


**Willingness to Communicate in L2, Foreign Language
Motivation Among Saudi Classroom Anxiety, and L2 Learning
EFL Learners: A Correlational Study**

Hessa Moetik Alshahrani

Department of English - College of Languages and
TranslationKing Khalid University



الرغبة في التواصل باللغة الثانية، القلق الدراسي، ودافعية تعلم اللغة الثانية لدى طلبة اللغة الانجليزية السعوديين:

حصة معتق الشهراني

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ملخص الدراسة:

تلعب رغبة متعلم اللغة في التواصل دوراً محورياً في تشكيل نتائج التعلم وهي أساسية لاكتساب الكفاءة في اللغة الإنجليزية لغةً أجنبية. تفحص هذه الدراسة التفاعل المعقد بين الرغبة في التواصل باللغة الثانية، والدافع لتعلمها، بالإضافة إلى القلق في الفصل الدراسي بين طالبات اللغة الإنجليزية السعوديات. كان عدد المشاركات ١٤٧ طالبة يدرسن اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة الملك خالد. أظهر تحليل ارتباط بيرسون أن دافع الطالبات لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كان مرتبطاً بشكل إيجابي برغبتهم في استخدامها في التواصل، في حين كان قلقهن في الفصل الدراسي مرتبطاً سلباً برغبتهم في التواصل باللغة الإنجليزية، علاوة على ذلك، أظهرت التحليلات الإحصائية المتعلقة بالتفاعل بين المتغيرات المستقلة وجود علاقة إيجابية بين الدافعية لتعلم اللغة الثانية والقلق الدراسي في فصل اللغة الإنجليزية. نوقش اتساق البحث الحالي مع الأبحاث المماثلة، وبعض القيود، جنباً إلى جنب مع الآثار الإضافية في المناقشة والاستنتاج للباحثين المهتمين بإعدادات الفصول الدراسية المستقبلية للغة الإنجليزية لغةً أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الرغبة في التواصل، القلق الدراسي، الدافعية، الطلبة السعوديون

Willingness to Communicate in L2, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, and L2 Learning

Motivation Among Saudi EFL Learners: A Correlational Study

Hessa Moetik Alshahrani

Department of English - College of Languages and Translation
King Khalid University

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Abstract:

The language learner's willingness to communicate plays a pivotal role in shaping learning outcomes and is fundamental to acquiring proficiency in English as a foreign language (EFL). This study examines the intricate interplay between willingness to communicate in L2 (WTC), motivation to learn L2, and foreign language classroom anxiety among Saudi female EFL learners. Participants were 147 students studying English at King Khalid University. Pearson correlation analysis showed that students' motivation was positively connected with their willingness to communicate in L2, while their classroom anxiety (FLCA) was negatively correlated with L2 WTC. Furthermore, the statistical analyses concerning the interaction between these independent variables demonstrated a positive correlation between L2 motivation and FLCA. The consistency of the present research with comparable research, some limitations, along with additional implications, are discussed in the discussion and conclusion for enthusiastic researchers in future EFL classroom settings.

keywords: Willingness to communicate, foreign language classroom anxiety, motivation, Saudi students

Introduction

Willingness to communicate, foreign language classroom anxiety, motivation, Saudi students Therefore, understanding communicative effectiveness may play a crucial role in enhancing language learners' capability to initiate and sustain social interactions and communication skills

Therefore, the current empirical study aims to fill a notable gap within existing literature by delving into a relatively unexplored domain. Specifically, the intricate interplay among Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA), second language (L2) learning motivation, and L2 Willingness to Communicate (L2WTC) remains under-investigated in scholarly research up to this point

Research questions

- RQ1: Does Saudi EFL learners' level of L2 learning motivation affect their willingness to communicate in L2
- RQ2: Does foreign language class anxiety affect Saudi EFL learners' willingness to communicate
- RQ3: Is there a correlation between FLCA and L2 learning motivation
- RQ4: What are the possible reasons reported by the participants expressing their motivation to learn L2

Literature Review

L2 Learning Motivation

Motivation is a broad term employed in several contexts. According to Dornyei (2009), it is one of the factors that teachers and students frequently refer to in order to explain learning accomplishment or failure, making it among the most crucial psychological concepts in language field instruction. Motivation is arguably the most significant component influencing L2 learning outcomes (Renandya, 2015)

