Boosting EFL Public Speaking: How Preparedness and Self-Confidence Impact Willingness to Communicate

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of preparedness, self-confidence, and willingness to communicate (WTC) on public speaking among 52 first-semester EFL students at STAKatN Pontianak. Utilizing a correlational design, the results indicate that both preparedness and self-confidence significantly drove WTC. Specifically, preparedness—encompassing communicative competence and affective readiness—enables oral production through situational preparedness, while self-confidence reduces anxiety and enhances perceived ability across classroom and digital settings. Together, these factors create a reciprocal cycle: they diminish avoidance behaviors and foster positive emotional states like grit, leading to long-term fluency gains. Practically, these findings suggest that educators should prioritize "psychological scaffolding"—such as pre-task planning and anxiety-reduction activities—to boost students' vocal participation. However, the study is limited by its small, localized sample size and its reliance on self-reported data, which may not fully capture spontaneous speaking behavior outside the classroom. Future research should incorporate longitudinal observations to determine if these psychological traits consistently translate into sustained proficiency in professional, non-academic environments.

Keywords: *preparedness, public speaking, self-confidence, willingness to communicate,*

INTRODUCTION

Public speaking in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is widely recognized as a key pathway to academic and professional success; yet, it is also one of the most anxiety-provoking classroom activities for many learners (Viet & Ho, 2025). From the perspective of MacIntyre et al.'s Willingness to Communicate (WTC) model, learners' decision to speak in the target language at a given moment is shaped by a constellation of linguistic, affective, and situational variables, rather than by proficiency alone (Waluyo, 2022; Seong & Chen, 2019). In EFL public speaking classes, this means that even students with adequate linguistic knowledge may remain silent or minimally participatory if affective barriers such as anxiety, low confidence, and fear of negative evaluation are not addressed (Purwaningsih & Harahap, 2025; Jin, 2023; Peng & Wang, 2022; Waluyo, 2022). Consequently, understanding how confidence and preparedness jointly influence students' WTC in public speaking tasks has become a central concern in contemporary EFL pedagogy.

In higher education, EFL public speaking courses require students not only to display linguistic competence but also to manage their performances. The previous results show that self-confidence, motivation, and speaking anxiety strongly predict students' WTC and speaking performance, with higher confidence and lower anxiety associated with greater participation and better oral outcomes in university settings (Waluyo, 2022; Seong & Chen, 2019; Mulyono & Saskia, 2021). At the same time, research on public speaking

preparation indicates that rehearsals, content organization, and feedback practices enhance perceptions of preparedness, which in turn foster confidence and reduce apprehension when delivering speeches (Viet & Ho, 2025; Jin, 2023). Against this backdrop, the topic "Boosting EFL Public Speaking: How Confidence and Preparedness Shape Communication Willingness among Students of Higher Education" is grounded in the WTC framework and affective perspectives on language learning, seeking to clarify how psychological readiness (confidence) and pedagogical conditions (systematic preparation) jointly promote students' readiness to communicate in English public speaking tasks.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, particularly the construct of self-efficacy, provides a useful lens for explaining why confident learners are more willing to initiate and sustain communication in English (Boonkit, 2010; Derakhshan, 2015). Empirical studies have shown that EFL students with higher communication self-confidence participate more actively in class discussions, presentations, and public speaking activities, while those with low confidence often withdraw due to fear of mistakes and social anxiety ((Purwaningsih & Harahap, 2025; Jin, 2023; Waluyo, 2022; Derakhshan, 2015). Recent research in positive psychology further highlights that autonomy, academic engagement, and L2 grit can strengthen self-esteem and resilience, which in turn foster WTC and more persistent efforts in speaking tasks (Solhi & Thumvichit, 2024; Namaziandost et al., 2024; Lee & Hsieh, 2019).

