

## Exploring Thai English Majors' Willingness to Communicate in English: Perspectives from High and Low GPA Students

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### Abstracts

This study examined Thai university English majors' willingness to communicate (WTC) in English by comparing students with high and low GPAs across classroom and social contexts. Data were collected from 36 fourth-year students, using a validated questionnaire and open-ended written responses. The questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and independent-samples *t*-tests. The written responses were analyzed qualitatively by organizing similar ideas into themes and reporting the patterns using participants' own wording where relevant. Results showed that high-GPA students reported significantly higher classroom WTC in four situations: pair or group work, speaking with classmates outside class for practice, expressing opinions in front of the class, and giving presentations. In both groups, WTC was highest when communicating with classmates during classroom activities and lowest when interacting in groups not composed of friends. No significant differences were found between the two GPA groups in willingness to communicate with native versus non-native English speakers. The qualitative findings showed that high-GPA students described stronger confidence, more active communication behaviors, and greater intercultural awareness. Low-GPA students more often described anxiety and reduced participation, especially in unfamiliar or public situations. Overall, GPA was linked to higher WTC in interactive learning contexts, while the interlocutor's nativeness appeared to play a limited role.

**Keywords:** Willingness to Communicate, English Majors, GPA, Thai EFL Context

### Introduction

English is widely recognized as a global language for international communication (Moslehifar, 2012). Although national languages continue to play a central role in many societies, interest in learning English as an International Language (EIL) remains widespread. However, learners' willingness to learn and use English varies considerably and is influenced by multiple factors, including learning purposes, perceptions of interlocutors, language proficiency, and

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individual psychological characteristics (Moazzam, 2014; Culhane, 2004; Dörnyei, 2005). In particular, learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) in English has been identified as a crucial factor that mediates actual language use, especially in foreign language contexts.

Previous research suggests that WTC is shaped by learners' backgrounds, educational experiences, and social environments (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Somsai & Intaraprasert, 2011). Learners' attitudes toward English, their self-confidence, and their previous exposure to communicative situations can either facilitate or inhibit their willingness to engage in interaction. In some contexts, the use of English may also be affected by nationalistic or cultural perceptions, where speaking English is viewed as unnatural or unnecessary, potentially leading to communication apprehension. Such perceptions may discourage learners from actively using English, particularly in public or unfamiliar situations.

An additional factor influencing WTC concerns learners' perceptions of interlocutors, particularly the distinction between native and non-native English speakers. Some studies report that learners show a higher willingness to communicate with native speakers due to perceptions of authenticity and linguistic authority (Moazzam, 2014). In contrast, other studies suggest that non-native English speakers may be perceived as more approachable and empathetic, which can positively affect learners' willingness to communicate (Phothongsunan, 2017; Tsou & Chen, 2017). These mixed findings indicate that the role of interlocutor nativeness in shaping WTC remains inconclusive and context-dependent.

In Thailand, English is taught and used as a foreign language, and despite its increasing importance in education and international communication, many Thai learners demonstrate reluctance to use English in both classroom and real-life settings (Somsai & Intaraprasert, 2011; Pattapong, 2015). Recent research has shown that Thai EFL learners often experience difficulties in speaking and listening and tend to avoid direct interaction, particularly with unfamiliar interlocutors (Chaisiri, 2023). As a result, WTC becomes a key variable in understanding why learners with similar instructional backgrounds may demonstrate different levels of communicative engagement.

While English proficiency is often assumed to be closely related to WTC, empirical findings suggest that this relationship is not always straightforward. Studies have shown that self-confidence, anxiety, and motivational factors may exert a stronger influence on WTC than proficiency alone (Darasawang & Reinders, 2021). In the Thai university context, English proficiency test scores are not always systematically recorded or publicly available, whereas Grade Point Average (GPA) is clearly documented and frequently considered by academic institutions and employers. (Therefore, GPA may serve as a practical indicator of academic performance when examining differences in students' communicative behaviors, although it should not be equated directly with language proficiency.)

Despite growing interest in WTC, limited research has examined how Thai English majors with different levels of academic performance perceive and experience willingness to communicate across different communicative contexts. In particular, few studies have compared high- and low-GPA English majors in terms of their willingness to communicate with native speakers, non-native speakers, and in classroom settings. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to comparatively investigate the willingness to communicate in English among Thai English majors with high and low GPAs. By examining both quantitative and qualitative perspectives, this study seeks to provide insights that may inform English language teaching practices and curriculum development in the Thai EFL context positions within the public sector.

### Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study was to investigate Thai university students majoring in English with high- and low-Grade Point Averages (GPAs) in terms of their willingness to communicate (WTC) in English across different communicative contexts. Specifically, the study aimed to examine students' willingness to communicate with native English speakers, non-native English speakers, and in classroom settings. (By comparing students with differing academic performance levels, the study seeks to identify patterns of similarity and difference in WTC that may inform pedagogical practice in the Thai EFL context.)

### Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Is there a significant difference between students with high and low GPAs in terms of their willingness to communicate in English with (native and non-native English speakers)?
2. Is there a significant difference between students with high and low GPAs in terms of their willingness to communicate in English in classroom contexts?
3. Is there a significant difference between students' willingness to communicate with native and non-native English speakers as perceived by students with high and low GPAs?
4. What are the perspectives of students with high and low GPAs regarding their willingness to communicate in English?

### Research Framework

Willingness to communicate (WTC) among non-native English speakers is a complex and multidimensional construct influenced by linguistic, psychological, and contextual factors. Previous research has identified interlocutor characteristics, learning context, motivation, anxiety, and self-perceived communicative competence as key variables shaping learners' WTC (MacIntyre

et al., 1998). In EFL contexts, where opportunities for authentic communication are often limited, these factors become particularly salient.

One major strand of research on WTC concerns learners' perceptions of interlocutors, especially the distinction between native English speakers (NES) and non-native English speakers (NNES). Some studies report that learners demonstrate higher WTC with NES due to perceptions of linguistic authority and authenticity (Moazzam, 2014). Other studies, however, suggest that NNES may be perceived as more relatable and supportive, which can encourage learners to communicate more freely (Phothongsunan, 2017; Tsou & Chen, 2017). These contrasting findings indicate that interlocutor nativeness does not uniformly predict WTC and that learners' perceptions are shaped by contextual and experiential factors.

Peer interaction has also been shown to play a significant role in shaping WTC. Learners are generally more willing to communicate with peers than with strangers or authority figures, as peer interaction often provides a low-anxiety environment that reduces fear of negative evaluation (Ma et al., 2024; Rotjanawongchai, 2023). Classroom activities such as pair and group work can therefore create important opportunities for learners to engage in meaningful communication, particularly in EFL settings.

In addition to contextual factors, affective variables such as foreign language anxiety, self-confidence, and intercultural sensitivity have been identified as strong predictors of WTC (Barrios & Napiórkowska, 2024; Zheng et al., 2024). Learners with higher anxiety levels tend to demonstrate lower WTC, whereas those with greater intercultural sensitivity are more willing to engage in communication with diverse interlocutors. Motivation and learners' self-regulated learning behaviors further interact with these affective factors, influencing both in-class and out-of-class communication (Dörnyei, 2005; Zulkepli, 2020).

Language proficiency is often assumed to be closely related to WTC; however, empirical evidence suggests that this relationship is not always linear. Darasawang and Reinders (2021), for example, reported that Thai EFL learners' WTC was more strongly associated with self-confidence than with formal proficiency measures. This finding highlights the importance of considering academic and psychological factors alongside linguistic competence. In contexts where standardized speaking proficiency scores are unavailable or limited, academic indicators such as GPA may offer a practical, though indirect, lens through which differences in communicative behavior can be examined.

Taken together, these studies suggest that WTC emerges from an interaction of individual, social, and contextual variables rather than from language proficiency alone. Drawing on this body of research, the present study adopts WTC as a conceptual framework to examine how Thai English majors with high and low GPAs differ in their willingness to communicate across interlocutor types and classroom contexts.

## Research Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to examine Thai English majors' WTC in English. Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire, while qualitative data were obtained from open-ended responses. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data was intended to provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' communicative willingness across different contexts.

### 1. Participants

Participants in this study consisted of 36 fourth-year students majoring in English at a Thai university. They were purposively selected based on their Grade Point Averages (GPAs) and divided into two groups: 18 students with high GPAs (3.20–4.00) and 18 students with low GPAs (2.00–2.79). GPA was selected as the grouping criterion because it represents a standardized measure of academic achievement across all completed coursework and is clearly documented on academic transcripts. Although GPA does not directly measure English language proficiency, it was considered a practical indicator of overall academic performance in this context, particularly given that the university's English proficiency test does not include a speaking component and is not recorded on students' transcripts. This distinction was therefore used to explore whether differences in academic performance were associated with differences in willingness to communicate in English.

