

The Role of Language Ideologies in Students' Willingness to Communicate in English: A Case Study of Indonesian EFL Junior High School Students

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the role of language ideologies in students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in junior high school students from Central Java. This study used a case study involving 91 ninth grade junior high school students from a state junior high school in Central Java. Data collection was carried out through questionnaires, observations, and interviews. From the questionnaire and interview results, several students from six classes were chosen through purposive sampling to join a classroom observation. The interviews were used to collect the main data focused on question-and-answer activities during lessons. The study results showed that most of the students see English as important for career and education, English as a symbol of social status, balancing global English and local cultural identity, and lack of confidence in language use. The role of language ideology in the class shows that students with positive language ideology have high willingness to communicate (WTC), whereas those with contradicting language ideology has low willingness to communicate (WTC). These results fit earlier research showing that WTC depends on students' attitudes, emotions, and the classroom environment, and language ideologies alone aren't enough. Students also need confidence, supportive teachers and peers, and plenty of low-pressure chances to practice.

Keywords: *EFL students, language ideology, willingness to communicate, socio-cultural theory*

INTRODUCTION

Kroskrity (2010) stated that language ideologies are beliefs, feelings, and ideas that people have about how language works and how it should be used. These views typically reflect the political and economic goals of individual speakers, ethnic and other interest groups, and nations. In Language learning, language ideologies refer to the beliefs and attitudes about languages and their speakers, which profoundly influence students' perceptions and behaviors towards language learning (Sung, 2022). In multilingual settings like Indonesia, where students are often exposed to several languages, language ideologies can either boost or reduce their motivation to use English (Yashima et al., 2004). Different language ideologies can mediate learners' emotional responses and shape their learning goals (Sung et al., 2022). On the other hand, conflicting language ideologies can create negative emotions.

Willingness to Communicate (WTC) refers to a person's readiness to start and participate in communication in a particular situation. McCroskey (1997) defined WTC as "a person's inclination to initiate communication with others." In the classroom context, WTC describes the students' readiness to commence communication when they have many choices. (Barjesteh et al., 2012). The success of learning a second language and a foreign language is influenced by WTC (Artha & Susanto, 2024). WTC is influenced by a complex interplay of internal and external factors that work together to determine learners' communication behavior. Internal factors include motivation, self-confidence, anxiety, and proficiency, while external factors involve the classroom environment, teacher and peer support, and social context that affect learners' confidence and willingness to speak (Lee et al., 2019; Khajavy et al., 2016). From Indonesia, Sarifah et al. (2024) identified that internal barriers such as anxiety, lack of motivation, and self-confidence problems significantly hinder students' language participation. At the same time, Anggela et al. (2024) showed that external conditions like limited infrastructure, low parental involvement, and minimal teacher training also negatively affect learners' engagement.

Language ideologies are the beliefs people hold about language; these belief are used to explain or justify why they speak a certain way in particular situations (Razfar, 2013). Although these beliefs often feel like simple "common sense" or something "natural," they are also tied to moral judgments and political interests (Irvine, 1989; Silverstein, 1996a). Studying language ideology helps us uncover the forces that shape the choices, interactions, and goals of multilingual students and their teachers (Tollefson & Yamagami, 2013). Russell et al. (2024) revealed that students' language ideologies significantly influence their social interactions in school settings and their perception of their own identities. In this way, language ideology becomes a key channel through which language learning and students' social experiences both inside and outside the classroom are shaped.

Although language ideologies are one of the factors that shape language learning, and WTC is an affective success of language learning, there is limited research that explores it. For example, Sung et al. (2022) examined how language ideologies such as native-speakerism and World Englishes ideology mediate emotions in student teachers' L2 learning experiences, revealing their impact on learners' identities and learning goals; however, this study did not directly investigate their influence on WTC Likewise, major WTC studies focus predominantly on immediate psychological and contextual factors that affect WTC, including affective variables such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety (Lee et al., 2019); classroom environmental factors (Khajavy et al., 2016); individual characteristics like personality and proficiency (Yashima et al., 2018); and social variables such as peer relationships and intergroup dynamics (Soyoof et al., 2022). While these studies provide comprehensive insights into the complex, dynamic interactions between individual, contextual, and linguistic factors that influence WTC (Alimorad et al., 2021), the absence of language ideologies represents a significant gap in the current understanding of WTC.

