RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BELIEFS ABOUT GROUP WORK, MOTIVATION, COMMUNICATION CONFIDENCE, AND WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE IN GROUP WORK

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Abstract: **Relationships between Beliefs about Group Work, Motivation, Communication Confidence, and Willingness to Communicate in Group Work.** Group work has been employed in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms to develop students' communicative competence in English as there is a shift from traditional instruction orientation to communicative learning. This article elucidates the relationships between four factors in foreign language group work settings: beliefs about group work, communication confidence, motivation, and willingness to communicate. A questionnaire was administered to 100 advanced EFL learners taking their masters' degree in English Language Teaching at one of the state universities in Indonesia. A tested model in which willingness to communicate in EFL group work is determined by beliefs in EFL group work and fortified by motivation and communication confidence was formulated. The structural equation modeling was used to confirm the model. The findings show that beliefs in EFL group work had relatively strong effect on willingness to communicate in EFL group work via motivation and communication confidence. On the other hand, communication confidence in EFL group work had negative direct relationship with willingness to communicate in EFL Group Work. The students' learning characteristics apparently had influenced their communication confidence as confirmed by the results of the in-depth interview.

Keywords: group work, willingness to communicate, confidence

Abstrak: **Hubungan antara Keyakinan tentang Kerja Kelompok, Motivasi, Kepercayaan Diri dalam Berkomunikasi, dan Kesediaan Berkomunikasi dalam Kerja Kelompok.** Kerja kelompok telah digunakan dalam ruang kelas Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) untuk mengembangkan kompetensi komunikasi siswa dalam bahasa Inggris karena pergeseran orientasi dari pembelajaran tradisional menjadi komunikatif. Artikel ini memaparkan hubungan antara empat faktor dalam kerja kelompok dengan menggunakan bahasa asing: keyakinan tentang kerja kelompok, kepercayaan diri dalam berkomunikasi, motivasi, dan kesediaan untuk berkomunikasi. Kuesioner diberikan kepada 100 pembelajar bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing yang sedang mengambil gelar master mereka dalam program Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris di salah satu universitas negeri di Indonesia. Dirumuskan sebuah model hubungan kesediaan untuk berkomunikasi dalam kelompok kerja dengan bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing ditentukan oleh keyakinan dalam kelompok kerja dan diperkuat oleh motivasi dan kepercayaan diri dalam berkomunikasi. Pemodelan persamaan struktural digunakan untuk mengkonfirmasi model. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa keyakinan tentang kelompok kerja dengan menggunakan bahasa Inggris memiliki pengaruh yang relatif kuat terhadap kesediaan untuk berkomunikasi di dalam kelompok kerja melalui motivasi dan kepercayaan diri dalam berkomunikasi. Sebaliknya kepercayaan diri dalam berkomunikasi dalam kelompok kerja dengan menggunakan bahasa Inggris memiliki hubungan langsung yang negatif terhadap kesediaan untuk berkomunikasi dalam kelompok kerja dengan menggunakan bahasa Inggris. Karakteristik belajar siswa mempengaruhi kepercayaan diri mereka dalam berkomunikasi seperti ditegaskan oleh hasil wawancara mendalam.

Kata kunci: kerja kelompok, kesediaan berkomunikasi, kepercayaan diri

In tertiary levels of education, group work has become as an integral part of English as a foreign language (EFL) instructional classroom activities due to theoretical and pedagogical reasons. Several theoret-

ical approaches offer a rationale for the use of group work as it develops learning experiences towards a variety of interactional features, like collaboratively solving linguistic problems (McDonough, 2004; Ädel, 2011) and mediating EFL learning (Dobao, 2012; Balagiu et al., 2014). In this context, pedagogical reasons for utilizing group work in EFL classrooms have also been suggested since it offers students more time to speak English than when teacher-centered activities are applied (AbuSeileek, 2012), generates students' autonomous learning (Fung, 2014), and promotes less apprehension in learning (McDonough, 2004; Brown, 2007).

