



The Relationship between Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate in English Speaking Classes among EFL Vocational Students

Adinda Safitri¹, Nita Kaniadewi²

^{1,2}Department of English Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,
University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. Hamka

Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-06-06 Revised: 2026-06-29 Accepted: 2026-06-30 Keywords: <i>English Speaking Classes; EFL Learners; Foreign Language Anxiety; Vocational High School; Willingness to Communicate</i> DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.11081 Corresponding Author: Adinda Safitri adindaasaf@gmail.com Department of English Education, Faculty of Teacher	<i>Vocational EFL learners face distinct communicative demands because their curriculum emphasizes workplace-oriented English use. However, many students still hesitate to participate in English speaking activities due to psychological barriers. Drawing on the Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) framework and MacIntyre et al. (1998) Willingness to Communicate (WTC) model, this study examined the relationship between these two constructs among Grade 10 students at a vocational high school in Jakarta, Indonesia. A quantitative correlational research design was employed involving 107 students from the Digital Business, Retail Business, and Office Management programs. Data were collected using the adapted Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and the Willingness to Communicate Scale (WTCS). Both instruments demonstrated satisfactory validity and reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of 0.757 and 0.913, respectively. Because the assumption of linearity was not satisfied, the relationship between the variables was analyzed using Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation. The analysis revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate ($\rho = -0.201$, $p = 0.038$). The relatively weak correlation suggests that Foreign Language Anxiety is one of several factors associated with students' willingness to communicate, alongside other psychological, contextual, and instructional influences. Although the relationship was relatively weak, the findings confirm that</i>

Training and Education,
University of Muhammadiyah
Prof. Dr. Hamka

Foreign Language Anxiety remains an important affective factor associated with vocational students' willingness to communicate. This study extends understanding of the relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate in the underexplored Indonesian vocational EFL context and offers practical implications for creating supportive, low-anxiety classroom environments that foster students' communicative confidence and active participation in English speaking activities.

1. Introduction

English has become an essential international language that supports academic achievement, professional competence, and global communication. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) across various educational levels, including Senior High Schools (SMA) and Vocational High Schools (SMK). Although both institutions include English in their curricula, they differ considerably in their educational orientation and learning objectives. Senior high schools generally emphasize academic literacy and preparation for higher education through activities such as reading comprehension, essay writing, and grammatical analysis.

In contrast, vocational high schools prioritize practical competencies and labor-market readiness. Ariansyah et al. (2024) explain that vocational education focuses on developing industry-relevant professional skills needed in the workplace. Likewise, Fajri et al. (2022) emphasize that vocational students encounter learning demands that are closely aligned with workplace expectations. Consequently, English instruction in vocational schools' places greater emphasis on developing communicative competence through speaking-oriented activities that prepare students for authentic professional communication.

Within this communicative orientation, successful English use depends not only on learners' linguistic competence but also on their psychological readiness to communicate. MacIntyre et al. (1998) conceptualized Willingness to Communicate (WTC) as an individual's readiness to initiate communication when opportunities arise. Their pyramid model proposes that communication behavior is influenced by multiple interacting factors, including communicative competence, situational context, motivation, self-confidence, and affective variables. Among these affective factors, language anxiety has consistently been recognized as one of the most influential variables affecting learners' decisions to speak in a second or foreign language. Therefore, learners with adequate language knowledge may still choose not to communicate when psychological barriers reduce their willingness to participate.

In vocational education, English functions not only as an academic subject but also as a practical communication tool required in workplace settings. Students are expected to communicate effectively while serving customers, writing business emails, delivering presentations, participating in workplace simulations, and interacting with colleagues or clients. Efrizah et al. (2024) reported that English instruction in vocational schools is intended to develop communicative competence that directly supports students' future careers.

Similarly, Simanjuntak et al. (2024) found that vocational students frequently encounter difficulties in oral communication because workplace-oriented speaking tasks require spontaneous language production, professional interaction, and immediate performance. Unlike students in general secondary education, vocational learners must demonstrate not only linguistic accuracy but also professional communication skills in realistic workplace situations. These distinctive learning demands may increase psychological pressure during English speaking activities.

One of the most influential psychological factors affecting classroom communication is Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA). Horwitz et al. (2019) defined Foreign Language Anxiety as feelings of nervousness, tension, and apprehension specifically associated with learning and using a foreign language. Learners experiencing high anxiety often fear making mistakes, receiving negative evaluations from teachers or peers, and failing to express their ideas accurately. Consequently, they may avoid participating in classroom interaction despite possessing sufficient linguistic competence. Alqarni (2021) further explained that Foreign Language Anxiety functions as an affective barrier that limits learners' oral performance and active classroom participation.

The influence of anxiety is particularly evident in speaking activities because speaking requires learners to produce language spontaneously under immediate social evaluation. Unlike reading, writing, or listening, speaking provides little opportunity for revision and requires learners to retrieve vocabulary, organize grammatical structures, produce accurate pronunciation, and interact simultaneously. Horwitz et al. (2019) argued that these simultaneous cognitive and social demands increase learners' communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation.