To explore this issue further, there is a need to examine the role of language ideologies in students' WTC in multilingual contexts, particularly in Indonesia. While past studies have addressed classroom environments and motivational factors, the role of language ideologies has been largely overlooked. Therefore, this research focuses on state junior high school students in Central Java and seeks to provide new insights by addressing the following research questions:

1. How do students' language ideologies relate to English in multilingual contexts in Indonesia?
2. How do students' language ideologies affect their willingness to communicate (WTC) in English?

METHOD

Research Design

This current study used a qualitative case study approach, chosen for its suitability in exploring complex phenomena like language ideologies and students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in a multilingual context. A case study involves an in-depth analysis of naturally occurring phenomena, such as individuals, organizations, programs, or decisions, allowing for a thorough examination within real-life contexts (Tracy, 2020).

Setting and participant

The participants of this study were 92 ninth-grade students from a state junior high school in Sragen, Central Java, Indonesia. They were between 13 and 15 years old and shared relatively similar levels of English proficiency. Most of the participants spoke Javanese as their local language and Indonesian as the national language. The researcher employed purposive sampling to select participants who met specific criteria relevant to the study, as this method allows the inclusion of individuals possessing particular characteristics or experiences (Rohmawati, 2025). From the total pool, 24 students representing six different classes were chosen based on the results of the questionnaire and interview for further observation and analysis. All participants provided written informed consent and voluntarily agreed to take part in the study without any form of coercion. They were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage. To ensure confidentiality and protect participants' identities, pseudonyms were used in all excerpts and data presentations.

Data collection and procedure

This study collected data using three main methods: a questionnaire, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews. First, a questionnaire was given to all students to gather basic information about their language ideologies and WTC. Based on the questionnaire results, 24 students were selected for semi-structured interviews to gain deeper insights into their personal experiences, beliefs, and motivations toward using English. According to Freiermuth and Ito (2020), semi-structured interviews are useful for exploring how personal experiences and motivations influence students' WTC, while Bearman (2019) highlights that this method helps researchers obtain rich and detailed data. After the interviews, classroom observations were carried out to see the interaction related to WTC and the role of positive and contradictory language ideology. Finally, follow-up interview questions were asked after the observations to clarify students' classroom behaviors and confirm the earlier findings.

Instrument

In this research, the instruments used include a questionnaire, observation sheet, interview guide, and sound recording devices for documentation. The questionnaire was designed to obtain students' general views about their language ideologies and WTC. The observation guidelines helped the researcher collect data systematically during classroom activities, while the interview guidelines ensured that the questions remained focused and relevant to the research objectives. In addition, voice recording devices were used during interviews to accurately capture participants' responses and prevent data loss.

Data analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using a qualitative approach. After all the data were collected, the researcher first reviewed and organized the results from the questionnaire, interview transcripts, observation notes, and audio recordings. The questionnaire data were

summarized to identify general patterns of students' language ideologies and their WTC (WTC). Then, the interview and observation data were analyzed using thematic analysis to find recurring ideas and themes related to students' beliefs, confidence, and communication behaviors. The researcher followed Saldaña's (2016) coding process, which consists of two cycles: the first cycle involved descriptive coding to label key statements or actions, and the second cycle involved grouping similar codes into broader themes. To ensure accuracy, data from different sources were compared and cross-checked through triangulation between questionnaires, interviews, and observations.

RESULTS

Students' language ideologies related to English in the multilingual context in Indonesia.

Based on the data gathered from questionnaires, observations, and the interviews, several key themes emerge that explain students' language ideologies related to English in the multilingual context in Indonesia.

Importance of English for Career and Education

The data reveals that English is widely regarded as a tool for global success, especially in obtaining better career and educational opportunities. It shows that both female and male students strongly agree on its significance.

Extract 1

Nasyifa

"English opens many doors for education and career opportunities that Indonesian can't offer, especially globally."

Extract 2

Vero

"English is also needed when students are looking for scholarships, as many scholarship programs require applicants to be fluent in English."

They see English is a vital resource for career growth; students recognize that proficiency in English directly correlates to improved job prospects and access to higher education. This reflects a belief that mastering English allows individuals to be globally competitive and career-ready.

Moreover, most of the students agreed that mastering English is necessary to keep up with people from other countries.