One of the numerous benefits ascribed to the use of group work, especially for advanced students, is that it serves as an essential process and ultimate goal of language learning in EFL classrooms. Substantial attention to communicative activity has been emphasized in classrooms through various instructional activities. This is apparent in Brown's (2007: 241) argument that students have to use the language productively and receptively in the classroom activities. In addition, success in EFL is often associated with students' ability to speak English, as EFL students' academic achievement is assessed based on their ability to communicate effectively in the target language (Nunan, 1991; Dörnyei, 2005).

Many investigations have been conducted regarding the pivotal importance of group work in accordance with communication enhancement in EFL classes. However, only a subset of studies investigating group work has been considered improvement in using English, and fewer looked at causal relationship on factors that successfully enhance communication in English. McDonough's (2004) study on group work in EFL settings found that students who had more participation during the pair and group activities demonstrated improved English forms verbal production, although they perceived the activities to be less useful in language learning. Another study conducted by AbuSeileek (2012) found that the size of group work (five-student group) influenced achievement in communication skills.

Previous studies have been conducted on willingness to communicate (WTC) in EFL context. Yashima's (2002) study was conducted on WTC as one of the framework to examine the relation among L2 learning and L2 communication variables. A study conducted on the relation among WTC, communication confidence, motivation, learner belief, and classroom environment found that classroom environment had strong effect on WTC, communication confidence, learner beliefs, and motivation (Peng and Woodrow, 2010). Although the relation-

ships among factors predicting WTC have been reported in the above-mentioned research, studies on WTC in EFL Group Work focusing on advanced students are still scarce. It seems to be a lead to a question whether willingness to communicate in English can occur in an EFL group work.

A previous research study has been conducted to find the causal relationships between beliefs about group work, communication confidence in L2 group work, and willingness to communicate in L2 Group Work (Fushino, 2010). The hypothesis of a study that willingness to communicate in the second language (L2) group work strengthened by communication confidence is constructed and tested. The study involves 729 first-year university students in a university acknowledged as a prestigious university in Japan,. Each student joined the English program which employed an English-only policy, so teachers were told to use English for instruction in the two courses they had to take, namely Communicative Course and a Language and Culture Course, regardless of the students' English proficiency. Japanese language was avoided as much as possible even in the lower proficiency classes. A questionnaire in Japanese language was administered to explore the relationship among beliefs about group work, communication confidence in L2 group work, and willingness to communicate in EFL group work. The findings show that teachers should find ways to elevate students' communication confidence and beliefs about group work to boost willingness to communicate in English language, particularly in enhancing students' self-perceived communicative competence.

Referring to Fushino's (2010) study, the present study attempts to explore further findings that willingness to communicate in English occurs in group-work activities both inside and outside the classes. Based on the study, the present study was developed by varying (1) the subjects of the study, (2) the variables, and (3) the test of reliability and validity of the questionnaire. This study elicits information from advanced EFL students, majoring English Language Teaching, while in Fushino's study, the participants were from non-English departments.

Learning motivation is included in the current study as one of the latent variables affecting willingness to communicate (Lightbown & Spada, 2006) in EFL Group Work. Gardner and Lambert (1972) specifically proposed that learning motivation consists of instrumental motivation, which concerns with utilitarian purpose of the language learners in learning the foreign language such as to get academic titles and obtain good grades; and integrative motivation, which deals with learners' interest to get

along with the target culture such as to be able to appreciate some authentic works and to think the way the native speakers do.

Beliefs about group work, also a latent variable, are constructed based on beliefs about value and usefulness of group work, as well as negative perception about traditional instruction orientation. The beliefs are not only in the cognitive domain but also social construct conceived in the social interaction whereby students gain experiences and face problems (Barcelos, 2006) in learning a foreign language. The beliefs are accordingly assumed to have relationship with willingness to communicate in L2, which is defined as a readiness of a person using L2 to get involved in a particular discourse at a specific time (MacIntyre et al., 1998: 547)

Another latent variable in the study is communication confidence. In L2 context, MacIntyre et al. (1998) proposed that communication confidence comprises L2 communication apprehension and perceived L2 communicative competence. Their idea is adapted in the context of EFL in this study. Communication apprehension deals with students' uneasiness in communicating in groups and perceived communicative competence concerns students' self-awareness of their ability to communicate in English. Communication confidence is therefore assumed to have strong effect on willingness to communicate, the observed variable.

