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By:

Adil Ishag
B.A. (Hons.) in English Language/ Guidance & Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Khartoum 2006
P.G.D. in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, University of Juba 2009
M.A. in Applied Linguistics (ELT), University of Khartoum 2011
Dr. Phil. in Psycholinguistics, University of Leipzig, Germany 2016

Supervised by:

Dr. Gamar Addawla Albooni

Department of English Language, Faculty of Education
University of Khartoum

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DEDICATION

This work is un-begrudgingly dedicated to all family members, acquaintances, colleagues and friends in my home town Wadelhilew for being a constant source of support and inspiration all along.
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First and foremost, I would very much like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Gamar Addawla Albooni, whose expertise, vast knowledge, patience and constructive comments have tremendously helped me in achieving this work. I am really so much indebted to Dr. Mohammed Hassan the head of the English Department, and also to my colleagues and the staff members of the department for their solid support and invaluable assistance. A profound word of thanks should be expressed to all the students who enthusiastically participated in the empirical survey. Last but by no means least; I would like to express my special acknowledgement and gratitude to Prof. Pieter Seuren, Prof. Abdelwahid Awdalla, and Prof. Ali Farah for their invaluable comments, suggestions and proofreading.
ABSTRACT

Research Title: Willingness to Communicate in English Language among Sudanese University Students in Relation to Anxiety and Self-Perceived Communication Competence

Researcher’ Name: Adil Ishag Abdallah Abaker

Degree: Ph.D. in English Language

This study aims at investigating the relationship between willingness to communicate in English language, self-perceived communication competence, and foreign language anxiety among Sudanese EFL students, along the variables of language achievement, academic level and gender. Both the quantitative and qualitative methods are used to collect and analyze the data for the study. The tools used to collect data are standardized questionnaire comprising 67 items and semi-structured interview. A sample of 156 respondents is purposively drawn from the total population of about 220 students; then interviews were conducted on a representative sample. The results were obtained by utilizing SPSS which is used for the statistical analysis in terms of cross-tabulation, correlation coefficient, independent samples t-test, and analysis of variance. The study reveals a number of findings (significant level p < 0.05): willingness to communicate in English language and self-perceived communication competence are positively correlated, whilst foreign language anxiety has a negative impact on both willingness to communicate and self-perceived communication competence. Self-perceived communication competence is a good indicator of willingness to communicate in English language and foreign language anxiety than actual language achievement.

The results further reveal that there are some gender differences in willingness to communicate in English language, foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence. The study concluded to a number of recommendations: teachers of English language should create supportive and relaxed atmosphere that promotes speaking ability. Students should be provided with equal communication opportunities to enhance their communicative competence in English as a foreign language. Applications of modern technologies should be utilized to develop students’ communication competence in English language.
مستخلص البحث

العنوان: الرغبة في المخاطبة باللغة الإنجليزية لدى الطلاب السودانيين وعلاقتها بالقلق والكفاءة المدركة في المخاطبة

الباحث: عادل اسحق عبدالله ابكر

الدرجة: دكتوراه الفلسفة في اللغة الإنجليزية

تهدف هذه الدراسة لمعرفة الرغبة في المخاطبة باللغة الإنجليزية وعلاقتها بكل من الكفاءة المدركة في المخاطبة وقلق تعلم اللغة في ضوء متغيرات الإنجاز اللغوي والمستوى الأكاديمي واللغة. اتبعت الدراسة المنهج الكمي والنوعي لجمع وتحليل البيانات. تم استخدام استبانة مقننة ومقابلات شبه موجهة لجمع البيانات. استمرت الدراسة على 67 عينة وزعت على عينتين قصيدة شملت 156 طالباً من مجمل مجتمع البحث البالغ عددهم حوالي 220 طالباً، وكذلك تم إجراء مقابلات مع عينة مماثلة من الطلاب، وقد تم تصنيف وتحليل البيانات باستخدام برامج الحزمة الإحصائية (SPSS) بإجراء معاملات الارتباط، اختبار تعلينتين مستقلتين وتحليل التباين الأحادي. توصلت الدراسة إلى عدد من النتائج (مستوى الدلالة الإحصائية 0.05 < p) منها: وجود علاقة إيجابية بين الرغبة باللغة الإنجليزية والكفاءة المدركة في المخاطبة، بينما يؤثر القلق سلباً على الرغبة في التحدث والكفاءة المدركة في المخاطبة باللغة الإنجليزية على حد سواء. كشفت الدراسة أن الكفاءة المدركة في المخاطبة باللغة الإنجليزية تلعب دوراً أكبر من الإنجاز اللغوي الفعلي في تحديد مستوى الرغبة في المخاطبة والقلق، خاصة في المراحل الأولية من تعلم اللغة. أسفرت الدراسة كذلك عن بعض الفروقات الدالة إحصائياً تعزى لمتغيرات النوعي في كل من مستوى الرغبة في المخاطبة باللغة الإنجليزية وقلق تعلم اللغة والكفاءة المدركة في المخاطبة. قدمت الدراسة بعض النصائح منها: ينبغي على أساندة اللغة الإنجليزية خلق بيئة محفزية وداعمة للأنشطة الخاطبية وتزويد الطلاب بفرص متكافئة للمخاطبة باللغة الإنجليزية. ينبغي استخدام التدابير الثقافية الحديثة لتعزيز المهارة المخاطبة باللغة الإنجليزية لدى الطلاب.
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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ANOVA: Analysis of Variance
CA: Communication Apprehension
CLT: Communicative Language Teaching
EFL: English as a Foreign Language
ESL: English as a Second Language
FLA: Foreign Language Anxiety
FLCAS: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale
FNE: Fear of Negative Evaluation
GPA: Grade Point Average
ICA: Intercultural Communication Apprehension
MMR: Mixed Method Research
NS: Native Speaker
SLA: Second Language Acquisition
SLTA: Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity
SPCC: Self-Perceived Communication Competence
SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TA: Test Anxiety
UWTC: Unwillingness to Communicate
WTC: Willingness to Communicate
WTC-FLS Willingness to Communicate in a Foreign Language Scale
WTC-NN: Willingness to Communicate with Non-native Speakers
WTC-NS: Willingness to Communicate with Native Speakers
WTC-SC: Willingness to Communicate in School Context
Chapter One
Introduction

1.1 Background

It has long been established that the process of language learning is not merely a simple learning of language skills and structures. According to (Gardner et al., 1997; Arnold & Brown, 1999), many other non-linguistic factors such as willingness to communicate, foreign language anxiety, motivation, and communicative perceived competence substantially affect this process.

The essential goal of language teaching is to promote learners’ communicative competence, which is a manifestation of willingness to communicate in the foreign language. Kang (2005, p. 278) states that “with increased emphasis on authentic communication as an essential part of L2 learning and instruction, willingness to communicate has been proposed as one of the key concept in L2 learning and instruction”. Willingness to communicate is a potential construct that emphasizes the active involvement of L2 learners to use the language and create opportunities to do so, which will in turn enhance their language proficiency. In this regards, MacIntyre and Doucette (2010) point out that being willing to communicate is part of becoming fluent in a second language, which often is the ultimate goal of L2 learners. Since language is a tool for communication, willingness to communicate promotes
language acquisition, by improving speaking skills and emphasizing the speaking opportunities to language learning. In this context, MacIntyre and Charos (1996, p. 3) state that:

“Communication and second language acquisition are closely tied together. On one hand, recent trends toward a conversational approach to second language pedagogy reflect the belief that one must use the language to develop proficiency, that is, one must talk to learn. On the other hand, communication is more than a means of facilitating language learning, it is an important goal in itself”.

Advocating communicative language teaching and learning approaches emphasized the importance of cultivating communicative competence in L2 learners. Dörnyei (2001) suggests that competence in the second language may not be enough. Students need to not only be able but also willing to communicate in the second language. Furthermore, Swain and Lapkin (2002) imply that language is learned through interactive meaningful communication in a pragmatic setting. Swain (2000) further asserts that language use and language learning co-occur, and it is language use that mediates language learning.

Willingness to communicate is closely related to language anxiety, in which language anxiety negatively affects willingness to communicate and quality of performance in the target language. Moreover,
McCroskey and Richmond (1990), believe that self-perceived communication competence might have a strong influence on individuals’ willingness to communicate. MacIntyre, Noels, and Clement (1997) further found that the perception of competence in the L2 can be biased by language anxiety and that individuals who are highly anxious about communicating tend to perceive their communication competence to be lower than it is rated by a neutral observer.

Language anxiety has attracted a large amount of research as one of the most influential psychological and affective factors in foreign language learning. This assumption has also been supported by Gardner et al. (1997), who examined the relationship between foreign language anxiety beside other affective variables and language performance, concluding that foreign language anxiety was the most potential factor, which negatively influenced language achievement.

Moreover, MacIntyre et al. (1997, p. 266) indicate that throughout the process of acquiring a second language, learners often assess their own developing abilities. Commonly, this self-assessment can facilitate their learning by helping them develop strategies to enhance their linguistic capabilities. Empirical research such as those conducted by (Yashima et al. 2004; Matsuoka, 2005; Cameron, 2013) also indicated a strong correlation between perceived communicative competence and
willingness to communicate. Similarly, Peng and Woodrow (2010) reported that Chinese university students who have high self-evaluation of L2 competence and less anxiety arousal tend to be more willing to enter into communication. MacIntyre et al. (2002) suggest that the effect of one’s perceived competence can override one’s actual competence in communication situations, especially when it comes to the initiation of communication, which is conceptualized as willingness to communicate.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the ongoing emphasis on communication and communicative approaches in modern language pedagogy; language teaching/learning in Sudan - according to the researcher’s experience and observations - still seems to be obviously influenced and dominated by teacher-centered approaches and traditional methods that primarily focus on language structures and grammatical rules. As such, students would have few opportunities to enhance their communicative competence and remain reluctant to communicate in the target language, even after studying the language for a long period of time since the fifth grade in primary schools.

Avoiding communication in the target language is not only related to language anxiety and communication apprehension, but also strongly influenced by learners’ self-perceived communication competence.
Language anxiety is quite prevalent among foreign language learners. According to Worde (1998), one third to one half of the students examined reported experiencing debilitating levels of language anxiety. This implies that communicating in a foreign language such as English is considered as an anxiety-provoking situation. Learners of English language in Sudan are not an exception, and thus learning English as a foreign language has always been a problematic area for Sudanese students, due to limited contact with the target-language speakers and lack of exchange opportunities in the last decades, especially with the English speaking countries. In this context, Sudanese students majoring in English are mostly exposed to English in formal classroom setting, where Arabic is the medium of instruction and the language of everyday communication. A deterioration in speaking and communication skills in English is considered to be a major problem among Sudanese students in different educational levels post-Arabization (Ahmed, 2016; Siddiek, 2011). Due to dominant attitudes, students majoring in English might not have many opportunities to practice or communicate in English outside the lectures halls, and they mostly adhere to speaking in Sudanese Arabic among themselves. These situations will probably lead to anxiety where students are required to communicate in the foreign language and this will in turn affect the learning process and their willing to communicate in the target language.
Nevertheless, to the best of the candidate’s knowledge, the area of willingness to communicate in relation to anxiety and self-perceived communication competence has not been addressed in the Sudanese context. As such, this study is intended to bridge the gap in this area of research, regarding foreign language learning in general and English as a foreign language more specifically.

1.3 Research Objectives

This study aims at achieving the following specific objectives:

1. The overall objective of the study is to investigate the complex relationship between willingness to communicate in English as a foreign language, language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence among Sudanese students majoring in English.

2. Additionally, it seeks to examine the level of willingness to communicate and language anxiety among Sudanese students, in the light of some factors such as: Gender, academic level and their self-perceived communication competence.

1.4 Research Questions

This study attempts to scientifically and objectively answer the following posed questions:

1. What is the relationship between Sudanese undergraduate EFL
students’ willingness to communicate, self-perceived communication competence and foreign language anxiety in learning English?

2. Are there any statistically significant differences of Sudanese EFL undergraduate students in their willingness to communicate, and foreign language anxiety according to their overall language achievement?

3. Is self-perceived communication competence of Sudanese undergraduate EFL students a better indicator of their levels of willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety than their actual language achievement?

4. Are there any significant gender differences among Sudanese undergraduate EFL students in their willingness to communicate, language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence?

5. Are there any significant differences among Sudanese undergraduate EFL students in their willingness to communicate, foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence in English according to the academic level?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the hypotheses of this study are initially formulated and operationalized in the following testable
1. Willingness to communicate of Sudanese EFL undergraduate students and their self-perceived communication competence are positively correlated, and their levels of willingness to communicate and self-perceived communication competence are negatively correlated with their foreign language anxiety.

2. There are statistically significant differences of Sudanese EFL undergraduate students in their willingness to communicate, and foreign language anxiety according to their overall language achievement.

3. Self-perceived communication competence of Sudanese undergraduate EFL students is a better indicator of their willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety than their actual language achievement.

4. There are significant gender differences among Sudanese undergraduate EFL students in their willingness to communicate, foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence in English.

5. There are significant differences among Sudanese undergraduate EFL students in their willingness to communicate, language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence in English according to the academic level (preliminary, intermediate, and
1.6 Research Significance

Understanding different variables that impact L2 willingness to communicate is considered to be crucial to enhance learners’ language proficiency and communicative competence.

In spite of the growing number of research dealing with foreign language anxiety as an important factor influencing foreign language learning, there are very few studies on willingness to communicate and language anxiety in foreign language learning simultaneously, especially in the Sudanese context. In this regard, Piniel (2006) points out that foreign language classroom anxiety is still considered to be a relatively new and developing area within foreign language research.

As such, this study will contribute to the existing literature by adding comprehensive insight in order to understand and appreciate the substantial role of affective factors in foreign language learning context. It is also anticipated that the outcomes of the proposed study would be utilized in further applied linguistics research, syllabus design, and enhancing foreign language learning at the tertiary level in Sudan in general and English language more specifically. The results are expected to inform teachers so as to enhance and promote learners’ communication skills and interactive activities in the language
teaching/learning process. Thus, thoroughly understanding the underlying variables that might influence willingness to communicate in the target language is of an utmost significance to improve learners’ second/foreign language proficiency.

1.7 Methodology of Investigation

In order to examine the relationship between willingness to communicate, foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence in English; a mixed method approach is used. The obtained data is statistically analyzed using SPSS.

1.7.1 Participants

The participants of this study are undergraduate students enrolled in the Department of English, at the faculty of Education, University of Khartoum, Sudan. A representative sample is used to select participants from different academic levels representing preliminary, intermediate, and advanced language learners.

1.7.2 Instruments of Data Collection

Willingness to Communicate (WTC) and Self-Perceived Communication Competence (SPCC) scales are utilized to gather the empirical data. Concerning foreign language anxiety; a modified version of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) is used. It is based on 5-point Likert scale and composed of 33 items intending to
measure three dimensions related to general sources of foreign language anxiety namely: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. This scale has been widely used in its adapted and translated version to assess language anxiety among second/foreign language learners of different nationalities and academic levels including preservice teachers. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were also conducted to collect the qualitative data.

1.8 Definition of Terms

The key terms of the study are defined as follows:

1.8.1 Willingness to communicate (WTC):
MacInyre et al. (1998, p. 547) define willingness to communicate as “a learner’s readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons using a second language”.

1.8.2 Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA):
Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 128) view foreign language anxiety as a “distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behavior related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process”.

Similarly, Brown (2007, p. 384) defines language anxiety as “a feeling of worry experienced in relation to a foreign language, either trait or state in nature”.
1.8.3 Self-Perceived Communication Competence (SPCC):

Shahbaz et al. (2016, p. 159) define Self-perceived communicative competence as how “an individual perceives his/her own competence for spoken communication in a certain context."
Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework of the study by thoroughly scrutinizing and reviewing relevant literature to the variables of the study, as well as reporting previous empirical studies in the field. Foremost, it deals with the notion and nature of willingness to communicate and its underlying factors, in addition to self-perceived communication competence and theories of input and interaction hypothesis. Additionally, it tackles the nature of foreign language anxiety in relation to language achievement and proficiency. Finally, it reviews a considerable number of empirical studies related to Willingness to Communicate, Self-Perceived Communication Competence, and Foreign Language Anxiety.

2.1 The Notion of Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

The significance of willingness to communicate in L2 according to MacIntyre (2007), stems from the observation that some learners, despite extensive study, may never become successful L2 speakers and habitually remain silent. The term willingness to communicate is a relatively recent psycholinguistic construct, which is quite central to an individual’s communication in a second/foreign language in particular, and to the overall language proficiency in general. The notion of willingness to communicate was originally proposed in communication
science and was applied to the field of first language (L1) by McCroskey and Richmond (1987). However, there were other similar constructs which contributed to the emergence of willingness to communicate such as: the work of McCroskey (1970) on communication apprehension, Burgoon (1976) on unwillingness to communicate, as well as previous research on shyness, reticence, and predisposition toward verbal behaviour. Later on, McCroskey and Baer (1985, p. 7) reconceptualized the construct of unwillingness to communicate into a positive one termed willingness to communicate, which has been defined as the probability that an individual will choose to communicate, specifically to talk, when free to do so. Initially, willingness to communicate was considered as a static and individual’s personality based predisposition toward approaching or avoiding the initiation of communication when free to do so, that remains relatively consistent across a wide range of communication situations, irrespective of the type of receivers. This has been further stated by McCroskey (1997, p. 77), who defines willingness to communicate as “an individual’s predispositions to initiate communication with others”. This personality trait and orientation could explain why some people would talk and others would not under the same or similar circumstances. Therefore, an individual’s personality was assumed to have a general impact on the cognitive choices, that a learner would make about his orientations and attitudes towards
communicative situations and to the extent to which he would initiate or being willing to communicate in the target language. However, the current trend in second language research views willingness to communicate as a rather dynamic and context-specific construct. It could further be argued that, willingness to communicate in the classroom settings does not exist as a single variable but rather as the result of various underlying cognitive, affective and social factors, where language learning is essentially regarded as a dynamic social activity.

Nevertheless, earlier studies have emphasized the importance of willingness to communicate as a key variable in language teaching and learning, that could contribute to a successful language acquisition especially speaking fluently in the target language as ultimate outcome of any language instruction. In this regard, McCroskey and Richmond (1987, p. 153) state that “high willingness is associated with increased frequency and amount of communication, which in turn are associated with a variety of positive communication outcomes. Low willingness to communicate is associated with decreased fluency and amount of communication, which in turn are associated with a variety of negative communication outcomes. As such, willingness to communicate is considered to be a crucial element in the frequency and fluency of the second language use, implying that language learners who are optimally willing to communicate in the second language, would actually look for
and utilize opportunities to communicate in L2, which in turn enhance their level of fluency in the target language.