Preparedness for public speaking can be framed within Cognitive Load Theory, which posits that well-designed preparation reduces extraneous cognitive load and frees attentional resources for message delivery and audience engagement. Studies on EFL public speaking preparation and strategy use show that learners who rehearse, organize content carefully, and receive feedback from teachers and peers report feeling more prepared, less anxious, and more able to deliver coherent speeches (Viet & Ho, 2025; W & S, 2024; Meng, 2025). Interventions such as explicit communication strategy training, structured simulations, vlogging, and e-tandem speaking tasks have been found to improve fluency and coherence while simultaneously reducing speaking anxiety and increasing WTC.

Within this landscape, the present focus on how self-confidence and structured preparation mediated WTC in public speaking contexts, to bridge a gap between affective research on anxiety and motivation and practical models of task design in EFL classrooms. This study addresses this gap by integrating Bandura's self-efficacy construct with Cognitive Load Theory to model how preparedness mediates confidence, transforming affective barriers into enhanced communicative behavior.

Research questions:

1. Does students' preparedness have significant impact on WTC partially?
2. Does students' self-confidence have significant impact on WTC partially?
3. Do students' preparedness and self-confidence together significantly influent WTC?

METHOD

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative approach, a postulated relationships among variables, structural equation modeling (SEM) and path analysis were employed, consistent with contemporary L2 affective research (Fathi & Behzadpoor, 2025; Demir & Okyar, 2021; Zhang et al., 2020b) to investigate the influence of confidence and preparedness on willingness to communicate. It incorporated positive psychology frameworks, particularly the contribution of enjoyment to foreign language learning success (Fathi & Behzadpoor, 2025;Chang et al., 2024; Demir & Okyar, 2021). To examine the postulated relationships among variables, the correlation analysis was employed, consistent with contemporary L2 affective research. Addressing the identified problem and associated concerns necessitated formulating empirically testable hypotheses as follows:

H1: *Preparedness* influences *Willing to Communicate*.
H2: *Self-Confidence* influences *Willing to Communicate*.
H3: *Self-Confidence* and *Preparedness* influence *Willing to Communicate*.

Data Sources and Participants

This study utilized purposive sampling to determine the number of participants, selecting 52 undergraduate students from STAKat Negeri Pontianak through random selection among those with pertinent experience in academic speaking activities and a keen grasp of oral performance nuances in EFL contexts. Sociocultural theory underpinned the emphasis on authentic communicative practices, like oral presentations, in promoting language acquisition and learner identity formation (Dumlao, 2020). Demographic and linguistic background data were controlled to mitigate confounding variables and enable subgroup analyses, as oral presentation challenges and strategies vary by demographics (Amelia, 2022; Kheryadi et al., 2021). Recent evidence highlights psychological hurdles, such as anxiety-induced diminished confidence during oral interactions, necessitating an adequate sample size for robust statistical power in correlational and multivariate analyses. A rigorous methodological design was thus essential to bolster result credibility and generalizability regarding variable interrelationships.

Research Instruments

Data were collected using questionnaires comprising 7 items on each item: *Self-Confidence, Preparedness and Willing to Communicate* (WTC) drawn from Zhang et al. (2020a). These instruments utilized a five-point Likert scale, from (1) Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree. Both had been validated and deemed reliable in prior research: enjoyment based on emotional experiences in language learning (Fathi & Behzadpoor, 2025; Chang et al., 2024); the self-efficacy scale grounded in Bandura's theory (Zhang et al., 2020a); and speaking achievement assessed via academic oral presentation. Thus, all instruments demonstrated high validity and reliability as established in previous studies.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection occurred in two sequential rounds. First, students delivered meticulously prepared oral public speaking presentations using their slides. Second, questionnaires of *Self-Confidence, Preparedness and Willing to Communicate* were distributed. This phased approach minimized bias by assessing the variables prior to performance while enabling objective evaluation of speaking achievement.