Supporting this view, Peng (2024) reported that Foreign Language Anxiety was negatively associated with students' performance in English public speaking classes and that speaking performance was closely related to learners' anxiety, enjoyment, and willingness to communicate. These findings suggest that speaking activities are particularly sensitive to affective influences because learners are required to perform publicly while simultaneously managing linguistic and emotional demands.

Numerous studies have consistently demonstrated a negative relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate. Wang et al. (2022) found that learners experiencing higher levels of anxiety participated less actively in classroom interaction and demonstrated lower willingness to communicate. Ghelichli (2022) similarly reported that highly anxious learners were less likely to initiate communication during English learning activities.

Abdulkareem et al. (2022) demonstrated that classroom environment indirectly influences learners' willingness to communicate through its effect on Foreign Language Anxiety. Bai (2023) found that Foreign Language Anxiety and boredom significantly predicted learners' willingness to communicate among Chinese EFL learners. Bai & Hu (2025) further reported that positive emotions, particularly Foreign Language Enjoyment and academic buoyancy, could mitigate the negative effects of anxiety on students' readiness to communicate. Lin et al. (2025) also identified academic buoyancy as an important protective factor that enables learners to maintain their willingness to communicate despite experiencing Foreign Language Anxiety.

Although previous studies have consistently reported a negative relationship between these two constructs, most have been conducted in university settings or general EFL contexts. Consequently, their findings cannot be directly generalized to vocational education, where English learning emphasizes workplace-oriented communication rather than purely academic interaction. Vocational students are expected to communicate professionally in situations that require both linguistic competence and practical performance. These distinctive learning conditions suggest that the relationship between anxiety and willingness to communicate may differ from that observed in other educational contexts.

Research involving Indonesian vocational high school students remains relatively limited. Manipuspika (2018) investigated the relationship between the two constructs among Indonesian EFL learners and found that students with higher levels of language anxiety tended to demonstrate lower willingness to communicate. However, the participants represented general EFL learners rather than vocational students, and the study did not account for the distinctive workplace-oriented communicative demands that characterize vocational education.

This methodological limitation means that the findings cannot be directly transferred to vocational contexts, where the nature of speaking tasks, learner goals, and classroom expectations differ substantially from those in general secondary or university settings. Wang et al. (2022) also reported that anxiety significantly reduced learners' classroom participation and willingness to communicate, but their participants were drawn from non-vocational educational settings, limiting the extent to which their conclusions can be applied to learners whose English use is oriented toward professional and workplace purposes.

Bai (2023) confirmed that Foreign Language Anxiety significantly predicted learners' willingness to communicate in the Chinese EFL context; nevertheless, the study focused on Chinese EFL learners categorized as struggling readers, and vocational secondary learners in Indonesia were not included. The cultural, institutional, and curricular differences between Chinese and Indonesian EFL contexts further limit the direct transferability of these findings. Taken together, these studies consistently demonstrate a negative association between the two constructs.

However, they share a common limitation: most were conducted in non-vocational contexts, involved non-Indonesian samples, or examined learner populations whose communicative demands differ substantially from those of Indonesian vocational students. Therefore, empirical evidence concerning the relationship between the two constructs among Indonesian vocational high school students remains scarce.

This gap is particularly significant because vocational learners face distinctive communicative demands that emphasize workplace-oriented English use, spontaneous interaction, and professional communication performance, conditions that may shape the nature and strength of the FLA-WTC relationship differently from what has been observed in general or university EFL settings. Understanding this relationship is therefore essential for developing English instruction that better prepares vocational students for future workplace communication.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine whether a significant relationship exists between Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) among Grade 10 EFL learners at a vocational high school in Jakarta using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and the Willingness to Communicate Scale (WTCS). Theoretically, this study extends the application of MacIntyre et al. (1998) Willingness to Communicate framework within the underexplored context of Indonesian vocational EFL education. Practically, the findings are expected to provide English teachers with insights into designing supportive, low-anxiety classroom environments that foster students' confidence, increase participation in English speaking activities, and strengthen communicative competence required for future workplace settings.

2. Method

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) among EFL vocational high school students. A correlational design was considered appropriate because the purpose of the study was to examine the direction and strength of the relationship between two naturally

occurring variables without manipulating the research conditions (Creswell & Creswell (2022)). In this study, Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) served as the independent variable (X), while Willingness to Communicate (WTC) served as the dependent variable (Y). Foreign Language Anxiety refers to learners' feelings of tension, nervousness, and apprehension experienced during English learning, particularly in speaking activities, whereas Willingness to Communicate refers to learners' readiness to initiate communication in English during classroom interaction. The study was conducted at a vocational high school in Jakarta during the 2025/2026 academic year.

The population consisted of all Grade 10 students enrolled in the Digital Business, Retail Business, and Office Management programs. Although the school offers five vocational programs, including Visual Communication Design (DKV) and Accounting, only these three programs were selected because they place greater emphasis on workplace communication and interpersonal interaction in English, which aligns with the objectives of this study. Students in these programs are expected to develop practical English communication skills for business communication, customer service, office administration, and professional interaction.