### 2. Research Instrument and Its Quality

The research instrument was a WTC questionnaire adapted from Alqahtani (2015). Minor modifications were made to ensure suitability for the Thai university context based on expert feedback. The questionnaire consisted of two main parts. The first part collected demographic information, including gender and GPA. The second part comprised 20 items measuring students' willingness to communicate in English across three domains:

- Section A: Willingness to communicate with native English speakers (6 items)
- Section B: Willingness to communicate with non-native English speakers (6 items)
- Section C: Willingness to communicate in English in classroom contexts (8 items)

Participants responded to each item using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

To establish content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by three experts using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). Items were revised based on their feedback prior to data collection. The revised questionnaire was then piloted with fourth-year English majors from a different department. Internal consistency reliability for the overall scale and subscales was examined using Cronbach's alpha, indicating acceptable reliability for research purposes.

### 3. Data Collection

Data were collected through an online questionnaire administered on a voluntary basis. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study and provided consent before completing the questionnaire. They were assured that their responses would remain confidential and would be used solely for academic research purposes. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

### 4. Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean scores and standard deviations, to examine overall patterns of willingness to communicate. Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to compare differences in WTC between high- and low-GPA students across the three communicative domains. Probability values (p-values) were used to determine statistical significance. Cohen's G\*Power was used to calculate the sample size, statistical power, or detectable effect size.

Qualitative data from open-ended responses were analyzed using thematic coding. (Responses were first read repeatedly to identify recurring patterns, after which codes were generated and grouped into broader themes related to confidence, anxiety, communicative strategies, and contextual factors.) This qualitative analysis was used to complement the quantitative findings by providing deeper insight into students' experiences and perceptions of willingness to communicate.

## Research Results

This section reports the results of the study on English major students' WTC in English, comparing students with high and low GPAs. The findings are organized in line with the revised research questions and are presented across three communicative contexts: communication with native English speakers, communication with non-native English speakers, and classroom communication. The analysis was based on data from 36 purposively selected English majors drawn from a total population of 89 fourth-year students. This sample size met the requirement suggested by Cohen's G\*Power analysis ( $d \approx 0.93$ , power = 0.80), indicating sufficient statistical power to detect a large effect. The scale demonstrated high reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.902, indicating excellent internal consistency and that the items consistently measured the same underlying construct.

### Finding 1: Willingness to Communicate in English with Native Speakers as Perceived by English Majors with High and Low GPAs

Table1 Rank numbers, Mean ( $\bar{x}$ ), Standard Deviation (S.D.), t-test ( $t$ ), and probability value ( $p$ ) of English majored students' willingness to communicate with native speakers

Rank no.	Statement	High GPA		Low GPA		$t$	$p$
		$\bar{x}$	S.D.	$\bar{x}$	S.D.		
1	If I encountered native speakers of English who are facing problems in my country because of not knowing our language, I would take the opportunity to speak with them in English.	4.71	0.69	4.35	0.79	1.56	0.14
2	If someone introduced me to a native speaker of English, I would like to try my ability to communicate with him/her in English.	4.50	0.73	4.00	0.81	1.73	0.104
3	I am willing to talk with native speakers of English.	4.41	0.87	3.88	0.86	1.94	0.07
4	I am willing to accompany native speakers of English and be their tour guide for a day, free of charge.	3.61	1.24	3.55	1.04	0.70	0.87
5	If I saw native speakers of English in public places like on the street, in a restaurant, etc., I hope for an opportunity to speak with them.	3.26	1.02	3.05	0.86	1.78	0.94
6	If I saw native speakers of English in public places like on the street, in a restaurant, etc., I would try to find an excuse to approach and talk to them.	3.17	0.97	2.46	0.85	2.23	0.02*
Total		3.94	0.68	3.55	0.69	4.12	.009*

This result indicates a significant difference in overall willingness to communicate with native English speakers between high-GPA and low-GPA students. High-GPA students reported a higher mean score than low-GPA students ( $\bar{x} = 3.94$  vs.  $\bar{x} = 3.55$ ), and the difference was statistically significant ( $t = 4.12$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

In addition, a statistically significant difference was found for Item 6, which concerned initiating communication with native English speakers in public places ( $t = 2.23$ ,  $p < .05$ ). High-GPA students reported a higher level of willingness than low-GPA students. This item reflects spontaneous communication rather than structured or situationally supported interaction.

