

## **Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in English: Insights from Pre-service EFL Teachers**

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### **Abstrak**

Keterampilan bahasa lisan di kalangan calon guru dapat ditunjukkan dari untuk kemauan berkomunikasi dalam bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi kesediaan calon guru untuk berkomunikasi dalam bahasa Inggris di lingkungan pedesaan. Studi survei ini terdiri atas 217 siswa Bahasa Inggris sebagai peserta yang dipilih melalui *convenience sampling*. Kuesioner kesediaan disebar melalui pertemuan tatap muka di kelas dan daring. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa terdapat beragam persepsi mengenai kemauan keterampilan lisan, kepercayaan diri, dan frekuensi penggunaan bahasa Inggris. Hasil juga menunjukkan bahwa dari calon guru junior dan senior, tercatat bahwa calon guru senior sebagian besar melebihi-lebihkan junior dalam hal kemauan berbicara bahasa Inggris. Sementara itu, calon guru perempuan mempunyai tingkat kemauan berbahasa yang lebih besar jika dibandingkan dengan laki-laki. Kesimpulannya, kesediaan berbahasa tidak hanya muncul menjadi aspek berharga dalam pembelajaran keterampilan bahasa lisan, namun juga berdampak pada keterampilan bahasa Inggris lainnya secara tidak langsung.

**Kata Kunci:** kemauan untuk berkomunikasi, calon guru Bahasa Inggris, lingkungan pedesaan

### **Abstract**

Oral language skill among EFL students can be indicated from willingness to communicate in English. This current study aimed to investigate pre-service EFL teachers' (PSTs) willingness to communicate (WTC) in English across rural setting. A survey study with 217 EFL students as the participants selected through a convenience sampling was employed. A questionnaire of the willingness was distributed through in-class meeting and online mode. The first result revealed that there is a variety of perceptions on oral skill willingness, self-confidence, and English use frequency. The second result showed that from junior and senior PSTs, it is noted that seniors mostly overdid juniors in terms of willingness to speak English. Meanwhile, female PSTs had greater levels of WTC if compared to that of the males. In conclusion, WTC not only emerge to be a valuable aspect in learning oral language skills, but also impact on other English skills indirectly.

**Keywords:** willingness to communicate, pre-service EFL teachers, rural setting

### **INTRODUCTION**

Oral language skill appears to be one of the influencing factors that encourages pre-service EFL teachers (PSTs) to communicate in various EFL classroom contexts. In academic context, PSTs are expected to participate in English communication to indicate that they are engaged in oral English skill (Amiryousefi, 2018; Chichon, 2019). Their willingness to communicate (WTC) is a useful attitude to practice oral English skill both through a natural and adapted settings. Meanwhile, the concept of WTC is

not new in English learning. Its impacts remain valuable to indicate PSTs' engagement in a highly practical skill during English learning (Bergil, 2016; Collins et al., 2016; Saha, 2023). Consequently, those with lower oral language willingness tends to have lack of motivation in learning other English skills such as reading and listening.

As this study focused on exploring PSTs' perception towards oral language willingness in a rural setting, it is a need to figure out related factors influencing PSTs' levels of WTC in English. Self-confidence determines emergence of willingness to speak English in many academic occasions (Lee & Lee, 2019). PSTs who believe in their own confidence to speak are able to develop communication willingness. Lack of self-confidence has negative impacts on how PSTs view such willingness in oral skill classes. Similarly, self-confidence does not emerge itself, but it is influenced by proficiency level in speaking English (Lee & Chen Hsieh, 2019; Yao, 2021). Oral language proficiency determines quality to communicate in English. The higher the oral proficiency is, the better oral language performance will be. Both factors are basic principles in WTC as they help to increase motivation and fluency during oral language performance. Thus, WTC will be automatically developed.

Exposure and environment are other related factors influencing PSTs' willingness to speak in English. Intensive exposure to English-speaking atmospheres such as English club, online English forum, English theatre, and daily academic English in the classroom leads to higher intensity of WTC (Deng & Peng, 2021; Lee et al., 2019; MacIntyre & Wang, 2021). It is noted that environment shares positive perception for PSTs to indulge themselves into English speaking activities (Ayuningtyas & Wiyanah, 2023). In other words, PSTs' willingness and English-speaking environment are interrelated that willingness can be developed through such environment, while positive learning environment is overwhelmed by such willingness. Therefore, WTC in English should be provided with positive and supportive English-speaking environment to enhance confidence and comfort in speaking English (Plantika & Adnan, 2021). It can be revealed by providing sufficient resources and meaningful practice to speak English (Darasawang & Reinders, 2021).

