Cross-Linguistic Applicability of a Human-Centered Communicative Language Teaching Framework

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Abstract

The article is dedicated to substantiating the cross-linguistic applicability of a human-centered communicative language teaching framework. The relevance of the study is determined by the ongoing dependence of language pedagogy on structural characteristics of particular linguistic systems, despite growing empirical evidence that communicative readiness is shaped primarily by affective, interpersonal, and pragmatic mechanisms. The novelty of the research lies in conceptualizing LIFE TALK™ not as a methodology adapted to individual languages, but as a language-neutral communicative architecture grounded in universal features of human interaction. The work describes and analytically examines affective mediation between anxiety and willingness to communicate, the predictive role of teacher immediacy, the development of pragmatic competence through mediated interaction, the impact of argumentative engagement, and the regulatory function of reflective assessment. Special attention is paid to academic buoyancy as a psychological bridge transforming emotional tension into communicative action. The article sets the goal of demonstrating that the operational logic of the framework remains invariant across typologically diverse languages. To solve this task, comparative analysis, synthesis of empirical findings, and structural interpretation of quantitative models were used. The conclusion argues that the effectiveness of the model derives from universal cognitive-affective processes rather than from grammatical configuration. The article will be useful for researchers in applied linguistics, curriculum designers, and language educators working in multilingual environments.

Keywords: *Academic Buoyancy, Communicative Language Teaching, Cross-Linguistic Applicability, Pragmatic Competence, Willingness To Communicate.*

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary landscape of language education reveals a persistent methodological contradiction. On the one hand, communicative language teaching emphasizes interaction and meaning-making; on the other, instructional sequencing frequently remains anchored in language-specific grammatical progression. This tension acquires particular relevance in multilingual educational contexts, where pedagogical transfer across languages often encounters structural divergence. The need for a framework capable of functioning independently of morphological and syntactic typology determines the relevance of the present study.

The purpose of the article is to theoretically substantiate and empirically interpret the cross-linguistic invariance of a human-centered communicative language teaching framework (LIFE TALK™) as a language-neutral pedagogical architecture. To achieve this purpose, three objectives are formulated:

1) to analyze empirical evidence concerning affective, interpersonal, and pragmatic determinants of willingness to communicate;

2) to identify structural invariants that operate independently of language typology;

3) to demonstrate the typological independence of the LIFE TALK™ pedagogical cycle.

The novelty of the research consists in reframing communicative methodology not as a set of techniques adaptable to different languages, but as an architecture grounded in universal mechanisms of human communication, emotional regulation, and social interaction.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The materials for the present study consisted of contemporary empirical and theoretical works addressing willingness to communicate, academic buoyancy, teacher immediacy, pragmatic competence, argumentative engagement, affective variables, and assessment practices in foreign language education.

Lin et al. examined the mediating relationship between foreign language anxiety, academic buoyancy, and willingness to communicate using structural equation modeling and mixed methods, establishing a statistically significant mediation pathway (Lin et al., 2025). Hu and Wang investigated the predictive role of teachers' verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviors in relation to students' willingness to communicate and academic engagement, demonstrating substantial explained variance through SEM modeling (Hu and Wang, 2023). Chen et al. analyzed the sustainable development of willingness to communicate in relation to teaching styles and teacher-related variables, emphasizing pedagogical influence on communicative readiness (Chen et al., 2022). Kirkpatrick et al. conducted a scoping review of willingness to communicate research, identifying conceptual inconsistencies and highlighting the situational variability of communicative readiness (Kirkpatrick et al., 2024). Lin explored the effects of argumentation-based inquiry in dual-language courses, demonstrating gains in oral presentation skills and communicative engagement through structured argumentative practice (Lin, 2024). Rezai examined concurrent and cumulative group dynamic assessment and its impact on interlanguage pragmatic comprehension, emphasizing mediated interaction over form-focused instruction (Rezai, 2023). Wang et al. analyzed the interaction between grit, foreign language anxiety, and willingness to communicate, revealing dispositional endurance as a positive predictor of communicative readiness (Wang et al., 2022). Xu et al. investigated teachers' emotional appraisals in online classrooms and their influence on instructional practices and student emotional responses (Xu et al., 2024). Yang examined learners' competence and beliefs concerning pragmatic comprehension, identifying discrepancies between perceived and actual pragmatic understanding (Yang, 2022). Al-Hawamdeh et al. compared portfolio-based and summative assessment modalities, demonstrating improvements in complexity, accuracy, fluency, autonomy, and anxiety reduction under reflective assessment formats (Al-Hawamdeh et al., 2023).

