Language Education domain. Moreover, there is a belief that anxiety can be an important factor that affects students' WTC (Bashosh, Nejad, Rastegar, & Marzban, 2013).

2.4. Previous Empirical Studies Review

Akbarzadeh and Narafshan (2016) examined the connection between the anxiety among Iranian EFL learners and WTC. They used two questionnaires to gather the data needed (WTC and anxiety questionnaires). The conclusion showed that there is a negative correlation between EFL students' anxiety and their inclination to interact.

Navidinia, Kazemi, and Ghazanfari (2019) studied the effects of EFL learners' anxiety and perfectionism on their WTC. The participants of the study were 120 (50 males and 70 females) Iranian EFL university students. The outcomes of the research signified that learners' anxiety and perfectionism had a critically contrary effect on their WTC in the language class.

Rachmah (2020) investigated compared the effectiveness of online and offline classes for EFL students. The researcher also investigated learners' understanding of the virtual class in comparison with offline lessons to recognize the effectiveness between online and offline classes. The obtained results showed more effectiveness of the offline class and the students preferred offline learning to online learning.

Khatoony and Nezhadmehr (2020) investigated the problems that EFL teachers come up with the presentation of virtual education all through Coronavirus pandemic circumstances, specifically in Iran. The outcome of the study claimed that, despite the fact that Iranian EFL teachers could apply the applications and platforms competently, many problems such as shortage of suitable hardware and software, students' absence of concentration and demotivation as to virtual classes, scarcity of financing and provide for language schools can be found.

3. Methods
3.1. Participants

The contributors of this research were 80 Iranian EFL students (48 female and 32 male) whose level of proficiency was intermediate. Their proficiency level was measured via Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT). The participants were busy learning English at language school in Ahwaz. Half of the contributors were studying in online classes and the others were studying in regular classes. The classes were not taught by the researcher, but the researcher observed the classes during the course. The contributors were aware that they were participating in a study and they also were ensured about the confidential keeping of their information. The contributors were adult EFL learners and they were between 20 and 30 years old.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT)

The OQPT assist English teachers put students into the fitting and suitable level class for a language course. They can also apply it as a perceptive scale of a student's general language ability (Allan, 2004). According to Allan (2004), the tests have been formulated against the levels system supplied by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching,

Assessment (commonly known as the CEF), which has been taken up by the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) as well as by governments and major institutions, including exam boards, throughout Europe.

The OQPT used here included 60 questions where the contributors should select the proper choice among the choices. After carrying out the test, the outcomes were gathered and the contributors whose proficiency levels were satisfactory for the research were chosen to participate in the study. The scores between 30 and 40 were identified as intermediate learners.

3.2.2. WTC Questionnaire

The WTC questionnaire is a seven-point Likert-type questionnaire that is used to evaluate EFL learners' willingness to communicate. This questionnaire is developed by Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, and Shimizu (2004). The questionnaire is divided into six parts of Motivational Intensity, Desire to Learn English, Intergroup Approach-Avoidance Tendency, Interest in International Vocation/Activities, Interest in International News, and Frequency and Amount of Communication in English. The first part is composed of six entries, the second part is composed of six entries, the third part is composed of seven entries, the fourth part is composed of six entries, the fifth part is composed of two entries, and the sixth part consists of five items.

3.2.3. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

This questionnaire is well-known among many researchers who have their focus on foreign language anxiety. The FLCAS is a self-reporting questionnaire that inquires learners to display their impression and point of view about learning a foreign language. This scale comprises 33 items. Each item was gone with a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*. The contributors were asked to answer all 33 items on the FLCAS scale. Since both questionnaires which were used in the study were standard, their reliability and validity were already confirmed and it was not necessary to measure them again.

3.3. Procedure

As the start pace, to assess their general English information and to ensure that there were no meaningful dissimilarity among them the OPT was presented

to the contributors. The questionnaires were administered to the participants before starting the course to measure the participants' anxiety and WTC. The participants enrolled in a 15-session English course and they studied Top-Notch 2 book in it. The researcher observed some sessions of the regular class per se. All sessions of the online class were recorded and the researcher observed them. The researcher performed the observations to check the participants' WTC and anxiety during the course and consider how much these issues were changed in the participants during the course. After the fishing the course, the questionnaires were administered to the participants to assess their anxiety and WTC again. The obtained results were analyzed using statistical tests.