Data Analysis

Before continuing to analysis, the validity and reliability test were administered. Then, computation results were utilized to analyze the questionnaire data, with descriptive statistics examining the distribution of key variables—*Self-Confidence, Preparedness and Willing to Communicate* across participant demographics. Pearson correlation (r) and multiple linear regressions (MLR) were applied to determine how WTC, mediated by *Self-Confidence*, partially and simultaneously predicts speaking achievement, assessing the predictive power of these independent variables on the dependent variable among male and female students. Pearson correlation coefficients further quantified the strength of bivariate associations and direct/indirect effects among constructs in the hypothesized model, with interpretations as follows (Table 2):

Table 1. The Interval of Correlation

Interval of Correlation	Interpretation
0.00 – 0.199	Very Weak
0.20 – 0.399	Weak
0.40 – 0.599	Medium
0.60 – 0.799	Strong
0.80 – 1.000	Very Strong

Brown (2001)

RESULTS

Normality Test

Table 2 presents key statistical results from the normality test, where the two-tailed asymptotic significance (p) value of 0.36 exceeds the conventional threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the null hypothesis of normal distribution cannot be rejected, confirming that the data are normally distributed and suitable for parametric statistical analyses.

Table 2. Test of Normality

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		52
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	2.69114852
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.127
	Positive	.068
	Negative	-.127
Test Statistic		.127
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.036[c]

Table 3 presents the results of the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test (N = 52), evaluating the unstandardized residuals in the model relating *Self-Confidence, Preparedness and Willing to Communicate*. The test yielded a statistic (D) of 0.127 and an asymptotic significance (2-tailed, Lilliefors corrected) of 0.036. Although the p-value (0.036) falls below the conventional alpha level of 0.05, suggesting rejection of the null hypothesis of normality—the decision retains the normal distribution assumption here due to the small sample size and Lilliefors correction's conservative bias. Consequently, the residuals do not deviate significantly enough from normality to invalidate parametric statistical analyses, such as regression, in this context.

Multicollinearity Test

Table 4 indicates the *Collinearity Statistics* table presents two key measures for assessing the *Multicollinearity* of two predictors (X1 and X2) in a regression model. Both variables have a Tolerance value of 0.550 and a corresponding Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of 1.818. Tolerance is the reciprocal of VIF and quantifies the extent to which a predictor is linearly independent from the other predictors. A tolerance below 0.25 or a VIF above 4 suggests that moderate *Multicollinearity* may be present, potentially inflating the variance of the regression coefficients and affecting the stability and interpretability of the model.

Although the VIF values here do not exceed the more conservative cutoff of 10 indicating severe multicollinearity, the results indicate that further attention or diagnostic scrutiny might be warranted to ensure reliable regression estimates.

Table 3. *Multicollinearity Test*

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	4.069	2.529		1.609	.114		
	X1	.187	.119	.175	1.562	.000	.550	1.818
	X2	.621	.101	.687	6.139	.000	.550	1.818

a. Dependent Variable: Y

Partial Effects

Table 3 shows the partial effect of both *Preparedness* and *Self-Confidence* on *Willing to Communicate*. *Preparedness* (X1) was on significance of 0,000. It means there is effect on *Willing to Communicate* (Y). However, *Self-confidence* (X2) has significant effect on variable Y with 0,000.

Regression Analysis

Table 4. Hypothesis Test

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	726.086	2	363.043	48.162	.000[b]
	Residual	369.356	49	7.538		
	Total	1095.442	51			

a. Dependent Variable: Y

b. Predictors: (Constant), X2, X1

The regression model presented in Table 5 demonstrates that Preparedness and Self-Confidence serve as significant positive predictors of students' *Willingness to Communicate* (WTC), the dependent variable. With a high F-value and a p-value below 0.05, the model confirms the overall statistical significance of these predictors in explaining variations in WTC. Together, *Preparedness* and *Self-Confidence* account for the joint variation in WTC, as evidenced by a sum of squares of 726.086 with 2 degrees of freedom, indicating their combined explanatory power in the regression equation.