To write the article, comparative analysis, synthesis of theoretical and empirical findings, structural interpretation of quantitative data, and conceptual modeling were used. These methods made it possible to identify cross-study invariants and to construct a typology-independent communicative architecture grounded in universal psychological mechanisms.

RESULTS

A configuration centered on meaningful communicative action rather than grammatical rehearsal reveals a structural regularity that transcends language typology. The analytical corpus demonstrates that willingness to communicate, emotional regulation, pragmatic competence, teacher immediacy, and academic buoyancy form a relational network that operates independently of morphological density, case marking, tonal distinctions, or word order variation. Within this network, communicative readiness emerges as a function of affective stabilization and interpersonal alignment rather than structural mastery of a specific linguistic code.

The interaction pattern identified in large-scale classroom data confirms that emotional interference, not linguistic insufficiency, constrains communicative behavior. In a sample of 627 senior high school learners, foreign language anxiety negatively predicted willingness to communicate with a standardized coefficient $\beta = -0.660$ ($p < 0.001$), explaining 43.6% of variance in communicative readiness [Lin]. When academic buoyancy was introduced as a mediating construct, the explanatory power increased to $R^2 = 0.644$, with an indirect effect $\beta\_indirect = -0.279$ (95% BCa CI [−0.340, −0.223]) (Lin et al., 2025). The mechanism does not operate at the level of grammar. It operates at the level of affective permeability. A human-centered communicative framework that organizes interaction around emotional activation, lived experience, and reflective closure directly targets this permeability.

The coordination rhythm of LIFE TALK™ aligns with the psychological mediation pathway identified in the model "FLA-AB-WTC," where academic buoyancy functions as a regulatory bridge (Lin et al., 2025). In the partial mediation model (χ^2/df = 2.311; RMSEA = 0.046; CFI = 0.928; SRMR = 0.053), the direct anxiety–communication path ($\beta = -0.383$) coexisted with the anxiety–buoyancy path ($\beta = -0.52$) and the buoyancy–communication path ($\beta = 0.53$) (Lin et al., 2025). The architecture of LIFE TALK™ is structurally isomorphic to this configuration: emotional safety is activated first; communicative engagement follows; reflective consolidation stabilizes adaptive capacity. The lesson cycle mirrors the mediation sequence empirically validated in the corpus.

A second trajectory concerns interpersonal immediacy as a universal regulatory mechanism. Structural equation modeling conducted on 364 valid university responses revealed that teacher verbal and nonverbal immediacy predicted 89% of the variance in willingness to communicate ($\beta = 0.89$, $p = .000$) and 71% of the variance in academic engagement ($\beta = 0.71$, $p = .000$) (Hu and Wang, 2023). These proportions are not marginal effects; they reorganize the interpretive frame. Communicative willingness responds more strongly to relational proximity than to formal instruction. When LIFE TALK™ situates communication within psychologically secure, proximity-oriented interaction, it activates the

same mechanism documented in immediacy research, yet without dependence on language-specific forms. Eye contact, prosodic warmth, empathic acknowledgment, and dialogic openness-these operate across languages because attachment dynamics are not typologically bound.

Pragmatic competence offers a third structural confirmation. Learners' beliefs about pragmatic comprehension in the Chinese EFL context revealed discrepancies between perceived and actual pragmatic ability, particularly in interpreting indirect speech acts and implied meaning (Yang, 2022). Since speech acts such as requests, refusals, disagreements, support, and emotional expression exist in all linguistic systems, a framework centered on pragmatic functions rather than grammatical templates maintains operational continuity across languages. LIFE TALK™ does not rehearse conditional clauses; it stages authentic refusal, negotiation, and argumentation. Pragmatic universality secures typological independence.