In the light of the above explanation, the present study is conducted to investigate the relationships among factors that may affect students' willingness to communicate in EFL group work. It is intended to investigate the relationship between beliefs about EFL group work and willingness to communicate in English, particularly in group-work settings, via learning motivation and communication confidence in EFL group work. This present study is to provide insights into the teaching and learning process involving group work activities in EFL setting.

METHODS

Participants

The participants were 100 first-year students of Master's Program in English Language Teaching at Universitas Negeri Malang. They were chosen because they were considered advanced EFL learners who were actively using English in their learning activities in the classrooms, both individually and in group work. The total number of students in the program was actually 105 but when the questionnaires were distributed, two of them were absent and the answers of three other students to the questions in the questionnaire were illegible. Later, ten of them (five female and five male) were chosen randomly to be involved in in-depth interviews conducted to explore participants' reasoning and confirm the findings for better understanding about the phenomena.

Instruments

In the present study, a set of questions on a 5-point Likert scale (5= strongly agree; 4= agree; 3= undecided; 2= disagree; 1=disagree), which was adapted from Fushino's (2010) questionnaire, was used to collect the data. The questionnaire consisted of 8 subscales and had 59 items in total. The total number of items in this questionnaire was originally 72. However, after a try-out was administered to fifteen advanced EFL learners, who were excluded from the participants, to measure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, only 59 items were considered good for the purpose of the present study.
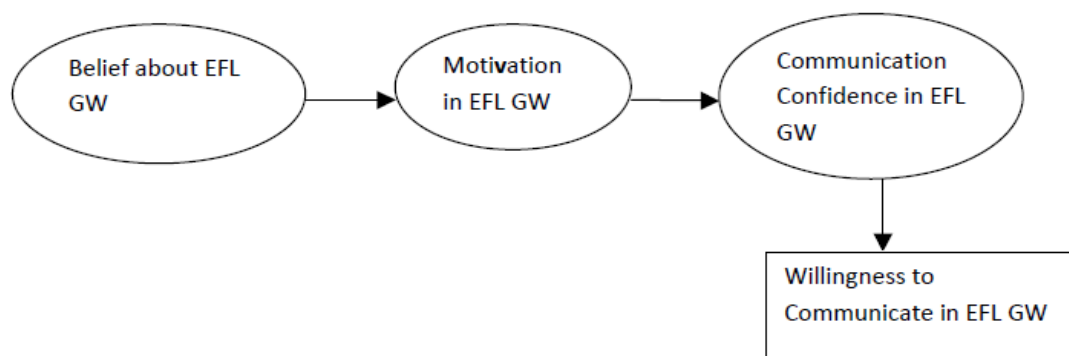

Figure 1. English Foreign Language (EFL) group work (GW) model (WTC=willingness to communicate).

From the try-out, the questionnaire validation was measured based on Pearson Product moment correlation. Among them 16 questionnaire items were not valid and consequently eliminated. In conformity with the results of the try-out, the reliability indices of the questionnaire sections were as follows: (1) communication apprehension in EFL group work (7 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .888$); (2) self-perceived communicative competence in EFL group work (7 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .871$); (3) positive beliefs about the value of group work (5 items, $\alpha = .861$); (4) negative traditional instruction orientation (6 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .739$); (5) beliefs of group work usefulness (17 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .962$); (6) willingness to communicate in EFL group work (9 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .918$); (7) instrumental motivation (3 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .638$); and (8) integrative motivation (2 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = .930$).