### Finding 2: Willingness to Communicate in English with Non-Native Speakers as Perceived by English Majors with High and Low GPAs

Table 2 Rank numbers, Mean ( $\bar{x}$ ), Standard Deviation (S.D.), t-test ( $t$ ), and probability value ( $p$ ) of English majored students' willingness to communicate with non-native speakers

Rank no.	Statement	High GPA		Low GPA		$t$	$p$
		$\bar{x}$	S.D.	$\bar{x}$	S.D.		
1	I am willing to talk with non-native speakers of English.	4.27	1.03	3.80	1.01	1.55	0.15
2	If I encountered non-native speakers of English who are facing problems in my country because of not knowing our language, I would take the opportunity to speak with them in English.	4.27	0.70	3.80	1.01	1.24	0.24
3	If someone introduced me to a non-native speaker of English, I would like to try my ability to communicate with him/her in English.	4.13	0.99	3.87	0.99	.774	0.45
4	I am willing to accompany non-native speakers of English and be their tour guide for a day, free of charge.	3.73	1.22	3.53	1.24	.41	0.69
5	If I saw non-native speakers of English in public places like on the street, in a restaurant, etc., I hope for an opportunity to speak with them.	3.20	1.32	2.80	1.32	1.19	0.25
6	If I saw <b>non-native</b> speakers of English in public places like on the street, in a restaurant, etc., I would try to find an excuse to approach and talk to them.	3.13	1.36	2.33	0.82	.15	0.54
Total		3.79	0.52	3.36	0.64	5.029	0.004*

The overall comparison revealed a statistically significant difference in total WTC scores between high-GPA students ( $\bar{x} = 3.79$ , S.D. = 0.52) and low-GPA students ( $\bar{x} = 3.36$ , S.D. = 0.64),  $t = 5.029$ ,  $p < .01$ . This result indicates a general difference in willingness to communicate with non-native English speakers when the items are considered collectively. Although high-GPA students consistently reported higher mean scores across all six items, none of the individual items reached statistical significance.

### Finding 3: Willingness to Communicate in English in Class as Perceived by English Majors with High and Low GPAs

Table 3 Rank numbers, Mean ( $\bar{x}$ ), Standard Deviation (S.D.), t-test ( $t$ ), and probability value ( $p$ ) of English majored students' willingness to communicate in English in class

Rank no.	Statement	High GPA		Low GPA		$t$	$p$
		$\bar{x}$	S.D.	$\bar{x}$	S.D.		
1	I am willing to have pair and group activities in the class so that I can talk in English with my classmates.	4.27	0.70	3.00	0.85	5.104	0.001*
2	In order to practice my English, I am willing to talk in English with my classmates outside the class.	4.20	0.94	3.07	0.70	3.523	0.003*
3	I am willing to talk and express my opinions in English in the class when all my classmates are listening to me.	3.93	1.03	3.06	0.70	2.476	0.027*
4	I am willing to give a presentation in English in front of my classmates.	3.93	1.22	3.06	0.80	2.303	0.037*
5	In order to practice my English, I am willing to talk in English with my professors outside the class.	3.67	1.11	3.20	0.77	1.284	0.220
6	In group work activities in the class, when the group is composed of my friends, I am willing to speak in English.	3.47	0.74	3.07	0.80	1.702	0.111
7	I am willing to ask questions in English in the classes at the university.	3.47	1.06	3.07	0.80	1.065	0.305
8	In group work activities in the class, when the group is NOT composed of my friends, I am willing to speak in English.	3.00	0.86	2.73	1.25	0.590	0.565
Total		3.74	0.42	3.03	0.13	5.355	0.001*

The overall mean score for classroom WTC was significantly higher for high-GPA students ( $\bar{x} = 3.74$ , S.D. = 0.42) than for low-GPA students ( $\bar{x} = 3.03$ , S.D. = 0.13),  $t = 5.355$ ,  $p < .01$ , indicating a substantial difference between the two groups at the aggregate level. Statistically significant differences were also found in four classroom-related situations. High-GPA students reported significantly higher willingness to communicate during pair and group activities in class ( $t = 5.104$ ,  $p < .01$ ). They also showed greater willingness when speaking with classmates outside the classroom for practice purposes ( $t = 3.523$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In addition, high-GPA students were more willing to express opinions in front of the class ( $t = 2.476$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and to give presentations in English ( $t = 2.303$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

In other classroom situations, mean differences were observed but did not reach statistical significance. These situations included asking questions in class, speaking with professors outside the classroom, and participating in group work with friends or non-friends.