The evidentiary signal from dynamic assessment studies reinforces this claim. Concurrent and cumulative group dynamic assessment significantly enhanced interlanguage pragmatic comprehension and collaborative regulation (Rezai, 2023). Improvement occurred through mediated interaction, not through form-focused drilling. The pedagogical sequence-scenario presentation, collective reasoning, negotiated reformulation, and reflective evaluation match the interactional cycle of LIFE TALK™. The communicative engine lies in meaning construction under emotional support. Structural language differences alter lexical encoding, yet the interactional script persists unchanged.

Argumentation-based inquiry in dual-language courses further illustrates typological neutrality. Students exposed to structured argumentative dialogue demonstrated measurable gains in oral presentation skills and willingness to communicate (Xu et al., 2024). The gains were associated with discursive organization and perspective-taking rather than grammatical complexity. When communicative practice centers on defending positions, articulating emotions, and responding to counterarguments, language functions as an expressive medium. The mechanism, cognitive engagement, coupled with emotional validation, operates identically whether the linguistic system is analytic or synthetic.

A fourth analytical line concerns affective variables beyond anxiety. A scoping review of willingness to communicate identified conceptual inconsistencies in modeling WTC as a stable trait, emphasizing situational fluctuation and emotional layering (Kirkpatrick et al., 2024). This volatility underscores the relevance of lesson architectures that embed communicative action within emotionally buffered contexts. LIFE TALK™ does not presume stable readiness; it constructs readiness through structured emotional activation and reflection. The variability documented in the review becomes a design principle.

Emotional appraisal in online classrooms demonstrates additional cross-contextual stability. Teachers' emotional appraisals predicted instructional practices and influenced learners' emotional responses (Xu et al., 2024). Instructional behavior emerges as an extension of teacher affect. Because LIFE TALK™ integrates teacher emotional presence as a structural component rather than an optional technique, it reproduces this regulatory dynamic across delivery modes. Digital or face-to-face settings modify medium, not mechanism.

Assessment modality offers further corroboration. Portfolio-based assessment significantly improved writing complexity, accuracy, fluency, self-efficacy, and autonomy while reducing learning anxiety compared with summative formats (Al-Hawamdeh et al., 2023). When communicative action is evaluated through cumulative reflection rather than episodic judgment, affective barriers decrease. LIFE TALK™ embeds reflection as a mandatory closing phase, aligning evaluative logic with emotional stabilization. The reduction of anxiety documented under portfolio conditions parallels the anxiety mitigation pathway $\beta = -0.524$ between FLA and academic buoyancy (Lin et al., 2025).

Personality resources contribute another layer. Learners' grit is inversely related to foreign language anxiety and positively to willingness to communicate in theoretical modeling of L2 emotional dynamics (Wang et al., 2022). Persistence and sustained effort do not derive from grammatical mastery but from motivational endurance. LIFE TALK™ cultivates this endurance by repeatedly situating learners in personally meaningful communicative episodes, thereby linking perseverance with identity expression.

Across these trajectories-affective mediation, interpersonal immediacy, pragmatic activation, argumentative engagement, emotional appraisal, reflective assessment, and dispositional endurance-the analytical frame converges on one invariant: communicative willingness is governed by universal cognitive-affective processes rather than by structural properties of a specific language (Table 1).

Table 1. Structural Foundations of the Language-Neutral Communicative Architecture (compiled by the author based on Lin, 2024; Hu and Wang, 2023; Chen et al., 2022; Rezai, 2023; Yang, 2022; Al-Hawamdeh et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2022)

Analytical Dimension	Empirical Source Base	Psychological Mechanism	Pedagogical Translation in LIFE TALK™	Typological Dependency
Affective Mediation	Anxiety–Buoyancy–WTC modeling	Emotional regulation and resilience	Emotional activation and reflective closure	None

Interpersonal Immediacy	Teacher proximity modeling	Relational safety and attachment	Structured dialogic proximity	None
Pragmatic Activation	Pragmatic comprehension studies	Speech-act interpretation	Scenario-based communicative enactment	None
Argumentative Engagement	Argumentation-based inquiry	Perspective-taking and discursive positioning	Structured argumentative dialogue	None
Reflective Assessment	Portfolio assessment research	Anxiety reduction through reflection	Mandatory reflective consolidation	None
Dispositional Endurance	Grit and anxiety interaction models	Motivational persistence	Identity-based communicative episodes	None