As the topic about willingness to communicate in English seems to be interesting for many researchers, there has been a plethora of studies that discuss WTC in terms of various views or focuses, including multilingual L2 classrooms (Deng & Peng, 2021), EFL immersion program (Grant, 2020), meta analysis (Jin & Lee, 2022), self-perceptions (Kruk, 2021, 2022), learning environment (Li et al., 2022; Mulyono & Saskia, 2021), L2 competence (Zhou et al., 2023), L2 classroom interaction (C. Wang & Tseng, 2020), and narrative review (Syed et al., 2021). It is interesting to concern on what has been researched and what has not. The previous studies indicate that studies on WTC in English contexts have been widely disseminated through previous journal publication. However, there is a little gap emerges from the enlisted studies as they tended not to focus on pre-service EFL teachers' point of views. Therefore, this current study was undertaken to concern on how pre-service EFL teachers in a rural setting perceive their willingness to communicate in English from a survey study.

This study was different from those conducted earlier regarding several issues. First, it focused on perceptions of pre-service EFL teachers in a rural setting who were expected to actively communicate in EFL classroom. Second, it employed a survey study by using a questionnaire (Darasawang & Reinders, 2021) that has not been used in previous studies. Third, context of study was in a public university in Indonesia and in many occasions Indonesian PSTs are expected to communicate in English both actively and creatively. There have not many studies focusing on such Indonesian

PSTs' insights or perceptions. Fourth, this study focused on researching WTC among PSTs in several rural universities. The term "rural context" is challenging as PSTs learn with some limitations such as learning tools, resources, infrastructure, or even internet signal. Lastly, this study was conducted based on the following questions: (1) What are types and levels of willingness to communicate in English among PSTs in a rural setting? (2) Is there a statistical difference of willingness to communicate in English across grade and gender? Regarding the research questions, it is noticed that a quantitative approach with survey method was utilized to accomplish the study.

### **Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in English**

Considerable interest has been devoted to the notion of PSTs' willingness to communicate (WTC) in English within the domains of language education and learning. PSTs' motivation and preparedness to participate in verbal exchanges in the target language are encapsulated in WTC, a crucial aspect of language learning. The purpose of this literature review is to provide a comprehensive overview of the current research concerning the WTC of PSTs as they learn English. By doing so, it is noticed that the students illuminate the various complex elements that impact their language development and communicative behaviors.

Various factors have a substantial effect on PSTs' WTC in the English language, according to research (Darasawang & Reinders, 2021; Subtirelu, 2014). Student motivation, language apprehension, and self-efficacy are intrinsic factors that significantly influence their propensity to engage in English communication. Research (Darasawang & Reinders, 2021; Li et al., 2022; Mahmoodi & Moazam, 2014) has demonstrated a positive correlation between elevated levels of self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation and increased WTC. This correlation promotes a feeling of assurance and a greater propensity to participate in linguistic exchanges. On the contrary, students' WTC is frequently impeded by language anxiety and the dread of committing linguistic errors, which manifests as hesitancy and restricted engagement in English communication.

Moreover, on PSTs' WTC, external factors such as the classroom environment, pedagogical approaches, and cultural influences exert a substantial impact. An environment in the classroom that promotes collaborative learning, is supportive and inclusive, and creates a secure environment for language experimentation has been linked to increased levels of written thought control among PSTs. On the contrary, inflexible pedagogical methods and a dearth of cultural awareness may hinder the confidence and eagerness of the students, especially those who are not native English speakers, to engage in English communicative activities (Cao & Wei, 2019).

The inclination of PSTs to engage in English language communication is shaped by an intricate interaction of personal, situational, and instructional elements that have a substantial impact on their language learning process. Through acknowledging the complex and diverse aspects of WTC and applying efficacious pedagogical approaches that develop an encouraging and all-encompassing educational setting, professionals have the ability to enable students to surmount language obstacles and cultivate resilient English communication proficiencies (Bergil, 2016; Jin & Lee, 2022). This, in turn, will facilitate PSTs' comprehensive language learning and intercultural competence. Additional research must be conducted to clarify the complexities of students' WTC in order to promote effective language education initiatives that address the varied needs and aspirations of language students in a globalized society and to inform practices based on empirical evidence.