The questionnaire sections were mainly utilized to elicit information regarding students' willingness to communicate in group-work activities using English (as shown in Figure 1). Beliefs about EFL Group Work consisted of Beliefs of Group Work Usefulness, Positive Beliefs about the Value of Group Work, and Negative Traditional Instruction Orientation. Learning Motivation included Instrumental Motivation and Integrative Motivation. Communicative Confidence in EFL Group Work dealt with Communication Apprehension and Self-perceived Communicative Competence in EFL Group Work. Willingness to Communicate in EFL Group Work indicated student's enthusiasm to communicate in English in their group-work activities.

As stated before, an in-depth interview was also adopted to collect data. The questions in the interview sessions were adapted from items in the questionnaire to elicit students' reasoning of their responses to the questionnaire. In order to obtain sufficient information, the questions from the questionnaire were modified. The interview was aimed at explaining the rationales behind the findings of the study.

Data Collection

Before collecting the data, the researchers obtained permission from the related language departments and professors/instructors in charge. The questionnaire was then administered in five classes in two weeks. Prior to distributing the questionnaire, participants were all informed of the objective of the study, and the time needed to fill in the questionnaire (about 20 min). They were assured that their participation would be voluntary, anonymous and at no cost to their academic assessment. Participants filled in the questionnaires in the classroom.

A further investigation in a form of in-depth interview was conducted after the data from the questionnaire were analyzed to look into the rationales behind the quantitative results. The participants in the interview were randomly selected consisting of five male and five female students constituting about ten percent of the whole population who filled in the questionnaires. Additionally, participants were balanced in terms of the gender to avoid gender biases. The in-depth interview was mainly intended to reveal whether there were some other external factors which potentially determine participants' (1) beliefs about group work activities, (2) motivation in learning English, (3) anxiousness or confidence in communicating in group-work settings using English, and (4) perceived communicative competence to be assured to speak in English.

Data analysis

To measure the model statistics (Degree of Freedom, Chi Square, and P Value), reliability analyses of the scales (the questionnaire), and inter-correlations between the variables under investigation, SPSS 18 was utilized. Chi-square tests of Independence, being suitable for nominal data, were conducted in order to check whether there were significant differences between Belief about Group Work, Motivation, Communication Confidence in EFL Group Work, and Willingness to Communicate in EFL group work. These differences were significant at 0.05 level.

Model Statistics		
Degrees of Freedom =		1462
Chi Square	=	2716,9501
P Value	=	0,0000

Furthermore, to test the hypothesis model, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was applied. The analysis of causal modeling was done using TETRAD (Pearl, 1998). SEM is a statistical modeling technique vastly used in behavioral sciences and consists of a series of confirmatory factor analysis and regression or path analysis (Hox and Berger, 1998). In this respect, SEM is used to test hypotheses about relations among observed and latent variables (Hoyle, 1995) of which purpose is to present an explanation for the relationships within the set of variables (MacCallum, 1995). Murayama (1998) states that structural equation modeling starts from a conceptual-based model specifying the relationships