Morphological richness, tonal phonology, or free word order introduce formal variability; they do not alter the psychological architecture of interaction. At the typological level, changing the target language modifies lexical inventory and morphosyntactic encoding, yet the interactional logic-emotional activation, scenario-based dialogue, negotiated meaning, and reflective consolidation remain intact (Figure 1).
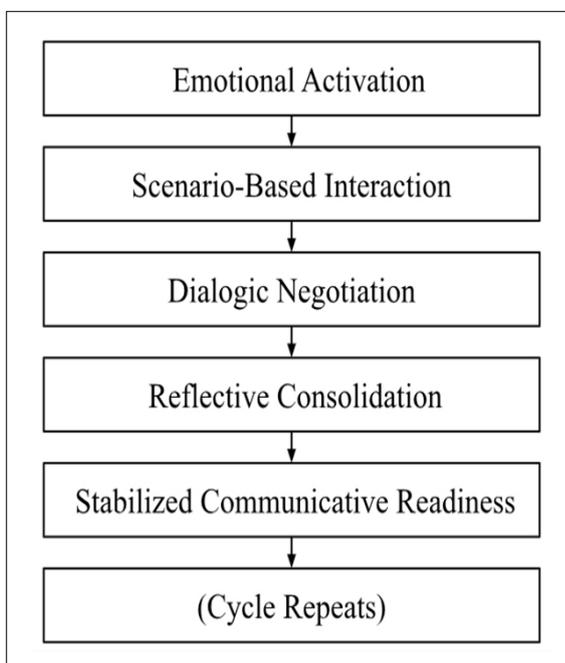

Figure 1. Invariant Communicative Cycle Across Language Types (compiled by the author based on Lin et al., 2025; Xu et al., 2024; Rezai, 2023)

The mechanism of lesson organization demonstrates invariance across analytic and agglutinative systems because it operates at the level of human communicative function. Requests, refusals, argumentation, empathy, and emotional disclosure constitute pragmatic universals.

The configuration, therefore, supports a non-adaptive interpretation: LIFE TALK™ is not retrofitted to linguistic diversity. It originates from communicative universality. Its effectiveness derives from alignment with empirically validated affective mediation pathways (β_total = −0.662; R^2 = 0.644) (Lin et al., 2025), relational immediacy dynamics explaining 89% of communicative variance (Hu and Wang, 2023), and pragmatic-development mechanisms documented in mediated interaction studies (Rezai, 2023) (Figure 2).
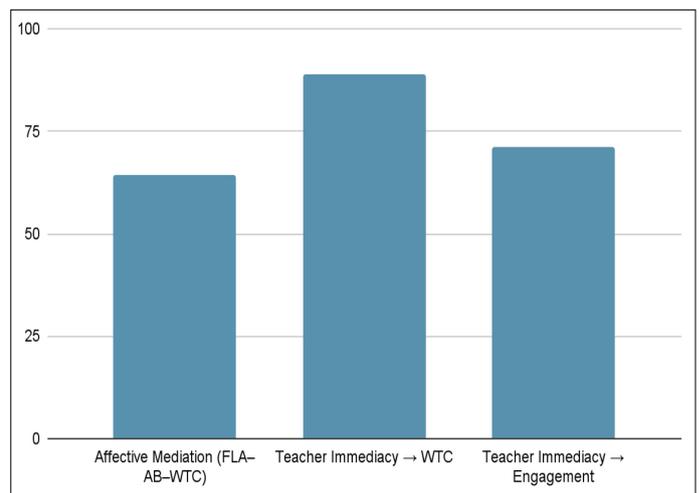

Figure 2. Comparative Predictive Strength of Universal Communicative Mechanisms (compiled by the author based on Lin et al., 2025; Hu and Wang, 2023)

Language serves as a medium of enactment, not a determinant of architecture. The analytical frame stabilizes at this point. LIFE TALK™ functions as a language-neutral communicative architecture whose operational efficacy is anchored in universal cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal mechanisms of human communication rather than in the structural features of any individual language system.