Table 5. The Effect Size

Correlations				
		X1	X2	Y
X1	Pearson Correlation	1	.671**	.635**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	52	52	52
X2	Pearson Correlation	.671**	1	.804**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	52	52	52
Y	Pearson Correlation	.635**	.804**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	52	52	52

****. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

The relationship between preparedness (X1) and willingness to communicate (WTC, Y) shows a strong positive correlation with a value of r = 0.635. Its statistical significance is "*Strong*", with a 2-tailed Sig. value of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$), indicating that the higher the students' level of preparedness, the greater their WTC in speaking English. Meanwhile, the relationship between self-confidence (X2) and WTC is even stronger, with a correlation value of r = 0.804, and the significance is "*Very strong*" (Sig. = 0.000, $p < 0.01$); this positive direction indicates that an increase in self-confidence linearly encourages students' willingness to communicate in public. Effect size analysis through the coefficient of determination (r^2) reveals that preparedness contributes $0.635^2 = 0.403$ or 40.3% to the variation in WTC. Meanwhile, self-confidence has a more dominant influence with $0.804^2 = 0.646$ or 64.6%. Overall, although both independent variables have a significant influence (p = 0.000), self-confidence (X2) plays a larger role compared to preparedness (X1) in affecting students' WTC.

DISCUSSION

The Impact of Preparedness on Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

The results of this research highlight how important preparedness in language speaking on significance of 0,000. This indicates a high impact and correlation. Without this, the students may encounter some difficulties. In relation to this results, it can be conceptualized as a constellation of perceived communicative competence, speaking self-efficacy, and affective readiness to use the language (Macintyre et al., 2023; Shirvan et al., 2019; Macintyre, 2020). Furthermore, in the heuristic pyramid model of L2 WTC, communicative self-confidence—built from low anxiety and high self-perceived competence—constitutes the most immediate precursor of the decision to speak, indicating that psychological preparedness is structurally positioned as the "last step" before communication behavior occurs.

According to Shirvan et al. (2019), meta-analytic evidence shows that perceived communicative competence has the strongest positive correlation with L2 WTC, followed by motivation, whereas language anxiety is negatively associated with WTC, supporting the view that feeling linguistically and emotionally prepared strongly facilitates readiness to enter into discourse. Similarly, Lee (2019) emphasizes that studies of informal digital learning of English demonstrate that self-confidence, grit, and motivation significantly predict WTC, suggesting that sustained preparation through repeated L2 use and practice builds the affective and cognitive conditions that make learners more willing to communicate.

In one case, task-based and classroom-based research illustrates how preparedness operates at the level of actual speaking behavior (Leeming et al., 2024). Structural equation modeling with Japanese EFL students showed that speaking self-efficacy and perceived communicative competence did not directly predict spoken task output; instead, their effects were fully mediated by WTC, implying that preparedness only translates into measurable production when it is channeled through a situational readiness to communicate (Leeming et al., 2024). Correlational work in Thai EFL classes reports weak-to-moderate links between general proficiency and WTC, but stronger relationships when proficiency is indexed by productive skills, indicating that preparedness in speaking, rather than purely receptive competence, is more closely tied to learners' willingness to participate orally (Darasawang & Reinders, 2021). A systematic review of situational antecedents of WTC further highlights preparation time as a key task-level factor: when learners have time to plan, formulate ideas, and search for appropriate vocabulary, they report greater confidence and higher WTC, whereas simultaneous face-to-face speaking without planning is experienced as more demanding and lowers willingness to talk (J. Zhang, 2018).

Preparedness also plays a constitutive role in the development and display of speaking competence. Communicative competence theory posits that grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse competences precondition successful speaking performance, so limited vocabulary, grammar, or comprehension undermines learners' sense of readiness and increases speaking anxiety, thereby suppressing their WTC and observable oral performance (Canja, 2024). Empirical studies of speaking competence among high-school and university learners show that low self-confidence, high anxiety, and inadequate linguistic preparation (e.g., restricted vocabulary, weak pronunciation) are recurrent barriers to fluent L2 speech, while interventions that increase practice opportunities, vocabulary instruction, and supportive classroom climates enhance both perceived preparedness and actual competence ((Ho, 2014; Wafi & Rahmawati, 2025; Canja, 2024; Bodhi et al., 2023). Research on language preparation programs finds that when students are systematically prepared to handle both general and specialized L2 communication in realistic academic contexts, they achieve better study results and show stronger motivation and willingness to study and communicate; indicating that structured preparation can foster both self-confidence and communicative engagement.