among a set of variables, provides estimation of all hypothesized relationships between the variables, and presents information on the plausibility of the model specifically concerning the cause-effect relationships. The current study intends to evaluate the relationships between the three latent variables (Beliefs about Group Work, Motivation, and Communication Confidence in EFL Group work) and Willingness to Communicate in EFL Group Work, an observed variable. The relationships showing the effect of one variable on another can be seen in the graphical aspect presented in SEM (Kline, 2011). Additionally, in order to provide rationales of the output of the statistical measurement, the transcripts from the interview were analyzed using content analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 2 shows the formulated hypothesis model of the study presenting the possible relationship among the variables. In this model, beliefs about EFL group work, a latent variable, indirectly affects willingness to communicate in EFL group work, an observed variable, via two other latent variables, motivation and communication confidence in EFL group work. Beliefs about group work have three indicator variables: beliefs of group work usefulness, Negative traditional instruction orientation, and positive beliefs about the value of group work. Motivation has two constructs: instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. Communication confidence in EFL group work has two indicator variables: communication apprehension in EFL group work and self-perceived communicative competence in EFL group work. The rectangles in the model represent the observed variables, whereas the ovals stand for the latent variables. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used as a statistical method to test the hypothesis model. There are three kinds of relationships between the variables, whether observed or latent, in structural equation model: the association, the direct effect and the indirect effect (Hoyle, 1995). The focus of the current study was more to see the direct effect and the indirect effect of the variables in the model.
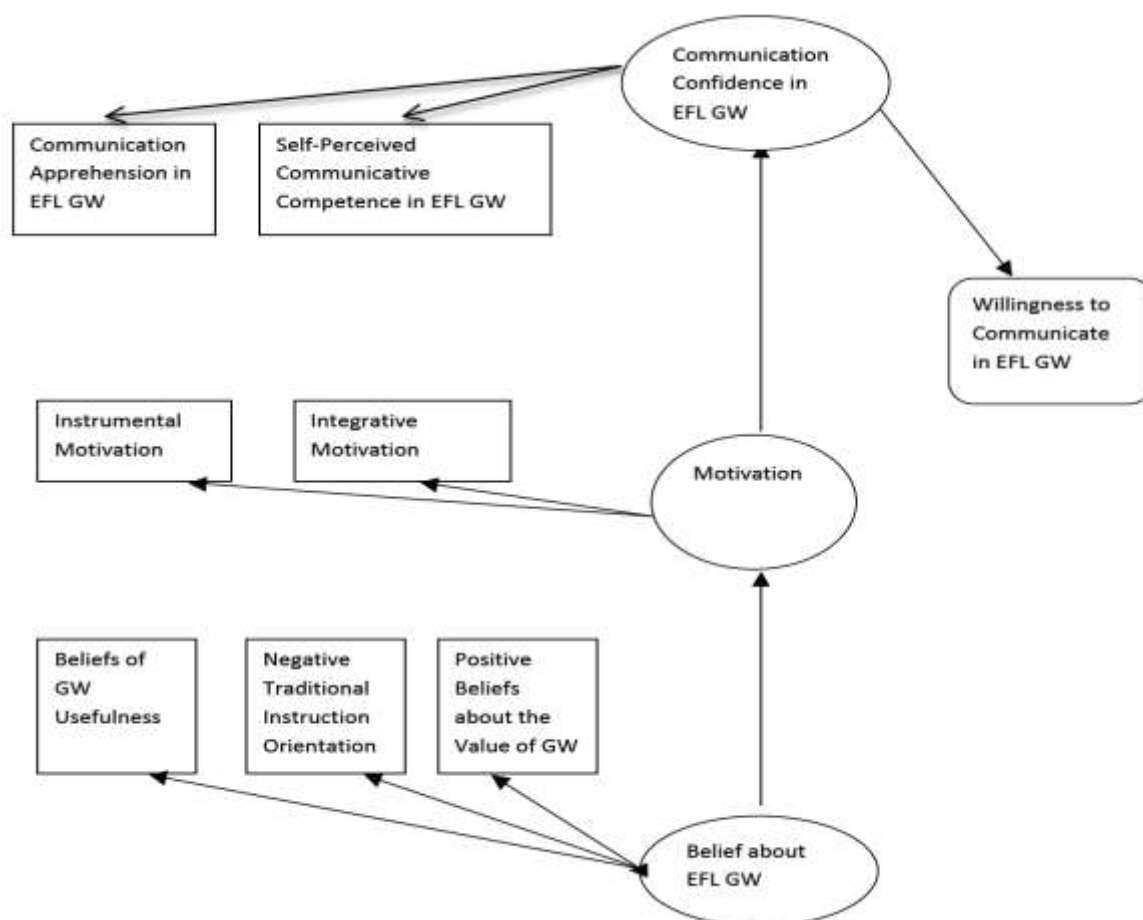

Figure 2. EFL Group Work Structural Model (Tested Model)