The notion of willingness to communicate refers to one’s psychological preparedness and tendency to engage in communication using L2, when an opportunity arises. This refers not only to the actual behaviour but to the latent intention as well, as an indicator and predictive of the subsequent communicative behaviour. For instance, MacIntyre et al. (1998) illustrate that several students might raise their hands in a class to answer a question posed by the teacher. Even if only one student of them would have the opportunity to answer the question communicating in L2, however all of the students raised their hands can be considered as willing to take part in the communication and hence expressing their L2 willingness to communicate.

According to McCroskey (1992) willingness to communicate could be identified in four communication contexts: groups, meetings, dyads, and publics, crossed with three types of interlocutors namely: strangers, acquaintances and friends. As such, MacIntyre (2007) suggests that willingness to communicate can be seen as both an individual difference factor facilitating L2 acquisition, especially in a pedagogical system that emphasizes communication, and as a non-linguistic outcome of the language learning process.
2.1.1 Differentiating Willingness to Communicate from Motivation

Willingness to communicate is a distinct construct within personality, which at first glance seems to be similar to other constructs such as desire to communicate and most notably language learning motivation. Thus, it is necessary to differentiate willingness to communicate from these constructs, which are regarded as key affective variables that influence the language learning process. First of all, Wen and Clement (2003, p. 25) differentiate willingness to communicate from desire to communicate by pointing out that “desire refers to a deliberate choice or preference, while willingness emphasizes the readiness to act”. Willingness to communicate on the other hand, has been defined by MacIntyre et al. (1988, p. 547) in terms of “a learner’s readiness to enter discourse at particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2”. Moreover, MacIntyre (2007) claims that willingness to communicate is the final psychological step to the initiation of L2 communication.

Second, a differentiation has to be made between the concept of willingness to communicate and motivation, which is considered as one of the major non-linguistic factors impacting both the process and outcomes of acquiring a second language. In this regard, Gardner and Lambert (1972) – who first empirically investigated the motivational factors in second language acquisition – found that L2 achievement is
related not only to the individual learner’s linguistic aptitude or general intelligence but also to the learner’s motivation and interest in learning the target language. Language motivation was originally conceptualized and incorporated into Gardner’s socio-educational model (1985, p. 10), where he refers to L2 learning motivation as “the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language”.

One could argue that willingness to communicate is distinct from motivation, where motivation is an overall hypothetical construct within personality that influences the process of language learning in general, irrespective of a particular language domain and skill. One the other hand, willingness to communicate is a quite specific construct which is pertinent to communicating and speaking the second language and as such is assumed to be more situational dependent. However, these constructs as any other psychological variables do not operate in isolation, but are rather interconnected and might have a mutual influence on each other. For instance, it has been indicated that motivation as operationalized by Yashima (2002) might indirectly influence willingness to communicate through communication confidence. Another distinction is that motivation evolved mainly from psychological research, whereas willingness to communicate was originally developed in the field of communication and speech science,
and therefore these theoretical backgrounds have been reflected in approaching the study of each concept.

2.1.2 Willingness to Communicate in the First and Second Language

The concept of willingness to communicate as a relatively recent affective variable - evolved from the field of speech communication - was primarily introduced with referenced to communication in the first language (L1). It was then considered as a static cognitive construct and personality trait-like predisposition that remained relatively stable across a variety of communication situations and interlocutors. In this context, Richmond and Roach (1992, p. 104) state that “willingness to communicate is the one, overwhelming communication personality construct which permits every facet of an individual’s life and contributes significantly to the social, educational, and organizational achievements of the individual”. In the early period of research on willingness to communicate, most of the studies regarded willingness to communicate as a common human communication behaviour in the native language, where McCroskey and Richmond (1990) defined it as “variability in talking behaviour”. They have further pointed out that situational factors might indeed affect an individual’s willingness to communicate; however, individuals are expected to display similar willingness to communicate tendencies in various contexts. Moreover, MacIntyre et al. (2003, p. 591) clarify that individuals display consistent
tendencies in their predisposition toward or away from communicating, given the choice. In one’s first language, willingness to communicate is a fairly stable personality trait and results in a global, personality-based orientation toward talking.

However, later on during the 1990s as noted by McGroaty (2001), the field of applied linguistics and language acquisition has witnessed a great shift from the macro cognitive and socio-psychological approaches toward more micro immediate factors represented in the classroom environment and contextual variables, which are assumed to play a crucial role in language learning as a dynamic social activity. Accordingly, willingness to communicate was then conceptualized and extended to communicating in the second language (L2) by MacIntyre and Charos (1996) and expanded in a subsequent study by MacIntyre and his associates (1998). Unlike willingness to communicate in L1 as a fixed personality trait-like predisposition, willingness to communicate in L2 was regarded as a dynamic situation-specific variable that varies across a number of communication contexts.

Therefore, willingness to communicate in L2 is quite different and as such not considered as a simple manifestation of L1 willingness to communicate or a simple indicator of one’s personality. In this context, MacIntyre et al. (1998, p. 546) state that “it is highly unlikely that willingness to communicate in the second language is a simple
manifestation of willingness to communicate in the L1”. They argue that in the L2 context, the situation is more complex because the level of one’s proficiency, and in particular that of the individual’s L2 communicative skill, is an additional powerful modifying variable.

MacIntyre et al. (Ibid) further attribute the difference between L1 and L2 willingness to communicate due to the inherently different natures of L1 and L2, and uncertainty inherent in L2 use that interacts in a more complex manner with those variables that influence L1 willingness to communicate. For instance, among most adults, a much greater range in communicative competence would be found in the L2, as compared to the L1. By definition, L1 speakers have achieved a great deal of competence with that language. However, L2 competence level can range from almost no L2 competence (0%) to full L2 competence (100%). In addition, L2 use carries a number of intergroup issues, with social and political implications, that are usually irrelevant to L1 use.

From a situational perspective, Kang (2005, p. 291) expanded the definition of L2 willingness to communicate to refer to “an individual’s volitional inclination towards actively engaging in the act of communication in a specific situation, which can vary according to interlocutor, topic, and a conversational context, among other potential situational variables”. Furthermore, it has been suggested by MacIntyre, Babin and Clement, (1999) that L1 willingness to communicate captures
both stable trait-like predisposition and transient state-like characteristics that might substantially vary across individuals and situations.

Changing the language from L1 to L2 might affect the entire communication context and therefore it seems clear that L2 willingness to communicate is not a direct transfer or manifestation of L1 willingness to communicate, where L2 willingness to communicate is regarded as a multilayered construct encompassing a variety of interrelated complex attributes. In an empirical investigation, Charos (1994) found a negative correlation between students’ willingness to communicate in L1 and L2.

Generally speaking, willingness to communicate in the first language is mainly regarded as a personality construct, while willingness to communicate in the second language is regarded to be influenced by rather situational and state-like variables.

2.1.3 Trait versus Situational Willingness to Communicate

In the literature, two orientations towards the study of willingness to communicate could be identified. Previous research initially focused on willingness to communicate as a trait-like predisposition that remains consistent across different contexts and as such its situational orientation has been underestimated. However, most recent studies tend to focus on the situational nature of willingness to communicate. For example, Kang (2005, p. 291) postulates that L2 willingness to communicate is “an
individual’s volitional inclination towards actively engaging in the act of communication in a specific situation, which can vary according to interlocutor(s), topic, and conversational context, among other potential situational variables”. This implies that individuals communicate differently with various interlocutors discussing different topics in different situations.

This polarization could be attributed to the nature of the language investigated, where there is an obvious difference in the process of first and second language acquisition. L1 willingness to communicate could be regarded as a personality construct, whereas L2 willingness to communicate is considered to be directly influenced by situated and dynamic factors, due to the wider spectrum of antecedents in L2 willingness to communicate. In this regard, MacIntyre (1998, p. 546) indicate that in L2 context, willingness to communicate should be treated as a situational variable, open to change across situations. They further consider L2 willingness to communicate as a situational variable with both transient and enduring influences. They distinguish and define the transient and enduring variables as follows:

“The enduring influences such as intergroup relations, learner personality, etc. represent stable, long-term properties of the environment or person that would apply to almost any situation. The situational influences such as desire to speak to a specific person,
knowledge of the topic, etc. are seen as more transient and dependent on
the specific context in which a person functions at a given time”.
Therefore, in L2 communication instances, willingness to communicate
should not be solely limited to a trait-like predisposition, but should also
consider its dynamic nature since the use of L2 might substantially be
influenced by situational variance in competence and intergroup
relations among others.

As indicated by Cao (2013), longitudinal studies of L2 learners
indicate that willingness to communicate is a dynamic concept, which is
multifaceted and might fluctuate over time, due to changes in contextual,
personal, and linguistic factors. Thus, a learner’s decision to speak in L2,
apart from his perceived communication competence, largely depend on
momentary interaction of a set of mutually related variables related to
culture, motivation, instructional context and so on.

Like any other psychological constructs, willingness to communicate
tends to manifests dual nature, that is to say, it encompasses both static
and dynamic orientations. In this regard, Dörnyei (2005) argues that
willingness to communicate in L2, similar to other individual variables
such as motivation, language anxiety and personality, is suggested to
display dual characteristics, the trait willingness to communicate and the
situational willingness to communicate, with the former being a stable
disposition and the latter possessing a situated nature.
Nevertheless, the trait-like predisposition and the situational aspect of willingness to communicate were found complementary and not contradictory. MacIntyre et al. (1999) suggest that trait-like willingness to communicate prepared individuals for communication by creating a tendency to place themselves in situations where communication is expected; situational willingness to communicate on the other hand, influences the decision to initiate communication within a particular situation. L2 willingness to communicate is seen as a highly situated phenomenon, rising and falling as internal states and external circumstances interact. Hence, it could be argued that both individual and contextual factors should be considered to investigate and explain the complex and multilayered willingness to communicate construct, and highlighting the complementary contributions of both trait and situational aspects in willingness to communicate.

2.1.4 Macintyre’s Heuristic Model of Willingness to Communicate

MacIntyre and his associates (1998) initiated one of the most comprehensive models in an attempt to investigate and outline the various variables that might account for individual differences in L2 willingness to communicate, which is essential for a successful communication in the second language. The model is designed in a hierarchical pyramid-shaped figure, which encompasses six different layers, taking into account a number of potential linguistic,
communicative and socio-psychological factors that might affect a learner’s willingness to communicate in L2 setting. The model distinguishes between two sets of affecting variables: the temporal situational variables that are dependent on communication context such as the desire to speak to a specific person at a given time, knowledge of the topic discussed), and the enduring variables that are on the other hand relatively stable across different situations such as intergroup relations, communicative competence, learner’ personality. The pyramid starts at the top with the situational and transient influences (layers I, II, III) moving down bottom of the pyramid to the most stable and enduring variables (layers IV, V, VI), suggesting that willingness to communicate in L2 is a situational variable with both transient and enduring influences.

Figure 2.1 Macintyre’s Heuristic Model of WTC (1998)
Willingness to communicate is placed in the second layer of the hierarchy directly beneath the frequency of L2 actual communication. Willingness to communicate is proposed as a behavioral intention as the final step before initiating communication in L2 with a specific person when an opportunity arises, and as such it implies a greater likelihood of using the second language. According to this model, a learner’s decision to communicate in a second language is determined by the mutual interaction and interplay between the immediate and dynamic situational factors and the most enduring static factors alike.

2.1.5 Variables Underlying Willingness to Communicate

Individual differences in second/foreign language learning have long been considered among the most crucial issues in the field of language acquisition. Researchers attempted to address the question: why second language learners substantially different in the overall achievement and level of proficiency in the target language, and which factors or a combination of variables that might contribute to these variances. Similarly, the same question has also been posed regarding learners’ differences in their level of oral communication and their willingness to communicate in L2. As proposed by (Wen & Clement, 2003; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996), willingness to communicate in the classroom as a readiness to initiate a communicative behaviour does not exist as a
single variable, but is rather an outcome of numerous underlying cognitive, affective, societal and personality characteristics. In this section, a set of underlying variables that are speculated to account for potential differences in learners’ willingness to communicate will be thoroughly outlined and discussed.

McCroskey and Richmond (1987, p. 138) examined a set of variables that might lead to differences in a person’s willingness to communicate, and labeled these variables as antecedents to willingness to communicate. They identified six variables that might account for individual differences in L1 willingness to communicate. These variables were introversion, anomie and alienation, self-esteem, cultural divergence, communication competence, and communication apprehension. However, they suggested that these variables might not be the causes of the variability in willingness to communicate, considering the possibility that some of these antecedents developed alongside the willingness to communicate predisposition simultaneously and thus “it is more likely that these variables may be involved in mutual causality with each other, and even more likely that both the antecedents and willingness to communicate are produced in common by other causal elements”. The rest of the variables that substantially account for individual differences in willingness to communicate are dealt with in the forthcoming sections. These variables are gender differences,
motivational and attitudinal orientations, personality attributes as represented mainly by introversion-extroversion dimensions within personality, social support and class-room environment, international posture, and finally discussing the role of cultural dimensions in L2 willingness to communicate.

(a) Gender

Gender is one of the main factors that account for potential differences in second language acquisition. Traditionally, female students tend to outperform their male counterparts in language learning in general and claimed to have a higher level of motivation and positive attitudes towards the target language. For instance, Wright (1999) found that in a sample of Irish adolescents learning French, girls had more positive attitudes than boys toward learning and speaking French. Regarding willingness to communicate, a number of studies (e.g., Richmond & Roach, 1992), has also suggested that patterns of willingness to communicate across different groups are more likely to be different between male and female language learners. Backer and MacIntyre (2000) investigated the role of gender and immersion in L2 communication, among Canadian high school immersion and non-immersion students who learn French as a second language. In terms of gender, the study found that female students in non-immersion programs
are more motivated to learn French compared to male students in the same program.

In another empirical study, Moazzam (2014) reported no significant difference between male and female EFL learners in terms of willingness to communicate. Nevertheless, Tannen (1990), postulates that despite the stereotypes of women as being talkative, adult men seem to talk more in meetings, or mixed-group discussions than their female counterparts.

Conversely, Smith (1997) revealed that adolescent girls tend to converse more than boys in L1. Similarly, Clark and Trafford (1995, p. 315) state that “modern languages seem to be perceived as a ‘traditionally female’ subject”. At first these findings regarding gender differences in willingness to communicate might seem contradictory and controversial, but they rather suggest that willingness to communicate is situation-sensitive, in which one could argue that females tend to be more communicative in general, whilst men tend to dominate communication in certain situations such as during meetings for instance.

(b) Motivation and Attitudes

Motivation and attitudes are among the most crucial psychological constructs that explain both the process and outcome of second/foreign
language learning. The research on second language motivation and attitudes has been initiated by the Canadian psycholinguist Robert Gardner (1985) and his associates, especially in his well-known socio-educational model. In the literature of second/foreign language learning, motivation has been classified into two broad types namely: integrative and instrumental motivation, which has long been established and dominated L2 motivation research in different educational contexts.

According to Lambert (1972), Integrative motivation - which is a key concept in the socio-educational model - reflects an interest in learning another language because of a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other language group. Instrumental motivation on the other hand, refers to the pragmatic and functional orientations in learning a foreign language. Furthermore, Gardner (2001, p. 5) describes integrative motivation as follows:

“The variable integrativeness reflects a genuine interest in learning the second language in order to come closer to the other language community. At one level, this implies an openness to, and respect for other cultural groups and ways of life. In the extreme, this might involve complete identification with the community (and possibly even withdrawal from one’s original group), but more commonly it might well involve integration within both communities.

However, this conceptualization of integrative motivation has been
questioned, especially in foreign language learning contexts. In this respect, Dailey (2009) points out that due to the change in global languages, there is no model community to identify with, consequently leading to a broader classification of integrative motivation. In the same context, Dörnyei (2010) further supports this claim by stating that, in many language learning situations, and especially with the learning of world languages such as English or French, it is not at all clear who ‘owns’ the L2, and this lack of a specific L2 community undermines Gardner’s theoretical concept of integrativeness. Similarly, McClelland (2000) argues for redefining the concept of ‘integrativeness’ that emphasizes the integration with the global community, rather than identification with native speakers of the target language community and culture, highlighting the necessity to reappraise Gardner’s concept of integrative motivation to fit the perception of English as an international language.

Gardner (1985) has claimed that integrative motivation is the most important, and predictable factor of excelling in a second language than the instrumental motivation. However, this claim has at times been questioned and challenged in light of subsequent empirical research in different contexts than the Canadian English-French bilingual context. In this regard, Ellis (1994) postulates that Integrative motivation has been shown to be strongly related to L2 achievement. It combines with
instrumental motivation to serve as a powerful predictor of success in formal contexts. Learners with integrative motivation are more active in class and are less likely to drop out. However, integrativeness is not always the main motivational factor in L2 learning; some learners, such as those living in bilingual areas, may be more influenced by other factors like self-confidence or friendship.

Furthermore, Dörnyei (1994) argues that affective predispositions toward the target language community are unlikely to explain a great proportion of the variance in language attainment. In an empirical investigation, Liu (2007) found that Chinese students had positive attitudes towards learning English and were highly motivated to learn English; however, they were more instrumentally motivated than integratively. In this regard, Norton (2001) expands L2 motivation to encompass learners’ future assimilation, by introducing the concept of “imagined communities”. According to Kanno and Norton (2003, p. 241), the construct “imagined communities’ refers to groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of imagination”. They further indicate that imagined communities might even have a stronger impact on learners’ current actions and investment than those in which they engage on a daily basis.

Attitudes are defined by Kreitner and Kinicki (2004, p. 197) as “a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or
unfavorable manner with respect to a given object”. Though, attitudes have usually been distinguished from other related concepts such as opinion, which is defined as an overt belief without an affective reaction. Moreover, as Bohner (2001) states, attitudes are often studied due to a belief that they can be at the origin of behavior. This implies that attitudes play a directive and influential role on behavior. In an investigation conducted by Dörnyei and Kormos (2002) in Hungarian and British classes, they found that students’ engagement in classroom oral activities as measured by the numbers of words and turns, were significantly correlated with attitudes towards the language tasks they were asked to perform.