4. Results and Discussion
4.1. Results
4.1.1. Placement Test Results

The placement test was presented to the contributors to assess their general English information and to ensure there was no meaningful dissimilarity between them. Tables 1 and 2 indicate the results.

Table1

Descriptive Statistics of OQPT

	Classes	*N*	Mean	*Std*. Deviation	*Std*. Error Mean
OQPT	Online	40	35.68	1.713	.271
	Regular	40	36.06	1.843	.291

The mean score ($M = 35.68$) and standard deviation ($SD = 1.71$) of the participants in the online class and the mean score ($M = 36.06$) and the standard deviation ($SD = 1.84$) of the participants in the regular class on the placement test are shown in the table. Based on the obtained outcome, it can be mentioned that the mean scores are so adjacent they cannot be meaningfully different. Results of the Independent-Samples *t-test* can prove this vantage point.

Table 2

Comparing Iranian EFL Learners' Anxiety and Willingness

to Communicate in Regular and Virtual Class

Results of Independent-Samples t-Test for the Placement 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.* (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	*Std.* Error Difference	Lower	Upper
OQPT	Equal variances assumed	.166	.685	-.955	78	.343	-.380	.398	-1.172	.412
	Equal variances not assumed			-.955	77.587	.343	-.380	.398	-1.172	.412

The outcome of the Independent-Samples *t-test* for the placement test is indicated in Table 2. The difference between the mean scores was not statistically significant (*t* (78) = -.96, *p* = .343) since the *p-value* was greater than .05. Accordingly, all participants were intermediate EFL learners and the groups were homogenous.

4.1.2. Results of Administering the Questionnaires before the Course

The questionnaires were administered to the participants before the course to measure their anxiety and WTC. The results are shown in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3

Comparing Iranian EFL Learners' Anxiety and Willingness

to Communicate in Regular and Virtual Class

Descriptive Results of Administering the Questionnaires before the Course

	Classes	*N*	Mean	*Std.* Deviation	*Std.* Error Mean
First WTC Test	Online	40	3.28	1.867	.295
	Regular	40	3.03	1.833	.290
First Anxiety Test	Online	40	2.93	1.347	.213
	Regular	40	3.23	1.387	.219

The mean score (*M* = 3.28) and standard deviation (*SD* = 1.87) of the participants in the online class and the mean score (*M* = 3.03) and the standard deviation (*SD* = 1.83) of the participants in the regular class for the first WTC test are shown in the Table. It also indicates the mean score (*M* = 2.93) and standard deviation (*SD* = 1.35) of the participants in the online class and the mean score (*M* = 3.23) and the standard deviation (*SD* = 1.39) of the participants in the regular class on the placement test. It can be noticed that the differences between the mean scores for both questionnaires were not meaningful. The Independent-Samples *t-tests* were administered to check this issue statistically.

Table 4

Results of Independent-Samples t-Test for Administering the Questionnaires before the Course

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*-test for Equality of Means					
	F	*Sig.*	*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	*Std.* Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference

									Lower	Upper
First WTC Test	Equal variances assumed	.019	.891	.604	78	.547	.250	.414	-.574	1.074
	Equal variances not assumed			.604	77.973	.547	.250	.414	-.574	1.074
First Anxiety Test	Equal variances assumed	.011	.917	-.981	78	.329	-.300	.306	-.909	.309
	Equal variances not assumed			-.981	77.935	.329	-.300	.306	-.909	.309

What table 4 indicates is that the results of the Independent-Samples *t-tests* for both WTC ($t(78) = .60, p = .547$) and anxiety ($t(78) = -.98, p = .329$) questionnaires were not significant because both *p* values were higher than .05. Accordingly, no meaningful differences between the participants' anxiety and WTC in both classes before the course can be seen.