The results in Figure 3 support our hypotheses that beliefs about EFL group work indirectly affects willingness to communicate in EFL group work via motivation and communication confidence in EFL group work. The results indicate that communication confidence in EFL group work was a predictor of WTC in EFL group work. Communication confidence in EFL group work has a relatively strong negative direct correlation (-.5602) on WTC in EFL group work. The result seems to be contradictory to Fushino's (2010) notion that communication confidence in EFL group work has a significant effect on WTC in L2 group work. Motivation has a very strong indirect negative correlation (-1.0332) on WTC in EFL group work. Despite the negative correlation, it seems to confirm the notion that learning motivation could significantly predict willingness to communicate (MacIntyre et al., 2003 and Peng, 2007). Motivation has a strong direct negative correlation (-1.0332) on communication confidence in EFL group work. Beliefs about EFL group work have a relatively strong indirect effect (.5415) on WTC in EFL group work. It seems to confirm Fushino's (2010) idea that beliefs about EFL group work affect indirectly WTC in L2 group work. Beliefs about EFL group work have a strong direct effect (.5415) on motivation, the strongest direct effect compared to the direct effect of motivation (-1.0332) on communication confidence in EFL group work and that of communication confidence in EFL Group Work (-.5602) on WTC in EFL group work. The results signify that the indirect effect of beliefs about EFL group work (.5415) on WTC in EFL group work was stronger than the indirect effect of motivation (-1.0332) on WTC in EFL group work.

The point in which communication confidence in EFL group work has negative correlation with WTC in EFL group work and beliefs about group work has positive indirect correlation with WTC in EFL group work seems to be antithetic. However, this point can be easily understood when it is related to Indonesian culture and characteristics, which to a certain degree influence the learner characteristics of Indonesian EFL students (Exley, 2005). The culture teaches people to act unassertively, which is resulted in students' lacking confidence, hesitancy and passiveness in the realm of education. In the study, even though all of the participants graduated from English Department in their undergraduate studies, they still had lack of confidence in communicating their ideas in English particularly in academic settings.
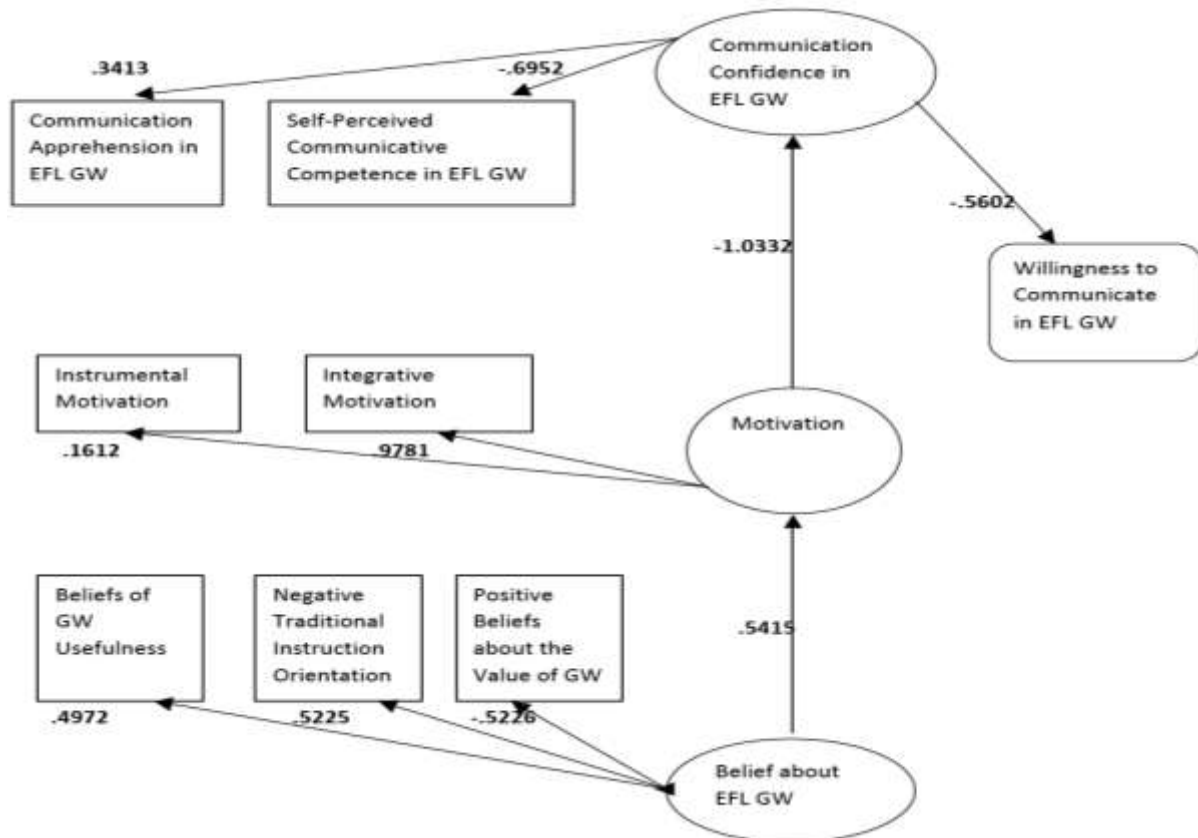