On the other hand, Clement and Gardner (2001) argue that motivational processes facilitate L2 communication, even though motivational variables have traditionally been more closely related to language learning in general rather than to L2 communication per se. Motivation is a closely related factor to willingness to communicate, where Dörnyei and Skehan (2003) regarded L2 willingness to communicate as an extension of the motivational construct. According to MacIntyre and Charos (1996), motivation influences the reported frequency of L2 use but might operate somewhat independently from the influence of L2 willingness to communicate.

Moreover, integrative motivation plays a crucial role in the activity
level of the learner in both formal and informal language learning situations. Since integrativeness refers to the desire to learn a L2 in order to integrate and communicate with members of the target language community; it could thus be anticipated that learners who possess a higher level of integrative motivation will more likely interact with speakers from L2 than those who are less integratively oriented.

(c) Personality Attributes

Personality as an organized system of behaviours, attitudes and values that characterizes an individual; is considered to have a direct or indirect impact on the process of language learning. Herman and Oxford (1990) underlie that different types of personalities may entail more or less willingness to learn a second language as well as different levels of competence or confidence in using another language to communicate. Extraversion-introversion have long been the most fundamental personality traits that have been investigated with reference to second language acquisition in general and language communication more specifically. Empirical research (e.g., Dewaele, 1998; Dewaele & Furnham, 2000) found that extroverts seem to be more advantageous in taking opportunities to communicate in the second language both inside and outside the classroom, and they would therefore achieve a higher level of fluency in an oral production task compared to their introvert
counterparts. Similarly, earlier research also revealed that introverted students are less likely to engage in conversations and communicate in L2 than the extroverted ones, as McCroskey and Richmond (1990) have stated that the personality trait dichotomy of introversion/extroversion is an antecedent to willingness to communicate in both L1 and L2.

These traits as any other psychological personality traits postulate a continuum between extreme introversion and extroversion. It was further assumed that highly introverted language learners would most likely have a lower evaluation of their communication competence. Conversely, McCroskey and McCroskey (1986) indicated that extroversion and willingness to communicate were significantly correlated. It is worth mentioning that extroversion per se does not imply accuracy in the second language, as Dewaele and Furnham (1999, p. 32) stated that “extroverts were found to be generally more fluent than introverts in both the L1 and L2. They were not necessarily more accurate in their L2, which reinforced the view that fluency and accuracy are operational dimensions in second language proficiency”.

Nevertheless, the claim that extroverts are always better at language learning than introverts reflects a rather controversial set of findings. In this respect, it has been argued that introvert learners are assumed to excel at developing cognitive academic language proficiency. This is due to the observation that introverts are typically more oriented towards
academic success and tend to be more independent of momentary and external rewards, since they are usually driven by internal stimuli. Therefore, Myers and Myers (1995) posit that introverts tend to deeply engage in their tasks and sustain their motivation and interest for long period of time. Furthermore, introverts might perform slightly better on L2 vocabulary tests (Carrel et al., 1996), especially when the learning occurs in a familiar situation, whereas extroverts as observed by MacIntyre et al. (2007) seem to perform better when the learning situation has a moderate degree of novelty.

(d) Social Support and Classroom Environment

Language is evidently a social activity and construct in the first place, which is used to integrate and communicate with members of a certain social group, and as such the learning of a second/foreign language is partially facilitated by social underlying variables. In this respect, Williams (1994, p. 77) highlights that “there is no question that learning a foreign language is different to learning other subjects. This is mainly because of the social nature of such a venture. Language, after all, belongs to a person’s whole social being: it is part of one’s identity, and is used to convey this identity to other people. The learning of a foreign language involves far more than simply learning skills, or a system of rules, or grammar; it involves an alteration of self-image, the adaptation
of new social and cultural behaviours and ways of beings, and therefore has a significant impact on the social nature of the learner”. Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) in his theory of learning, indicated that the role of language is essentially social, and that the primary function of speech, both for the adult and the child, is the function of communication, social contact, and influencing surrounding individuals.

Willingness to communicate has been found to be closely related to micro variables such as social support and classroom environment among others. MacIntyre et al. (2001) examined the impact of social support and language learning orientations on L2 willingness to communicate among 79 grade nine students of L2 French immersion students from a junior high school in Canada. They revealed that social support from parents and teachers facilitated students’ willingness to communicate inside the class, whereas support from friends influenced their willingness to communicate outside the classroom.

A number of qualitative studies has also attempted to investigate the situational and dynamic nature of willingness to communicate in classroom contexts. For instance, Cao and Philp (2006) identified a number of variables that have an impact on willingness to communicate behavior in the classroom namely: group size, familiarity with interlocutor(s) and topic discussed, self-confidence, medium of communication and cultural background. Cao (2011) further outlined
three dimensions including individual, linguistic and environmental to have joint effects on the situational willingness to communicate in L2 classroom. In addition to the cognitive and affective factors; classroom environment has been considered by Peng and Woodrow (2010) as a significant predictor of willingness to communicate in L2. In this regard, in his well-thought theory of language acquisition, Krashen (1982) also highlighted that stressful classroom environments contribute to a filter that block the input and consequently hinder the process of acquiring the target language, which in turn results in poor output or communicative abilities in L2.

(e) International Posture

Yashima (2002) adapted and reconceptualized Gardner’s integrativeness to fit the Japanese context as “international posture”, which refers to a general attitude among Japanese toward an undifferentiated international community, which fosters English learning and use for communication that influences motivation, which in turn predicts proficiency and L2 communication confidence. International posture might involve intercultural friendship orientation, interest in international vacation/activities, interest in foreign affairs and openness or a non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures. In this regard, MacIntyre (2007, p. 569) points out that “the major motivation to learn
another language is to develop a communicative relationship with people from another cultural group”. International posture is thus, closely related to the ever increasing role of English as a global language, which for many Japanese learners represents the world outside Japan and an orientation toward an international outlook.

Yashima (2000) points out that English language in the mind of young Japanese learners seems to represent something larger than the typical British or American Culture. For many learners, English symbolizes the world around Japan, something that connects them to foreign countries or strangers, with whom they can communicate in English. However, studying abroad or coming to close contacts with native speakers of the target language might not be feasible for some students and as such Yashima (2013) suggested that creating an “imagined international community” in EFL classroom would help promote learners’ integration into other ethnolinguistic communities, in order to save expenses and time commitment that would be accessible only to the privileged few.

The attitudinal construct ‘international posture’ had been investigated in a qualitative study by Yashima (2002, p. 62) to explore Japanese students’ willingness to communicate in EFL context. The study found that ‘international posture’ had a direct effect on motivation and indirectly predicts proficiency and communication confidence, that
is to say “the more internationally orientated an individual was, the more willing he or she was to communicate in English”. Furthermore, Yashima et al. (2004) found that among those learning a foreign language, international posture seems to influence student willingness to communicate in a second language, which subsequently influences the frequency of actual communication in the second language.

(f) Cultural Dimensions

Hofstede et al. (2010, p. 6) defines culture as “collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another”. Kramsch (1998, p. 10) also defines culture as “membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space, history, and common imaginings”. He further points out that language plays a mediatory role in the social construction of culture, contributing to its formation and change. Although many factors play a substantial role in predicting people’ orientations toward communication, culture could also be highly influential. McCroskey and Richmond (1990) proposed the notion of willingness to communicate from multi-cultural perspectives, highlighting the role of culture in willingness to communicate and how cultural instances are closely related to an individual’ willingness to communicate. A person might be an outstanding communicator in his own country and culture, yet he
might have completely inadequate communication skills in a new environment using a different language, unless he had the essential language skills.

The relation between the constructs of culture, language and communication could be better illustrated in the light of the cultural dimensions, which have been proposed by Hofstede et al. (2010). There are five cultural dimensions namely: small versus large power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long- versus short-term orientation. Hofstede et al. (ibid, p. 28) refers to power distance as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally”.

The dichotomy of collectivism versus individualism is also one of the most widely used dimensions in exploring and organizing cultural differences among nations. This dimension refers to the extent to which a society believes people should remain independent from groups, and captures the relative importance learners place on personal and shared educational interests. The essential distinction between individualism and collectivism as indicated by (Hofstede, 2001; Triandis, 1995) is ultimately the level of independence.

Culture could also be categorized based on the level of directness in oral communication; into the dichotomy of high context versus low
context. In this respect, Hall (1976) assigned culture into two broad types: high context culture and low context culture. According to Hall and Hall (1987) high context and low context are classified by the extent to which people take for granted that the listener’s knowledge about the subject under discussion when they communicate. In high-context communication, the listener possesses contextual background and hence does not need to be given much background information. On the other hand, in low-context communication, the listener knows very little and must be told practically everything. The substantial difference between these two dimensions lies in the degree of directness of the verbal communication. Chung (1992) points out that people from high-context culture value social harmony, and therefore they frequently use indirect verbal interaction and are more able to decipher and read non-verbal expressions. More feeling is used in expression, and meanings are implicitly embedded at different levels of the socio-cultural context. In contrast, people from low-context culture value individualism, and thus they tend to use direct verbal interaction and are less able to guess non-verbal expressions. In low-context conversation, logic is used to present ideas, and meanings are overtly conveyed through direct communication forms. In an empirical study, Zhang et al. (1996) compared communication apprehension levels between Chinese and American college students. Their findings confirmed the notion that high-context
cultures such as the case of Chinese culture produced higher levels of communication apprehension.

Moreover, Wen and Clement (2003) examined the influence of Confucianism cultural values in China, suggesting that Chinese students’ lack of willingness to communicate in public is not just a language phenomenon, but deeply rooted in their other-directed self and submissive way of learning. Therefore, Chinese students tend to be very sensitive to the evaluation of the significant others, which in turn makes them less likely to engage in classroom communication when learning, and thus consequently impeding the development of their L2 speaking abilities. Hence, it could be concluded that cultural expectations of communication play a profound impact on people’s willingness to communicate across cultures.

2.1.6 Willingness to Communicate and Second Language Acquisition

According to (Larsen-Freeman, 2007; Firth & Wagner, 2007), the field of second language acquisition has witnessed a great shift in the last two decades from the emphasis on the learners’ cognitive and interlanguage system into more socially situated approaches. It has been argued that language learning should be considered as a dynamic set of variables which can be constantly negotiated through interaction.

With an increasing emphasis on authentic communication as an
essential component of language acquisition; willingness to communicate is both a means and an end of language education, and that the process of language acquisition cannot be isolated from language use and interaction. This implies that willingness to communicate is considered to be one of the individual variables that affect L2 acquisition, and at the same time as a goal of L2 instruction. As a direct predictor of frequency in communication in L2, MacIntyre et al. (1999) suggest that willingness to communicate has the potential to facilitate the language learning process as higher willingness to communicate among students translates into increased opportunity for practice in an L2 and authentic L2 usage.

According to, (MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010; Kim, 2004), being willing to communicate is part of becoming fluent in a second language, which often is the ultimate goal of L2 learners. Research has shown that students’ participation in communication and interacting in the class is of a great importance in acquiring a second language and play a facilitating role in language proficiency and fluency. The role of willingness to communicate in language acquisition relies in the notion that learners have to practice speaking in order to learn as a source of input, as Skehan (1989, p. 48) refers to as a willingness to “talk in order to learn”.

Similarly, MacIntyre and Charos (1996, p. 3) postulate that “communication and second language acquisition are closely tied
together. On one hand, recent trends toward a conversational approach to second language pedagogy reflect the belief that one must use the language to develop proficiency, that is, one must talk to learn. According to Swain (2000), language use and language learning co-occur, and it is language use that mediates language learning. This implies that willingness to communicate in the second language is one of the potential predictor of successful L2 acquisition.

2.1.7 The Interaction Hypothesis

It is generally believed that oral and face-to-face interaction in L2 is one of the crucial sources in the process of L2 acquisition. The interaction hypothesis advanced by Long (1985) emphasizes two key points about the role of interaction in L2 acquisition: (a) comprehensible input is necessary for second language acquisition; (b) modifications to the interactional structure of conversations taking place in the process of negating a communication problem, help to make input comprehensible to a second language learner.

In the updated subsequent version of the interaction hypothesis, Long (1996, p. 452) indicates that “negotiation for meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers interaction adjustment by the native speaker (NS) or a more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner’ capacities, particularly
selective attention, and output in productive ways”. Some of the strategies utilized, when negotiating meaning might include speaking slowly and more deliberately, requesting clarifications, repeating speech and paraphrasing.

Although comprehensible input is an essential element in both Krashen’s input hypothesis and Long’s interaction hypothesis; there is still a difference on how this element has been conceptualized in these theories. In this respect, Ellis (1994) posits that the input in Krashen theory claimed to be comprehensible due to simplification and help of non-linguistic and contextual clues, whilst Long considered that interactive input is more important than non-interactive input.

2.1.8 The Input Hypothesis

The Input hypothesis is one of the main hypotheses of the well-known theory of second language acquisition by Krashen (1982). Central to Krashen’s theory of second language acquisition, is distinguishing between language ‘acquisition’ and language ‘learning’. Learned competence and acquired competence develop in very different ways. In his view, language learning occurs through the formal study of rules, patterns, and conventions, a study which enables one to talk about and consciously apply the knowledge gained. Language acquisition, however, occurs quite differently, for it develops exclusively through
“comprehensible input”. That is, second language students acquire language competence by exposure to language that is both understandable and meaningful to them. By concentrating on meaning, they subconsciously acquire form. According to Krashen (ibid), acquisition is a subconscious process, while learning is a conscious process. Though, both play a role in developing second language competence, acquisition is considered far more important for language fluency.

The input hypothesis states that language is acquired by receiving “comprehensible input” that is slightly beyond one’s current level of competence (i+1) (Krashen, 1985). Input is of a great importance in the process of L2 acquisition, as Gass (1997) posits that second language learning simply cannot take place without input of some sort. The input hypothesis emphasizes two essential points: (a) speaking is a result of acquisition and thus speech cannot be taught directly, but emerges in its own as a result of building competence via comprehensible input; and (b) if input is understood after receiving a sufficient amount of it, then the necessary grammar is automatically provided without any need to be explicitly taught. Nevertheless, not all input the acquirer hears is processed for acquisition, due to nonlinguistic factors such as lack of motivation, self-confidence and anxiety, which represent effective filter that mentally block the input to be processed and acquired. Therefore,
implementing communicative language teaching techniques and providing students with opportunities for meaningful interaction should be encouraged to foster language learning and constitute a source of oral input of successful L2 acquisition.

2.1.9 Theory of Planned Behaviour and Willingness to Communicate

The theory of planned behavior postulates that behavioural intentions are often predictive of actual behaviour. Thus, willingness to communicate which indicates an inclination towards interaction, can also be explained according to this theory, where the initiation of communication as Kuhl (1994) suggests, is by definition, implies an action. Similarly, MacIntyre (1994) asserts that the notion of willingness to communicate entails an intention to initiate a communicative behaviour, and this behavioural intention is often predictive of actual behaviour.

The theory of planned behaviour was proposed by Ajzen (1991) in the field of social psychology, in order to provide a theoretical framework for explaining the determinants of a wide range of human behaviour in different situations and contexts. According to Ajzen (2002; 2005) this theory, human behaviour is determined by behavioural, normative and control beliefs. Behavioral beliefs are subjective and personal in nature and reflect an individual’s favorable or unfavorable
attitudes towards a particular behaviour. Normative beliefs refer to the perceived social pressure and judgements of significant others such as parents, friends and teachers, to perform or not to perform the behaviour. Control beliefs, on the other hand, refer to the degree of perceived control and ability in performing the behaviour. Ajzen (ibid) states that the more favourable the attitudes and subjective norm with respect to a behaviour, and the greater the perceived behavioural control, the stronger should be an individual’s intention to perform the behaviour under consideration.

Figure 2.2 Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behavior (1991)

Accordingly, communicating in the second language can be seen as an outcome of willingness to communicate, which reflects an intention to interact. The behaviour of actual communication is an action, which is controlled by intentions, but not all intentions or willingness to communicate necessarily could be carried out, unless there are right opportunities to translate this intention into a communicative behaviour.
2.1.10 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Willingness to Communicate

Earlier traditional methods of language teaching such as the grammar-translation method and the audio-lingual method have primarily focused on the process of habit formation, utilizing mechanical drills and rote learning by memorizing grammatical rules and dialogues. In the last decades, communicative language teaching - which focuses on promoting learners’ communicative competence through meaningful communication activities - has been widely adopted in ESL/EFL settings. Communicative language teaching has been proposed to provide learners with opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions and communicate in the second language, which in turn will enhance their L2 overall proficiency.

Brown (2007) posits that communicative language teaching entails the following characteristics: 1. Classroom goals are focused on all of the components of communicative competence 2. Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic and functional use of language for meaningful purposes 3. Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques 4. Students ultimately have to use the language productively and receptively, in unrehearsed context outside the classroom. Similarly, Nunan (1991) characterized communicative language teaching as: (1) an
emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction; (2) the use of authentic texts; (3) a focus on the learning process; (4) the use of learners’ personal experiences; and (5) a link between classroom learning and real language use outside the classroom (p. 279).

As such, communicative language teaching had a great impact on the techniques proposed into language teaching classroom in the last two decades. Within communicative language teaching, Celce-Murcia (2001) states that there is an emphasis on the learner-centered classroom, and the role of the teacher as the facilitator. Therefore, for communicative language teaching to be effective, interaction between students and teacher as well as amongst learners should be encouraged, in which students may need motivation and willingness to initiate interaction. A number of methodological techniques and procedures such as task-based teaching, and content-based instruction have been proposed as a concrete framework within communicative language teaching. Nonetheless, Littlewood (2007) argues that there are some ambiguities about what communicative language teaching exactly means and which methodology is the best practice that reflects communicative language teaching.

Willingness to communicate as a potential construct in explaining L2 communication is of a great interest to communicative language teaching, which emphasizes learning through communicating. In this
respect, MacIntyre et al. (1998) argue that it is essential for L2 educators to design L2 teaching pedagogy and programs that can enhance L2 students’ willingness to communicate. Furthermore, MacIntyre (2007) draws attention to the learner’s decision to voluntarily speak the language when the opportunity arises, even as basic language skills are being acquired. L2 researchers highlight that language learners who are more active in language use have a greater potential to develop communicative competence by having more opportunities to interact with others. Therefore, Ellis (2008) suggests that learners with a strong willingness to communicate may be able to benefit from communicative language Teaching.