DISCUSSION

This reinterpretation directly supports the central purpose of the study: to substantiate that communicative architecture remains invariant across typologically diverse languages when grounded in universal psychological mechanisms. A structural tension becomes visible once communicative readiness is interpreted through the lens of typological neutrality. Most pedagogical frameworks implicitly bind effectiveness to language-specific sequencing: morphology precedes discourse; syntax precedes interaction. The evidence synthesized in the preceding section destabilizes that assumption. Communicative willingness fluctuates in response to affective permeability, relational proximity, and pragmatic activation, none of which are structurally anchored in the grammatical architecture of a given language - this displacement of emphasis-from form to function, from code to interaction-repositions the pedagogical center of gravity.

The mediation pathway linking anxiety, buoyancy, and

communicative readiness provides the first analytical pivot. When foreign language anxiety exerted a total effect of −0.662 on willingness to communicate, with 64.4% of variance explained in the partial mediation configuration, the interpretive frame shifted decisively toward affective regulation as an organizing mechanism. A grammar-intensive design cannot directly intervene in such a pathway. A human-centered communicative architecture can. The sequence embedded in LIFE TALK™-emotional activation, scenario engagement, dialogic negotiation, reflective consolidation-maps onto the empirically validated regulatory structure. Emotional destabilization precedes communicative withdrawal; emotional recovery precedes re-engagement. The model intervenes precisely at that juncture.

The argument does not rest on correlation alone. It rests on structural alignment. The pedagogical cycle mirrors the mediation logic: anxiety is acknowledged rather than suppressed; buoyancy is cultivated through controlled exposure to communicative risk; willingness emerges as a residual effect of adaptive stabilization. In this configuration, the language system functions as an expressive medium. Its typological properties do not reconfigure the psychological sequence.

A second interpretive trajectory concerns relational immediacy. When interpersonal immediacy accounted for 89% of the variance in willingness to communicate and 71% of the variance in engagement, the scale of influence exceeded what structural instruction alone could plausibly generate. Relational proximity alters communicative thresholds. The lesson architecture of LIFE TALK™ internalizes this finding by treating emotional safety not as an auxiliary classroom climate variable but as a structural prerequisite. The communicative event is staged only after proximity is established.

This reframes the longstanding debate between communicative competence and communicative courage. Competence presupposes structural mastery; courage presupposes emotional safety. The empirical distribution of variance suggests that the latter exerts disproportionate weight. A language-neutral communicative mode, therefore, reprivileges relational calibration as a universal regulatory constant. Whether the target system employs tonal distinctions or inflectional morphology does not modify the necessity of psychological safety.

The pragmatic dimension introduces a further layer of typological independence. Pragmatic comprehension difficulties documented across contexts reveal persistent gaps in interpreting indirect speech acts, implied meaning, and stance positioning. These gaps emerge even where grammatical proficiency is stable. The implication is not that grammar lacks relevance, but that communicative breakdown frequently originates at the level of social intention rather than structural encoding. LIFE TALK™ addresses this by organizing lessons around universally instantiated speech

functions: requesting, refusing, supporting, disagreeing, and arguing. The functional inventory is cross-linguistic; its lexical realization varies.

Here, the argument encounters a potential counterposition: pragmatic norms differ across cultures. This is accurate. Yet pragmatic variation concerns sociocultural calibration, not the existence of communicative functions themselves. Every linguistic system encodes ways to request, to decline, and to negotiate. The structural resources differ; the communicative intent does not. The model leverages this invariance. Typological diversity modifies surface realization; it does not dissolve the underlying speech-act architecture.

The findings on dynamic and argumentation-based assessment deepen this perspective. Gains in oral presentation skills and communicative readiness occurred when learners were placed in dialogic, argumentative, and reflective cycles. Improvement was associated with discursive organization and perspective-taking rather than morphological expansion. The communicative engine lies in structured interaction. Reflection stabilizes identity positioning; negotiation consolidates stance. The linguistic code adapts to serve these processes.