Extract 3

Fara

"Without English, it's hard to compete globally. It's the language of the future, and anyone who doesn't know it will be left behind."

Extract 4

Azzahra

"When we are in another country and cannot speak their language, we can communicate using English."

These show that students see English as a non-negotiable skill for entering the global workforce and pursuing international opportunities. They see English as an empowering tool to new opportunities both professionally and academically.

For many students, English is not just a school subject but a way to connect with the world beyond. Some students shared how learning English helps them access information and connect with others from different countries.

Extract 5

Galang

"Learning English allows me to understand information from the internet, like news or videos, that are mostly in English. It's important for keeping up with what's happening around the world."

Extract 6

Surya Okta

"I want to learn English because it helps me understand what people are saying in movies, and I can talk to people from other countries when I play online games."

These examples show that English allows students to connect to global content like videos, games, and news. For students, English is not just about school; it's also about understanding the world and staying informed, which makes learning the language feel more relevant and important in their daily lives.

The importance of English as a key to success shows that students see it as a valuable investment for their future. The recognition of English's value indicates that students are developing a global perspective, where English is not just a subject to learn but an essential life skill for navigating the challenges of a globalized world.

English as a Symbol of Social Status

The second finding reveals that students see English as a symbol of prestige and intelligence in society. For them, speaking English fluently places someone in a higher position compared to those who only use Indonesian or local languages. This ideology indicates that language is not only about communication but also about how people are judged and valued in social life.

Extract 7

Lintang

"People who can speak English fluently are usually respected more, because others think they are clever and cool."

Extract 8

Grasia

"When someone speaks English, it looks impressive, like they know more than others."

These statements provide authentic evidence that students see English as a way to gain admiration and be associated with modernity and higher knowledge. From their perspective, English can function as a social marker that distinguishes people who are globally minded and educated from those who are not.

Furthermore, students also see English proficiency as linked to being "smart".

Extract 9

Azzahra

"Because not many people in Indonesia are fluent in English, they think it's too difficult to understand, so when they see someone who can speak English, they feel that person is smart."

Extract 10

Eka *"I think people who are fluent in English are high intelligent,
how can they remember all the words and know the meaning?"*

These statements reflect the common perception that English proficiency is associated with higher social status and education.

In conclusion, the second finding highlights that students see English proficiency as a symbol of prestige and intelligence in society. The data clearly shows that students believe English proficiency is linked to higher social status, with more than half agreeing that people who speak English are viewed as smarter and more capable.

Balancing Global English and Local Cultural Identity

The third finding reveals that students concern about losing their local cultural identity. On one hand, students see English as essential for accessing career opportunities and higher education globally. However, they also strongly believe that Indonesian and local languages are vital for maintaining their cultural heritage.

Extract 11

Rendi *"I think English can be useful, but I worry that it might cause
people to forget their own local languages and cultures."*

Extract 12

Grasia *"I believe learning English is important, but it shouldn't mean
forgetting our local languages. We need both."*

Extract 13

Surya *"English is important for the future, but we should not forget
our own language. It's part of who we are."*

This demonstrates that while students value English for global success, they are also committed to preserving local languages and cultural identity.

Many students expressed a desire to find a balance, where learning English for future success does not come at the cost of losing their cultural roots.

Extract 14

Lintang *"We can master English while still using our local language
for daily life. We can use both without any problem. Because
we can't use English when talking to our parents or neighbors,
so I think local language is also important."*

This reflects the belief that multilingualism should be encouraged, where English and local languages work together and support each other.

At the end, students want to learn English because it has benefits all over the world, but they also want to keep their local languages as an important part of their cultural identity. This finding shows that students want a balanced approach, where students can use English to take advantage of global opportunities while still honoring their cultural heritage by using local languages.

Lack of Confidence in English Language Use

The fourth finding reveals that students experience a lack of confidence in using English, even though they know how important it is for their academic and professional success. The data reveals that most of students feel less confident speaking English compared to

other languages, especially in school or social media. This means that students have a hard time speaking English, especially in class, where they are expected to do so.

Extract 15

Bintang

"I'm scared to speak because I'm not good at English yet. I'm afraid of being laughed at"

This expresses the fear of making mistakes that contributes to hesitancy when using English in class.