Although communicative language teaching explicitly advocates the advantages of learners’ interaction in meaningful communication, learners might still seem to be unable to unleash their potential and capacity to communicate with each other. In this context, Dörnyei (2005, p. 207) indicates that; it is not uncommon to find people who tend to avoid entering L2 communication situations, even if they possess a high level of communicative competence. There is a layer of mediating factors between having the competence to communicate and putting this competence into practice.
2.1.11 Self-Perceived Communication Competence (SPCC)

Self-perceived communication competence - which refers to the self-evaluation of one’s ability to communicate appropriately in given situation - has been considered as one of the potential predictor of learners’ willingness to communicate. McCroskey (1997) revealed that willingness to communicate is highly related to self-perceived communication competence more than actual competence. Furthermore, McCroskey (ibid) demonstrates that it was not a person’s actual communication skills or competence which was supposed to influence their willingness to communicate; it was more likely that individual’s self-perceived communication competence would make the difference. Therefore, people who consider themselves competent in communication are believed to be more willing to initiate or participate in communication behaviours.

Self-Perceived communication competence is a rather cognitive construct that implies an individual’s self-assessment of the target language skills. In this regard, McCroskey and Richmond (1990) argue that since the choice of whether to communicate is a cognitive one, it is likely to be more influenced by one’s perceptions of competence, of which one is usually aware, than one’s actual competence of which one may be totally unaware. Moreover, according to (Wadman et al., 2008; Oxford & Herman, 1993), an individual’s self-assessment of their intent
to communicate has been found to be influenced by their self-esteem; in which low self-esteem may negatively impact a person’s communicative performance.

During the process of acquiring and learning a second language, it is likely that students would often assess their skills and abilities in the target language. The assessment and estimation of one’s own communicative competence as noted by (Weaver, 2010; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989) may arise from a combination of previously encounters of L2 use. In an empirical investigation, Baker and MacIntyre (2000) found a positive relationship between L2 self-perceived communication competence and willingness to communicate in L2 for non-immersion group, arguing that it is not the individual’s actual skill that counts; rather it is how they perceive their communication competence that will determine their willingness to communicate. This implies that self-perceived communication competence is a potential predictor of L2 communication performance, since that learners would usually tend to communicate based on their self-judgment of L2 fluency rather than their actual competence.

The judgement of one’s own ability towards a specific task is assumed to be related to self-efficacy. According to Zimmerman (2000), the characteristics of self-efficacy are multi-dimensional and differ in their domain of functioning and also vary in different contexts and
depend on a mastery criterion of performance that is related to a judgement of one’s capabilities about performing a particular task at a particular level of difficulty. Similarly, Bandura (1997) states that while it is related to the self-confidence construct, self-efficacy concerns a more specific judgement of one’s capabilities towards a specific task.

McCroskey and McCroskey (1988) proposed a scale for measuring L1 self-perceived communication competence, in which speakers rate their probability of self-assessed communication competence ranging from 0, which indicates completely incompetent to 100, indicating fully competent. The scale incorporates 12 items describing four basic communication contexts namely; public speaking, talking in a large meeting, talking in a small group, and talking in a dyad, as well as three common types of receivers namely; strangers, acquaintances, and friends. Moreover, in his model of self-regulation, Bandura (1986, 1988) postulates that the perception of competence and belief that one can control desired outcomes constitute critical components of one’s expectations for success at a given task. He further point out that the perception of control and competence determines the amount of effort spent in pushing a goal. If expectations are high, then one will expend greater effort, with greater likelihood of success. If, on the other hand, expectations are low, one expends less effort, with concomitantly less success.
2.2 Conceptualization of Anxiety

In the last two decades, a great deal of research has been conducted regarding second/foreign language anxiety. Language anxiety is situation-specific and different from general anxiety and other forms of anxiety because it is specific to learning and communicating in a foreign language. Although language anxiety was an essential component in Gardner’s socio-educational model of language motivation; foreign language anxiety as a distinct construct from general anxiety was first conceptualized by Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 128). Foreign language anxiety was defined as “a distinct complex of beliefs, perceptions, feelings; and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process”. Moreover, they have identified three components of foreign language anxiety namely: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Brown (2007, p. 384) has also defined language anxiety as “a feeling of worry experienced in relation to a foreign language, either trait or state in nature”.

Furthermore, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994, p. 283) defined foreign language anxiety as “the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning”. According to Scovel (1978), anxiety is associated with the formal process of language learning undertaken by adults, not the
informal, unconscious language acquisition process that characterizes how children appear to learn a language. MacIntyre and Gardner (1989, 1991) proposed a model to illustrate the development of foreign language anxiety. According to them, foreign language anxiety develops due to the negative experiences of language learners during the language learning process. At the preliminary stage of the foreign language learning process, motivation and language aptitude are better predictors than language anxiety. However, after experiencing the language learning process for a while, the learner forms attitudes depending on both his positive and negative experiences. If the learner’s experiences are predominantly negative, he develops language anxiety, and consequently feels nervous and performs poorly. As such, learning a foreign language is a unique learning experience and highlights the role of anxiety as a crucial psychological construct relevant to understanding the language learning process alongside other affective factors.

2.2.1 Categorizations of Language Anxiety

Anxiety as a personality trait has been typically categorized into three broad kinds that is: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and a situation-specific anxiety. As indicated by Spielbeger (1983), trait anxiety is conceptualized as a relatively stable personality attribute, while state anxiety is seen as a response to a particular anxiety-provoking stimulus such as an important test. More recently, MacIntyre and Gardner,
(1991a) imply that the term ‘situation-specific anxiety’ has been used to highlight the persistent and multi-faceted nature of some anxieties. The type of anxiety experienced in public speaking is generally considered to be a situation-specific anxiety.

According to MacIntyre (2007), the differentiation between the types of anxiety is important not only in terms of measuring and understanding how these variables affect willingness to communicate, but also in terms of pedagogical intervention. For instance, anxiety triggered by situational factors is more likely to fluctuate over time and is perhaps more amenable to instructional intervention.

Trait anxiety as a psychological personality trait is conceptualized by Scovel (1978) as a more permanent predisposition to be anxious in a wide range of situations. This implies that trait anxiety is relatively stable and long-lasting that applicable and occurs in a variety of situations. Trait anxiety is not only related to language learning, but it can also be manifested in many other situations as a general overreaching type of anxiety, and as such considered a psychological construct within personality.

State anxiety is on the other hand, an immediate, transitory emotional experience with immediate cognitive effects. MacIntyre (1999, p. 28) defines state anxiety as “the transient emotional state of feeling nervous that can fluctuate over time and vary in intensity”. It
should be noted that state anxiety is the reaction, and trait anxiety represents the tendency to react in an anxious manner.

Whereas situation-specific anxiety is referred to by Phillips (1992) as anxiety suffered when a specific event is repeated. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991c) view state anxiety as a blend of trait and situational instances. It is an apprehension at a particular moment in time in response to a definite situation. These situations might encompass public speaking, oral exam, interview or group discussion. Situation-specific anxiety is similar to trait anxiety in the sense that it is stable and particular to each individual, except that it is specific to certain situations. However, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a) argue that the situations provoking anxiety will differ, even across individuals who show similar trait anxiety scores; and even among individuals high in trait anxiety.

In conclusion; there are controversial opinions about which type of these three anxieties is more relevant to foreign language anxiety. For instance, state anxiety is regarded as a blend of the trait and the reaction to situational stimulus. That is to say, trait anxiety is the accumulation of previous experience of state anxiety. For example, when encountering an anxiety-provoking situation, a person with high trait anxiety tends to experience state anxiety. Nevertheless, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a) point out that research on trait anxiety has not proven to be informative in predicting achievement in a second language. Accordingly, MacIntyre
and Gardner (1989) stated that it is state anxiety, rather than trait anxiety, that influences the language learning process.

On the other hand, situation-specific anxiety is a combination of both trait and state anxiety, with more similarity to state anxiety than to trait anxiety. That is to say, it is considered as trait anxiety restricted to a single context or situation (MacIntyre, 1999). Therefore, it could be concluded that each of these three types of anxieties reflects a different aspect of anxiety as a complex psychological construct.

2.2.2 Debilitating versus Facilitating Anxiety

Anxiety can facilitate or debilitate the language learning process, however, the facilitative aspect of anxiety has been underestimated, and therefore only the debilitating aspect of anxiety has been mostly addressed and empirically investigated. Thus, anxiety is classified into facilitating and debilitating; facilitating anxiety is the anxiety of low intensity, which motivates the person to act proactively and overcome the feeling of anxiety. Conversely, debilitating anxiety is the anxiety of high intensity, which causes the person to avoid certain situations and prolong the task in order to avoid the experience of anxiety (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). In other words, anxiety can have a negative or positive impact on the language learning process, depending on several factors, such as the intensity of anxiety and the nature of the task.

Scovel (1978, p. 139) distinguishes between facilitating and
debilitating anxiety in foreign language learning. He argues that a certain amount of anxiety would stimulate effective language learning by motivating the individual to fight the new task, that is to engage in approach behaviour geared at mastering the task. However, an excessive amount of anxiety triggered, for example, by the perceived level of difficulty of the task, would hinder learning by inducing the learner to flee the new learning task.

According to Eysenck (1979, p. 365) who further suggests that anxious individuals will compensate for the increased cognitive demands by increased effort and that the extent to which anxiety either facilitates or impairs performance is determined by the extent to which high anxiety subjects compensate for reduced processing effectiveness by enhanced effort. Whether anxiety would enhance or hinder performance depends on the level of additional effort undertaken by the learner. If the task undertaken by the learner is relatively simple, anxiety would most likely have positive effect due to additional effort, which in turn improve performance. However, if the task requires a lot of ability, anxiety would probably lead to decrease in performance. This phenomenon called Yerkes-Dodson Law, which represents the relationship between anxiety and performance on a graph, with the intensity of anxiety arousal on the horizontal axis and performance on the vertical axis. The interaction between these two factors results in an
inverted U-shaped carve, with the highest point standing for the highest performance. The graph further shows that there is an optimal degree of anxiety arousal, which is anticipated to enhance task performance. That is to say, too much or too little anxiety, as shown in the extremes of the graph, leads to poor performance, whilst the optimal level of anxiety arousal, as shown in the middle of the graph, leads to the best performance.

![Diagram of Yerkes-Dodson Law](image)

**Figure 2.3 Yerkes-Dodson Law**

According to Tobias (1980), second language anxiety might occur at the three stages of input, processing and output. At the input stage, language anxiety acts like a filter by blocking and reducing the amount and quality of input information from going to the learner’s cognitive processing system. Thus, from a debilitative anxiety perspective, language anxiety would slow down or reduce the quantity and quality of
information from entering the processing stage. Language anxiety hinders the information which has reached the processing stage from being adequately processed, and therefore even less is learned by anxious learners at this stage. At the output stage, learners are assumed to produce output based on what they have learned and acquired beforehand. However, language anxiety in turn influences the quality of performance, resulting in poor productive skills, and communication especially.

Argaman and Abu-Rabia (2002) posited that facilitating anxiety, which is the proper and optimal level of anxiety arousal, can motivate students to work harder and have better performance. This facilitating and optimal anxiety can lead to high language achievement, whereas low anxiety produces no motivation for making efforts and high anxiety prevents students from performing well. This implies that too much anxiety has an inhibiting effect on the process of successful language learning, whereas a certain degree of anxiety would facilitate language learning and might be even necessary for high levels of achievement in L2. In this context, Seller (2000) explains that facilitating anxiety influences the learner in a positive way and is best described as enthusiasm before a challenging task. In contrast, debilitating anxiety includes the unpleasant feelings such as worry and dread that interfere with the learning process.
Scovel (1978) attempted to examine the likelihood that both aspects of anxiety might be at work simultaneously whenever a person undertakes any activity. In his investigation, he found that a higher state of anxiety facilitates learning for highly intelligent individuals, but debilitates learning for less intelligent individuals. Furthermore, he pointed out that increased anxiety at the early stages of learning debilitates academic performance, while increased anxiety at later stages of learning is likely to improve performance. Similar to Scovel, Jaones (2004) states that both facilitating and debilitating anxiety are possible in the same learners, but it seems that debilitating anxiety is relatively more common.

Generally speaking, it could be concluded that despite the positive aspect of facilitating anxiety that increases learners’ effort, anxiety does not seem to be useful in the overall foreign language learning process. For instance, Horwitz and Young (1991) found that students with high levels of anxiety tended to overstudy despite the fact that their effort did not seem to yield success. Papi (2010) also doubts the facilitating effect of anxiety and he clearly challenges the notion that the facilitating effect of anxiety might increase learners’ motivation to learn.
2.2.3 Components and Sources of Foreign Language Anxiety

Horwitz et al. (1986) state that foreign language anxiety stems from three major sources of anxieties, which are namely fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test anxiety. Language anxiety may not necessarily encompass equal levels of these three sources of anxieties. This is due to the consideration that; communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation seem to be related. For instance, when learners experience apprehension during group discussions, they might also feel anxious when being negatively evaluated by the group members. According to Horwitz et al. (Ibid), test anxiety only occurred when learners sat for exams, whereas fear of negative evaluation could exist to a much wider variety of situations such as in interviewing for a job or speaking a foreign language in the class.

According to Aida (1994), in EFL setting, students with a fear of negative evaluation tend to sit passively in the classroom, withdrawing from classroom activities that could otherwise enhance their improvement of the language skills or even skipping classes to avoid anxiety-provoking situations. Regarding test anxiety, there is still controversial debate whether test anxiety in learning a foreign language can be clearly differentiated from test anxiety in learning other academic subjects such as mathematics. It seems plausible that some students
might experience high levels of anxiety when taking examinations regardless of the academic subject. Thus, regarding test anxiety as a component of language anxiety is questionable and therefore MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) postulate that it may be more appropriate to classify test anxiety as a general anxiety rather than language anxiety.

In conclusion, these three components and sources of anxiety do not operate in the same way, with communication apprehension being the most important component and would therefore be explained in the next section.

Communication apprehension caused by fear, anxiety, and the thought of negative consequences to speaking are considered to be the single best predictor of a person’s willingness to communicate. Communication apprehension is defined by McCroskey (1997, p. 192) as “an individual’s level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons”. It is also defined by Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 127) as “a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people”. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) point out that the cognitive disruption caused by communication apprehension and its consequences can occur within an individual without a single act of communication behaviour; simply being aware of potential future communication with another person can create distraction and disrupt the language learning process.
Communication apprehension also termed as oral communication anxiety is different from general anxiety. General anxiety refers to the predisposition to experience anxiety in a wide range of situations, such as taking tests or being exposing to a frightening object; whereas communication apprehension refers only to apprehension within communication-related situations. Hence, general anxiety is differentiated from communication apprehension because it affects the overall L2 learning as well as specific skills, whilst CA is only related to speaking skill. For instance, McCroskey and Richmond (1990) state that, in order to avoid having to experience high communication apprehension, people may become less willing to communicate and therefore select occupations that involve low communication responsibilities. Similarly, Roach (1999) postulates that communication apprehension is one of the major reasons an individual might be unwilling to communicate. Horwitz (1995) also confirms that speaking publicly in the target language has been found to be particularly anxiety provoking for many students, even those who feel little stress in other aspects of language learning. In the classroom, as indicated by Daly et al. (1997), anxious pupils are unwilling to talk in front of their peers or the teacher. Young (1990) further asserts that speaking in the foreign language is often cited by students as their most anxiety-producing experience.
According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1991), communicators experience higher communication apprehension when using non-native languages than when speaking in their native language. McCroskey et al. (2003) discuss that when people speak in a language that is not their first language, it is likely they will see themselves as less competent as a communicator, which also results in the individuals being more apprehensive about their communication. They also found that second language speakers perceive themselves less communicatively competent and are less willing to communicate than native language speakers.

Communication apprehension can also be extended to intercultural apprehension, which is defined by Neuliep and McCroskey (1997, p. 145) as “the fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated interaction with people of different groups, especially cultural and ethnic/racial groups”. It describes a situation filled with novelty, unfamiliarity, dissimilarity, and uncertainty. Gudykunst and Kim (1997) indicate that interactions among people from different cultures caused anxiety, labeled as intercultural communication apprehension, and thus it is easy for people to be anxious in a new cultural environment.
2.2.4 Anxiety in Second Language Acquisition

Foreign language anxiety is anticipated to impede the process of language acquisition, because anxious student is usually self-conscious and distracted by self-depreciating thoughts which interfere with both the learning process and attempts to communicate in the target language. Cognitive psychologists attempted to investigate the impact of anxiety on language acquisition at different stages, in which anxiety might indirectly affect the learning process at various stages.

In this context, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994a) demonstrate that foreign language anxiety occurs at each of the following three stages of the second language acquisition process: input, processing, and output. Anxiety at the input stage may cause attention deficits and poor initial processing of information. Students with high levels of input anxiety may ask for sentences to be repeated more often, or may reread a text several times to compensate for missing input. At the processing stage, anxiety can interfere with the organization and assimilation of information. High levels of anxiety at this stage may hinder student’s abilities to understand messages or learn new vocabulary items in the foreign language. At the final output stage, anxiety may interfere with the retrieval and production of previously learned information. High levels of anxiety at this stage may impair students’ abilities to speak or write in the foreign language.
Similarly, Tobias’s (1979, 1986) model of language anxiety illustrates the cognitive effects of anxiety on language learning in three stages: input, processing, and output. This model assumes that anxiety is aroused at the input stage, when the learner is first exposed to instruction, and the internal reactions resulting from anxiety may distract the learner’s attention and impede encoding of the incoming stimuli. It implies that learners with high level of anxiety would experience difficulty, due to less attentional capacity than their less anxious counterparts, since the latter devote their attention to task demands and are less concerned with task-irrelevant preoccupations.

Krashen (1982) also claims that anxiety contributes to an effective filter, which causes individuals to be less receptive to language input and less expressive of output. In turn, they fail to fully absorb the target language content, and language acquisition process might be impeded. Similarly, Sellers (2000) indicates that anxiety can act as an effective filter that prevents certain information from entering a learner’s cognitive processing system, and consequently can influence both the rate and accuracy of language learning.

Furthermore, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994a) argue that though anxiety might cause deficits in the cognitive processing and impair task performance, it has to be noted that task performance can provoke anxiety as well, for instance, a demand to answer a question in a second
language class may cause a student to become anxious; anxiety leads to worry and rumination. Cognitive performance is diminished because of the divided attention, and therefore performance suffers, leading to negative self-evaluation and more self-deprecating cognition which further impairs performance and so on. In addition to the effect of anxiety on L2 performance, anxious students rather tend to experience basic problems in vocabulary acquisition and retrieval.