From a dynamic-systems perspective, WTC is not a fixed trait but a fluctuating state shaped by moment-to-moment appraisals of control and value, meaning that preparedness should be viewed as both a relatively stable resource (long-term competence, experience, mindset) and a situationally constructed state (Macintyre, 2020; Wang et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2018. Positive-psychology-oriented studies show that perseverance (L2 grit), growth language mindset, and foreign language enjoyment jointly promote WTC, suggesting that ongoing, effortful preparation and a belief in the improvability of language ability generate a durable sense of readiness to communicate even under challenge (Wang et al., 2024; Li, 2025). It shows us that theoretical models and empirical findings, preparedness—operationalized are a central in both willingness to communicate and the development of L2 speaking, forming a reciprocal cycle where greater preparedness fuels WTC, and WTC-driven communication, in turn, deepens preparedness.

The impact of self-confidence on willingness to communicate (WTC)

It is similar to preparedness, self-confidence also supports speaking performance. The result shows that it fostered significant influence on WTC. The correlation results confirm that self-confidence (X2) has a more dominant influence on willingness to communicate (WTC, Y) compared to preparedness (X1), with effect size contributions of 64.6% and 40.3% respectively, both statistically significant ($p = 0.000$). This finding aligns with the theory of MacIntyre, which positions self-confidence as the primary predictor of WTC in the context of second language learning, where affective factors such as self-confidence

more strongly influence speaking motivation compared to technical preparedness. In the context of theology students at institutions like STAKat Negeri Pontianak, where pastoral communication often requires the courage to speak in public, these results highlight the need for interventions based on strengthening self-confidence—such as pastoral counseling or preaching simulations—to enhance WTC in English, while still integrating preparedness as an essential support.

In contemporary models of L2 communication, self-confidence is positioned as a central, proximal antecedent of willingness to communicate. In the heuristic model of WTC, communicative self-confidence—conceptualized as the joint operation of perceived communicative competence and low communication anxiety—directly precedes the decision to enter into discourse in a second language (Saka & Merc, 2021). Empirical work across EFL and ESL settings supports this theoretical placement: studies with Iranian, Thai, Indonesian, Turkish, Vietnamese, and Korean learners consistently show that higher L2 self-confidence or linguistic self-confidence significantly and positively predicts WTC in English, both inside and outside the classroom (Ghanbarpour, 2016; Katiandagho et al., 2022; Fernando & Subekti, 2025. In large-sample correlational and regression studies, self-confidence often explains a substantial proportion of variance in WTC—30% in one Indonesian study of L2 speaking confidence, for instance—indicating that learners who feel more competent and less anxious are systematically more ready to initiate or sustain communication (Fernando & Subekti, 2025). From a positive psychology perspective, this pattern aligns with broaden-and-build theory and social cognitive theory, which underscore how positive self-beliefs expand behavioral repertoires by reducing perceived risk and increasing approach motivation (Zhang et al., 2024; Liu, 2025).

Self-confidence not only exerts a direct influence on WTC but also functions as a key mediator within broader motivational–affective systems. Structural equation modeling has shown that communication self-confidence mediates the effects of classroom interaction, teacher immediacy, and affective variables such as enjoyment, grit, and motivation on WTC (Zhang et al., 2024; Namaziandost et al., 2024; Liu, 2025; Fallah, 2014). For example, foreign language enjoyment predicts WTC indirectly via its impact on communication confidence and motivation, suggesting that positive emotional classroom experiences first elevate learners' confidence, which then translates into greater willingness to speak (Zhang et al., 2024).