Extract 16

Layllia

"I can't speak English well,"

This statement indicates low self-esteem and anxiety about speaking English. These responses highlight that students with lower confidence often avoid participating in class activities and discussions.

Extract 17

Anggita

"I'm not confident because my accent isn't perfect."

This statement reveals how concerns about accent and pronunciation can contribute to self-doubt and prevent students from speaking confidently.

However, the interviews also revealed that some students feel more confident using English in less formal, low-pressure situations.

Extract 18

Mundhiala

"I feel comfortable using English when I'm chatting with friends online, but I'm less confident in class."

This highlights how the context and familiarity with the environment play a crucial role in students' comfort levels with speaking English. Informal settings, where there is less pressure to be perfect, allow students to practice without the fear of being judged. In contrast, more formal contexts, such as classroom settings, often provoke anxiety, causing students to avoid speaking English in front of others.

The contrast between these two groups, the confident students who see English as valuable and the less confident students who feel anxious about speaking, demonstrates that language ideologies significantly affect students' confidence and their willingness to speak. The data shows that while positive beliefs about English help build confidence and motivation, negative ideologies contribute to anxiety and reluctance to communicate in the language.

Lastly, the lack of confidence in using English is a significant factor affecting students' ability to communicate in English, even when they recognize its importance for academic and professional success. The findings suggest that students' language ideologies play a crucial role in shaping their confidence levels and willingness to use English in classroom settings.

The Effect of Language Ideologies on Students' Willingness to Communicate in English

Language ideology is basically the set of beliefs and attitudes people have about language and how it should be used. Sung et al. (2022) identified that different language ideologies

can mediate learners' emotional responses and shape their learning goals. On the other hand, conflicting language ideologies can create negative emotions. Based on the data obtained from questionnaires, observations, and interviews, several key themes reveal the effect of language ideologies on students' WTC.

Students With a Positive Language Ideology Have a Positive Willingness to Communicate

This theme highlights those students with positive ideologies toward English who showed greater initiative and confidence in using the language during classroom interactions. These students consistently responded to teacher questions, but demonstrating a strong foundation in understanding classroom content. Not only did they respond to questions, those students also took initiative to engage in discussions, ask clarifying questions, and express their thoughts in English even when faced with linguistic challenges. These students' language use was not entirely in English, often incorporating Bahasa Indonesia. They viewed this mixed approach as a tool for self-expression and interaction, rather than simply a requirement for academic performance.

Several pieces of evidence highlight that students with a strong belief in the value of English tend to have a higher WTC in the language. For instance, Zalfa and Vani from Class 9C consistently showed this by actively participating in group discussions, seeking clarification on challenging topics, and confidently answering their teacher's questions.

Extract 20

Zalfa

"I know my English isn't perfect, but I try to speak because it will help me in the future. If I don't use it, how will I improve?"

This quote reflects Zalfa's strong belief in the practical value of English, which motivates her to overcome any language barriers and engage more fully in class. Similarly, Bintang A and Rosyid from Class 9D made significant efforts to communicate, using English to retell stories, engage in peer discussions, and offer feedback, even though their vocabulary and sentence structure were sometimes limited.

Extract 21

Bintang

"Because I want to get used to and become fluent in English, English class is the place where I practice. I can directly clarify with my teacher if I have difficulty expressing myself. This way, I will be able to speak English more fluently for future use."

This proactive approach to learning reflects a mindset focused on continuous improvement through practice. While some students also actively participated, their responses to follow-up questions were often limited to simple "yes" or "no," indicating a lower level of comfort or proficiency. Ultimately, the proactive engagement of students like Zalfa, Vania, Bintang A, and Rosyid was clearly driven by their belief in the importance of English. This demonstrates how positive attitudes towards a language can significantly boost a student's WTC more frequently and assertively in English, even when their proficiency is still developing.

Students who had a positive language ideology not only participated more in class but also worked harder to improve their English. They believed that speaking English would help them in the future, which motivated them to try even when they faced difficulties. For example, even if they didn't know all the words or made mistakes in grammar, they kept speaking because they saw English as a useful tool.

Extract 22

Surya *“I think it’s okay not to know all the meanings of the words, as long as we try to use English and our conversation partner understands what we mean. I’m used to speaking English when I play games.”*

This highlights how, for students like Surya, using English as a communication tool is more important than achieving perfection.

These students also demonstrated flexibility by using both English and Bahasa Indonesia in class, which helped them express themselves more effectively.