2.2.5 The Impact of Language Anxiety on Oral Proficiency

As suggested by Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999), foreign language anxiety is one of the most important predictors of foreign language achievement. Achievement in L2 might encompass students’ self-perceived language performance, course final grades and measurement of linguistic outcomes. In numerous studies (e.g., Horwitz et al., 1986; Liu, 2006; Saito & Samimy, 1996; Woodrow, 2006; Ellis, 1996; Aida, 1994), a negative relationship between anxiety and L2 achievement has been reported. For instance, Saito and Sammy (1996) examined the relationship between foreign language anxiety and language performance of American college students learning Japanese as a foreign language. The results indicated that anxiety had a negative impact on students’ performance for intermediate and advanced level students, but not for preliminary students. Nonetheless, there are some controversial issues regarding the cause - effect relationship between anxiety and
achievement, that is to say, whether anxiety is regarded as a consequence and result rather than a cause of poor language performance. Therefore, MacIntyre (1995) posits that it is more relevant to suggest that an interrelationship exists between anxiety and achievement, rather than a one-way causality.

Anxiety has been identified in different skills areas of learning a foreign language such as reading (e.g., Sellers, 2000); writing (e.g., Atay & Kurt, 2006); listening (e.g., Elkhafaifi, 2005; Vogely, 1998); and speaking with more emphasis. According to (Young, 1991), empirical research indicates that students might experience less anxiety in some skills than others, namely in reading and writing. For example, in reading activities, the students may be less anxious since they could take time to comprehend the text. However, texts that are written in unfamiliar scripts and writing systems might cause reading anxiety. As indicated by (Saito et al., 1999), reading in a foreign language class can provoke anxiety in some students.

Regarding oral communication, Horwitz et al. (1986) state that speaking in the target language seems to be the most threatening aspect of foreign language learning. Unlike reading and writing where students can make corrections; listening and speaking demand high level of concentration to perform the task at hand. For instance, Young (1990) found that speaking in front of the class or others is seen by students as
one of the most anxiety-provoking tasks. Similarly, Crandall (1998) claims that anxiety has the potential to negatively affect students’ language production.

2.2.6 Individual Differences in Foreign Language Anxiety

Individual differences play an increasingly crucial role in determining the level of attainment in learning a foreign/second language. Arnold and Brown (2007) regard anxiety as one of the affective factors that obstructs the learning process. Saito et al. (1999) claim that anxiety has the potential for significant interference with language learning and production and poses a threat to an individual’s self-concept. The level of foreign language anxiety is evidently influenced and mediated by a number of individual differences and personality characteristics, and therefore learners vary in the extent to which they might experience anxiety of communicating in a foreign language. Several researchers (e.g., Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; Dewaele, 2012, 2013) have also demonstrated that personality attributes can substantially affect language learning success. A number of personality traits have been suggested to act as predictors of interpersonal differences in foreign language anxiety. For instance, Dewaele et al. (2008) found higher level of the trait ‘emotional intelligence’ are associated with reduced foreign language anxiety.

Perfectionism is considered as one of the personality attributes that
is closely related to foreign language anxiety. In this regard, Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) examined the relationship between foreign language anxiety and perfectionism. They found that anxious language learners and perfectionists may have a number of common characteristics such as higher standards for their English performance, a greater tendency towards procrastination, more worries about being judged by others, and a higher level of concern over their errors. These characteristics would potentially make such learners less successful in language learning than their non-perfectionists counterparts.

Introversion-extroversion dimension is one of the most obvious personality traits that has always been investigated in reference to foreign language anxiety in general, and in communication apprehension more specifically. Brown et al. (2001) assert that the widely held underlying assumption is that introverts are more likely to be anxious than extroverts. Introverts are usually more likely to prefer individual work over group work, and thus they might tend to be anxious when they encounter communication related classroom settings, whilst extroverts on the other hand, tend to be less anxious in social interactions. MacIntyre and Charos (1996) reported that higher levels of extraversion were associated with lower foreign language anxiety. Furthermore, in a study of Japanese EFL speakers, Oya et al. (2004) found that extrovert students were more proficient in overall oral
performance, and made fewer grammatical mistakes.

Moreover, gender has been indicated in some studies by (Keller, 1983; Aacken, 1999; Dörnyei & Shoaiib, 2005) as an important perspective under second language learning investigations; highlighting females to execute more interests, positive behaviors and performances, in comparison to the males. In another study, Campbell and Shaw (1994) identified a significant interaction between gender and foreign language anxiety; in which male students were more anxious to communicate in the target foreign language than their female counterparts. However, the role of gender in language anxiety reflects a rather controversial set of positive and negative findings. Onwuegbuzie et al. (2001) indicate a possible existence of female oriented foreign language culture; in which men might perceive the study of foreign language as a feminine subject, and accordingly feel less comfortable in the language learning context. Kitano (2001) examined the role of gender in language anxiety among Japanese learners, finding that males experienced a higher degree of foreign language anxiety than females. Campell and Shaw (1994) also reported a significant correlation between gender and foreign language anxiety; indicating that male students were more anxious while using a foreign language inside the classroom than the females. Conversely, other empirical studies suggested that females are more anxious in learning a foreign language than males. For example, Machida (2001)
investigated foreign language anxiety among Japanese based on gender and other variables, and found that female learners are more anxious than their male counterparts.

The stage of language learning is also assumed to influence foreign language anxiety; in which a number of studies indicated that beginning learners were found to have higher levels of language anxiety than the more advanced learners. Based on such empirical findings, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991, p. 111) postulate that “as experience and proficiency increase, anxiety declines in a fairly consistent manner”, this implies that foreign language anxiety is rather more prevalent at the earlier stages of language learning, and in contrast is less problematic for advanced students. Bailey et al. (2000) further state that a common finding is that anxiety decreases as ability increases. Contradictory studies have report the opposite, that advanced learners are more anxious compared to beginners or no significant difference between the two groups. For instance, Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999) could not found significant differences in the level of language anxiety between beginning, intermediate and advanced learners. Liu (2006) who examined anxiety in EFL learners of three different proficiency levels, did not find any significant differences in anxiety among the three groups either. Similarly, Pichette (2009) did not report any differences in anxiety between first-semester language students and their more advanced
counterparts.

A number of empirical studies such as those conducted by (Cheng, 2002; Saito & Samimy 1996) also reported that advanced learners scored higher on anxiety than their lower proficient counterparts.

According to Dewaele (2008), the frequency of L2 use had a significant impact on anxiety. More specifically, the more frequently individuals used a L2 when speaking to friends, colleagues, strangers, on the phone or in public; the less anxious they might feel in these situations. For instance, those individuals who used a L2 everyday had much lower levels of anxiety than those who used a L2 yearly or monthly.

Furthermore, Dewaele (2010) suggests that the distance between known languages and the target language also determines the level of foreign language anxiety. If there is language pairing, in which the target language belongs to the same or familiar linguistic family such as romance or Germanic languages, then the level of foreign language anxiety tends to be lower. Furthermore, Dewaele (2008) found that individuals with knowledge of more languages, reported lower levels of communication apprehension/foreign language anxiety in some situations in the L1 and L2, and in more situations in L3 and L4.

Dewaele et al. (2008) imply that knowing many languages may give multi-linguals some advantages to be more confident in their ability to avoid linguistics icebergs.
The age and context of language learning might also be underlying factors in foreign language anxiety. Individuals who started learning a foreign language at a later age are anticipated to have higher levels of foreign language anxiety than those who started learning at an earlier age. The context in which the target language had been acquired has also an impact on the level of foreign language anxiety; implying that individuals who had acquired a foreign language only through formal classroom instruction experienced significantly higher levels of anxiety than those who acquire it in mixed and naturalistic settings.

Additionally, motivation and anxiety are interrelated, in which highly motivated learners tend to be less anxious. For instance, Gardner et al. (1992) point out that integratively motivated learners are less anxious in L2 context than learners who are instrumentally motivated. These findings imply that motivation and anxiety are two separate dimensions with overlapping behavioural consequences.
2.3 Previous Empirical Investigations

This section thoroughly scrutinizes some empirical investigations conducted on foreign language anxiety, self-perceived communication competence and willingness to communicate related variables. For instance, a number of studies have reported a negative relationship between anxiety and self-perceived communication competence. A great deal of various previous empirical studies on those variables is presented. The first section reports studies conducted on willingness to communicate, the second one deals with studies on foreign language anxiety, followed by self-perceived communication competence, and finally a number of cross-cultural studies on willingness to communicate, anxiety, and self-perceived communication competence are postulated.

2.3.1 Empirical Studies on Willingness to Communicate

Since the development of MacIntyre et al. (1998)’s model of willingness to communicate, variables underlying this WTC model were investigated in a number of empirical research studies in both ESL and EFL contexts. This section reviews some empirical studies conducted on willingness to communicate in relation to a number of relevant influential factors.

Lahuerta (2014) examined willingness to communicate in English among 195 Spanish undergraduate students majoring in several degrees.
The analysis showed that the Spanish undergraduates’ motivation to learn English had a significant relationship with their willingness to communicate in English. The results also revealed a significant positive relationship between self-perceived communication competence and willingness to communicate, and a significant negative relationship between anxiety and self-perceived communication competence.

Ghonsooly et al. (2014) also investigated 243 Iranian EFL learners' level of willingness to communicate in English, and the relationships between willingness to communicate, communication confidence, and classroom environment. Results of the descriptive statistics indicated that participants were moderately willing to communicate in English inside the language classroom, felt low levels of anxiety, and perceived themselves moderately confident to communicate in English in the classroom. Correlational analyses also indicated that willingness to communicate is positively correlated with classroom environment and perceived communicative competence, and negatively correlated with communication Anxiety.

In the same context, Khany and Nejad (2016) studied the relationship between L2 willingness to communicate, L2 unwillingness to communicate and the personality traits of openness to experience and extraversion in an Iranian context on a sample of 217 English major students. The results showed that openness to experience and
extraversion were the main predictors of L2 willingness to communicate.

Similarly, Zarrinabadi et al. (2014) utilized qualitative methods to examine the potential effects of teachers on Iranian EFL learners’ willingness to communicate in English. Study participants were asked to describe relevant situations in which teachers influenced their willingness to communicate. Namely a focused essay technique was used to explore how teachers affect learners’ tendency to talk in class. The findings indicate that some purposeful decisions in the topic of the discussion and the size of the group can positively contribute to facilitating willingness to communicate. The results also show that teachers’ use of delayed error correction and motivational strategies positively contribute to increasing learners’ willingness to talk in the classroom.

In a Chinese Context, Liu and Jackson (2008) investigated unwillingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety among Chinese first-year EFL students. The results showed that Chinese students’ unwillingness to communicate and their language anxiety were significantly correlated with their self-assessed English proficiency.

In term of the effect of age and gender differences on willingness to communicate and other related variables such as motivation, anxiety, and self-perceived communicative competence; MacIntyre et al. (2002)
conducted an empirical investigation among junior high school students in a French immersion program in Canada. The results demonstrated that girls were more willing to communicate than boys, and contrary to their expectations they found an increase in L2 anxiety among males and a decrease among females as they progressed throughout the program. Furthermore, the study showed that students who were motivated tended to be more willing to communicate, had higher perceived competence, had lower anxiety and communicate more frequently in French.

Kang (2005) investigated variables affecting willingness to communicate in the classroom among four Korean learners from a conversation partner program conducted at a state university in northern USA. The model of situational willingness to communicate, developed from the qualitatively oriented data, suggested three newly emerging antecedents of situational willingness to communicate as an interactive effect of these three psychological conditions, namely security, excitement and responsibility, all of which are subject to momentary change, influenced by situational variables, such as topic, interlocutors and conversational context. ‘Security’ refers to feeling safe from the fears that non-native speakers tend to have in L2; ‘excitement’ refers to a feeling of happiness when using the target language, e.g. participants seemed to be excited when talking about topics about which they had interest, background, experience or knowledge; whereas ‘responsibility’
implies an individual’s feeling of commitment to communicate in order to understand or clarify the message that was derived from personal, interpersonal, or intergroup instances. This study revealed that learners’ sense of security, excitement, and responsibility fluctuated according to the topic, interlocutors, or the context, which have a significant effect on students’ willingness to communicate, and therefore teachers have an important role in developing these psychological factors.

Cao and Philp (2006) investigated learners’ perceptions of factors influencing willingness to communicate in the classroom context among eight language learners enrolled in an intensive general English program at a university-based private language school in New Zealand. The overseas students had diverse L1 backgrounds: Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Swiss German. The findings indicated the typical factors influencing willingness to communicate were group size, familiarity with interlocutor(s) and interlocutor participation. Lack of self-confidence was reported as the main antecedent of low participation in a whole-class discussion. Topic familiarity and interest were also identified as factors affecting willingness to communicate behaviours.

Yesim (2005) examined willingness to communicate of EFL students in Turkey using both quantitative and qualitative methods. In the qualitative study, 15 students out of 365 students who answered the questionnaires were randomly selected for an interview. Lack of
opportunity to use English in daily life was the main reason why the
students were reluctant to use English when given the opportunity.
Although students were able to communicate in English, they did not
want to use English with other Turks because they thought that
communicating in English with Turks was ‘absurd’, which indicated the
cultural values of the Turkish students.

Khajavy et al. (2017) attempted to examine the relations between
emotions, classroom environment, and willingness to communicate
using the advanced quantitative methodological procedure of doubly
latent multilevel analysis. For this purpose, 1528 secondary school
students from 65 different classrooms in Iran participated in the study.
The results showed that a positive classroom environment is related to
fostering willingness to communicate and enjoyment, while it reduces
anxiety among students. Moreover, enjoyment was found as an
important factor in increasing willingness to communicate at both
student and classroom level, while anxiety reduced willingness to
communicate only at the student level. The findings further indicated
that classrooms which used the communicative language teaching
programs were more willing to communicate than traditional classrooms
in the Iranian context.

Denies et al. (2015) investigated willingness to communicate and
its determinants through structural equation modelling (SEM),
investigating French as a second language in a representative sample of over 1,000 grade 12 students in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. It investigated the under-explored relationship between willingness to communicate and language proficiency through extensive standardized listening tests. The findings of the study revealed that classroom willingness to communicate is a strong predictor of willingness to communicate outside the classroom; however, in naturalistic settings the role of integrativeness decreases while anxiety levels play a larger role.

Cao (2014) reported on a multiple case study that investigated the dynamic and situated nature of learners’ willingness to communicate in second language classrooms. The study conducted on a sample of six learners of English as a second language enrolled in an English for academic purposes programme in New Zealand for 5 months. Data were collected through classroom observations, stimulated-recall interviews, and reflective journals. Analysis of the data indicated that the classroom willingness to communicate construct is best described as a dynamic situational variable rather than a trait disposition. Cao argues that situational willingness to communicate in class results from the interdependence among individual characteristics, classroom environmental conditions, and linguistic factors. These three strands of factors interdependently exert either facilitative or inhibitive effects on
an individual student’s willingness to communicate in class at any point in time.

In regard to other underlying variables of willingness to communicate, Khaki (2013) asserted that learner’s autonomy, as crucial educational construct, is also of an utmost significance in language learning and communication. Therefore, he attempted to investigate whether there is any statistically significant relationship between learner autonomy and willingness to communicate in Iranian EFL learners. The sample of the study consisted of 77 Iranian English learners out of 100 advanced learners. A learner autonomy questionnaire and a willingness to communicate scale, for measuring trait-like willingness to communicate, were administered for collecting the quantitative data. The results demonstrated a significant and strong relationship between learner autonomy and trait-like willingness to communicate in Iranian EFL learners and a significant but weak correlation between learner autonomy and situational willingness to communicate in Iranian EFL learners. Thus, it can be concluded that a significant relationship between learner autonomy and willingness to communicate can be seen in Iranian EFL learners. According to these findings, it seems that autonomous learners tend to be willing to communicate; however, some other factors in the classroom environment may increase or decrease their foreign/second language use.
2.3.2 Empirical Studies on Foreign Language Anxiety

In this section, a number of empirical studies on foreign language anxiety are reviewed and examined in relation to other related variables.

In the Malaysian context, Latif (2015) investigated the factors influencing the level of language anxiety among 132 adult language learners of the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. In addition to the main contributing factors of language anxiety - which are communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and general feeling of anxiety - the study also addressed gender, age and years of learning as variables to be considered. The results obtained indicate that there is a significant relationship between language anxiety and years of learning English, while no significant relationship was obtained regarding gender and age. Finally, the Multiple Regressions analysis revealed that the investigated students predominantly experienced a general feeling of anxiety in learning English. These findings led the researcher to conclude that motivation and self-confidence might probably be the most important factors to enhance the second language learning environment, since it seems that age does not influence anxiety levels.

Wu (2010) conducted a research on a sample consisted of 66 Taiwanese students aged from 23 to 54 to investigate the relationship between their language learning strategy and anxiety in the foreign language classroom. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods and
utilized several standard measures to examine the participants’ perceptions toward learning English. The findings revealed high levels of language anxiety among the students, which prevent them from successfully achieve the target language. Furthermore, the study correlated levels of anxiety with age of the participants: in which, students between 24 and 30 years old seemed to have lower levels of anxiety than the older participants.

In the Arab world context, Al-Saraj (2013) investigated foreign language anxiety of ten female college students learning English in Saudi Arabia. The study revealed that the participants attributed their language anxiety to certain anxiety provoking factors such as the teaching method, teacher-learner interaction, style of communication, and fear of negative evaluation. Similarly, Abu-Rabia (2004) investigated whether teachers’ attitudes were related to language anxiety among 67 EFL students. He found that students were less anxious if the teachers’ attitudes towards them were more favourable.

Elkhafaifi (2005) examined language anxiety among 233 graduate and postgraduate students, and found that advanced students had lower language anxiety than beginning or intermediate students. Similarly, Liu (2006) examined language anxiety of 100 Chinese EFL students at three different proficiency levels. The results indicated that students with advanced level proficiency in English tended to be less anxious.
Nevertheless, Casado and Dereskiwsky (2001) compared the anxiety level of first and second semester students learning Spanish as a foreign language, and found that students’ level of language anxiety seemed to increase slightly with more exposure to the language learning.

Liu and Chen (2015) investigated EFL learner language anxiety and learning motivation of high school students. Subjects included 155 students from the same private senior high school in central Taiwan, 60 in academic track and 95 in vocational track. The findings of the study revealed that both groups of students felt moderate levels of language anxiety; there were no significant differences in anxiety level between the two groups of students.

Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999) explored the impact of 26 factors on foreign language anxiety. They identified seven major variables that significantly predicted foreign language anxiety namely; age, academic achievement, previous history of visiting foreign countries, experience with foreign languages, expected overall evaluation of current course, perceived academic competence, and perceived self-worth.