Motivation has long been acknowledged as a vital element in influencing both language acquisition alongside its

success. Motivation is “a process whereby a certain amount of instigation force arises, initiates action, and persists as long as no other force comes into play to weaken it and thereby terminate action, or until the planned outcome has been reached” (Dörnyei, 1998: 118). Manolopoulou-Sergi (2004) further emphasized that (a) motivation is a process, (b) it deals with objectives that people try to accomplish (or not), (c) it requires people to be active, with students focusing their efforts on achieving their goal, as well as (d) motivated action is both started and maintained. Gardner (1985) distinguished between two categories of motivation: First, the desire of an EFL student to integrate and fit into the target L2 group is referred to as integrative motivation. Furthermore, some benefits to one's profession, along with education, are included in instrumental motivation. In this study, the instrumental motivation is adopted since we examine EFL learners' motivation, i.e., in educational settings

Motivation and Anxiety

The association between anxiety and motivation in foreign language acquisition, along with the factors affecting differing outcomes, has been the focus of inconsistent findings in prior research

Since motivation and anxiety are multifaceted structures in foreign language learning environments, different correlation results are produced using a wide selection of constructs. For instance, the authors of a study that found a positive association between anxiety and motivation concluded that highly driven students were more likely to experience exam anxiety than learning anxiety (Wang et al., 2022). According to Kim and Cho (2018), motivation for learning may be classified into two groups: career motivation and exam motivation. Each form of incentive may have a distinct impact on learning anxiety. Moreover, learning anxiety could be a reflection of a “lack of confidence in their abilities” (debilitating anxiety) or else “their desire for better achievement” (facilitating anxiety), hence, high-anxiety students had been spotted at “all levels” of motivation, that obscures the connection among motivation as well as anxiety (Wang et al., 2022, p. 12)

Many studies have shown that there has been a negative correlation between anxiety and motivation. For instance, Alico (2016) found a negative correlation between the two variables, indicating that while the motivation to learn L2 increases, anxiety level in writing decreases. Research by Jain and Sidhu (2013) concluded that anxiety lowers tertiary students' motivation. As a result, there is a direct and indirect connection among the terms general motivation and anxiety, positive as well as negative. Consequently, due to the challenges of evaluation, the majority of studies focused on the overall correlation between the two variables rather than the cause-and-effect relationship

L2 willingness to communicate

Willingness to communicate (WTC) had been initially introduced in the examination of L1 (first language)

communication. In the 1990s, it caught the interest of scholars studying the acquisition of L2 (second languages). “WTC in L2 stands for “a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2” (MacIntyre, et al., 1998, p. 547). MacIntyre and colleagues stated that L2 WTC ought to be “the ultimate goal of the learning process” (p. 547). After discovering that L2 WTC had been more” complex as well as situation-specific than the L1 WTC, they created a multilayer pyramid model to show the various factors affecting WTC. The relationship among WTC and numerous individuals, socio-psychological, and contextual factors has been demonstrated in a growing number of studies to date

Why do some people opt to speak up when given the chance to use their L2, though others stay “silent? Some students with advanced linguistic proficiency are hesitant to employ their L2 for communication, whilst other students with limited linguistic skills seem to participate in L2 communication whenever feasible. The individual variances in communication” inclinations significantly influence language learning outcomes. To improve the L2 WTC definition's fit for the current study's EFL context, the L2 WTC definition is adapted from MacIntyre et al. (1998) as ‘a willingness to have communication in a spoken way inside the classroom with a person or persons, using English as an FL’

is a complicated but crucial part of L2 pedagogy and communicative language education (Kang, 2005). It can be viewed as a nonlinguistic result of L2 learning as well as an element that facilitates directed language learning (MacIntyre, 2003). According to Kang (2005), elevating L2 WTC in the classroom has at least 3 benefits: (1) it increases the likelihood that L2 learners will utilize the language in authentic communication, that promotes learning of languages; (2) it increases likelihood that these learners will become more independent and try to acquire the language via communication independent of the instructor's guidance; as well as (3) It enables these learners to pursue education beyond the classroom. In any case, the research on the relationship between WTC as well as other emotions has received little attention, and the .scope of WTC investigation has to be expanded