4.1.3. Addressing Research Question One

To reply the first research question results of the WTC questionnaire which was managed to the contributors after the course was considered. The results are indicated in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of Second WTC Test

	Classes	*N*	Mean	*Std.* Deviation	*Std.* Error Mean
Second WTC Test	Online	40	4.45	2.171	.343
	Regular	40	3.50	1.922	.304

The mean score (*M* = 4.45) and standard deviation (*SD* = 2.17) of the participants in the online class and the mean score (*M* = 3.50) and the standard deviation (*SD* = 1.92) of the participants in the regular class for administering the WTC questionnaire after the course are shown in table 5. The dissimilarity between the mean scores was meaningful. The Independent-Samples *t-test* results can confirm this point of view.

Table 6

Results of Independent-Samples t-Test for administering the WTC Questionnaire After the Course

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*-test for Equality of Means						
		F	*Sig.*	*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	*Std.* Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Second WTC Test	Equal variances assumed	1.483	.227	2.072	78	.042	.950	.458	.037	1.863

Equal varianc es not assume d	2.07 2	76.86 2	.042	.950	.458	.037	1.86 3

According to Table 6, since the *p-value* was lower than .05, the results of the Independent-Samples *t-test* were meaningful (*t* (78) = -.98, *p* = .042). Accordingly, a meaningful dissimilarity between the participants' WTC after the course and the participants in the online class who had a higher level of WTC can be seen.

4.1.4. Addressing Research Question Two

Considering the results of the anxiety questionnaire which was administered to the participants after the course the second research question can be replied. The results are shown in Table 7 and Table 8.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of Second Anxiety Test

	Classes	*N*	Mean	*Std.* Deviation	*Std.* Error Mean
Second Anxiety Test	Online	40	2.83	1.338	.211
	Regular	40	2.95	1.449	.229

Table 7 shows the mean score (*M* = 2.83) and standard deviation (*SD* = 1.34) of the participants in the online class and the mean score (*M* = 2.95) and the standard deviation (*SD* = 1.45) of the participants in the regular class for administering the anxiety questionnaire after the course. The dissimilarity between the mean scores was not considerable. The Independent-Samples *t-test* was managed to assess this issue statistically.

Table 8

Comparing Iranian EFL Learners' Anxiety and Willingness

to Communicate in Regular and Virtual Class

Results of Independent-Samples t-Test for administering the Anxiety Questionnaire After the Course

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	*Sig.*	*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	*Std.* Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Second Anxiety Test	Equal variances assumed	1.264	.264	-.401	78	.690	-.125	.312	-.746	.496
	Equal variances not assumed			-.401	77.505	.690	-.125	.312	-.746	.496

Since the *p-value* was lower greater than .05 in Table 8, the results of the Independent-Samples *t-test* were not meaningful (*t*(78) = -.40, *p* = .690). Accordingly, there was not a meaningful dissimilarity between the contributors' anxiety after the course and the participants in both classes had almost the same level of anxiety.

4.1.5. Addressing Research Question Three

Considering the relationship between the results of the WTC and anxiety questionnaires, the third research question can be replied. The results are shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Results of the Pearson Correlation Test for the Questionnaires

		Online Class		Regular Class	
		Second WTC Test	Second Anxiety Test	Second WTC Test	Second Anxiety Test
Second WTC Test	Pearson Correlation	1	-.652	1	-.424
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000		.006
	N	40	40	40	40
Second Anxiety Test	Pearson Correlation	-.652	1	-.424	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.006	
	N	40	40	40	40

According to Table 8, there was a negative and meaningful relationship between the contributors' anxiety and WTC in the online class ($r = -.65, p < .001$) and in the regular class ($r = -.42, p = .006$) because the r values were lower than 0 and p values were lower than .05. Therefore, when the anxiety increases the WTC decreases, and when the anxiety decreases the WTC increases.