Park (2014) examined the latent constructs of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale using two different groups of Korean university students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). The findings revealed that Korean learners experienced a consistent level of communication anxiety towards the target foreign language. The study
pointed out that communication apprehension and confidence were the strongest potential factors in the participants’ perceptions.

Lin (2012) investigated the impacts of foreign language anxiety and individual characteristics on the achievement expectations of Chinese second language learners and English second-language students at the university level. Four research questions were examined through quantitative design. The study also outlined the differences between non-Western and Western adult learners and the impact cultural factors have on the adult learners’ level of foreign language anxiety. Namely, the comparative findings of the empirical research indicated that Chinese as a second language students who were educated under Western educational systems display different achievement expectations, anxiety levels, and motivational learning factors as compared to English as a Second Language students who were trained under Non-Western education. Accordingly, ESL students’ anxiety levels were lower when compared with the one of Chinese as a Second Language students.

Similarly, Jin et al. (2015) investigated whether foreign language anxiety varied across foreign languages. 146 first year Chinese university students’ anxiety in English and Japanese, was tested twice over a two-month interval. The results indicated that anxiety in Japanese gradually decreased over time while anxiety in English remained the same. The researchers noted that the improvement in students’ Japanese
proficiency probably explained the decrease in anxiety in Japanese as compared to less improvement in students’ English proficiency.

Dewaele and Shan (2013) examined the link between Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity and foreign language classroom anxiety in English of 73 secondary school students in Hong Kong. The findings of the study revealed that foreign language classroom anxiety, second language tolerance of ambiguity and Self-rated English proficiency predict half of the variance in each other; in other words, students who were more tolerant of second language ambiguity were less anxious in their EFL classes and they also felt more proficient.

Dewaele (2007) investigated individual differences in levels of communicative anxiety and foreign language anxiety in the first (L1), second (L2), third (L3) and fourth (L4) language of 106 adult language learners. Data were collected about communication apprehension/foreign language anxiety levels when speaking with friends, with strangers, and speaking in public. The analyses revealed that multi-linguals do experience more communication apprehension in stressful situations in their L1, but that levels of foreign language anxiety are higher in languages learnt later in life. The knowledge of more languages was linked to lower levels of foreign language anxiety in the L2. Female participants were only found to experience higher levels of communication apprehension in L1 public speech. Older
participants tended to report higher levels of communication apprehension/foreign language anxiety across languages. Rank orders for communication apprehension/foreign language anxiety were significantly similar across the L1, L2, L3, and L4, which suggests that levels of communication apprehension/foreign language anxiety are relatively stable and could be linked to a lower order personality trait such as emotional intelligence.

2.3.3 Empirical Studies on Self-Perceived Communication Competence

Self-perceived communication competence is one of the most potential predictor of willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety. Therefore, this section reviews a number of empirical investigations that were conducted on the impact of this construct on willingness to communicate and language anxiety among other related affective factors.

In the Japanese context, Matsuoka (2005) reported a positive relationship between self-perceived communicative competence and willingness to communicate among a group of Japanese EFL students. In the same context, Hashimoto (2002) investigated the effects of L2 willingness to communicate and motivation on actual L2 use among 56 Japanese EFL students. The findings demonstrated that lack of L2
anxiety and self-perceived communicative competence were predictors of L2 willingness to communicate, which consequently led to more L2 use; whilst L2 anxiety negatively influenced self-perceived communicative competence.

In a study conducted by Cameron (2013) in New Zealand among migrants descending from Iran, had identified a number of potential factors affecting students’ willingness to communicate such as self-perceived communicative competence, motivation and anxiety.

In their study, MacIntyre, Noels and Clement (1997) found that anxiety was more closely linked with perceived proficiency than with objectively measured proficiency in French speaking, reading, and writing skill respectively, suggesting that anxious students might underestimate their L2 ability in French. Similarly, Perales and Cenoz (2002) reported a significant negative relationship between anxiety and self-perceived proficiency among 411 L2 learners in Spain.

Saint Leger and Storch (2009) examined learners’ perceptions and attitudes towards oral class activities in order to investigate how learners’ perceptions and attitudes influenced their willingness to communicate in L2. The study was carried out on a sample composed of 32 native English speakers, enrolled in the most advanced level of a French course at an Australian university. A wide range of data gathering methods were employed such as: Self-assessment questionnaire, subject
evaluation questionnaire, focus group interviews, and the teacher’s assessment of class participation. The findings indicated that during whole class discussion, participants’ level of anxiety increased, which adversely affected their willingness to communicate. The desire to speak in small groups, which was not uniform, depended on interlocutors and affiliation motives. Some learners felt more relaxed to speak in French in small group discussion, while some perceived that to speak French with their English speaking peers was artificial, because they have to use their affiliation motives in order to establish rapport with the French speaking community.

Pawlak et al. (2016) attempted to identify the factors that shape advanced learners’ willingness to communicate during conversation classes in four different groups of students. A combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis revealed that the extent to which willingness to communicate fluctuated was impacted by a range of contextual and individual factors. It was enhanced in particular when students were given the opportunity to communicate with familiar receivers in small groups or pairs on topics related to personal experiences.

Dewaele (2010) investigated the effect of the knowledge of other languages on self-perceived communicative competence and communicative anxiety in the French of 953 users. The analyses suggest
that when a language is either very strong or very weak, the knowledge of other languages does not play a major role. However, at intermediate levels of language proficiency, multilingualism can play a potential role in challenging communicative situations.

In an Arabic speaking context, Mahdi (2014) attempted to identify the main communication difficulties faced by EFL students at King Khalid University. The study investigated the participants’ willingness to communicate in English when they have an opportunity and highlighted the personality traits that affect students’ oral communication in English. The findings demonstrated that Saudi EFL students preferred to communicate more in interpersonal conversations and group discussions than in other contexts, such as public speaking and meeting situations. The students also showed greater willingness to communicate with friends than with strangers or acquaintances. In addition, the findings of this study convincingly demonstrated that there is a significant positive correlation between personality traits and willingness to communicate in some communicative situations, such as meeting and public speaking contexts, and with some interlocutor types, such as acquaintances and strangers.
2.3.4 Cross-Cultural Variations in Willingness to Communicate, Anxiety and Self-Perceived Communication Competence

One of the major motives to learn another language is to develop a communicative relationship with people from another cultural group. In this regard, cross-cultural studies have been carried out to determine the generalizability of willingness to communicate across different contexts. For instance, the United States is typically found to have significantly higher willingness to communicate scores than other countries. In a cultural comparison between American and Micronesian students, Burroughs et al. (2003) found that Micronesian students perceived themselves as more apprehensive, less communicatively competent, and less willing to communicate than American students in both their first and second language alike. In another study within the collectivistic Thai culture, Dilbeck et al. (2009) found that self-perceived communication competence scores of the Thai students were lower than those of their American counterparts. This finding has also been replicated and confirmed in a number of empirical studies, reporting that the levels of willingness to communicate among Americans were significantly higher than those in other cultural contexts. McCroskey et al. (1990) compared the willingness to communicate of Swedish students to American students. They found that Swedish students perceived themselves to be more competent in communication, but American are more willing to
communicate due to the higher cultural expectations from American culture than Swedish cultural expectations. Similarly, Lin et al. (2003) compared willingness to communicate between American and Korean students. They found that American students were more to communicate intercultural than Koreans.

Considering the impact of ethnic and cross-cultural dimensions in willingness to communicate and how cultures might probably value aspects of communication differently, Croucher et al. (2016) attempted to explore the position of Singapore on the continuum of communication apprehension, self-perceived communication competence, and willingness to communicate. Responses were obtained from 209 self-identified Ethnic-Chinese born in Singapore and 105 Malay immigrants. The results revealed Ethnic-Chinese to have low self-reported communication apprehension, while Malays had high communication apprehension in comparison to regional neighbours. Malays and Ethnic-Chinese both had low willingness to communicate and low self-perceived communication competence levels in comparison to regional neighbours. The findings show a potential “immigrant effect”, as Malay immigrants had much higher communication apprehension than Ethnic-Chinese. Furthermore, the study indicated that, when compared with European and North American scores, Singapore’s levels of willingness to communicate are lower, which means that Chinese and Malay
participants were less prone to communicate with each other, as a consequence of their high levels of anxiety. Accordingly, one possible explanation could either lie in the educational system and in a culture discrepancy between Western and Non-Western society; while European and North American educational systems encourage active participation in class and to express one’s opinion, Asian cultures rely on a more pedagogical structure that seems to be more teacher-oriented. Moreover, among Asian cultures such as in China and Japan, people tend to avoid opposing individuals with higher social ranks, for example, the elderly and people with high scholarly (Croucher et al., 2016).

Similarly, Campbell (2016) investigated the level of ethnocentrism and the willingness to communicate interculturally of management students (N = 438) at a university in New Zealand. The 22-item Generalized Ethnocentrism scale and the 12-item Intercultural Willingness to Communicate scale were used. Results show that respondents were not highly ethnocentric and were moderate in their willingness to communicate with people from other cultures. The results further suggest that participants recognized the importance of intercultural communication in the workplace but that their attitudes toward interaction with students from other cultures were not conducive to developing intercultural communication skills.

Harris (2017) explored the willingness of US citizens to
communicate with Mexicans as a function of US citizens’ ethnocentrism and Mexicans’ immigration documentation status. The study also explored the potential role that various lifespan variables, such as early communication with Mexicans, close relationships with Mexicans, age, geographic location, and political affiliation may have on ethnocentrism and willingness to communicate with documented and undocumented Mexicans in the US. One hundred and eighty-seven people (a non-random sample) completed an online instrument. The results of the study show that as expected ethnocentricity is negatively correlated with willingness to communicate with both documented and undocumented Mexicans. In addition, the results show that there is a stronger negative correlation between ethnocentricity when it comes to communicating with undocumented than documented Mexican immigrants. Further, the study found that close relationships with Mexicans matter in willingness to communicate as well as political affiliation.

Lu and Hsu (2008) investigated the differences in willingness to communicate between Americans and Chinese living in China and the United States, and the factors affecting willing to communicate between these two nationalities. A battery of questionnaires was administered to 47 American and 54 Chinese college students in China, and 51 American and 42 Chinese college students in the US. Overall Americans were found to be more willing to communicate with Chinese than were
Chinese with Americans. Participants living abroad reported higher levels of willing to communicate than those living in their home country. Among Chinese, willing to communicate was positively related to self-perceived communication competence, language competence, immersion time and motivation being positively correlated and negatively associated with communication apprehension. Similar results were obtained from Americans, except that immersion time and language competence were not related to willingness to communicate.

Del Villar (2014) carried out a research on Filipino elders’ attitude about aging and willingness to communicate with other people and highlighted the importance of self-esteem in engaging in communication. According to the research findings, it seems that Filipino elders tend to be comfortable in interacting with strangers, and even with people from other cultures. Further, elder respondents who reported a high level of willingness to communicate also displayed high self-esteem. In fact, when willingness to communicate levels were correlated with elders’ self-esteem scores, the study found a significant correlation between the two variables, that is to say, that the more self-esteem elders experience, the higher willingness to communicate they will have.

Quero (2014) compared the levels of intercultural communication apprehension of two groups of international Indian and Dominican
students in the United States when interacting with American students and with each other. Results indicated no significant difference on the levels of anxiety that both populations experience while interacting interculturally. However, in both cases, subjects with a poorer dominance of the English language, regardless of other variables such as gender and age, experience higher levels of intercultural communication apprehension.

Croucher et al. (2015) collected data from England, Finland, and Germany to explore national differences in communication apprehension. Based on the traditions of oral communication training in each nation, and the history of cross-cultural comparisons in communication apprehension, it was proposed that national differences would emerge. The results indicated that English participants scored lower than Finnish and German participants on total communication apprehension, public communication apprehension, dyadic communication apprehension, and meeting communication apprehension; Finnish participants scored higher than all nations on total, dyadic, and meeting communication apprehension; and German participants consistently scored in the middle on all aspects of communication apprehension, except for public communication apprehension. The study of oral communication, conversational style, and politeness are discussed as potential variables relating to
communication apprehension differences between the nations.

Furthermore, Croucher et al. (2013) examined the extent to which cultural variables, specifically religious identity and individualism/collectivism, related to communicative traits in France. Communication apprehension, self-perceived communication competence, and willingness to communicate were examined among self-identified Catholics and Muslims (n=533). Correlation analysis revealed that communication apprehension is negatively correlated with both self-perceived communication competence and willingness to communicate, whereas self-perceived communication competence and willingness to communicate are positively correlated. Regression analyses revealed that Muslims have higher levels of communication apprehension and Catholics have higher levels of self-perceived communication competence. Additionally, higher levels of collectivism are related to higher levels of communication apprehension and to lower levels of self-perceived communication competence and willingness to communicate, while higher levels of individualism are related to lower levels of communication apprehension.
Chapter Three

Methodology

The previous chapter scrutinizes the relevant literature in the field of the study and outlines a considerable number of previous empirical investigations related to the current study. This chapter intends to provide a detailed description of the research methodology used in order to gather data about Sudanese undergraduate students’ willingness to communicate in English and its relation with foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence, along the variables of gender, academic level and overall language achievement as reflected in their obtained academic grades. Additionally, a detailed description of the sample, development and construction of the research instruments, reliability and validity of the questionnaires, procedures of data collection and analysis are thoroughly outlined.

3.1 Research Methods of Investigation

Patton (1990) points out that different methods are appropriate for different situations. Hence, designing a study which is appropriate for a specific situation is largely determined by the purpose of the study, the questions being investigated, and the sources available.

This study attempted to use a mixed method to gain more in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the nature of willingness to communicate among Sudanese undergraduate students and how it
correlates with foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication. As such, this section outlines the different research methods in second language acquisition, and then elaborates on the mixed methods paradigm.

There are chiefly two broad research approaches that have been used in willingness to communicate research, namely quantitative which involves measurement, statistical analysis and numerical results and qualitative that mainly focuses on a holistic description and interpretation of the phenomena rather than measurement and quantification. Thus, quantitative research involves the collection and analysis of numerical data, whilst qualitative research considers narrative or experiential data.

Concerning willingness to communicate, the quantitative method has long dominated these empirical studies as well as in foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence, whereas the qualitative methods has been less utilized in such studies.

Regarding the quantitative research method, it has many advantages because the process of data collection can combine both descriptive and analytical summaries, as well as exploring the causal relationships between the various variables. Furthermore, quantitative research method is assumed to be more scientifically objective with less individual variations. In this regard, Dörnyei (2007) states that
quantitative approach is mostly favoured because it is systematic, rigorous, focused, and tightly controlled, involving precise measurement and producing reliable and replicable data that is generalizable to other contexts. Additionally, generalizability is considered as a major strength of using quantitative approach because a large enough sample helps reflect commonalities that exist in the data (ibid).

On the other hand, as noted by Dörnyei (2007), qualitative research has several strength points such as from thoroughly investigating a small sample size, it is possible to gain an insider perspective, which might help making sense of highly complex situations. In this regard, Moyer (2008) postulates that context is central to qualitative work where the experience is more important than a set of separate variables. However, qualitative research approach has also substantial weaknesses because it relies more on the researcher’s subjectivity, training and experience and as such is not widely used in willingness to communicate and similar empirical studies such as motivation and foreign language anxiety research.

Therefore, the current study opted to employ a mixed method research (MMR) approach, by combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection, in order to minimize the shortcomings of both methods when taken separately and to benefit from the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research methods, which could possibly
provide an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the topic under investigation.

Mixed methods research has emerged and developed in the recent decades and being used within the social sciences and applied linguistics. According to Dörnyei (2007), mixed methods research involves the collection or/and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study with some attempts to integrate the two approaches at one or more stages of the research process.

The mixed methods research tools adopted in this study are mainly standardized questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaires would gather quantifiable and objective data from a large number of participants, while the structured interview is considered as a complementary qualitative tool to shed more light about the complex topic of the intended research.

A questionnaire is considered as one of the most commonly used methods to collect data in empirical studies, in order to investigate the attitudes and opinions from a large group of participants in a wide range of topics. The advantages of collecting data through the use of a questionnaire according to Dörnyei (2007), are represented in the provision of answers to questions in a systematic and disciplined way, relative ease of construction, extreme versatility, and the ability to gather a large amount of information in a comparatively short amount of time.
and a readily usable form. In addition, depending on how it is structured, Mackey and Gass (2005) assume that a questionnaire can provide both qualitative insights and quantifiable data, and thus is flexible enough to be used in a range of research. Therefore, most previous empirical studies on willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety have predominantly employed questionnaires and have demonstrated that the questionnaire tool provides a high level of reliability.

Despite these evident advantages of using questionnaires for data collection, there are still some concerns since without context, numbers do not have any meaning. In this regard, Burns (2000) argues that the total score that might be obtained in quantitative research method has little clear meaning, since many patterns of response to the various items may produce the same score.

Given this consideration, the researcher also opted to utilize a semi-structured interview as a complementary qualitative research tool for data collection, in order to overcome the possible shortcomings of questionnaires and to gain more insightful understanding of the topic under investigation. There are obvious benefits and advantages in using interview in applied linguistics and second language acquisition research. According to Richards (2009), if properly conducted, interviews provide insights into people’s experiences, beliefs, perceptions, and motivation in a manner that cannot be achieved with
the use of questionnaires.

Furthermore, interview as qualitative research tool might be less representative and generalizable and that data collection and interpretation might be subject to researchers’ positions and backgrounds. As stated by Dörnyei (2007), there are some potential problems regarding the use of interview in applied linguistics research. The first one is that the interview format does not allow anonymity, thus the interviewees may try to display themselves in a better than real light or they may be too shy to articulate sufficient data. Similarly, Codo (2008, p. 162) further points out that the issue of truth might be problematic when interviewees want to please the researcher, “constrained by interview situation from expressing their views, or aim to project a given image for themselves or their community”.

3.2 Description of Research Population and Sample

The purpose of any research survey conducted on a certain sample is to generalize from the investigated sample to the intended population. However, for time and feasibility considerations, it is impractical and impossible to investigate the entire individuals of the research population. Thus, sampling is used to realize the objectives of the research by conducting the survey on selected representative subjects or individuals from the target population. In this study, the convenient
sampling method was employed. According to Fraenkel et al. (2012),
convenience sampling is quite optimal when there are no chances to
select a random and a systematic non-random sample. This sampling is
also efficient and practical, especially when conducting the research
survey in certain contexts such as certain universities or other
educational institutions.