Extract 23

Fara *“Sometimes, I mix English and Bahasa Indonesia to make sure I’m understood. It helps me express myself more clearly, and I think that’s okay for learning.”*

It shows that students with a positive attitude toward English are more willing to engage with the language, even when they are still mastering it. By combining both languages, they maintain communication without letting language barriers hinder their learning, demonstrating resilience and adaptability in their language use.

Students With Contradicting Language Ideology Have Low Willingness to Communicate

The data reveals a distinct pattern where students with contradicting language ideologies displayed significantly lower levels of engagement with English during classroom activities. These students with lower language ideology were often passive participants. Most of these students participated actively at the beginning and end of class sessions, such as when the teacher greeted them or prepared to leave. However, during the main part of the study, they only answered questions when specifically prompted or aided by their peers. Even when provided with opportunities to speak or participate in group discussions, they remained largely disengaged, relying heavily on their classmates for responses or avoiding participation altogether.

There were several pieces of evidence showing how students with lower language ideology have a lack of WTC in English. For instance, Wily and Tanvian showed minimal communication and actively avoided using English during class discussions, needing extensive teacher prompts to answer questions or contribute to group activities. In an interview,

Extract 24

Wily *“I don’t understand the question in English, and I can’t speak English.”*

This statement reflects a lack of confidence in their language abilities, which further inhibited their participation. Similarly, Bintang H and Layllia from Class 9D exhibited very limited verbal participation, often remaining silent during group discussions and struggling to initiate any conversation in English, despite being in a learning environment.

Extract 25

Layllia *“I feel awkward speaking English, especially when I know I’m going to make mistakes. I’d rather stay quiet than risk saying something wrong.”*

Her response reveals a deep-seated anxiety and reluctance to engage, rooted not only in skill gaps but also in fear of judgment.

The reluctance to speak was not simply due to a lack of proficiency; it was also tied to their belief that English was not important for their daily lives. This mindset seemed to erode their confidence in using English. When asked why they were hesitant to speak English, many students revealed that they didn't see the value in using English outside of the classroom.

Extract 26

Tanvian

"I don't think I'll need to speak English much. I'm fine with just speaking Bahasa Indonesia."

Extract 27

Soni

"I am Javanese, and in my daily life, I use Javanese to talk to my friends and parents. I don't know when I will use English. I think it's okay if I can't speak English."

This sentiment suggests that these students felt no immediate need to engage with English, which further contributed to their passive participation.

The contradicting language ideologies of these students seemed to come from their view that English wasn't important for their everyday life. This made them feel less confident and more anxious about using English. Instead of trying to communicate in English, they often chose to rely on their peers for help and avoided speaking English altogether. When they were asked to speak, they hesitated or avoided the task. This reluctance to speak in English was not just about skill but also about attitude. Their lack of interest in English prevented them from trying to use it, even when they were in a classroom where it was required.

The findings from this study suggest that while a positive language ideology can create a foundation for WTC, it is not the sole determinant of communication behavior. Students who held positive beliefs about English demonstrated higher levels of engagement and a greater willingness to overcome language barriers. However, students with contradicting language ideologies, even if they showed favorable attitudes toward English in questionnaires, struggled with communication, largely due to low confidence, anxiety, and insufficient linguistic competence. These results emphasize that while ideologies are crucial, they must be coupled with a supportive learning environment and opportunities for skill development to truly enhance students' WTC in English.

DISCUSSION

Students' language ideologies related to English in the multilingual context in Indonesia

Language ideology refers to the beliefs, assumptions, and values that individuals and communities hold about language, its speakers, and its uses (Woolard, 1992). These ideologies shape not only how learners perceive a language like English but also how they position themselves within multilingual and global contexts (Blommaert, 2006). In the multilingual context of Indonesia, the analysis of students' language ideologies reveals four main themes: (1) The importance of English for career and education, (2) English as a status symbol, (3) Balancing global English and local cultural identity, and (4) Lack of confidence in English language use.