This reorientation carries methodological implications. A pedagogy centered on meaningful action requires a redefinition of instructional sequencing. Traditional progression models assume that structural mastery accumulates linearly before authentic communication. The evidence suggests that communicative engagement itself reorganizes affective and cognitive resources, indirectly supporting structural acquisition. Engagement precedes consolidation. The order is inverted.

A further point of tension concerns assessment regimes. Portfolio-based evaluation reduced anxiety and increased complexity, accuracy, and fluency simultaneously. The coexistence of affective relief and linguistic advancement challenges deficit-oriented models that treat anxiety as inevitable collateral. Reflective assessment integrates performance and emotional regulation. LIFE TALK™ incorporates mandatory reflective closure, not as an evaluative ornament, but as regulatory reinforcement. Reflection converts communicative risk into structured meaning-making.

At this juncture, the scope of typological neutrality requires clarification. Language-neutrality does not imply that lexical and grammatical content are interchangeable. It indicates that the pedagogical architecture-its emotional sequencing, interactional staging, and reflective consolidation- remains invariant when lexical-grammatical material changes. Substitution of English with a morphologically rich Slavic language, an agglutinative Turkic language, or a tonal East Asian language modifies formal encoding tasks. It does not disrupt the architecture of emotional activation, pragmatic enactment, and dialogic argumentation.

The psycholinguistic layer strengthens this claim. Variables such as anxiety, buoyancy, grit, and engagement demonstrate measurable influence across contexts. These constructs operate within cognitive-affective systems common to human learners. They are not artifacts of a specific language structure. A pedagogical model that aligns with these variables is inherently typology-independent. Its operational domain lies in universal mechanisms of attention, emotion regulation, social affiliation, and self-expression.

Yet limits remain visible. The model presupposes classroom conditions that allow relational proximity and reflective time. In high-stakes, examination-dominated environments, temporal compression may constrain the full communicative cycle. The friction does not invalidate the architecture; it exposes systemic pressures that truncate it. Another boundary emerges in highly heterogeneous classrooms where pragmatic norms conflict sharply. Here, facilitation demands heightened intercultural sensitivity. The communicative core remains viable, though its moderation requires careful calibration.

The broader theoretical implication concerns the redefinition of communicative language teaching. Instead of framing communicative methodology as a set of techniques adaptable to languages, the analysis positions communicative architecture as an expression of human interactional universals. Language becomes a vehicle; interaction becomes core. The model does not adapt to linguistic diversity post hoc. It originates from the premise that communication, not structure, organizes learning.

An interpretive consolidation follows from these strands. When emotional regulation explains substantial variance in communicative readiness, when relational immediacy dominates predictive models, when pragmatic activation and argumentative dialogue generate gains independent of structural typology, when reflective assessment reduces anxiety while supporting complexity, then the center of pedagogical gravity shifts irreversibly. Structural features of individual languages recede from primary explanatory status.

LIFE TALK™ occupies that redefined center. Its effectiveness is not contingent upon analytic or synthetic morphology, upon fixed or flexible word order, upon tonal or stress-based phonology. Its operational logic is anchored in universal cognitive-affective processes: emotional safety enabling expression, dialogic engagement structuring meaning, reflection consolidating identity and agency. The architecture persists when the language changes because the communicative mechanism it mobilizes is fundamentally human rather than typological.

CONCLUSION

The study substantiated, through analytical synthesis of empirical findings, that willingness to communicate is primarily governed by affective regulation, relational immediacy, pragmatic activation, and motivational endurance rather than by structural characteristics of specific languages. The first objective was fulfilled through analytical examination of empirical evidence demonstrating the mediating role of academic buoyancy, the predictive strength of teacher immediacy, and the contribution of pragmatic and argumentative engagement to communicative readiness.

The second objective was achieved by identifying structural invariants—emotional activation, dialogic negotiation, reflective consolidation—that operate independently of morphological and syntactic typology.

The third objective was realized by demonstrating that the LIFE TALK™ pedagogical cycle maintains operational continuity across analytic, synthetic, and agglutinative systems, since its logic derives from universal cognitive-affective mechanisms.

The findings support the interpretation of LIFE TALK™ as a language-neutral communicative architecture. Its effectiveness is determined not by grammatical configuration but by alignment with universal processes of emotional regulation, interpersonal attachment, and meaningful interaction.

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