PSTs encounter distinctive obstacles throughout their educational process, rendering a greater inclination to engage in coherent discourse in English an essential determinant of their achievements. By incentivizing EFL learners to actively participate in verbal exchanges, a greater WTC facilitates the development and enhancement of their English language proficiencies (Chichon, 2019; Yashima et al., 2016). Students can enhance their language proficiency in various aspects, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and overall fluency and communicative competence, by engaging in regular and consistent communication.

English functions as an international common language, promoting intercultural dialogue and facilitating a more profound comprehension of varied cultural outlooks. PSTs engage in more meaningful intercultural dialogues, facilitate cultural exchange, and cultivate mutual understanding among people of diverse linguistic and cultural heritages by advocating for a higher WTC. English proficiency provides access to a vast multitude of professional and academic opportunities on a national and international scale. Academic resources in which English is the native tongue are more accessible to EFL learners with a higher WTC (Mulyono & Saskia, 2021; Sheybani, 2019; Zhou et al., 2023). These students are also more capable of participating in international academic program and pursuing career opportunities with multinational corporations, research institutions, and global forum.

Given the current epoch of digital communication and globalization, English has emerged as the prevailing language across numerous online platforms, encompassing academic databases, business communication channels, and social media. Acquiring a greater WTC enables PSTs to proficiently traverse and make valuable contributions to the worldwide digital environment, thereby promoting their engaged involvement in virtual communities, collaborative endeavors, and online discourse. In addition to facilitating language learning, a greater WTC fosters professional and personal development. Proficient English communication abilities empower students who are learning English to articulate their viewpoints, convey their ideas, and participate in substantive dialogues (Halupka-Rešetar et al., 2018; Pawlak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2015). This, in turn, cultivates self-assurance, critical reasoning, and interpersonal competencies that are vital for their professional and personal growth.

For career advancement in today's intensely competitive job market, English proficiency and a solid WTC are frequently regarded as indispensable qualities (MacIntyre & Wang, 2021; Pavelescu, 2023). EFL learners who achieve a higher WTC are more aptly prepared to engage in productive collaborations with international peers, communicate proficiently in a variety of professional contexts, and capitalize on employment prospects that demand proficient English communication abilities. Promoting a greater WTC among PSTs is critical for enhancing their language learning, cultural sensitivity, and international understanding (Cao & Wei, 2019; Lee et al., 2019; Lee & Lee, 2019). As a result, PSTs will be endowed with the essential abilities and self-assurance required to prosper in an ever more interconnected and linguistically varied society.

### **Learning English in a Rural Setting**

The term "learning English in a rural setting" pertains to the endeavor of attaining fluency in the English language while residing in a rural community. The rural environment presents a distinct array of obstacles and prospects that shape this process. These include restricted resource accessibility, cultural intricacies, and the impact of community customs and values. English language learning frequently occurs

in rural environments, where members of the community may have restricted opportunities to engage with a wide range of linguistic and cultural phenomena in comparison to their counterparts in urban regions (Reagan et al., 2019; J. Wang et al., 2019). A profound connection to local customs and traditions and a strong sense of community identity may also characterize this environment.

Within the realm of rural English language learning, both university EFL teachers and students encounter a multitude of obstacles, including restricted availability of language learning materials and resources, a dearth of proficient language teachers, and insufficient opportunities for immersion in authentic language environments (Hillyard, 2020; Zheng et al., 2023). In order to tackle these obstacles, the teachers frequently utilize innovative pedagogical approaches that incorporate values and customs of the local community and culture into language courses. In addition to these methods, the teachers employ interactive learning approaches, community resources, and technology to cultivate a stimulating and encouraging educational setting for pupils. In addition, acquiring English proficiency in a rural environment frequently necessitates the incorporation of pragmatic implementations that are pertinent to the requirements and ambitions of the local populace. This may involve the integration of English language courses that are relevant to traditional sectors, farming, or community progress, thus augmenting the feasibility and relevance of language learning in a rural environment (Ai et al., 2022; Mahmud, 2020; Ruiz, 2019).