The sample was selected using purposive sampling because the study specifically required participants whose characteristics were directly relevant to the objectives of the research. Purposive sampling allows researchers to intentionally recruit participants who meet predefined inclusion criteria relevant to the research objectives (Campbell et al. 2020). Grade 10 students were chosen because, during the first semester, all vocational programs follow the same general English curriculum, providing relatively similar learning experiences. Beginning in the second semester, English instruction gradually becomes contextualized according to each vocational program through text-based learning and speaking activities related to students' respective fields of study.

This specialization becomes more pronounced in higher grades, where speaking tasks increasingly reflect students' vocational competencies. By selecting Grade 10 students from the Digital Business, Retail Business, and Office Management programs, the study ensured that participants possessed relatively homogeneous English learning experiences while already beginning to engage in vocationally relevant speaking activities. Consequently, these participants were considered appropriate for examining the relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate. A total of 107 students participated in the study.

Ethical principles were observed throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school administration. Participants were informed about the objectives and procedures of the study, and their participation was entirely voluntary. They were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any stage without any academic

consequences. To ensure confidentiality, no personally identifiable information was collected, and all responses were analyzed anonymously and used solely for academic research purposes.

Data were collected using two adapted questionnaire instruments. The first instrument was the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (2019). The original FLCAS was contextually adapted to measure English speaking anxiety among Indonesian vocational EFL learners while preserving the original construct of Foreign Language Anxiety. Twenty items representing communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and speaking-related anxiety were selected and modified to reflect classroom speaking situations commonly encountered in vocational education. For example, the original statement, *"I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class,"* was adapted into *"I feel unsure of myself when I speak English in my speaking class"* to better represent vocational students' English-speaking experiences.

The second instrument was the Willingness to Communicate Scale (WTCS) adapted from Simi & Penz (2014), which was developed based on MacIntyre et al. (1998) conceptual framework of Willingness to Communicate. The instrument originally consisted of 20 items designed to measure learners' willingness to communicate in English. Several items were contextually adapted to reflect vocational classroom situations involving discussions, presentations, peer interaction, and workplace-oriented speaking activities while maintaining the original construct of Willingness to Communicate. For example, the original statement, *"I like to talk about a topic if I am interested in it,"* was adapted into *"I am willing to speak English when the topic is interesting."*

Both instruments were adapted by modifying the wording of the original items to suit the objectives of this study and the characteristics of Indonesian vocational EFL classrooms while maintaining the theoretical constructs measured by each instrument. The adaptation primarily focused on contextualizing the questionnaire items to English speaking situations commonly encountered by vocational students without altering the theoretical dimensions underlying the original instruments. To ensure that all participants clearly understood each statement and to minimize misunderstanding caused by differences in English language proficiency, the questionnaires were administered in Bahasa Indonesia.

Prior to the main study, the adapted questionnaires were piloted with 34 Grade 10 students who possessed characteristics similar to those of the target participants but were not included in the main sample. The pilot study was conducted to evaluate the psychometric quality of the adapted instruments. Item validity was examined using the Corrected Item-Total Correlation, whereas reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha in IBM SPSS Statistics.

Following Field (2018), questionnaire items were considered valid when the corrected item-total correlation exceeded the critical value of the *r*-table, whereas Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of .70 or higher indicated satisfactory internal consistency. The validity analysis showed that all 20 FLCAS items satisfied the required validity criterion. For the WTCS, two items (QW01 and QW02) failed to meet the required criterion and were therefore removed from the final instrument. Consequently, the final questionnaires consisted of 20 FLCAS items and 18 WTCS items. The reliability analysis yielded Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of 0.757 for the FLCAS and 0.913 for the WTCS, indicating satisfactory internal consistency for both instruments.

The questionnaires were administered during regular classroom sessions after participants had received an explanation regarding the objectives of the study and agreed to participate voluntarily. All questionnaires were completed during the same session and collected immediately after completion.

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics were first computed to summarize participants' demographic characteristics and the distributions of Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate scores. Prior to hypothesis testing, instrument validity, reliability, normality, and linearity analyses were conducted to examine the quality and characteristics of the data. The normality assumption was evaluated using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, whereas linearity was examined using the Deviation from Linearity value in the ANOVA output. The normality test indicated that the data were normally distributed; however, the assumption of linearity was not satisfied.

Therefore, the relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate was analyzed using Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation because the assumption of linearity required for Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was violated (Field 2018). The strength of the correlation was interpreted using Guilford's (1956) classification: 0.00–0.20 (very low), 0.21–0.40 (low), 0.41–0.70 (moderate), 0.71–0.90 (high), and 0.91–1.00 (very high). Statistical significance was determined at the 0.05 level.