Figure 3. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) Result (Final Model)

The fact that Motivation has indirect negative correlation with WTC in EFL group work seems to be contradictory. The high willingness to communicate actively in English in a group work should be in the same direction with high learning motivation. However, when examined more closely in the in-depth interview conducted with some of the participants, it was revealed that students were not willing to have discussion in English and became less motivated in speaking in English in group-work activities because they preferred using their native language when discussing with their classmates, even though the topic was in English and related to ELT. They said that they could explain their ideas to their classmates more comprehensively in group-work discussions in their native language than in English.

Communication confidence in EFL group work has two indicator variables, namely communication apprehension in EFL group work and self-perceived communicative competence in EFL group work. The regression weight of communication confidence in EFL group work to communication apprehension in EFL group work is .3413. In contrast, the regression weight of communication confidence in EFL group work to self-perceived communicative competence is -.6952. The findings suggest that communication apprehension in EFL group work could more strongly predict communication apprehension in EFL group work than self-perceived communication competence.

The fact that communication apprehension in EFL group work has positive correlation with communication confidence and self-perceived communication competence has negative correlation with communication confidence in EFL group work seems contradictory. This fact, however, becomes clear when associated with the learner characteristics of the students. From the in-depth interview, it was revealed that the students were reluctant to convey their ideas in English especially when their background knowledge was not related to ELT. It seems to be contrary to the fact that they had been exposed to the use of English communicatively in academic settings as some of them graduated from English literature program. The subjects offered in the Master's program were different from those they previously learned in their undergraduate program that caused hesitancy in communicating their ideas in group-work discussion in English. They were afraid of making mistakes when speaking English and not being able to convey their ideas comprehensively. It seems to confirm that Indonesian EFL students' un-

easiness in communicating with their friends has something more to do with saving face so that they are not embarrassed in front of the group members (Exley. 2005). The reluctance of conveying ideas in English was also confirmed by the fact that English is a foreign language that is hardly ever spoken in daily conversation.

Motivation is influenced by two constructs, instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. The regression weight of motivation to integrative motivation was .9791, whereas that of motivation to instrumental motivation was .1612. It indicates that integrative motivation is a stronger predictor of learning motivation than instrumental motivation. It seems to be contradictory to the fact that as advanced EFL learners taking their Master's degree, the students should be more motivated to get good grades so that they could obtain their Master's degree and eventually get better jobs with good salary. When more painstakingly explored, the students' motivation is reasonable because they prepare themselves to be teachers and lecturers after finishing their Master's program. The students seemed to focus more on integrative motivation in order to be able to understand English the way the native speakers do so that they can make use of some authentic materials after they graduate. However, these two different orientations of motivation are viewed to be related entities. It seems to be in line with Lamb's (2004a) argument that, for Indonesian students, integrative and instrumental motivations in learning English are complex concepts that cannot be easily differentiated as discrete concepts.