The results indicate comparable levels of willingness to communicate between the two groups in these contexts.

#### **Finding 4: A Comparison of Willingness to Communicate with Native and Non-Native English Speakers as Perceived by English Majors with High and Low GPAs**

The results revealed no statistically significant difference between willingness to communicate with native and non-native English speakers among high-GPA students ( $t = 1.897$ ,  $p = .116$ ). Similarly, no statistically significant difference was found among low-GPA students ( $t = 2.379$ ,  $p = .063$ ). These results indicate that interlocutor nativeness did not significantly influence students' willingness to communicate, regardless of academic performance.

#### **Finding 5: The perspectives of students with high and low GPAs regarding their willingness to communicate in English**

Analysis of the open-ended responses revealed clear differences in how high- and low-GPA students perceived and experienced WTC in English. High-GPA students described frequent and active use of English across both academic and everyday contexts. Their responses reflected confidence, a strong sense of responsibility as English majors, and the use of deliberate strategies to sustain communication. Several students referred to initiating or responding to interactions with both native and non-native English speakers. One student stated, *“When you’re an English major student, you’re expected to be good at English speaking and that made me have to practice English a lot.”* Another noted habitual practice: *“I talk to myself every day in every situation. I love to speak English.”*

High-GPA students also described adapting their communication to support interaction. For example, one student explained, *“Knowing that they are non-native English speakers makes me more cautious about my language and vocabulary use,”* while another mentioned using tools and resources: *“Different accents but we can use translator tool.”* Several students referred to specific encounters, such as helping tourists or answering questions about Thailand: *“If some native speakers wanted to know more about Thai laws, I would be willing to explain to them.”*

In contrast, low-GPA students frequently expressed anxiety, hesitation, and lack of confidence, particularly in public or unplanned situations. Their responses tended to be brief and focused on emotional barriers rather than communicative experiences. One student wrote simply, *“Lack of confidence,”* while another stated, *“I am scared to speak in public.”* Situations requiring spontaneous speech were especially challenging, as illustrated by the comment: *“In situations where I am not prepared to speak English, such as impromptu speeches in front of the class, my confidence may decrease.”*

Although some low-GPA students expressed a desire to improve, this willingness was often accompanied by nervousness: *“I am nervous to speak to them sometimes, but also want to improve my speaking.”* Few students in this group mentioned concrete strategies for overcoming communication difficulties, and references to interactions with non-native English speakers were limited. One student explained reduced use of English outside class, stating, *“We are familiar with our own language, so we don’t know why we are supposed to talk in English outside of class if it’s not forced.”*

Overall, the qualitative findings complement the quantitative results by showing that higher WTC among high-GPA students was associated with confidence, strategic behavior, and frequent engagement, while lower WTC among low-GPA students was closely linked to anxiety, limited practice, and situational avoidance.

## Conclusion

This study explored Thai English majors’ WTC in English by comparing students with high and low GPAs across interactions with native English speakers, non-native English speakers, and classroom contexts. The findings indicate that students with high GPAs demonstrated significantly higher willingness to communicate in several classroom-related situations, particularly those requiring active participation, such as group work, expressing opinions, and giving presentations. These results suggest that academic performance is associated with greater engagement in interactive learning contexts.

In contrast, no statistically significant differences were found between students’ willingness to communicate with native and non-native English speakers in either GPA group. This finding suggests that interlocutor nativeness played a limited role in shaping students’ communicative willingness in this context. Instead, situational familiarity and affective factors appeared to be more influential in determining whether students chose to communicate in English.

Qualitative findings further revealed differences in students’ perceptions and experiences of communication. High-GPA students reported greater confidence, strategic awareness, and engagement across a range of communicative contexts, whereas low-GPA students expressed higher levels of anxiety and hesitation, particularly in public or unfamiliar situations. These findings highlight the importance of addressing affective and contextual barriers alongside linguistic development.

Overall, the study underscores the multidimensional nature of willingness to communicate and suggests that fostering supportive classroom environments may be particularly important for encouraging participation among students with lower academic confidence.

## Discussion

This study examined Thai English majors' WTC in English by comparing students with high and low GPAs across interactions with native English speakers, non-native English speakers, and classroom contexts. Overall, the findings indicate that students with higher GPAs demonstrated greater willingness to communicate in several interactive situations, particularly within classroom-related contexts, while interlocutor nativeness did not appear to exert a significant influence on students' WTC.