Furthermore, English proficiency can function as a conduit to wider educational prospects, enabling PSTs to engage in cultural exchanges, gain entry into higher education institutions, and explore the world beyond their immediate community, even in a rural environment. The objective of EFL teachers and communities is to endow students with the essential language abilities required to participate in a globalized society, while simultaneously safeguarding the rural community's distinctive cultural heritage and traditional practices that are integral to its identity (Lopez, 2021; Yao, 2021). In essence, the process of acquiring English proficiency in a rural environment entails confronting the distinct obstacles and prospects that are particular to such communities, incorporating values and customs of the local populace into linguistic instruction, and cultivating language proficiencies that are pertinent to the aspirations and requirements of the community. By means of these endeavors, the EFL teachers collaborate to endow students with the linguistic proficiency and cultural consciousness essential for success in both domestic and international spheres (Fargas-Malet & Bagley, 2021).

Social learning theory places significant emphasis on the influence of social interactions and observational learning throughout the language learning process. EFL teachers apply this theory in a rural context by promoting collaborative learning activities, group discussions, and peer-to-peer interactions; this will develop an atmosphere in which PSTs acquire knowledge from one another's communication styles and language usage (Saha, 2023; Sharif & Channa, 2022; J. Wang et al., 2019). Constructivism places significant emphasis on the active engagement of learners as they construct their own knowledge and comprehension via interactions and personal experiences. EFL teachers implement constructivist principles in a rural context by devising practical language learning tasks, project-oriented learning activities, and authentic language learning encounters that are applicable to the rural environment of the students. This approach will motivate them to actively participate in the learning

process and develop their comprehension of the English language (Hayes, 2009; Mukeredzi, 2016).

Rural context frequently face challenges related to restricted availability of high-quality educational resources, such as qualified English language teachers, current curriculum materials, and cutting-edge learning technologies (J. Wang et al., 2019; Zheng et al., 2023). The implementation of effective language learning program in rural setting may be hindered by financial constraints and inadequate educational infrastructure, which present considerable obstacles for individuals desiring to acquire English language proficiency. Moreover, the lack of fully immersive English-speaking environments in rural areas further limits the potential for genuine language immersion and cultural awareness. Agricultural communities' diverse cultural functions as both an impetus and an impediment to English language learning (Ruiz, 2019). Rural learners' language learning processes may be impacted by cultural traditions and local dialects, which in addition to contributing to their cultural identity and heritage, may also affect English pronunciation, language usage, and the assimilation of new linguistic structures. The simultaneous pursuit of English language proficiency and the preservation of regional languages is a common occurrence that requires an approach to language learning that promotes the development of global communication competencies while paying homage to the cultural heritage of rural communities (Collins et al., 2016; Hoover et al., 2019; Saha, 2023).

## RESEARCH METHOD

Through a convenience sampling technique, a number of PSTs (n=217) from one Indonesian public university was selected as the participants of this survey study. The participants consisted of 67.74% (n=147) female and 32.6% (n=70) male PSTs. Meanwhile, as for the grade, it is stated that there were 70.5% (n=153) senior, 29.49% (n=64) junior PSTs who participated during the survey study. Prior to participant determination, I provided 231 informed consents sent via *Email* and *Whatsapp*. In two weeks, 231 PSTs were expected to read, understand, and signed the consent, revealing that they were ready to participate in the study. However, 14 PSTs did not sign and return the consents by the deadline and it proved that they were not able to be involved as participants. Fortunately, 217 PSTs approved themselves as participants. This survey study employed Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Questionnaire (Darasawang & Reinders, 2021). This questionnaire consisted of 21 items and three dimensions. The first dimension is perceptions of willingness to communicate (e.g., *Ask questions of friends who do an oral presentation in front of the class*). It consisted of 4 items and used a five-points Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very unwilling) to 5 (very willing). The second dimension, communicative self-confidence (e.g., *I am worried that I will not understand what my friends say in English*), comprised 10 items with different five-points Likert scale, including 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The last dimension, frequency of English use (e.g., *I use English to communicate with my teachers*), has 7 items and it is scored based on 1 (never) to 5 (always). Regarding the reliability, it is noticed that WTC questionnaire has higher internal consistency ( $\alpha=.89$ ) and it indicates that the questionnaire is a reliable instrument for this study.