The findings reveal that the majority of students emphasized the importance of learning English for future career and educational opportunities. As Maftoon and Najafi (2015) explained that the WTC is not influenced by gender. This shared belief reflects a strong and positive language ideology toward English among junior high school students

in Indonesia's multilingual context where students perceive English not merely as an academic subject but as a key instrument for accessing global resources, improving employability, and pursuing higher education. This result aligns with Altiner's (2018) finding that highlights that this focus on English is driven by the belief that it is essential for future opportunities. It also supports what Gardner (1985) and Dörnyei (1998) called *instrumental motivation*, where students are motivated to learn a language because of the benefits it brings, like jobs or education. This also supports Bourdieu's (1991) idea that language can be a kind of power or "symbolic capital" that gives people advantages in life. Interestingly, both male and female students in this study agreed on the importance of English, which may be due to the influence of the internet and social media, where English is often shown as a global language full of opportunity (Seargeant, 2009). This finding contrasts with the results from China, where it was found that males had significantly higher initial levels of WTC than females (Feng et al., 2025). This may be partly attributed to the traditional female role in China, which expects females to be "quiet thinkers" (Shi, 2010).

Based on the second finding, students see English as a symbol of social status. The data show that students associate fluency in English with being smarter, more capable, and in a higher social position compared to those who speak only Indonesian or local languages. This view is consistent with previous studies (Mirhosseini, 2018; Pennycook, 2013), which argue that English is often seen as a status symbol tied to global opportunities and success. International students perceive English as conveying "power," "privilege," and "prestige," extending their social opportunities and positive identity both domestically and abroad (Tananuraksakul, 2010). In Korea, this view extends beyond students; elite parents consider English proficiency a marker of national power, middle-class identity, and social distinction (Lee, 2021). This connection between language and social status is also explained by Sociocultural Theory, which shows that people's social environments play a big role in how they learn languages (Vygotsky, 1994). According to Vygotsky's theory, language acquisition is deeply influenced by the social context and the symbolic values attributed to language within that context (Lantolf & Beckett, 2009). In Indonesia, where English is linked to modernity and global engagement, students may perceive speaking English as a way to gain respect and improve their social standing (Saputra, 2022). This finding reflects the broader sociocultural perspective that language is not only a means of communication but also a tool for navigating and constructing one's identity within a society (Lantolf, 1994). Additionally, the belief that English proficiency is tied to higher social status suggests that students' attitudes toward English may be influenced by external societal pressures and internal desires for social recognition, which are crucial factors in their motivation and willingness to use English (Yashima et al., 2004).

The third finding reveals that students balancing global English and local cultural identity. Students overwhelmingly agree that English opens more career opportunities, but they also worry that the increasing dominance of English could lead to a decline in interest in local languages, which are crucial for preserving cultural heritage. This finding is consistent with research showing that while English is seen as a key to global success, it can also threaten local languages and cultural identities (Irham, 2022; Hayes, 2016). In Indonesia, where many languages are spoken, students face the challenge of balancing English's global advantages with the need to keep their local languages alive (Zein, 2019). This struggle fits with Lantolf & Beckett's Sociocultural Theory (1994), which emphasizes how language learning is shaped by social and cultural influences. An unexpected finding in this study was the students' strong desire to balance both English and their local languages. Instead of seeing these languages as competing, students want them to coexist and complement each other, which aligns with recent efforts to integrate local culture into English curricula to support both cultural identity and language learning (Ratri et al., 2024).

Based on the fourth finding, students show a lack of confidence in using English,

particularly in informal setting. Although they agree English is important, they don't always feel confident using it in daily life. This shows a gap between what they believe and how they act. Subtirelu (2014) calls this a "deficit ideology," the belief that one's English is "not good enough" compared to native speakers. Because of this belief, students hesitate to speak, even when they are motivated. This reflects emotional barriers, as discussed by Lee (2020), and Vygotsky's (1978) view that confidence in speaking is shaped by the environment and social interaction. It is contrary to Sung (2022) whereby fostering positive language ideologies and enhancing motivation, educators can help students build the confidence and communication skills needed to succeed in multilingual environments. It can be concluded that even if they have a high level of language ideology, there are always other reasons that make students feel unconfident. Research by Grant (2018) and Amalia et al. (2019) also found that students feel more confident when they are in supportive environments and comfortable with the topic. This study supports previous findings but also highlights that having positive attitudes is not enough. Students need safe spaces to practice, because confidence grows not only from within but also through positive social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). This finding is consistent with Sarifah et al. (2024), who discovered that Indonesian EFL students faced similar internal barriers such as low motivation, limited confidence, and pronunciation anxiety during online learning.