3. Result

A total of 107 tenth-grade vocational high school students participated in this study. As presented in *Table 1*, the participants consisted of 72 female students (67.3%) and 35 male students (32.7%). Regarding vocational majors, 35 students (32.7%) were enrolled in Digital Business, while 36 students (33.6%) each represented Retail Business and Office Management. The relatively balanced distribution across vocational programs ensured adequate representation of communication-oriented disciplines within the school.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 107)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	72	67.3
	Male	35	32.7
Study Program	Digital Business	35	32.7
	Retail Business	36	33.6
	Office Management	36	33.6
Total		107	100

Descriptive statistics were calculated to describe students' levels of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) before examining the relationship between the two variables.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)	62.60	11.01	28	89
Willingness to Communicate (WTC)	57.78	8.80	28	85

As shown in *Table 2*, Foreign Language Anxiety scores ranged from 28 to 89 ($M = 62.60$, $SD = 11.01$), indicating that the participants generally experienced a moderate level of anxiety when communicating in English. Based on the categorization using the mean $\pm$ one standard deviation, 14 students (13.1%) were classified as having low anxiety, 80 students (74.8%) experienced moderate anxiety, and 13 students (12.1%) experienced high anxiety. The predominance of moderate anxiety suggests that most vocational students encountered noticeable psychological discomfort during English speaking activities, although their anxiety was not excessively high.

For Willingness to Communicate, the scores ranged from 28 to 85 ($M = 57.78$, $SD = 8.80$). These findings indicate that students generally demonstrated a moderate level of willingness to communicate in English classroom interactions. Although many students were willing to participate in speaking activities, some still showed hesitation when initiating communication, suggesting that affective factors such as anxiety might influence their communicative behavior.

Validity Test

Prior to the main study, the adapted questionnaires were piloted with 34 tenth-grade students who possessed characteristics similar to those of the target participants but were not included in the main sample. Item validity was evaluated using Corrected Item–Total Correlation.

Table 3. Validity Test Results

Variable	Number of Items	Valid Items	Invalid Items	Description
Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)	20	20	0	All items valid
Willingness to Communicate (WTC)	20	18	2 (QW01 and QW02)	Two items removed

The validity analysis showed that all twenty FLA items met the required validity criterion and were retained for the main study. In contrast, two items from the WTC questionnaire (QW01 and QW02) failed to meet the validity criterion and were therefore removed. Consequently, the final questionnaire consisted of 20 FLA items and 18 WTC items.

Reliability Test

The reliability test was conducted to assess the internal consistency of both instruments using Cronbach's Alpha

Table 4. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Standard	Description
Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)	0.757	> 0.70	Reliable
Willingness to Communicate (WTC)	0.913	> 0.70	Excellent Reliable

The reliability analysis demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency for both instruments. The FLA questionnaire obtained a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.757, indicating acceptable reliability, whereas the WTC questionnaire achieved an Alpha coefficient of 0.913, indicating excellent reliability. These results suggest that both instruments consistently measured their intended constructs and were appropriate for the main study.

Normality Test

The normality test was conducted using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test to examine whether the data were normally distributed.

Table 5. Normality Test Result

Test		Significance Value	Criterion	Description
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		0.108	Sig. > 0.05	Normally Distributed

The significance value obtained from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was 0.108, which exceeded the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the data were considered normally distributed.

Linearity Test

Before selecting the appropriate correlation analysis, the linearity assumption was examined using the Deviation from Linearity value.

Table 6. Linearity Test Result

Variables	Criterion	Result	Description
Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate	Sig. > 0.05	0.009	Not Linear

The linearity test produced a Deviation from Linearity significance value of 0.009, which was lower than 0.05. This finding indicates that the relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate did not satisfy the assumption of linearity. Consequently, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was considered inappropriate, and Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation was employed to examine the relationship between the two variables.

Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Test

Because the assumption of linearity was violated, the relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate was analyzed using Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation.

Table 7. Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Results

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) – Willingness to Communicate (WTC)	-.201	.038	107

The analysis revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate ($\rho = -0.201$, $p = 0.038$). Since the significance value was lower than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. The result indicates that students who experienced higher levels of Foreign Language Anxiety tended to report lower levels of Willingness to Communicate during English classroom activities.

According to Guilford's (1956) interpretation, the obtained correlation coefficient represents a low negative correlation, suggesting that although Foreign Language Anxiety is significantly associated with students' willingness to communicate, the strength of the relationship is relatively weak. This finding implies that Willingness to Communicate is likely influenced by additional psychological, instructional, and contextual factors beyond language anxiety alone.