Having received the informed consents from participants, I contacted the participants via *Whatsapp* to determine their readiness for a survey. This survey was conducted in a hybrid mode which consisting of in-class meeting and online mode. The online survey was intended for the participants who lived outside researcher's city. The reason was due to access and funding. The online survey allowed to reach

participants easily and effectively. It also helped to reduce need of funding for completing the study. In this case, the questionnaire was designed in *Google Form* and sent via *Email* and *Whatsapp*. I offered two weeks for 33.6% ( $n=73$ ) participants to fill in the online questionnaire and sent it back via online application. In other side, in-class meeting was applied for those who lived near by the researcher. Printed questionnaire was distributed to be directly completed by 66.4% ( $n=144$ ) participants. Furthermore, analyzing data collected from survey study consisted of some steps. To begin, data were prepared by importing completed data into SPSS 25. Outliers, missing values, and errors were checked carefully and this step was followed by cleaning data or correcting any error. Ensuring the surveyed data to be properly organized and formatted was paramount to prevent any error during statistical analysis. In the analysis, percentages for each item was calculated based on the scale dimension and the number of participants who chose the option. Meanwhile, the independent t-test was carried out of assumption that two demographic variables (i.e., grade and gender) contained statistical differences among them.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

In this subpart, there are two categories of findings that were provided to answer the research questions. The first question refers to types and levels of WTC among rural college PSTs. The second question concerns on statistical difference of WTC across grade and gender.

#### ***RQ1: What are types and levels of willingness to communicate in English among PSTs in a rural setting?***

Regarding the first category of study findings, it is noted that PSTs' perceptions to willingness to communicate varied according to each individual. The following table has more.

Table 1. Perceptions of Willingness to Communicate ( $n=217$ )

Items	Responses (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Answer the teacher during the elicitation stage.	20.3	54.1	5.7	12	7.9
Ask for clarification when you are confused about the task you must complete.	1.1	41	3.9	41.4	12.6
Ask questions of friends who do an oral presentation in front of the class.	5.2	23.6	10	9.2	52
Talk with the teacher during class.	12.4	49.5	7.6	24.1	6.4

*1 (very unwilling); 2 (somewhat unwilling); 3 (neutral); 4 (somewhat willing); 5 (very willing)*

The table 1 above revealed PSTs' perceptions to WTC in English classrooms. The students opted not to indulge themselves into brainstorming or preliminary discussion prior to learning (74.4%). However, less than 15% students attempted to answer teacher's question during the elicitation stage. Meanwhile, in doing a task, most PSTs (41.4%) stated that they asked for teacher's explanation when it was considered unclear. Interestingly, 41% students did not feel it was important to request any kind of clarification from their English teachers.

Oral presentation seems to encourage PSTs' participation during oral classroom discussion. More than 50% students addressed a question or mere suggestion to

classmates who presented a task in front of the class. Unfortunately, such encouragement was not increased for teacher-student interaction. More than 50% PSTs did not talk to the teachers during classrooms activities such as discussion, question-answer, or small talks. This problem appeared as an interesting topic to be discussed regarding WTC in English.

The second factor, communicative self-confidence, has detailed analysis in the following table.

Table 2. Communicative Self-Confidence ( $n=217$ )

Items	Responses (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
I am not afraid of making mistakes.	20.3	45.9	12.3	12.7	8.8
I find it difficult to communicate in English.	5.6	8.9	7.8	20	57.7
I am worried that I will not understand what my friends say in English.	61	9.1	5.2	15	9.7
I feel nervous about using English while participating in class activities.	5.7	21	5.3	6.8	61.2
I say what I want to say in English.	3.1	23	54.7	12	7.2
I think my friends/teacher cannot understand me because of my poor English.	21.5	7.9	2.1	3.4	65.1
I feel comfortable sharing my ideas/feelings/opinions with my friends/teacher in English.	-	15	27.1	47.3	11
I know the words required for communicating in English.	49.7	25.2	3.5	12	9.6
In general, I find communicating in English in classroom situations relaxing.	-	9.6	5.2	34.6	50.6
I think participating in class activities helps me develop my fluency (i.e., with hesitation and pause.)	4.7	10	5.6	45.4	34.3

*1 (strongly disagree); 2 (disagree); 3 (neutral/no opinion); 4 (agree); 5 (strongly agree)*

Mistakes in speaking English might be considered negative problems for PSTs. Many of these students had higher speaking anxiety and this problem was a result from fear of making mistakes (45.9%). This fear did not lead them to reduce enthusiasm to communicate in English as 57.7% PSTs did not feel embarrassed during oral English communication. Conversely, most students (61%) felt worried when other classmates used English either inside or outside the classroom. They might not understand other interlocutors, but at least they were willing to communicate with any purpose (54.7%).