Foreign language classroom anxiety

One domain of negative emotion that has been explored the most is foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA). It has been described as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz, et al., 1986, p. 128). Although speaking is usually associated with the highest FLCA, it is associated with any activity in FL. It has an impact on students at every level as well as non-native foreign .language instructors (ibid)

MacIntyre (1999) explained foreign language anxiety (FLA) as "the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language" (p.27). Numerous inquiries into the possible reasons for FLA have yielded a wealth of information. These investigations have shown that arousal of foreign language anxiety is connected with an extensive range of factors, which include error correction (Gregersen, 2003), peer competitiveness (Bailey, 1983), teacher-student incompatibility (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014), along with personality traits like perfectionism (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). Different degrees of anxiety may also arise as a result of learners' perceptions of their

foreign language competency (Dewaele, et al., 2008). Regarding the relationship with other emotions, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) discovered that while foreign language enjoyment and FLCA have a substantial negative link, they coexist in FL learning. Recently, Alshahrani's (2024) findings support the negative connections between FLE and FLCA among Saudi learners

According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1994a, 1994b), anxiety can interfere with language acquisition as well as production during the input, output, and processing phases of the process of learning. FLA has a negative impact on learning and communication, as studies have repeatedly demonstrated. These impacts are multifaceted and complex (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; Horwitz, 2010). MacIntyre and Serroul (2015) employed a dynamic strategy to examine the connection between anxiety feelings and real-time vocabulary retrieval difficulties during communication, focusing on the micro-perspective. Their findings revealed fluctuations in perceived competence and willingness to use L2

Liu and Jackson (2008) examined the connection among Chinese EFL learners' FL anxiety as well as their reluctance to communicate. A total of 547 first-year undergraduate non-English majors had been examined for this purpose. The investigation led to the following findings: first, "a learner who feared being negatively evaluated more tended to be more apprehensive about speaking and more anxious about tests" (ibid., p. 10). Second, the majority of students expressed a willingness to engage in interpersonal discussions; yet many of them were afraid of speech communication and disliked speaking English in class due to various factors, including anxiety or low English proficiency. Additionally, they stated that there was a direct link between the students' FL anxiety and their reluctance to interact. Moreover, "their unwillingness to communicate and their FL anxiety were significantly correlated to their self-rated English proficiency and .access to English" (ibid., p. 12)

In the Saudi context, multiple studies have explored the relationship between two of the three variables in question: willingness to communicate and anxiety (e.g., Alenezi, 2020), as well as motivation and anxiety (e.g., Alamer & Almulhim, 2021; Alshaye et al., 2014). However, to the best of the author's knowledge, no research has yet delved into the interplay among all three variables within the Saudi context. Therefore, the primary objectives of this study are to investigate potential correlations among L2 willingness to communicate, foreign language class anxiety, and L2 learning motivation among Saudi female EFL .students

Method

Research has demonstrated that motivation level affects communication willingness (MacIntyre, et al., 2003). Additionally, anxiety in foreign language classes affects students' willingness to speak in L2 (e.g., Alenezi, 2020). Several studies have also looked into the connection between anxiety and motivation (e.g., Alamer & Almulhim, 2021). The first phase of investigation is quantitative, aiming to explore the potential interplay between these three factors. Figure 1 shows the analysis model to be tested in the current study.

These interactions will be tested cross-sectionally and quantitatively. In other words, the correlation analysis will be run between the three variables under study: FLCA, L2 WTC, and L2 learning motivation. In addition, two open-ended questions will be included in the web-based questionnaire on potential reasons for learning English.

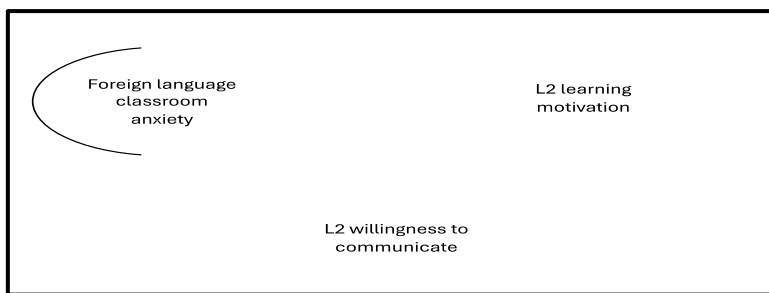


Figure 1. Model of interrelationships to be tested

Participants

A convenience sampling method was used. A total of 147 Saudi female undergraduate English majors at the College of Languages and Translation, KKU (King Khalid University), participated in the present study. The participants are enrolled in various levels of the BA degree program. All participants were native Arabic speakers who used English as their second language (L2). Fluency in reading and writing English was a prerequisite for admission to KKU's English department, involving passing the English Language Placement Test (ELPT) with a minimum score of 60% for enrolment consideration (as stated on the KKU College of Languages and Translation website). The participants had an average age of ($M = 19.51$), ranging from 18 to 21 years old