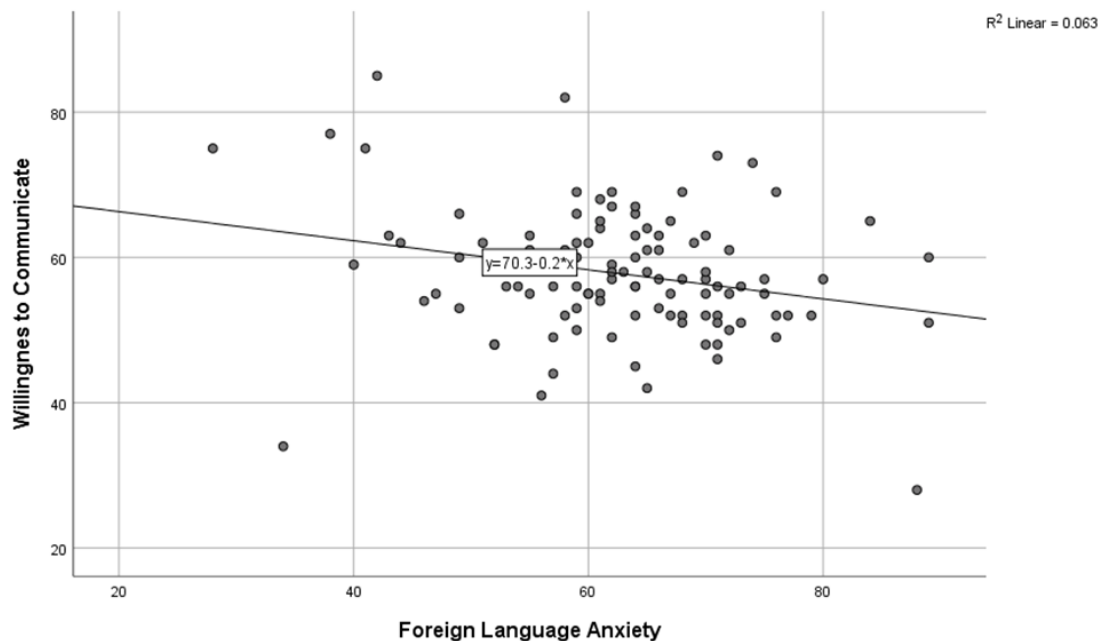


Figure 1. Scatterplot of the Relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate ($N = 107$, $\rho = -0.201$, $p = 0.038$)

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of participants' scores on Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate. The scatterplot demonstrates a slight downward trend, indicating that students with higher levels of Foreign Language Anxiety generally tended to report lower Willingness to Communicate. Although the data points are relatively dispersed, the overall pattern is consistent with the negative monotonic relationship identified by the Spearman correlation analysis ($\rho = -0.201$, $p = 0.038$).

4. Discussion

The present study examined the relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) among tenth-grade students at an Indonesian vocational high school. The findings revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between the two variables ($\rho = -0.201$, $p = 0.038$), indicating that students who experienced higher levels of language anxiety tended to demonstrate lower willingness to communicate in English classroom activities. Although the strength of the correlation was categorized as low, the findings suggest that Foreign Language Anxiety remains an important affective factor associated with students' communicative behavior in vocational EFL classrooms.

The descriptive findings indicate that although students experienced moderate levels of language anxiety, they also reported a moderate willingness to communicate in English classroom activities. This pattern may partly explain why the association between the two variables, although statistically significant, was relatively weak. However, this interpretation should be treated with caution because the present study did not directly examine the mechanisms underlying this association. The findings therefore suggest that students' communicative behaviour may also be shaped by additional psychological and contextual factors beyond anxiety alone.

The present findings support MacIntyre et al. (1998) heuristic model of Willingness to Communicate, which conceptualizes communication as the outcome of multiple interacting psychological, linguistic, social, and situational influences. Within this framework, Foreign Language Anxiety represents one of the immediate affective variables that may discourage learners from initiating communication because anxious learners often anticipate communication failure, fear making linguistic errors, and worry about negative evaluation from teachers or peers.

Consequently, learners experiencing higher levels of anxiety are generally more reluctant to participate in classroom discussions or voluntarily express their ideas in English, even when they possess adequate language proficiency. The present findings therefore reinforce the view that affective factors continue to play a meaningful role in shaping learners' communication behaviour in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom.

The findings are also consistent with previous empirical studies reporting a negative relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate. Manipuspika (2018), who investigated Indonesian EFL learners, found that students with higher levels of language anxiety were significantly less willing to participate in English communication. Similarly, Wang et al. (2022) reported that language anxiety reduced learners' readiness to initiate classroom interaction despite adequate language proficiency. Abbasi (2019) likewise found

that highly anxious learners tended to avoid oral communication activities, while Bai (2023) identified Foreign Language Anxiety as a significant negative predictor of learners' willingness to communicate. Collectively, these studies consistently demonstrate that Foreign Language Anxiety remains an important psychological factor associated with learners' willingness to communicate across diverse EFL contexts.

However, although the direction of the relationship observed in the present study is consistent with previous research, the magnitude of the correlation was relatively weak. Rather than contradicting earlier findings, this result suggests that Foreign Language Anxiety should not be interpreted as the sole determinant of learners' communication behaviour. Instead, the relatively weak relationship supports MacIntyre et al. (1998) proposition that Willingness to Communicate is a multidimensional construct influenced by multiple interacting factors operating at different levels.