A disturbing challenge in speaking English is when another interlocutor did not understand what first speaker said. It happened due to lack of oral English proficiency (65.1%). Fortunately, such problem seemed to be managed as PSTs believed in comfort to communicate in English with both classmates or teachers (47.3%) even though they did not have sufficient numbers of vocabularies needed to communicate that way (49.7%). Feeling comfortable when communicating with other interlocutors is an expectation for most PSTs (50.6%). They believed that such oral skill allowed to increase English proficiency (45.4%).

As for the last factor, frequency of English use, it is described in detailed in the following table.

Table 3. Frequency of English Use ( $n=217$ )

Items	Responses (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
I use English to communicate with my friends.	67	2.6	8	12.7	9.7
I use English to communicate with my teachers.	28	-	16	45.7	9.9
I use English to answer the teacher's questions.	31.3	2	4.5	18.1	44.1
I use English to check meaning (e.g., 'What does it mean?', 'I do not understand.')	34	21.5	12.4	22	10.1
I use English to ask questions.	-	23.2	34.6	42.2	-
I use English for simple interactions (e.g., How are you today?)	-	12	8.9	10.3	68.8
I use English only when I participate in class activities.	7.6	12.4	-	3.4	76.6

*1 (never); 2 (rarely); 3 (sometimes); 4 (often); 5 (always)*

Based on the above table, it is noticed that the majority of PSTs did not use English during their oral communication between them (67%). Hence, they tended to use English when talking to their EFL teachers (45.7%). They even admitted that fluent English communication between teacher and students was carried out of English-based talk (44.1%). On the other side, English was not used to learn how to use a particular vocabulary and how a term worked with its meaning (34%). Most of them asked question to both teacher or other classmates using English (42.2%). Surprisingly, English was usually used for a small talk or daily discussion (68%) even though other number of students believed that they chose English when learning English inside the classroom (76.6%).

***RQ2: Is there a statistical difference of willingness to communicate in English across grade and gender?***

There are two categories resulted from independent t-test analysis, including grade and gender demographic variables. Grade demography was divided into senior and junior student groups, while gender consisted of male and female students. The first category was summarized in the following table.

Table 4. Statistical Difference Across Grade Demography

Factors	Grade	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>p</i>
Perceptions of willingness to communicate	Senior	153	7.38	.74	.751
	Junior	64	4.12	.51	
Communicative self-confidence	Senior	153	24.09	.87	.482
	Junior	64	19.32	.43	
Frequency of English use	Senior	153	20.01	.62	.096
	Junior	64	24.75	.76	

The above table revealed senior PSTs' domination regarding perceptions of willingness to communicate ( $M=7.38$ ). A statistical difference emerged between senior and junior students as the juniors reached lower mean score ( $M=4.12$ ) compared to that of the seniors. Furthermore, seniors' self-confidence in English communication willingness tended to be higher ( $M=24.09$ ) than that of what the juniors had

(M=19.32). However, an opposite result was found in terms of frequency of English use. The juniors overdid (M=24.75) the seniors (M=20.01) regarding how often they used oral English language.

As for the second categories in independent t-test, gender variable can be clearly seen from the following table.

Table 5. Statistical Difference Across Gender Demography

Factors	Gender	n	M	SD	p
Perceptions of willingness to communicate	Male	70	32.62	.37	.731
	Female	147	41.57	.64	
Communicative self-confidence	Male	70	25.04	.46	.063
	Female	147	37.89	.82	
Frequency of English use	Male	70	24.56	.54	.539
	Female	147	28.47	.60	

In the table, it is noted that female PSTs overdid male for every WTC factors. First, the females had better perceptions (M=41.57) over the males (32.62). Another significant difference appeared in terms of communicative self-confidence. The females (M=37.89) revealed higher statistical difference compared to that of the males (M=25.04). Female PSTs also seemed to use English more frequently (M=28.47) than the males (24.56) regardless the difference was not too high.

## Discussion

This current study focuses on determining how WTC in EFL classrooms is perceived by PSTs. Studies on WTC among PSTs have identified various significant aspects that impact their attitudes. These characteristics frequently influence their levels of comfort and motives for participating in English conversation or talk. A considerable number of PSTs encounter language anxiety, which can have greater influence on their tendency to engage in English communication (Amiryousefi, 2018; Wood, 2016). The source of this anxiety may originate from apprehension of committing errors, facing criticism, or experiencing a lack of comprehension from either classmates or teachers. PSTs with higher levels of self-confidence in their linguistic aptitude tend to display greater willingness to engage in English communication. A favorable self-perception motivates PSTs to engage in English-speaking activities with confidence and willingness to take chances (Ai et al., 2022; Hoover et al., 2019; Zheng et al., 2023).