4.2. Discussion

It was uncovered in this research that there is a meaningful, considerable and negative relationship between the contributors' anxiety and WTC either in online or regular classes. The results of the study also showed that the contributors in the online class had a lower level of anxiety and performed significantly better related to WTC. The results of the research agree with the results of the foregoing researches like Farjami and Amirian (2013) who maintained that anxiety is an effective factor in the learning of new materials by students and it reduces the learners' interest in speaking in the class. A great number of EFL learners are afraid of being judged or even being ridiculed by their classmates and therefore they prefer to be quiet as much as possible. Some students are excessively obsessive about making mistakes and they are afraid of saying a sentence incorrectly or pronouncing a word badly and consequently receiving

negative feedback from their teachers and their classmates. These issues can explain the contradictory association between anxiety and WTC which was proved in this study and further previous studies in the literature (e.g., Bashosh et al., 2013; Zhang & Head, 2010).

As previously mentioned, the level of anxiety of the participants in the online class was lower and their WTC was significantly higher than the counterparts in the regular class. This issue can be related to the nature and advantages of online classes. Online the physical presence of the students does not exist and consequently, they do not have face-to-face interaction with each other. This can be a great point for learners who are upset about having errors or being judged by some cassmates in the class. In addition, in online classes, unlimited sources and materials are available to learners which helps them make fewer mistakes which consequently decreases their anxiety and increases their WTC. This point of view is consistent with Warnock (2009) who stated that online classes empower learners to handle the lessons and tasks at their own speed.

On the other hand, there are some studies in the literature which have contrasting results from the results of the current study. For example, Rachmah (2020) maintained that offline classes are more effective for teaching materials in language teaching classes than online classes. Angraeni, Chuzaimah, and Nasir (2019) also stated that offline classes are more effective for teaching vocabulary items to EFL learners than online classes. In another study Russell (2020) stated that online classes increase EFL learners' anxiety of speaking. These different results between the current study and the latter one can be related to time of conducting them. The Russel's study was conducted before the pandemic of while the current one was conducted after the pandemic. The pandemic itself, was a huge source of anxiety for most people in the world especially for students who came to the class where it was more difficult to follow social distance principle and health protocols. This situation could increase the anxiety of the students who came to the class and consequently their WTC.

5. Conclusion

According to the outcomes of the research, it can be mentioned that anxiety negatively affects EFL learners' WTC which has already been highlighted by previous researchers. The new point in this article is the comparison of this issue in online and regular classes. Based on the outcomes of the research, the contributors' WTC in the online classes were higher than the ones who enrolled in regular classes. This can be related to the characteristics of the online classes

or the students' perceptions about these classes. However, it is essential to manage more researches in the future on this issue because the sample of this study was small and it cannot be an accurate representative of EFL learners' community. Moreover, scholars can investigate the effectiveness of online education for various language skills and compare it with normal classes.

The number of online classes is rapidly increasing all over the world. Even after defeating the pandemic of COVID-19, it is possible that some learners would still be interested in continuing their learning English in online classes. Unquestionably, the use of technology for teaching and learning second or foreign languages has some challenges and limitations. For example, economical and specialized issues look to be the biggest challenges. Financial issues are linked to price of the possession of computers, software, telephone lines, and other charges. In some countries like Iran, providing suitable tools for taking part in online classes, like computers and laptops are really unaffordable for a large group of language learners. Technical difficulties refer to the quality and the speed of the Internet which is used handling the class. Undoubtedly, high-speed Internet is necessary for an efficient online class. However, the speed of the Internet is very low in Iran in comparison with most countries in the world and this problem is even more severe in some parts of the country where the families have lower incomes. These difficulties can have a negative effect on the future of online classes which need to be solved as soon as possible.

Anxiety is a great impeding factor that negatively affects EFL learners' language learning especially their speaking. Therefore, language instructors need to employ some methods in the class to reduce their students' anxiety. Because teachers do not have physical contacts with their students in online classes, they can employ some activities to create a fun atmosphere in the class which leads to the reduction of their learners' anxiety. In addition, learners also need to learn some methods to cope with their anxiety more effectively. regarding that both language teachers and learners are expected to experience a major amount of common anxiety because of the Corona Virus pandemic, employing techniques and activities that can lessen anxiety in online classes can cause some comfort to learners to some extent.

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to Communicate in Regular and Virtual Class

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