The Effect of Language Ideologies on Students' Willingness to Communicate in English

This study found two major patterns that show how language ideologies influence students' WTC in English. First, students with positive language ideologies show positive WTC in English. These students actively joined discussions, answered questions, and tried to use English even when they had limited vocabulary or made mistakes (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Second, students with contradicting language ideologies showed low WTC. They were less confident, often avoided using English, and only participated when prompted (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014). This suggests that language ideology plays a key role in shaping how confident and motivated students feel about using English in class. Students who believe that English is important and valuable are more likely to take risks and try to speak, while those with weaker beliefs often stay silent or depend on others to speak for them (Baker, 2011).

These findings are in line with earlier studies. Yashima (2002) explains that learners who value a language are more likely to be willing to use it in real situations. MacIntyre and Doucette (2010) also found that WTC is influenced not just by language ability but also by how students feel about themselves and the language. Feng et al. (2025) discovered similar patterns, showing that students who have positive views of English tend to facilitate the motivation to learn the language and positive emotions. Conversely, learners who hold contradicting language ideologies or negative perceptions of the language are less likely to engage in communication in that language, leading to lower WTC (Feng et al., 2025). Research by MacIntyre et al. (2001) also emphasizes that negative attitudes towards a language can significantly decrease a learner's motivation to use the language in real-life interactions, as learners may feel reluctant or anxious when faced with the opportunity to communicate. Additionally, negative language attitudes may arise from cultural or social factors, such as perceived social status or self-doubt, which further discourage learners from participating in language-related interactions (Yashima, 2002). This relationship suggests that improving learners' language attitudes by highlighting the social and personal benefits of language use may be an effective strategy for increasing their WTC.

Theoretically, these findings support and extend MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) model of WTC, which includes both personal and classroom-related factors. This study shows that language ideology can serve as a motivational base, but it must be supported by

confidence-building activities and positive classroom experiences in order to be effective. One unexpected finding is that some students who had positive beliefs about English still avoided speaking. This dynamic can be explained by the Situational Factors layer in the WTC pyramid, highlighting that the classroom environment (Li et al., 2022) and student cohesiveness significantly influence WTC (Khajavy et al., 2016). Even when students have positive language ideologies, factors like anxiety (Li & Li, 2024; Khajavy et al., 2018) and fear of making mistakes (Ananda & Hastini, 2023) can prevent them from communicating. In a multilingual context, students also face challenges in balancing their own cultural identity with learning English, which can cause internal struggles (Gao, 2020). This shows that even when students like English or think it is useful, emotional barriers such as fear, anxiety, or low self-esteem can prevent them from communicating in the language.

CONCLUSION

The study of the role of language ideologies of junior high school students in Central Java shows that students see English is important for career and education, English as a symbol of social status, students seeking to balance the benefits of global English with a strong commitment to their local cultural identity and languages, and students still lacking confidence when using English. The role of language ideologies reveals that students who have positive language ideologies and see English as an important and valuable skill tend to have higher WTC because they are willing to speak English even when they make mistakes and take part in discussions. On the other hand, students with contradicting language ideologies have a lower WTC and usually don't use English unless they are told to.

These results fit earlier research showing that WTC depends on students' attitudes, emotions, and the classroom environment, and language ideologies alone aren't enough. Students also need confidence, supportive teachers and peers, and plenty of low-pressure chances to practice. At the same time, their wish to balance global English with local identity suggests that pro-multilingual approaches like Indonesian and local languages alongside English can boost participation without making students feel they must give up their roots. Overall, language ideology operates as a motivational base that must be reinforced by an affirming classroom climate and structured chances to speak. The implication for teachers and schools is that they should make WTC a daily goal by normalizing mistakes, using translanguaging strategically, integrating local culture into English tasks, and giving frequent, low-stakes speaking turns so students' positive language ideologies can grow into confident communication.

One of the key limitations of this study is the population gap. The research was conducted with a specific group of junior high school students in one region of Indonesia, which limits the generalizability of the findings. The study's sample was restricted in terms of both geographical location and educational level, which means the results may not reflect the experiences of students from other regions, urban or rural settings, or different educational backgrounds. This limitation suggests that future research should include a more diverse sample of students from various regions and educational levels to better understand how language ideologies and WTC may vary across different contexts.

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