Improvement of student's linguistic proficiency plays a crucial part in evaluating their willingness to communicate. PSTs who have confidence in their language skills are more likely to actively participate in English communication. English learning motivation arises from diverse origins, such as inherent interest, external motivation, or the expectation to accomplish oral English learning objectives (Sato, 2019; J. Wang et al., 2019). Typically, PSTs with higher motivation levels tend to use English as a way to attain their desired oral skill goals. The cultural background of students has a considerable impact on their option to engage in communication in a foreign language (Li et al., 2022). Some PSTs originate from cultures that place a high value on linguistic competence, which could impact their oral skill to participate in impromptu communication.

The level of self-confidence that male or female PSTs possess greatly influences their motivation to engage in oral English activities. Verbal proficiency helps to engage

the students to actively participate in classroom discussions, group activities, and oral presentations. Such convincing self-confidence in oral communication skills motivates them to express their thoughts and ideas fluently (Jin & Lee, 2022; Kruk, 2022; Pavelescu, 2023). Higher self-confidence in terms of vocabulary and grammar allows to communicate with greater proficiency. Meanwhile, a strong command of English vocabulary and grammar also lead to use the language with confidence in different English classroom contexts. The level of confidence in pronunciation and accent can also have a significant influence on students' focus to engage in English conversation (Jin & Lee, 2022; Li et al., 2022).

On the other side, PSTs learning oral English skill in a rural college engage in English communication impacted by various factors, some of which are exclusive to their particular oral English atmosphere. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of such rural context is crucial in order to develop successful strategies aimed at improving their proficiency in English language communication (Hillyard, 2020; Hoover et al., 2019; Zheng et al., 2023). Rural-college students have limited access to English language exposure beyond their educational setting. Their confidence and readiness to speak in English are affected by this limited exposure, since they have less chances to practice and apply the language in real-life contexts. Rural colleges often face constraints in terms of resources, such as restricted availability of technology, high-quality learning materials, and language learning programs (Ai et al., 2022; Saha, 2023). The absence of these tools has impeded PSTs' learning of language skills and engagement in English communication. EFL teachers have to prioritize the pragmatic utilization of English in their students' everyday use and usage, underscoring its significance for forthcoming plans and achievements.

Rural setting often lacks sufficient professional development opportunities and training for EFL teachers to effectively teach languages. It impacts on the level of English language education and the capacity of teachers to establish a favorable learning atmosphere that encourages willingness to speak English (Collins et al., 2016; Ruiz, 2019; J. Wang et al., 2019). The lack of dependable internet access and technology infrastructure in rural setting hinder PSTs' ability to access online learning resources and interactive language learning platforms. The absence of access restricts their exposure to real English language materials and possibilities for real-world communication (Collins et al., 2016; Lopez, 2021; Ruecker, 2020; Ruiz, 2019; Sharif & Channa, 2022; J. Wang et al., 2019). In order to solve these difficulties and promote a favorable learning atmosphere, it is essential to introduce specific assessment that focuses on enhancing the availability of high-quality language learning materials, offering training opportunities for EFL teachers, and establishing comprehensive and culturally appropriate language learning initiatives that highlight the practical significance of English in students' daily lives (Hargreaves et al., 2009; Mukeredzi, 2016; Yao, 2021). Furthermore, internalization of technology-based learning tools and community involvement programs can effectively improve PSTs' oral skill of the English language and their eagerness to communicate using the language.

## **CONCLUSION**

WTC in English has become an important aspect for PSTs in rural college to increase their English skills. WTC does not mean that PSTs do not have to encourage themselves to practice oral English skills, but it allows them to engage in comprehensive English use and usage. WTC in English indicates that PSTs are of higher motivation to speak, not only in terms of oral English course such as Speaking,

but also throughout other English skills. The importance of WTC needs to be triggered by both PSTs and teachers as it leads to successful English learning, may it be written or oral. In this case, engagement to oral English activities determines how far such English skill has been achieved as an integral part of learning English in a rural setting. In addition, rural setting can be more challenging when PSTs are challenged with oral language willingness. Strategies and enthusiasm are needed to support such engagement and expectation.

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