Measures

In order to investigate and address the research questions effectively, the study utilized a questionnaire comprising both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The questionnaire, which was written in English and designed using Google Forms, commenced with a section collecting demographic information about the students, encompassing details such as age, gender, and study level. Following this introductory section, the questionnaire

incorporated three main scales intended to measure the study's
.three primary variables in detail

Willingness to communicate (WTC). The subsection of Weaver's (2010) 64-item WTC instrument, which measures learners' willingness to speak the L2, was utilized. In this study, a subset comprising 16 items was utilized (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$). The 16-item scale specifically estimates learners' level of willingness to complete different speaking tasks successfully on a 4-point Likert scale. The points of scale ranged from 1=Definitely not willing, to 4=Definitely willing.

L2 learning Motivation. Six items on the Motivational Intensity scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$) were extracted from a study by Gardner as well as Lambert (1972) and confirmed in earlier research by Yashima (2004) as a measure of motivation. A four-point scale was utilized, differing from the three multiple-choice answers in the original format. Students were required to indicate the extent to which each statement reflected their mental state: Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree (4).

Two questions were added asking the participants about their reasons for learning English. The first question is multiple choice, and there is a list of potential reasons for learning English, and the respondent can choose more than one option. The second question is open-ended, asking the participants to add any other reasons that are not included in the previous list

Short-form Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale. The present study adapted the Short-form Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale developed by MacIntyre (1994a) to assess foreign language anxiety in the FL classroom. One of the items in the test reads, "Even if I am well prepared for English language classes, I feel anxious about it." All components of the test load onto a single latent variable, indicating a unidimensional measure of FLCA. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" was used to assess each item. Notably, none of the items on the FLCA scale were reverse-coded, including the two items that were reverse-coded in the original scale (Horwitz et al., 1986) (Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$). Consequently, higher scores on this test indicate higher levels of anxiety for each item

These two phrases have been reformulated as follows

- I worry that I won't do well in my English lesson
- When I speak in English language classes, I do not feel confident

The measurements were piloted on 5 Saudi EFL female participants who helped in improving some elements of the questionnaire

Data collection procedure

In May 2024, questionnaires were distributed to the participants over one month, comprising a total of 39 items. Participation in the research was voluntary, and students were given ample time to complete the online questionnaire via Google Forms. Subsequently, the author reached out to her female colleagues at the English Department of the College of Languages and Translation, King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia, requesting them to share the online questionnaire with their EFL students. The questionnaire link was disseminated through Blackboard announcements and WhatsApp groups. Prior to completing the questionnaire, participants were briefed on the research objectives and required to provide consent by signing a consent form. They were assured that their responses would be collected anonymously and confidentially, and that they had the option to withdraw from the survey at any point without facing any repercussions.

Data analysis

Data collection procedure A Pearson correlation revealed a significant positive relationship between L2 WTC and L2 learning motivation ($r(147) = .58, p < .01$) (see Table 2). Participants with higher scores on L2 WTC also showed higher scores on L2 learning motivation. Looking at the strength of this relationship, these two variables share only 9.12% of the variance, which is considered a very small effect size.

Impact of Foreign Language Class Anxiety on Willingness to Communicate (RQ2)

Pearson correlation analysis shows that foreign language classroom anxiety is negatively linked to L2 learners' WTC ($r(147) = -.25, p < .01$) (see Table 2). In other words, those participants who feel more anxious in FL classes are less willing to communicate using L2.

Relationship between FLCA and L2 Learning Motivation (RQ3)

Pearson analysis revealed that the correlation among the two independent variables is positive ($r(147) = .82, p < .01$) (see Table 2). It means high levels of anxiety are associated with a linear increase in L2 learning motivation.