In addition to language anxiety, learners' willingness to communicate may also be associated with perceived communicative competence, self-confidence, motivation, classroom climate, teacher support, peer interaction, and situational characteristics. Therefore, the present findings suggest that language anxiety represents only one component within a broader network of psychological and contextual variables influencing learners' communication behaviour. Although statistically significant, the relatively weak correlation suggests that Foreign Language Anxiety is only one of several factors associated with learners' willingness to communicate, while other psychological, instructional, and contextual factors are also likely to influence students' communicative behavior.

This interpretation is further supported by recent studies in second language acquisition. Dewaele (2019) and Li et al. (2022) demonstrated that learners' willingness to communicate is influenced by both negative and positive classroom emotions. While Foreign Language Anxiety may discourage learners from communicating, Foreign Language Enjoyment and supportive classroom environments can simultaneously encourage learners to participate in English communication. These findings suggest that willingness to communicate cannot be explained by anxiety alone but is shaped by multiple interacting emotional and contextual factors.

Furthermore, Qinghe (2024) identified perceived communicative competence as one of the strongest positive predictors of willingness to communicate. Consequently, the relatively weak correlation identified in the present study may reflect the interaction between language anxiety and other facilitating variables that were beyond the scope of the present research.

Accordingly, the findings should not be interpreted as suggesting that reducing language anxiety alone will necessarily result in substantial improvements in learners' willingness to communicate. Instead, they reinforce the importance of understanding Willingness to Communicate as a dynamic construct

shaped by multiple psychological and contextual influences.

One possible explanation for the relatively weak relationship identified in the present study may relate to the characteristics and objectives of vocational English education. Previous literature suggests that English instruction in vocational education is intended to prepare learners for professional communication by developing practical language skills that meet workplace demands (Simanjuntak et al., 2024). Such instructional characteristics may provide learners with greater opportunities to develop communicative confidence, which may in turn support their willingness to communicate. Nevertheless, because the present study did not directly examine classroom instructional practices or learning activities, this explanation should be interpreted as a plausible interpretation supported by previous literature rather than as a definitive conclusion.

Recent empirical studies further support the multidimensional nature of Willingness to Communicate. Abdulkareem et al. (2022) reported that supportive classroom environments enhanced learners' willingness to communicate by reducing communication anxiety and encouraging active classroom participation. Similarly, Kalsoom et al. (2020) found that constructive teacher support and positive peer interaction increased learners' confidence to participate in English communication.

Furthermore, Bai & Hu (2025) demonstrated that Foreign Language Enjoyment and academic buoyancy positively contributed to learners' willingness to communicate, while Lin et al. (2025) reported that academic buoyancy mediated the relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate. Collectively, these findings suggest that learners' willingness to communicate develops through the interaction of multiple psychological and contextual factors rather than through Foreign Language Anxiety alone.

The present findings also align with Horwitz et al. (2019) conceptualization of Foreign Language Anxiety, particularly the dimensions of communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation. Learners experiencing communication apprehension often hesitate to speak because they anticipate making linguistic errors or receiving negative evaluations from teachers and classmates. Speaking in a foreign language requires learners to retrieve vocabulary, organize grammatical structures, produce comprehensible pronunciation, and respond spontaneously while simultaneously monitoring their own language performance.

These cognitive and emotional demands may discourage learners from initiating communication even when they possess adequate linguistic knowledge. Similar findings have been reported by Azzuan et al. (2022), Al-saidat (2023), and Efrizah et al. (2024), who found that speaking anxiety, fear of making mistakes, fear of negative evaluation, and limited speaking opportunities frequently reduced

learners' participation in English classroom communication. These findings further support the interpretation that Foreign Language Anxiety constitutes an important psychological barrier to learners' willingness to communicate, although its influence interacts with other facilitating psychological and contextual factors.

An important contribution of the present study lies in its educational context. While previous studies examining the relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate have predominantly focused on university students or learners in general secondary education, relatively few have investigated this relationship among Indonesian vocational high school students. By focusing specifically on vocational education, the present study extends the application of MacIntyre et al. (1998) heuristic model to a learning environment that emphasizes practical English communication skills for future professional purposes.

The relatively weak but significant correlation observed in this study further reinforces the multidimensional and context-dependent nature of the WTC framework, suggesting that the influence of Foreign Language Anxiety may vary across educational settings. Accordingly, this study contributes empirical evidence supporting the contextual applicability of the WTC framework by demonstrating that the relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate may vary across educational settings, including Indonesian vocational EFL education.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings suggest that English teachers should remain aware of the influence of Foreign Language Anxiety on students' classroom participation while recognizing that reducing anxiety alone may not be sufficient to enhance learners' willingness to communicate. Instead, teachers are encouraged to implement communicative and student-centred instructional approaches that simultaneously strengthen learners' confidence, perceived communicative competence, and motivation to communicate. Collaborative speaking activities, meaningful pair and group discussions, constructive feedback, authentic communication tasks, and psychologically supportive classroom environments may help reduce learners' fear of negative evaluation while encouraging greater participation in English communication.