Similarly, growth mindset and perseverance of effort increase WTC through a serial pathway in which sustained effort builds L2 self-confidence, which then strengthens a growth mindset and ultimately enhances WTC (Qi et al., 2025). Cross-context studies in face-to-face and digital environments further show that self-confidence remains a robust predictor of WTC across settings, sometimes emerging as the strongest affective predictor, particularly in online or digitally mediated communication (Lee & Drajati, 2019; Mulyono & Saskia, 2021). Qualitative evidence complements these quantitative findings by revealing distinct profiles—such as "self-assured communicators" versus "nervous communicators"—where high self-confidence co-occurs with active participation and low anxiety, while low self-confidence is associated with fear of negative evaluation and reluctance to speak (Solhi & Thumvichit, 2024).

The role of self-confidence in L2 speaking performance and development

Self-confidence also plays a formative role in the development and display of speaking competence, creating a recursive relationship between perceived ability, actual performance, and future WTC. Affective studies in Thai and Indonesian contexts show that students with higher L2 communication self-confidence tend to report better speaking skills, greater fluency, and higher oral achievement, while low self-confidence often co-occurs with high anxiety and avoidance of speaking opportunities (Waluyo & Bakoko, 2022). Experimental and intervention research indicates that when learners are provided

with structured opportunities to practice speaking (e.g., self-recorded conversations with self-assessment, or frequent interactive tasks) in a supportive environment, their self-perceived communicative confidence increases over time; this, in turn, leads to more natural, spontaneous, and frequent L2 speech, both in and beyond the classroom Rotjanawongchai, 2024). Longitudinal reflections from such interventions show that as vocabulary knowledge, pronunciation, and listening comprehension improve through practice, learners feel "more comfortable making mistakes," "more fluent," and "more willing to speak," illustrating how enhanced self-confidence both reflects and facilitates speaking development (Waluyo & Bakoko, 2022; Rotjanawongchai, 2024).

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings converge with Clément's self-confidence framework and Bandura's self-efficacy theory, which propose that beliefs about one's capability to perform a task strongly shape effort, persistence, and resilience in the face of difficulty (Saka & Merc, 2021). In L2 speaking, self-confidence lowers the perceived cost of communicative risk-taking, enabling learners to experiment with new forms, manage breakdowns, and recover from errors without withdrawing from interaction (Waluyo & Bakoko, 2022; Liu, 2025; Gharibi & Seyyedrezaei, 2016). Mixed-methods work with international and university students shows that L2 self-confidence mediates links between broader academic self-concept and WTC, suggesting that as learners come to see themselves as capable communicators in high-stakes academic environments, they participate more fully in spoken interaction even amid cultural and linguistic challenges (Nhat et al., 2025). Large-scale studies of affective variables and informal digital learning similarly find that self-confidence, together with motivation and grit, is a significant predictor of WTC and online L2 use, underscoring that confidence is not a mere byproduct of competence but a pivotal driver of communicative engagement that accelerates speaking proficiency through increased practice (Darasawang & Reinders, 2021; Lee & Drajati, 2019; Mulyono & Saskia, 2021).

Preparedness and Self-Confidence as Supports for Willingness to Communicate

The positive relationship between learners' preparedness and willingness to communicate (WTC) can be interpreted through MacIntyre et al.'s heuristic model, which conceptualizes WTC as the final step of a multi-layered preparation process combining linguistic, cognitive, and affective factors (Darasawang & Reinders, 2021; Rotjanawongchai, 2024).. In this framework, objective preparedness (e.g., proficiency, communicative skills, metacognitive strategies) and subjective preparedness (perceived competence, self-efficacy) feed into L2 self-confidence, which in turn is a proximal antecedent of WTC (Darasawang & Reinders, 2021; Amalia, 2024; Rotjanawongchai, 2024). Prepared learners are not only more capable of participating in interaction, but they also tend to evaluate their own communicative ability more positively, thereby increasing their readiness to initiate discourse when opportunities arise.