Factors Influencing Motivation to Learn L2: Participant Perspectives (RQ4)

The two open-ended questions included in the web-based questionnaire asked about the potential factors affecting participants' motivation to learn L2. The percentage of the participants' responses has been obtained quantitatively and is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. *Percentage of reasons for learning English*

Reasons for learning English	Percentage
It will be useful in getting a good job.	85.5%
I will need English for my career in the future.	73.9%
It will help me if I travel abroad.	69.6%
It will make me a more knowledgeable person.	59.4%
It will help me understand the culture of other countries.	46.4%
I would like to go to study in English-speaking countries.	37.7%
I would like to become friends with some English-speaking people.	27.5%
It will help me to please my parents.	27.5%
It is a required course in my college.	20.3%

Then the participants were asked to write openly about their motives to learn L2. Among the dominant reasons reported by the learners are as follows:

English-language literature and media:

- It will help me to read my favorite books and novels. (P 11)
- I love American literature, so I chose to learn the language to be more professional. (P 3)
- Watching movies without translation. (P 51)

A universal language

- Since it is the language that is spoken the most throughout the world. (P 112)
- English is a universal language. So learning it will make my life easier. (P 3)
- The most widely used language among people. (P 23)
- The English language has become the most used language in most countries of the world. (P 17)
- It helps me achieve my dream of learning languages. English is a very important language around the world these days. (P 38)

Self-confidence

- It will make me more confident. (P 29)
- The reason I learned English is to increase my knowledge and cultural background. I love learning new languages to increase my self-confidence. (P 1)

Translation future career

- I like languages, that's why I'm learning English, Hindi, and Turkish. I would like to get a job that requires translation skills. (*P 76*)
- I want to be a translator in the future. (*P 14*)

Discussion

The main aim of the present study was to investigate how language anxiety and motivation to learn a second language interact to influence Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in an L2 learning setting among Saudi EFL learners. Additionally, it examines the potential relationship between Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) and L2 learning motivation.

The first research question investigated the relationship between L2 willingness to communicate (WTC) and L2 learning motivation among Saudi EFL female learners. Statistical analysis unveiled a notable positive correlation between L2 WTC and English learning motivation, indicating that higher levels of motivation are associated with an increased willingness to communicate in English. These results imply that motivation may be a more dependable indicator of L2 WTC. This finding is consistent with several studies, such as those by MacIntyre and colleagues (2001), and Yashima and colleagues (2018), who noted that motivation had a favorable impact on WTC in L2, by MacIntyre and colleagues (2003), who discovered a very strong correlation between L2 WTC and students' enthusiasm to learn a language after participating in immersion and other intense program experiences, and by Peng (2022), who asserted that learners' L2 WTC was strongly correlated with learners' motivation to acquire the foreign language. Higher motivation generally correlates with greater self-confidence, which seems to lead to WTC in the L2 (Yashima et al., 2004).

The second research question examined the correlation between FLCA and L2WTC. Statistical analysis showed that the FLCA of Saudi female EFL learners is a strong negative predictor of their willingness to communicate in English. This suggests that anxiety had a crippling impact on WTC in the current sample. Previous studies (e.g., MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994a, 1994b; MacIntyre et al., 2003; Horwitz, 1986) support this unsurprising result. It also aligns with the findings of Horwitz's (2010) study, which showed that students' reluctance to interact in English was caused by fear related to foreign languages. When it comes to speaking a second language, nervous students speak less than those who are not. Furthermore, nervous pupils struggle to communicate in a way that produces high-quality work. In this sense, students' nervousness influences both their words and their delivery (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994a). There is a strong negative association between L2 anxiety and L2 performance in particular anxiety-inducing settings. Higher levels of WTC are generally associated with reduced levels of anxiety and perceptions of L2 competence (Yashima et al., 2018).

Despite the negative association between anxiety and L2 WTC among Saudi EFL female learners in this study, it is noteworthy to conclude that this connection is fluctuating. Even if a quiet student is skilled in their second language, the nervousness of the classroom environment may make them appear less intelligent than an extroverted student (Alenezi, 2020). It is also possible to argue that those students are less competent, less informed, less likely to get into problems, less likely to perform well in class, and less likely to be asked to react (Dewaele & Li, 2020).