For vocational high schools, these findings further suggest that English instruction should not only develop students' occupational language skills but also create supportive learning environments that encourage learners to communicate confidently despite experiencing language anxiety. Such instructional approaches may help vocational students develop both the communicative competence and confidence needed to use English effectively in future academic and professional settings.

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the present study employed a correlational research design; therefore, the findings identify statistical associations between Foreign Language Anxiety and

Willingness to Communicate but do not establish causal relationships. Consequently, the results should not be interpreted as indicating that Foreign Language Anxiety directly causes changes in learners' willingness to communicate. Second, the study relied exclusively on self-report questionnaires.

Although the research instruments demonstrated satisfactory validity and reliability, participants' responses may have been influenced by subjective self-perceptions and social desirability bias. Third, the participants were recruited from a single Indonesian vocational high school, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational settings or student populations. Accordingly, caution should be exercised when extending these findings beyond the context investigated in the present study. Finally, the present study examined only the bivariate relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate; therefore, the relative contribution of other potentially influential variables could not be determined.

Considering these limitations, future research is encouraged to investigate additional psychological and contextual variables that may contribute to learners' willingness to communicate, including perceived communicative competence, self-confidence, Foreign Language Enjoyment, learning motivation, classroom climate, teacher support, peer interaction, and academic buoyancy. Employing more comprehensive analytical approaches, such as multiple regression or Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), may provide a deeper understanding of the relative contribution of these variables. Furthermore, qualitative or mixed-methods studies involving classroom observations and interviews could offer richer insights into how learners experience language anxiety and how different classroom contexts shape their willingness to communicate. Future studies involving students from different vocational schools and educational levels would also help determine the generalizability of the present findings.

Overall, the present study confirms that Foreign Language Anxiety is significantly associated with learners' willingness to communicate among Indonesian vocational high school students. Nevertheless, the relatively weak correlation indicates that learners' communication behaviour cannot be explained by language anxiety alone. Instead, the findings support MacIntyre et al. (1998) proposition that Willingness to Communicate develops through the dynamic interaction of multiple psychological, instructional, and contextual influences. These findings highlight the importance of adopting a holistic approach to promoting English communication in vocational EFL classrooms by addressing not only language anxiety but also the broader psychological and instructional conditions that foster learners' communicative confidence and classroom participation.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) among Grade 10 EFL learners at an Indonesian vocational high school. The findings revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between the two variables ($\rho = -0.201$, $p = 0.038$), indicating that students who experienced higher levels of Foreign Language Anxiety tended to report lower Willingness to Communicate during English classroom interactions.

Although the correlation was categorized as low, the findings confirm that Foreign Language Anxiety remains an important affective factor associated with vocational learners' communicative behaviour, while also suggesting that Willingness to Communicate is shaped by a broader network of psychological, instructional, and contextual influences beyond language anxiety alone. Theoretically, this study extends the application of MacIntyre et al. (1998)

Willingness to Communicate framework to the underexplored context of Indonesian vocational EFL education, reinforcing the multidimensional and context-dependent nature of learners' readiness to communicate. From a pedagogical perspective, English teachers in vocational settings are encouraged to implement strategies that not only reduce Foreign Language Anxiety but also foster supportive, student-centred environments that promote communicative confidence and authentic speaking opportunities aligned with vocational contexts.

Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted with caution given that the correlational design precludes causal conclusions, the study relied on self-report instruments, and participants were recruited from a single vocational high school without examining potential differences across the three vocational programs (Digital Business, Retail Business, and Office Management).

Future research is recommended to investigate additional factors associated with learners' Willingness to Communicate, including perceived communicative competence, motivation, Foreign Language Enjoyment, classroom climate, teacher support, academic buoyancy, and English language proficiency. Comparative studies examining whether the FLA–WTC relationship differs across vocational program specialisations would also be valuable, as program-specific communicative demands may moderate this relationship in ways the present study could not determine.

Furthermore, future studies employing larger and more diverse samples, mixed-methods or longitudinal designs, and involving vocational schools from multiple regions across Indonesia would provide a more comprehensive and generalisable understanding of students' communicative behaviour in vocational EFL contexts.