The population of the current study is Sudanese undergraduate
students majoring in English as perspective teachers studying at the
faculty of Education. More specifically, this study was conducted
amongst the students of English Language Department, Faculty of
Education, University of Khartoum in Sudan. The university of
Khartoum was selected, since it is considered as the oldest and most
prestigious university in the country, that attracts the most notable and
qualified students, with rigorous entry requirements and selection
procedures. Therefore, the participants selected in this study would
represent an optimal sample for conducting such kind of empirical
research.

The total sample of the study composed of 156 Sudanese
undergraduate male and female students majoring in English Language
from the second, third, fourth, and fifth academic levels, which represent
different levels of mastery in the foreign language ranging from
preliminary, intermediate, and advanced. The students from the first academic level were not selected for participation in the empirical investigation, due to the fact that they are taking mostly introductory courses and their command of the foreign language is not yet established, which might affect the understandability of the content of the research instruments. Additionally, it was not possible for students in the first class to indicate their actual language achievement as measured by their overall grade average point, since they were in their first semester and have not yet undertaken any exam and thus do not have grades record.

The sample seems to be quite homogenous in terms of age and educational levels, however there were notably gender imbalances, where almost all academic levels were dominated by female students. Thus, the vast majority who participated in this survey were females 83.33% and the sample size of male students in all levels was considerably smaller 16.67%. A detailed description of the sample distributions according to gender, academic level, and overall language achievement (measured by cumulative average grade) is provided in the following charts.
Figure 3.2.1 Distribution of the Sample according to Academic Level

As can be seen in (figure 3.2.1) above, 26.28% of the second academic year students participated in the study, 27.56% from the third academic year, 21.15% from the fourth year and 25.00% from the fifth academic year also took part in the empirical survey. So, the distribution of the sample seems to be optimal between the different study classes.
3.2.2 Distribution of the Sample according to Grades

The grades were calculated according to the overall Grade Point Average (GPA) as follows:

2.0 – 2.49 = Pass/ Third Class

2.50 – 2.99 = Good/ Second Class Division II

3.0 – 3.49 Very Good/ Second Class Division I

3.50 – 4.0 = Excellent/ First Class
3.3 Construction of Investigation Instruments

3.3.1 Willingness to Communicate in a Foreign Language Scale (WTC-FLS)

In order to investigate the nature of Sudanese students’ willingness to communicate in English as a foreign language; the Willingness to Communicate in a Foreign Language Scale (WTC-FLS) that was constructed and developed by Baghaei (2013, p. 1090-1091), has been used for this purpose. The scale includes 22 items with three sub-scales, for three receivers and several contexts (group, face-to-face, and public). The receivers are the opportunities which occasionally arise for learners of FL’s to communicate in the language they are learning which include: (a) native speakers of the target foreign language (b) foreign non-native speakers of the target foreign language, and (c) classmates/instructors who learn/teach the foreign language. These were hypothesized to cover the major communication opportunities which might arise for FL learners. Baghaei (ibid) further states that the rationale behind considering native speakers, non-native speakers, and classmates/instructors as three receivers was the distinction which is made in the field of language acquisition between second and foreign language learning. The opportunities of those who learn a language as a foreign language to communicate in their FL are limited to classroom
environment and occasional encounters with native and non-native visitors. This context of learning is considerably different from L2 learning where opportunities to use L2 is numerous and extremely difficult to streamline and classify.

Limitations in communication possibilities and purposes of communication make the FL WTC and L2 WTC very different. While communications in L2 can be purposeful and authentic, in FL can be artificial and for learning and practice purposes only, with few chances for genuine communication. These differences in possibilities to communicate and the differences in the nature of communication in FL and L2 warrant the development of a specific scale to measure WTC in FL. Furthermore, since we are dealing with learners of foreign languages it was hypothesized that FL learners’ WTC might vary depending on whether they are talking with native speakers or non-native speakers of the language they learn. Therefore, the construct of WTC with foreigners was split up into two constructs of WTC with native speakers and WTC with non-native speakers. The scale constructed in this study comprised three sub-scales: WTC-NS, willingness to communicate with native-speakers (items 1–7), WTC-NN, willingness to communicate with foreign non-native speakers (items 8–14), and willingness to communicate with classmates/instructors who learn and teach the foreign language (WTC-SC), willingness to communicate in the school
context (items 15–22). Participants have to indicate their levels of agreeability on a 5 points Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The items in WTC-NS and WTC-NN were parallel or almost identical. The items in WTC-NS asked about respondents’ willingness to talk with native speakers while statements of WTC-NN asked about their willingness to talk with non-native speakers under the same circumstances and with the same wordings.

3.3.2 Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale was initially constructed and proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986), to investigate American undergraduate students’ anxiety in learning Spanish as a foreign language. Since then, this scale has proven to be a rigorous tool for measuring foreign language anxiety and has been administered in a number of empirical studies in a wide range of contexts. The scale consists of 33 five-point Likert scaling statements that describe feelings and behaviours that might be experienced by foreign language learners in the classroom. FLCAS measures three dimensions of foreign language anxiety, namely: communication apprehension (CA); fear of negative evaluation (FNE); and test anxiety (TA). FLCAS reflects a set of beliefs, perceptions, and feelings in response to L2 learning experience, and it also comprises other domains represented in FLCAS.
such as self-perceived proficiency, self-confidence, comparison, nervousness, and motivational intensity.

However, the version of FLCAS used in this study was adopted from Al-Saraj (2011), because it was slightly modified to suit the context of learning English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia, which is quite similar to Sudan.

The scale contains 33 items for overall foreign language anxiety with different dimensions. The participant has to indicate his level of anxiety ranging from strongly agree = 5 points; agree = 4 points, undecided = 3 points; disagree = 2 points; and strongly disagree = 1 point. Accordingly, the lowest possible score is 33, and the highest score is 165, which indicate the lowest and highest levels of foreign language anxiety, respectively that one might obtain. The scale includes three negative items (8, 12, and 28), and thus these items have been recoded in reverse.

The scale has mainly three sub-scales for measuring communication apprehension represented in the items (1, 2, 4, 7, 12, 17, 20); fear of negative evaluation is represented in the items (8, 11, 19, 23, 25, 26, 27, 33); and test anxiety which is represented in the items (14, 16, 21, 24, 32).
3.3.3 The Self-Perceived Communication Competence scale (SPCC)

The Self-Perceived Communication Competence scale was developed by McCroskey and McCroskey (1988) for measuring individuals’ perceptions of their communication competence. It has 12 items scoring for four communication contexts (public speaking, meetings, small groups, dyads) and scores for three types of receivers (strangers, acquaintances, and friends).

The respondents were instructed to estimate their English communication competence and assess the extent to which the respondents feel confident communicating in different situations and with different interlocutors, by indicating a number ranging from 0% (entirely incompetent) to 100% (entirely competent).

Instructions: Below are twelve situations in which you might need to communicate. People's abilities to communicate effectively vary a lot, and sometimes the same person is more competent to communicate in one situation than in another. Please indicate how competent you believe you are to communicate in each of the situations described below. Indicate in the space provided at the left of each item your estimate of your competence.

Indicate 0 = completely incompetent and 100 = competent.

_____ 1. Present a talk to a group of strangers.
_____ 2. Talk with an acquaintance.
3. Talk in a large meeting of friends.

4. Talk in a small group of strangers.

5. Talk with a friend.

6. Talk in a large meeting of acquaintances.

7. Talk with a stranger.

8. Present a talk to a group of friends.

9. Talk in a small group of acquaintances.

10. Talk in a large meeting of strangers.

11. Talk in a small group of friends.

12. Present a talk to a group of acquaintances.

**Scoring:** To compute the sub-scores, the percentages for the items indicated were added and divided the total by the number indicated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Calculation</th>
<th>Divided by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>item 1 + item 8 + item 12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>3 + 6 + 10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>4 + 9 + 11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyad (interpersonal)</td>
<td>2 + 5 + 7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>1 + 4 + 7 + 10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>2 + 6 + 9 + 12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>3 + 5 + 8 + 11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To compute the total SPCC score, the sub-scores for Stranger, Acquaintance, and Friend are added, and then that total is divided by 3.

3.3.4 The Semi-Structured Interview

With regard to the qualitative part of the data collection, a semi-structured interview was developed to achieve this objective. Based on the literature review on the study variables and intensive and extensive reading in the field, the researcher constructed questions to be posed during the interview sessions. It comprises 9 main questions covering the variables of the study namely, willingness to communicate in a foreign language, foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence. There are four questions (1-4) dealing with the dimensions of willingness to communicate and reticence, 3 questions (5-7) for tapping into foreign language anxiety in general, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, and the last two questions (8-9) are related to self-perceived communication competence.

3.4 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

The quality of any empirical study will be considered based on whether the findings are valid and reliable in order to be generalized into research population or replicated under similar conditions. As stated by Creswell (2007), the validity of research instrument concerns the trustworthiness of the knowledge produced and it entails both
questioning as to whether the survey investigates what it is intended to probe, and whether the study actually corresponds to the phenomena to which it refers. According to Vogt (1999), validity of an instrument refers to an instrument or a test “that accurately measures what it is supposed to measure”. Content validity, which refers to the degree to which that instrument measures intended content area, as indicated by Vogt (1999, p. 301) “is not a statistical property; it is a matter of expert judgment”. Accordingly, the content validity of the instruments used in this research are actualized, by utilizing standardized and well-established scales constructed by prominent researchers and experts in the field of applied linguistics and language acquisition. In addition, the research instruments used in this study have been revised by a number of experts and professors in the fields of applied linguistics, education and psychology from International University of Africa, Sudan University of Science and Technology, and University of Khartoum. The feedback and detailed insights of these experts have been taken into account, especially in constructing the semi-structured interview.

On the other hand, reliability of research instrument is referred to by Fraenkel et al. (2012) as consistency of the scores obtained, and how consistent they are for each individual from one administration of an instrument to another and from one set of items to another.

In order to establish the reliability of the instruments used in this
study, a reliability analysis was conducted by using SPSS. The Cronbach’s alpha for the willingness to communicate in a foreign language scale was 0.85, for the foreign language classroom anxiety scale was 0.88, and for the self-perceived communication competence was 0.88, which indicate that all these standardized instruments are highly reliable.

3.5 Survey Administration and Procedures of Data Collection

The empirical investigation and data collection have been carried out in the department of English Language, Faculty of Education, University of Khartoum. Before conducting the survey, the researcher has initiated contacts with head of the department and got his approval to carry out the survey amongst the students majoring in English Language. Since, the researcher is an alumnus of this faculty; he got an invaluable support from the head of the department, teaching staff, and students coordinators. The quantitative survey as represented by the standardized questionnaires, has been administered during regular lectures times, mostly at the end of the lectures and sometimes in the beginning. Before each session, the intended lecturer has been informed that questionnaires would be administered among his students, and therefore each lecturer has generously allocated part of his lecture time to this purpose, which last about 40 minutes approximately in order to complete the questionnaires. At the beginning of each session, the researcher was first
introduced by the lecturer and after that the students remained seated. The researcher introduced himself and the purpose of the session briefly, and then distributed the questionnaires among the attendees. The participants were assured that the survey would be treated for academic purposes only and their anonymity are granted, and so they have to feel free to respond honestly according to their opinions and feelings, and that there are no wrong or right answer. They were first instructed to answer the demographic and informative questions, and then they should read carefully through each item and tick the response that might best correspond to their level of agreement. Regarding the self-perceived communication competence, clear instructions were provided, in which the participants have to estimate and self-evaluate their communication competence in different situations across various interlocutors.

The researcher remained in front of the lecture hall during the survey session and offered further clarifications individually when needed. The instructions were given in Arabic language which is their mother tongue, to ensure a better and an equal grasp of the instructions for all participants irrespective of their command in English. All sessions were very smooth and the students were highly co-operative and curious, which resulted in higher rates of participation. Almost, all attendees have responded to the questionnaires which amount to more than 90%
participation rates. Upon completion of any questionnaire, each student has handed over the questionnaire to the researcher directly and sometimes were forwarded in groups. At the end of each session, the researcher has very much thanked the participants for taking part in the survey, and gave them further details about the nature of his study and the standardized scales that have been used. The collected and complete questionnaires amounted to 156 from students studying in the second, third, fourth, and fifth class respectively.

Regarding the qualitative data collection as represented by the semi-structured interview, the procedures were slightly different than that of the questionnaires administration. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in a second round after finishing the quantitative data collection, as a follow-up on a small sample (N= 20) from the second, third, fourth and fifth levels. First, the researcher went directly to the classes, before and after lectures times or during breaks and informed the students about his purpose and requested them to participate upon their interest. Since, the sample for the semi-structured interview is smaller than the quantitative one, so a selection was made sometimes according to certain criterion such as gender and language command to ensure that they would be optimally representative. For instance, the researcher looked at the results records of the whole students for each
class, and then selected those who were at the top, middle or end of the class according to their overall language achievement as has been measured by their Grade Point Average (GPA). In other cases, students were asked to estimate their level of communication, since that grade point average is not always a good indicator of communication competence. The participants were encouraged to participate in the semi-structured interview and a considerable number of them indicated their curiosity and willingness to participate, however actually 20 students got a chance to participate according to the pre-mentioned criteria.

During each session, the researcher has established a contact with the interviewee and conducted the interview in a quiet place in a lecture hall or in an office of the English language department. First, the interviewee was welcomed and informed about the purpose and nature of the interview, which has been entirely carried out in English. The researcher posed his questions and listened attentively and jot down the responses of the interviewee, and sometimes highlighted and stressed certain points which have been expressed by the participant. Each interviewee was identified anonymously according to his/her academic level, cumulative average grade, gender, and sometimes the researcher made some remarks about the fluency and communication abilities of the
exceptional and highly fluent ones. For instance, for anonymity, each participant was given a pseudonym starting with (S) referring to student, followed by his gender represented by (M) standing for a male participant, (F) for a female participant, his level of communication ability and fluency based on his cumulative average grade indicated by (H) standing for high command level in English, (A) standing for an average communication fluency, and (L) standing for a lower command level of English, the academic levels were labeled (2, 3, 4, 5) standing for the second, third, fourth, and fifth class respectively, and then a number that indicates his/her order among all the participant taken from each class. For example, SMH2.1 indicates a male participant with higher level command in English from the second class and was the first to be interviewed from this academic level and so on for the rest of the interviewees.

3.6 Methods of Data Analysis

After collecting and gathering the quantitative data, the researcher utilized Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23, in order to conduct the descriptive analysis of the questionnaires. Data analysis as Gay et al. (2005) suggest is a critical stage in the research process that requires the researcher to know and understand the data. With regard to research questions, Mackey and Gass (2005) argue that
data should be analyzed in ways that can shed light on the specific questions asked in the study. The data collection and analysis methods used in the current study were determined according to the research questions that have been posed in order to be answered objectively in the light of the obtained results.

In the current study, descriptive statistics of the overall willingness to communicate, foreign language anxiety, and self-perceived communication competence, along with their different sub-scales were computed.

For instance, descriptive statistics as well as independent samples t-tests, analysis of variance ANOVA, Person correlation coefficient, and multiple linear regressions were conducted. Correlations were used to determine the relationships between willingness to communicate, self-perceived communication competence, and foreign language anxiety. Independent samples t-test was carried out to determine if there were significant gender differences. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was also conducted to assess whether there were statistically significant differences between the different academic levels. Since that the results of ANOVA test only indicate whether there are any statistically significant differences between the groups, without showing how the groups differ from each other. Therefore, when there were such findings amongst the groups, a Tukey post-hoc test was conducted to determine
how the groups actually differ from one another. A detailed description of the various statistical methods and formulas that have been employed in this research is provided in the next chapter.
Chapter Four
Results, Analysis and Discussion

This chapter reports the results and findings of the gathered empirical data, which have been statistically analyzed. The study posed five main hypotheses which have been tested to determine if there are any significant differences between the various variables and examine the relationships between these constructs in a quantifiable manner. Since this study used a mixed method in data collection, therefore there are two types of data presented in this study namely quantitative and qualitative data. This chapter first reports and interprets the results of the quantitative survey and the qualitative findings of the semi-structured interview are presented in the subsequent section.

Regarding the quantitative data, the results are first presented in tables and figures for each hypothesis and then interpreted statistically to indicate their significance level. The findings are then thoroughly discussed and interpreted in the light of theoretical frameworks and established literature in the field.
4.1 The Relationship between Willingness to Communicate, Foreign Language Anxiety and Self-Perceived Communication Competence

The first hypothesis states that willingness to communicate of Sudanese EFL undergraduate students and their self-perceived communication competence are positively correlated. And their levels of willingness to communicate and self-perceived communication competence are negatively correlated with their foreign language anxiety.

Table 4.1.1 Correlation between Students’ Willingness to Communicate, Anxiety, and Self-Perceived Communication Competence in Learning English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>SPCC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WTC</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-0.223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note, WTC: willingness to communicate, SPCC: self-perceived communication competence)

To test this hypothesis, Pearson correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between these variables. The result of the
Pearson test as can be seen in table (4.1.1) above demonstrates that willingness to communicate among Sudanese undergraduate EFL students is significantly positively correlated with self-perceived communication competence \((r = .277, p = .000)\), and significantly negatively correlated with foreign language anxiety \((r = -.223, p = .005)\). Students’ level of foreign language anxiety is also significantly negatively correlated with self-perceived communication competence \((r = -.458, p = .000)\). The test also indicates that self-perceived communication competence is relatively more correlated with foreign language anxiety than with willingness to communicate. These results suggest that anxious students tend to perceive themselves as less competent to communicate and consequently less willing to communicate in English.

Furthermore, the effect of the three main types of anxiety on willingness to communicate was examined. The Pearson correlation result as shown in table (4.1.2) below reveals that these anxiety sources are significantly negatively correlated with willingness to communicate, indicating that fear of negative evaluation as the best predictor of unwillingness to communicate \((r = -.290, p = .000)\), followed by communication apprehension \((r = -.242, p = 0.002)\), and to a lesser extent test anxiety \((r = -.168, p = 0.036)\). This indicates that
unwillingness to communicate is mostly influenced by fear of negative evaluation than by communication apprehension or test anxiety.