The third research question dealt with the interaction between L2 learning motivation and foreign language classroom anxiety. Results revealed that both factors were significantly positively linked. Given that most people associate the word "anxiety" with bad

feelings, this finding may come as a surprise. The outcome supports the claim made by Strack et al. (2017) that "negative emotions have important motivational properties" (p. 114). Despite the fact that experiencing worry as an unpleasant emotion is disagreeable, it "can also provide energy, focus, and determination, helping an individual to work hard toward a future goal" (Strack et al., 2017, p. 122). Since the desire to avoid unforeseen circumstances is often correlated with anxiety, when learners are "interpreting their anxiety as facilitative", they might put in more time and work to get the intended results (Strack et al., 2017, p. 113). Under pressure, some individuals become more self-motivated. This finding, however, contradicts the hypothesis that there is a negative relationship between motivation and anxiety in language learning environments. (e.g., Jain & Sidhu, 2013). After examining the connection between learning motivation and FLCA, it can be said that reduced anxiety may improve learning motivation.

The last research question focused on the respondents' reasons for learning English. Based on the comments provided by students to the open-ended questions, it has been determined that over 90% of students overall are learning English and are willing to use it for motivational purposes. More specifically, 85% of students learn English with the intention of using it as a means (obtaining a good job, travelling abroad, or getting a good grade). This provides additional support for the quantitative data results, which show that students are more willing to converse in English when they are more motivated, a finding that is in line with Table 3 results. The answers provided by the respondents to the open-ended question demonstrated several other factors, including interest in English original literature and media, followed by the significance of English as a prominent language worldwide. Then, factors of self-confidence and future careers in translation have been reported as encouraging motives to learn English as L2. Being confident in one's ability to

communicate is essential for determining one's willingness to participate in L2. Furthermore, this implies that students who are more willing to take the lead in L2 communication will succeed. Similarly, WTC can act as a placed model or investigated construct (MacIntyre et al., 2003), meaning that variations in the context, such as L2 learning motivation, may have distinct effects on learners' WTC.

Conclusion

This study's primary aim was to examine the interplay between learners' anxiety, motivation for learning English, and willingness to communicate (WTC) in English within an EFL classroom in Saudi Arabia.

This research has some pedagogical consequences for research on language learning motivation, L2 WTC, as well as foreign language classroom anxiety. Initially, since the L2 motivation had been favorably correlated with L2 WTC, the learners should be provided with encouraging and cooperative teaching, which will increase their willingness to communicate. In addition, the traditional, boring and dry EFL teaching followed in Saudi classrooms should be replaced with activity-based teaching that will possibly motivate the learners to use L2 for oral communication. Teachers should also take steps to enhance the motivation of the learners with the help of positive reinforcement.

The results also showed a negative association between learners' L2 WTC and anxiety inside the FL classroom. More precisely, the majority of the EFL students in this study experience anxiety anytime they are required to communicate in English in the classroom, suggesting that anxiety is a concept that needs to be given

a lot of consideration in educational settings. In a similar vein, learners can increase both their readiness to speak and their eventual success by being aware of their nervousness. To accomplish this, English teachers should familiarize themselves with the concept of language anxiety. Furthermore, they should endeavor to pinpoint the causes of language anxiety in learners of foreign languages and devise methods for assisting the students in lowering their anxiety levels. By doing this, students will be more open to communicating, which will ultimately improve their academic performance.

It is also possible to hypothesize that students' positive anxiety and motivation will impede their smooth language acquisition (Zhou, 2016). Teachers have a clear chance to minimize the support for motivation among their learners. They may, for instance, remind the learners of the intrinsic motivations behind learning an L2 as well as the potential benefits this endeavor can have for their development and progress. It is important to remind students that learning should not be driven solely by the desire for rewards or employment in the future, but rather should be seen as a byproduct, as this type of motivation puts them at risk for increasing language anxiety.

Nonetheless, it is crucial to acknowledge particular limitations linked to this study. First, a thorough analysis of the variables influencing Saudi female EFL students' readiness to communicate in L2 may involve the use of numerous other methodologies, even though the empirical research used in this study provides insightful information. In a recent review, Derakhshan et al. (2023) introduced several cutting-edge techniques, including time series analysis, latent development curve modeling, and the process tracing approach, for assessing and understanding academic emotions. These creative methods could prove useful in future research with EFL students. Second, as the survey's respondents were

undergraduate students from a single Saudi university, more research, including EFL students from other educational backgrounds and settings, is necessary.

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