The quantitative findings showed that students with high GPAs reported significantly higher WTC in four classroom-related situations: participating in pair or group work, speaking with classmates outside class, expressing opinions in front of the class, and giving presentations. These results are consistent with MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) model of WTC, which emphasizes the role of situational confidence and perceived communicative competence in shaping learners' willingness to engage in communication. Students with higher GPAs may experience greater academic confidence, which could reduce communication anxiety and facilitate more active participation in classroom interaction.

The strong differences observed in classroom interaction may also reflect differences in learners' goal orientation and engagement with academic tasks. Previous studies have suggested that learners who demonstrate stronger academic engagement are more likely to seek opportunities to use the target language for learning purposes (Dörnyei, 2005; Darasawang & Reinders, 2021). Rather than indicating superior language proficiency alone, higher WTC among high-GPA students may reflect greater familiarity with academic discourse practices and classroom expectations. This interpretation aligns with research suggesting that self-confidence plays a more central role in WTC than formal measures of language proficiency.

In contrast, the absence of statistically significant differences in students' willingness to communicate with native versus non-native English speakers suggests that interlocutor nativeness was not a determining factor in this context. This finding supports perspectives from English as an International Language (EIL) research, which argue that English users increasingly view communication as a shared practice among diverse speakers rather than as interaction centered on native-speaker norms (Baker, 2011; Tsou & Chen, 2017). Students' willingness to communicate appears to be shaped more by situational comfort and familiarity than by the linguistic background of their interlocutors.

The qualitative findings further illuminate these patterns. High-GPA students described a range of communicative experiences and strategies, including adjusting language use, relying on peer support, and using digital tools to support interaction. These behaviors suggest higher levels of strategic competence and intercultural awareness, which have been shown to facilitate communication in multilingual contexts (Barrios & Napiórkowska, 2024;

Zheng et al., 2024). (Such strategies may help reduce anxiety and increase learners' perceived control over communicative situations.)

By contrast, students with low GPAs frequently expressed anxiety and hesitation, particularly in situations involving public speaking or unfamiliar interlocutors. Their limited references to concrete communication experiences and strategies suggest that affective barriers, rather than lack of interest, may constrain their willingness to communicate. This pattern is consistent with findings from Darasawang and Reinders (2021), who reported that anxiety and self-confidence play a critical role in shaping Thai EFL learners' WTC. Without adequate support or scaffolding, students with lower academic confidence may struggle to translate motivation into communicative action.

It is important to interpret these findings with caution. While GPA was used as an indicator of academic performance, it does not directly measure English language proficiency. Therefore, differences in WTC should not be interpreted as reflecting linguistic ability alone. Instead, the findings highlight the interaction of academic confidence, affective factors, and contextual support in shaping students' willingness to communicate.

Taken together, the results suggest that WTC among Thai English majors is a multidimensional construct influenced by academic, psychological, and contextual variables. Classroom environments that provide structured interaction, peer support, and low-anxiety opportunities may play a particularly important role in encouraging participation, especially for students with lower GPAs.

### Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings of this study. First, the sample size was drawn from a single institution, which may limit the generalizability of the results to other educational contexts. Second, participants were selected using purposive sampling based on GPA, which, while appropriate for comparative analysis, may not fully represent the broader population of Thai English majors.

In addition, GPA was used as an indicator of academic performance rather than as a direct measure of English language proficiency. As GPA reflects achievement across multiple subjects, differences in willingness to communicate should not be interpreted solely as differences in linguistic ability. Finally, the qualitative data were based on written self-reports, which may not fully capture students' actual communicative behaviors in real-time interactions.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several pedagogical implications can be considered. Language instructors may benefit from creating classroom environments that reduce anxiety and provide structured opportunities for oral communication, particularly for students with lower GPAs. Activities such as scaffolded group work, peer-supported discussions, and low-stakes speaking tasks may help students gradually build confidence and willingness to communicate.

In addition, incorporating opportunities for interaction with both native and non-native English speakers may help normalize diverse forms of English use and reduce learners' concerns about linguistic accuracy. Providing explicit support for communication strategies and affective regulation may further assist students who experience communication anxiety.

For future research, studies with larger and more diverse samples could provide broader insights into willingness to communicate across different institutional contexts. Longitudinal research may also help examine how students' willingness to communicate develops over time. Further investigation into the roles of psychological factors, such as self-efficacy and anxiety, could contribute to a deeper understanding of how willingness to communicate can be effectively supported in EFL settings.

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