As motivation has direct negative correlation with communication confidence in EFL group work, the reason that students are more motivated in reading English books or watching films in English language seems to account for such a correlation. In reading books or watching films, they were not required to speak in English. Even though they had to discuss the books they read in a group-work activity, they were more comfortable using their native language in the discussion. It seems to be in line with the argument that students integrate their 'English-speaking international version' and 'Indonesian-speaking self' (Lamb, 2004b) while learning English. The argument implies that the students are motivated in learning English to get better knowledge and global access to the world, but at the same time they are still comfortable in using their native language when communicating with other Indonesians.

In a group in which they felt that their English was at the equal level, the students conveyed that they could be more comfortable and confident in speaking English. However, it could not easily change the nature of the characteristics of the students. As Asians, particularly Indonesians, they tended to be aloof when they had to speak up what they had in mind. They accordingly seemed to lack in self-confidence when talking to others as giving opinions was deemed to be difficult because their culture affected how to communicate with other people (Nguyen, 2011). Students' feeling that they had positive beliefs about the value of group work made them to be willing to communicate in a group work setting. They nevertheless still hesitated to convey their ideas in full English with their friends. The culture that does not urge students to express their ideas and speak up frankly becomes the rationale of the findings. The feeling that students were uneasy in speaking English as they were afraid that what they wanted to explain would be easily understood by their friends and whether they could give full explanation of complex ideas they wanted to share was another vindication.

Beliefs about EFL group work have almost equal predictive power for Beliefs in group work usefulness (.4972) and negative traditional instruction orientation (.5225). The results seem to confirm the argument that there has been a shift from behaviorism to constructivism in language teaching (Jacobs and Farrel, 2001) which is signified by a shift from traditional instruction orientation to a more communicative learning in EFL classroom settings (Garrett, 2008). The positive values of beliefs of group work usefulness support the idea that group work is useful for students as a medium to convey their ideas in English, simply because EFL learners will find it important to communicate what they have in mind using English particularly in group work, either because they feel that their level of English proficiency is high-intermediate to advanced or they need more practices to communicate in English in order to be more assertive in a group work setting, as revealed in the in-depth interview. The idea is fortified by the fact that students have negative view on traditional instruction as they have more positive viewpoints towards the value of group work. Students who perceived traditional instruction to be negative presumably viewed group work to have more value on them as they could actively get involved in the discussion and felt easier to complete their task when working in groups. They found it beneficial to participate in a group discussion in which they felt more comforta-

ble in communicating rather than just listening to the lectures without having a chance to express what they had in mind. On the other hand, the regression weight of beliefs about group work to positive beliefs about group work was -.5226, which is a contradictory. The negative value of positive beliefs about group work seems to be more related to students' view of the application of group work as classroom activities.

CONCLUSION

The hypothesis model suggests that willingness to communicate is determined by belief about group work via motivation and communication confidence. The results show that beliefs about group work have positive correlation with the willingness to communicate. The students' willingness to communicate seems to be influenced by the learning characteristics of the students. The fact that students are reluctant to directly express what they have in mind is one of the factors why communication confidence of students in group work is low. Students have positive belief and attitude about willingness to communicate in group work, but they still lack self-confidence when they have to share their ideas in English to convey their complex ideas.

Since beliefs in EFL group work affect students' willingness to communicate, a teacher should serve more actively as a facilitator in students' group work activities. In fact, it is difficult to change the students' learning characteristics and to lessen their hesitancy in conveying ideas in the discussions, although they have positive attitudes towards group-work activities and also find group work to be more useful and valuable in their learning process compared to teacher-led traditional instruction. If students have more chance in doing some group work activities, they will have more opportunities to boost their confidence in communicating in English that may affect their willingness to communicate. The findings which suggest that willingness to communicate can be predicted by the value students believe about group work rather than their communication confidence seem to corroborate the idea that willingness to communicate in L2 or EFL settings is a complex matter (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

What still needs to be investigated is the relationship between motivation, both instrumental and integrative motivation, communication confidence, and willingness to communicate involving a larger sample size. For advanced EFL students, instrumental

motivation should be a stronger predictor of learning motivation than integrative motivation since pursuing a further study in Master's program is deemed as a stepping-stone to get a better job. The same case also applies for communication confidence as a strong predictor of willingness to communicate.

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