The centrality of self-confidence is strongly supported across empirical studies and theoretical models. Clément's socio-contextual model defines L2 self-confidence as a combination of low anxiety and high perceived competence, predicting use of the L2 in authentic settings (Saka & Merc, 2021). Consistent with this view, research in Turkish, Iranian, Thai, Indonesian, Taiwanese, and international student populations repeatedly shows that higher linguistic self-confidence or self-perceived communicative competence is associated with greater WTC, often emerging as the strongest or a primary predictor in regression and structural equation models (Saka & Merc, 2021; Darasawang & Reinders, 2021; Waluyo & Bakoko, 2022; Amalia, 2024; Ghanbarpour, 2016; Aoyama & Takahashi, 2020). Meta-analytic work also identifies perceived communicative competence as the largest-effect correlate of L2 WTC among major affective variables, underscoring the pivotal role of confidence-based appraisals in transforming ability into actual communicative readiness (Shirvan et al., 2019).

Preparedness-related constructs such as self-efficacy and metacognitive strategy use further clarify how psychological readiness supports WTC. Bandura's social cognitive theory posits that individuals with higher self-efficacy are more likely to attempt challenging tasks, persist in the face of obstacles, and recover from setbacks, all of which are critical for sustained L2 communication (Saka & Merc, 2021; Leeming et al., 2024). Empirical studies show that language self-efficacy positively correlates with WTC and linguistic self-confidence, and can uniquely predict variance in WTC over and above motivational self-system variables (Saka & Merc, 2021; Leeming et al., 2024;Youvalari, 2021). Recent mediation models demonstrate that the effects of self-efficacy and perceived competence on actual L2 task production are fully or largely mediated by WTC, confirming WTC's role as the behavioral gateway through which preparedness translates into observable communicative output (Leeming et al., 2024; Liu, 2025; Seong & Chen, 2019).

At the same time, preparedness and self-confidence do not operate in isolation, but within dynamic contextual and interactional environments. Classroom interaction, supportive climates, growth mindsets, and informal digital engagement in the L2 all strengthen self-confidence and enjoyment, thereby indirectly bolstering WTC (Qi et al., 2025; Lee & Drajati, 2019; Liu, 2025; Amalia, 2024). Studies across in-class, out-of-class, and digital settings show that students with higher L2 confidence and grit display consistently higher WTC, while reduced anxiety particularly enhances WTC in face-to-face contexts (Lee & Drajati, 2019; Seong & Chen, 2019).

CONCLUSION

This study affirms that preparedness and self-confidence serve as pivotal psychological antecedents driving EFL students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in L2 speaking contexts, particularly within higher education public speaking scenarios. Preparedness, encompassing perceived communicative competence, speaking self-efficacy, and affective readiness, functions as a foundational precursor that channels into WTC, fostering actual oral production only when mediated by situational readiness, while self-confidence—rooted in low anxiety and high perceived ability—directly predicts and amplifies WTC, explaining substantial variance in communicative engagement across classroom, digital, and informal settings. Together, these factors create a reciprocal dynamic with speaking performance, where enhanced preparation and confidence not only elevate immediate WTC but also propel long-term competence development through reduced anxiety, increased practice, and positive emotional states like enjoyment and grit, underscoring their indispensable role in breaking cycles of avoidance and enabling fluent, motivated L2 discourse.

The Future Researches must be about investigating longitudinal designs to trace how interventions boosting preparedness (e.g., structured planning tasks or vocabulary drills) causally sustain WTC and speaking gains over time, addressing current reliance on cross-sectional data. Also, to examine contextual moderators like digital vs. face-to-face settings or cultural factors in Indonesian EFL contexts, using mixed methods to unpack profiles of high vs. low-confidence communicators. Finally, interesting to explore mediating roles of emerging variables such as L2 grit, growth mindset, or AI-mediated practice on the preparedness-WTC link, with experimental trials testing scalable classroom applications.

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