6. References

- Abbasi, Farnaz. 2019. "Investigating the Relationship between Iranian EFL Learners' Language Anxiety and Their Willingness to Communicate." 1–13.
- Abdulkareem, Alyaa, Mitra Zeraatpishe, and Akram Faravani. 2022. "On the Interrelationships between Iraqi EFL Learners' Classroom Environment, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate: A SEM Approach." 5(2):143–56.
- Al-saidat, Emad. 2023. "Role of Anxiety in Willingness to Communicate in the Jordanian EFL Context." 29(June):133–45.
- Alqarni, Nada. 2021. "Language Learners' Willingness to Communicate and Speaking Anxiety in Online versus Face-to-Face Learning Contexts." 20(11):57–77.
- Ariansyah, Kasmad, Yanuar Farida Wismayanti, Renny Savitri, Virgiawan Listanto, and Azwar Aswin. 2024. "Comparing Labor Market Performance of Vocational and General School Graduates in Indonesia: Insights from Stable and Crisis Conditions." 6.
- Azzuan, Fariz, Amat Suparia, Ibrahim Abdullah, Muhammad Irfan Mhd, Farhana Ghazuddin, Muhammad Syaffiq, and Mohammed Raffi. 2022. "An Overview on Speaking Anxiety in Foreign Language Classroom: Level of Speaking Anxiety, Gender, and Factors." 7(10):1–12.
- Bai, Chun, and Jiaying Hu. 2025. "The Effect of Foreign Language Enjoyment on the Willingness to Communicate of Non-English Majors: The Mediating Role of L2 Grit and Academic Buoyancy." (September):1–11. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2025.1614742.
- Bai, Shuxia. 2023. "Heliyon The Predictive Effects of Foreign Language Anxiety and Boredom on Willingness to Communicate among Chinese Struggling EFL Learners." *HLY* 9(9):e19610. doi: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e19610.
- Campbell, Steve, Melanie Greenwood, Sarah Prior, Kerrie Walkem, Sarah Young, and Danielle Bywaters. 2020. "Purposive Sampling: Complex or Simple? Research Case Examples." doi: 10.1177/1744987120927206.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. 2022. *Research Design (Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches) - 6th Ed.Pdf*. 6th ed. SAGE Publication.
- Dewaele, Jean-Marc. 2019. "The Effect of Classroom Emotions, Attitudes toward English, and Teacher Behavior on Willingness to Communicate among English Foreign Language Learners." 38:523–35. doi: 10.1177/0261927X19864996.
- Efrizah, Doni, Yossy Fadly, and Vivi Oxana Putri. 2024. "ENGLISH SPEAKING BARRIERS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: A STUDY OF SMK SPP SNAKMA STUDENTS." 6(2):271–78.
- Fajri, Nurul, Vidi Astuti, and Diahhadi Setyonaluri. 2022. "Labor Market Outcomes of Vocational High Schools (SMK) and General High Schools (SMA) during

- the COVID-19 Pandemic." 3(3):278–93.
- Field, Andy. 2018. *Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS Statistics 5th Edition*. 5 th. London: Sage Publications.
- Ghelichli, Yahya. 2022. "Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate : High Level vs . Low Level Iranian EFL Learners." 1(1):1–9.
- Guilford, J. 1956. *Fundamental Statistics In Psychology And Education*. 1st ed. New York and London: McGRAW-HILL BOOK COMPANY.
- Horwitz, Elaine K., Michael B. Horwitz, Joann Cope, Elaine K. Horwitz, Michael B. Horwitz, and Joann Cope. 2019. "Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety." 70(2):125–32.
- Kalsoom, Ammara, Niaz Hussain Soomro, and Zahid Hussain Pathan. 2020. "How Social Support and Foreign Language Anxiety Impact Willingness to Communicate in English in an EFL Classroom." 10(2):80–91. doi: 10.5539/ijel.v10n2p80.
- Li, Chengchen; Dewaele, Jean-Marc; Pawlak, Mirosław; Kruk, Mariusz. 2022. "Classroom Environment and Willingness to Communicate in English : The Mediating Role of Emotions Experienced by University Students in China 1." *Language Teaching Research* 29(5):2140–2160.
- Lin, Yuxin, Baochang Wang, Guizhen Zhang, and Yankui Su. 2025. "The Relations among Foreign Language Anxiety , Academic Buoyancy and Willingness to Communicate in EFL Classroom." (October):1–15. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1634054.
- MacIntyre, P. D., Clément, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K. A. 1998. "Conceptualizing_Willingness_to_Communicate_in_a_L2.Pdf." 545–562.
- Manipuspika, Yana Shanti. 2018. "Correlation between Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate." 9(2):200–217.
- Peng, Jian-e. 2024. "The Predictive Roles of Enjoyment , Anxiety , Willingness to Communicate on Students ' Performance in English Public Speaking Classes." *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching* 62(2):485–508. doi: 10.1515/iral-2022-0162.
- Qinghe, Zhang. 2024. "Global Academic Journal of Linguistics and Literature Relationships among Willingness to Communicate , Self-Perceived Communication Competence and Communication Anxiety." 9028(1994):69–77. doi: 10.36348/gajll.2024.v06i02.005.
- Simanjuntak, M. B., Sut S., & Lumingkewas, M. S. 2024. "ENHANCING ENGLISH SPEAKING COMPETENCE FOR VOCATIONAL STUDENTS: DESCRIPTIVE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS." *Indo-MathEdu Intellectuals Journal* 5(3):3487–94.
- Simi, Ivana, and Hermine Penz. 2014. "Willingness to Communicate : Masterarbeit."
- Wang, Minqi, Hui Wang, and Yan Shi. 2022. "The Role of English as a Foreign Language Learners ' Grit and Foreign Language Anxiety in Their Willingness to Communicate : Theoretical Perspectives." (September):1–11. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1002562.

Adinda Safitri, Nita Kaniadewi
The Relationship between Language Anxiety
and Willingness to Communicate in English Speaking Classes
among EFL Vocational Students