Table 4.1.2 Correlation between Students’ Willingness to Communicate, and Different Types of Anxiety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>CA</th>
<th>FNE</th>
<th>TA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WTC</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.242</td>
<td>-.290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note, WTC: willingness to communicate, CA: communication apprehension, FNE: fear of negative evaluation, TA: test anxiety)

A further analysis of each study year separately as can be seen in table (4.1.3) below also reveals that there are significantly stronger negative relationships between these sources of anxieties and willingness to communicate only among preliminary and intermediate students in the second and third year and not among advanced students in the final and semi-final year. Similarly, fear of negative evaluation is the most predictor of unwillingness to communicate both in the second year (r = -.531, p = .000), and third year (r = -.581, p = .000), followed by communication apprehension in the second year (r = -.399, p = .010), and the third year (r = -.565, p = .000). However, test anxiety is significantly negatively correlated with willingness to communicate only among intermediate students in the third academic level (r = -.543, p =
These results further confirm that fear of negative evaluation is the most predictor of unwillingness to communicate among Sudanese undergraduate EFL students, and that the effect of psychological factors such as anxiety tends to be more influential in the beginning and intermediate academic levels.

Table 4.1.3 Correlation between Students’ Willingness to Communicate, and Different Types of Anxiety for each Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>CA</th>
<th>FNE</th>
<th>TA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second WTC</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.399**</td>
<td>-.531**</td>
<td>-.258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third WTC</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.565**</td>
<td>-.581**</td>
<td>-.543**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth WTC</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.790</td>
<td>.914</td>
<td>.284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth WTC</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.108</td>
<td>-.033</td>
<td>.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.512</td>
<td>.840</td>
<td>.540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note, WTC: willingness to communicate, CA: communication apprehension, FNE: fear of negative evaluation, TA: test anxiety)
The findings indicate that willingness to communicate among Sudanese students is significantly positively correlated with self-perceived communication competence and negatively with foreign language anxiety, and that self-perceived communication competence and anxiety are also significantly negatively correlated. These results are in line with the most established research findings in this field, and match the implications of MacIntyre & Doucette (2010), who indicated that willingness to communicate was significantly and positively correlated with perceived communication competence and negatively with anxiety about speaking French as a second language. These results are reported in a number of prior empirical investigations, revealing a significant positive relationship between self-perceived communication competence and willingness to communicate, and a significant negative relationship between anxiety and self-perceived communication competence (Lahuerta, 2014; Matsuoka, 2005; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Ghonsooly et al., 2014). Results of correlational analyses also indicated that willingness to communicate is negatively correlated with foreign language Anxiety.

Contrary to the widely held idea that communication apprehension is the single most predictor of willingness to communicate; the second part of the findings demonstrated that fear of negative evaluation is indeed consistently the most predictor of unwillingness to communicate,
followed by communication apprehension, and test anxiety to much lesser degree. When the results are taken for each class separately, it was found that fear of negative evaluation and communication apprehension significantly predict willingness to communicate among preliminary and intermediate students only. This result could be explained in the light of Sudanese society as a collectivistic culture, in which individuals are more conscious and sensitive about the evaluation of others, and as such those students tend to suppress their willingness to communicate to avoid being evaluated and commented on by others in a negative way. The contradictory result of fear of negative evaluation as the most prevalent source of anxiety instead of communication apprehension in the Sudanese context, which has been reported in most of the previous studies; could be rationalized in terms of the overlapping crossovers between these sources of anxiety. There is no clear-cut distinction between communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation, since in oral communication one might experience apprehension and at the same time fear the evaluation of others. On the other hand, test anxiety is not so prevalent among Sudanese students, and as such it is the least indicator of willingness to communicate. Regarding test anxiety, there is still controversial debate whether test anxiety in learning a foreign language can be clearly differentiated from test anxiety in learning other academic subjects such as mathematics. It seems plausible
that some students might experience high levels of anxiety when taking examinations regardless of the academic subject. Thus, regarding test anxiety as a component of language anxiety is questionable and therefore MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) argue that it may be more appropriate to classify test anxiety as a general anxiety rather than language anxiety.

In this regard, Horwitz et al. (1986) state that foreign language anxiety stems from three main sources of anxieties namely; communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Language anxiety may not necessarily encompass equal levels of three sources of anxiety. This is due to the consideration that; communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation seem to be related. For instance, when learners experience apprehension during group discussions, they might also feel anxious when being negatively evaluated by the group members. According to Horwitz et al. (Ibid), test anxiety only occurred when learners sat for exams, whereas fear of negative evaluation could exist to a much wider variety of situations such as in interviewing for a job or speaking a foreign language in the class.

As it has been demonstrated, the first hypothesis of the study is confirmed, in which willingness to communicate among Sudanese undergraduate EFL students and self-perceived communication
competence are significantly positively correlated, whereas foreign language anxiety has a negative impact on their levels of willingness to communicate and self-perceived communication competence.
4.2 Differences in Willingness to Communicate and Foreign Language Anxiety according to Language Achievement

The second hypothesis states that there are statistically significant differences of Sudanese EFL undergraduate students in their willingness to communicate, and foreign language anxiety, according to their overall language achievement.

Table 4.2.1 ANOVA: GPA Differences in WTC and Anxiety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WTC</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1100.10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>366.70</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>17681.49</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>116.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18781.59</td>
<td>155</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3492.37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1164.12</td>
<td>4.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>43660.63</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>287.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47152.99</td>
<td>155</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note, WTC: willingness to communicate)

In order to verify this assumption, a one way between subjects’ analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare the effect of actual language achievement as measured by overall grade point average (GPA) on both willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety as can be seen in table (4.2.1) above. The results indicate that
there are statistically significant differences for both variables namely; willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety, at the significant level p value $< .05$ with the conditions $[F(3,152) = 3.15, p = 0.27]$ for willingness to communicate, and $[F(3,152), p = .008]$ for foreign language anxiety. This means that differences in language achievement as indicated by accumulative grade average lead to variations in the levels of willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety, alike. Since the results of the ANOVA test was statistically significant, Tukey HSD post hoc test was conducted to compare the conditions with each other in order to identify the exact differences among the different categories of language achievement indicating fair, good, very good and excellent language achievement, respectively.

Regarding willingness to communicate, Tukey HSD post hoc comparison as shown in table (4.2.2) below indicates that the mean score of students with pass grade ($M = 80.48$, $SD = 10.70$) is significantly smaller than those with excellent language achievement ($M = 93.29$, $SD = 6.40$). There are no statistically significant differences between students with good and very good language achievement. This suggests that students with the lowest language achievement differ from students with the highest language achievement.
### Table 4.2.2 Tuckey HSD Post Hoc Test: GPA Differences in Willingness to Communicate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) GPA</th>
<th>(J) GPA</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>80.48</td>
<td>10.70</td>
<td>.802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>82.51</td>
<td>9.57</td>
<td>.802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>84.20</td>
<td>12.16</td>
<td>.333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>93.29</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the effect of language achievement on foreign language anxiety, Tukey post hoc comparison as shown in table (4.2.3) below demonstrates that the mean score for students with excellent grades (M =
79.86, SD = 10.40) is significantly smaller than those with pass grades (M = 101.89, SD = 16.58) and good grades (M = 100.12, SD = 17.02). This indicates that foreign language anxiety decreases as language achievement increases.

Table 4.2.3 Tuckey HSD Post Hoc Test: GPA Differences in Anxiety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) GPA</th>
<th>(J) GPA</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>101.89</td>
<td>16.58</td>
<td>.964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>100.12</td>
<td>17.02</td>
<td>.964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>95.50</td>
<td>17.72</td>
<td>.266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>79.86</td>
<td>10.40</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These findings are consistent with the established literature and held notion about the impact of language achievement on willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety, respectively. These findings are in line with some studies, which reported a significant positive correlation between willingness to communicate and foreign language achievement (Mahmoodi, 2014; Menezes & Juan-Garau, 2014). The finding of this study, however, indicates a significant difference in willingness to communicate among Sudanese students only between those who achieved pass grades and excellent students. This suggests that language achievement as measured by students’ overall GPA might
account for differences in willingness to communicate in the case of higher achievement or underachievement, in which students with pass class are the lowest and those with excellent are at the top of their class, and as such a significant difference is identified between these two groups.

On the other hand, foreign language anxiety is one of the most important predictors of foreign language achievement. The finding that Sudanese students’ foreign language anxiety was negatively correlated with their levels of language achievement, is in line with numerous studies such as those reported by (e.g., Horwitz et al., 1986; Liu, 2006; Saito & Samimy, 1996; Woodrow, 2006; Ellis, 1996; Aida, 1994), which suggested a negative relationship between anxiety and L2 achievement.

Nevertheless, there are some controversial issues regarding the cause-effect relationship between anxiety and achievement. At times, anxiety is considered to be a result and consequence rather than a cause of poor performance. Therefore, MacIntyre (1995) points out that it is more relevant to suggest that an interrelationship exists between anxiety and achievement, rather than a one-way causality.

In conclusion, the second hypothesis is confirmed, demonstrating that overall language achievement of Sudanese EFL undergraduate students predicts their levels of willingness to communicate in English and foreign language anxiety.
4.3 The Impact of Self-Perceived Communication Competence and Language Achievement on Willingness to Communicate and Foreign Language Anxiety

The third hypothesis assumes that self-perceived communication competence of Sudanese undergraduate EFL students is a better indicator of their willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety than their actual language achievement.

*Table 4.3.1 Correlation of Language Achievement and SPCC, with WTC and Anxiety*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>SPCC</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WTC</td>
<td>.277**</td>
<td>.209**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>-.458**</td>
<td>-.232**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note, WTC: willingness to communicate, SPCC: self-perceived communication competence)

To test this assumption, Pearson correlation coefficient was conducted to examine if self-perceived communication competence can be a better indicator of willingness to communicate and foreign language
anxiety than the students’ actual language achievement. The results of the correlation coefficient as presented in table (4.3.1) above indicate that there is a significant positive correlation between willingness to communicate and self-perceived communication competence \((r = 277, p = .000)\), and between willingness to communicate and language achievement \((r = 209, p = 0.009)\). In contrast, there is a significant negative correlation between foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence \((r = -.458, p = .000)\), and with language achievement \((r = -.232, p = 0.004)\). These results indicate that self-perceived communication competence and language achievement are positively correlated with willingness to communicate and negatively correlated with foreign language anxiety. Accordingly, self-perceived communication competence is considered as the better indicator of both willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety than actual language achievement.

When a further analysis for each academic level was computed as shown in table (4.3.2) below, stronger significant correlations are demonstrated between these variables, especially among preliminary and intermediate students. For instance, there is a strong significant correlation between willingness to communicate and self-perceived communication competence in the second academic level \((r = .439, p = 0.004)\), and in the third level \((r = .570, p = .000)\). No significant correlation between willingness to communicate and self-perceived
communication competence is indicated in the advanced levels of the semi-final and final students in the fourth and fifth year.

Table 4.3.2 Correlation of Language Achievement and SPCC with WTC and Anxiety for each Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>SPCC</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>WTC</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.439**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.518**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>WTC</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.570**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.657**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>WTC</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>WTC</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.486**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note, WTC: willingness to communicate, SPCC: self-perceived communication competence)
On the other hand, actual language achievement as measured by GPA is moderately significantly correlated with willingness to communicate in the third year only. From these results, it could be established that self-perceived communication competence is the single best indicator of willingness to communicate for preliminary and intermediate students than their actual language achievement.

Regarding foreign language anxiety, there are strong significant negative correlations between foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence in the second year (r = -.518, p = 0.001), in the third year (r = -.657, p = .000), and a moderate negative correlation in the fifth year (r = -.486, p = 0.002). Furthermore, foreign language anxiety is negatively correlated with language achievement only in the intermediate third year (r = -.316, p = 0.039).

These results combined consistently show that self-perceived communication competence is a better indicator than language achievement for willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety alike, especially among preliminary and intermediate students. Nevertheless, self-perceived communication competence is also a better indicator of foreign language anxiety than willingness to communicate, that is to say, the effect of self-perceived communication competence on foreign language anxiety is relatively bigger than that on willingness to communicate.
These findings are consistent with the most previous empirical studies and theoretical assumptions such as (MacIntyre et al., 1997; Baker & MacIntyre, 2000), which imply that self-perceived communication competence plays a vital role in predicting learners’ level of willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety than their actual language achievement. MacIntyre et al. (2002) further suggest that the effect of one’s perceived competence can override one’s actual competence in communication situations, especially when it comes to the initiation of communication.

On the other hand, self-perceived communication competence is a good indicator of foreign language anxiety among Sudanese EFL students. This finding agrees with (Hashimoto, 2002; Perales & Cenoz, 2002), who reported a significant negative relationship between foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence.

Regarding the interesting finding that self-perceived communication competence is the best indicator of willingness to communicate among preliminary and intermediate students only, but not among advanced students, might imply that self-perceived communication competence as a psychological construct would probably play a potential role in the beginning and intermediate levels, in which students seem to be more enthusiastic and curious to seek communication opportunities. In contrast, the effects of these factors are much less pronounced among
advanced students since they might be more experienced to handle psychological factors, and as such tend to be rather influenced by other meta-cognitive instances. These findings have far-reaching implications, indicating that affective and psychological factors in foreign language learning seem to be more beneficial in the earlier stages of language learning.

In summary, the third hypothesis is also confirmed, suggesting that self-perceived communication competence of Sudanese undergraduate EFL students is a better indicator of their willingness to communicate in English and foreign language anxiety than their actual language achievement.
4.4 Gender Differences in Willingness to Communicate, Foreign Language Anxiety and Self-Perceived Communication Competence

The fourth hypothesis postulates that there are significant gender differences among Sudanese undergraduate EFL students in their willingness to communicate, foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence in English.

To verify this hypothesis, an independent sample t-test was computed to determine if there were any gender differences in the levels of willingness to communicate, foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence, respectively.

Table 4.4.1 Gender Differences in Willingness to Communicate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WTC</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>84.69</td>
<td>13.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>82.72</td>
<td>10.56</td>
<td>.832</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTCNS</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29.46</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>27.55</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTCNN</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24.15</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>24.12</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTCSC</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31.08</td>
<td>6.49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>31.05</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.978</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note, WTC: willingness to communicate, WTCNS: willingness to communicate with native speakers, WTCNN: willingness to communicate with non-native speakers, WTCSC: willingness to communicate in school context)
Regarding willingness to communicate, the results of the t-test as can be seen in table (4.4.1) above reveal gender significant differences only in the construct of willingness to communicate with native speakers, where male students have higher mean score (M = 29.46, SD = 4.27) than the female students (M = 27.55, SD = 4.15), with conditions t(154) = 2.13, p = 0.035. This indicates that male students are more willing to communicate with native speakers of English than their female counterparts.

In regard to gender differences in foreign language anxiety, the results of the t-test as shown in table (4.4.2) below illustrate that the mean score of male students (M = 89.85, SD = 19.84) is lower than the mean score of the female students (M = 99.64, SD = 16.53), with the conditions t(154) = -2.66, p = 0.009. This result indicates that male students are less anxious in speaking English than female students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>89.85</td>
<td>19.84</td>
<td>-2.66</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>99.64</td>
<td>16.53</td>
<td>-1.54</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18.23</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>-1.54</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>19.77</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>-1.98</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNE</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20.46</td>
<td>7.16</td>
<td>-1.98</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>22.88</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>-1.59</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14.15</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>-1.59</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>15.22</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>-1.59</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note, CA: communication apprehension, FNE: fear of negative evaluation, TA: test anxiety)
Concerning self-perceived communication competence, the result of the t-test as can be seen in table (4.4.3) below indicates that the mean score of male students in self-perceived communication competence with strangers (M = 63.17, SD = 27.92) is significantly higher than the mean score of female students (M = 49.32, SD = 21.76), with conditions t(154) = 2.821, p = 0.005. This result demonstrates that female students perceive themselves as less competent to communicate in English with strangers than their male counterparts.

*Table 4.4.3 Gender Differences in Self-Perceived Communication Competence*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPCC</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>68.11</td>
<td>21.04</td>
<td>.836</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>65.10</td>
<td>15.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>69.22</td>
<td>26.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>62.47</td>
<td>17.72</td>
<td>1.623</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>62.95</td>
<td>27.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>58.27</td>
<td>19.15</td>
<td>1.054</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>69.58</td>
<td>24.48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>69.88</td>
<td>16.89</td>
<td>-.077</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyad</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>70.69</td>
<td>20.65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>69.76</td>
<td>16.97</td>
<td>.246</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>63.17</td>
<td>27.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>49.32</td>
<td>21.76</td>
<td>2.821</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>63.13</td>
<td>24.97</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>65.90</td>
<td>19.19</td>
<td>-.639</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
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<td>78.03</td>
<td>20.20</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>80.07</td>
<td>15.68</td>
<td>.836</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>.404</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note, SPCC: self-perceived communication competence)
This study indicates significant gender differences among Sudanese undergraduate EFL students, in which males are more willing to communicate with native speakers, being less anxious and feel more competent to communicate with strangers in English.

The finding that Sudanese male students are more willing to communicate in English than their female counterparts can partially be attributed to a number of considerations. One possible explanation is that male students as a minority are assumed to have better chances and opportunities to communicate and might receive more attention from their teachers. Another probable explanation might be attributed to the conservative nature of the Sudanese society towards females and social constraints imposed upon them that lead them to shy away in communication. Additionally, it is also more likely that male students as a minority endeavour to excel and outperform as a result of gender competitiveness inside the classroom. In this regard, Tannen (1990) postulates that despite the stereotypes of women as being talkative, adult men seem to talk more in meetings, or mixed-group discussions than their female counterparts.

Regarding foreign language anxiety, Sudanese female students have a higher level of anxiety communicating in English than the male students. This result is supported by Machida (2001), who found that Japanese female learners are more anxious than their male counterparts.
In terms of self-perceived communication competence, the current study could not indicate any significant gender differences in the overall self-perceived communication competence. However, a significant gender difference is indicated only in regard with communicating with strangers, in which Sudanese female students felt less competent to communicate with strangers. This result is similar to that female students are less willing to communicate with English native speakers than their male counterparts, since that native speakers are by definition strangers, and as such these two findings are complementary and compatible with each other. Self-perceived communication competence is not a fixed notion but rather a dynamic construct that fluctuates according to different factors, implying that individuals communicate differently with various interlocutors discussing different topics in different situations. So, it seems plausible that female students shy away from communicating with strangers and native speakers whom they are not familiar with, and tend to be reluctant to communicate in certain situations, in which they are expected not to initiate communication according to the societal values and norms in Sudan.
To sum up, the fourth hypothesis is partially confirmed, in which significant gender differences among Sudanese undergraduate EFL students are only demonstrated in some constructs. For instance, female students are less willingness to communicate with English native speakers, have higher levels of foreign language anxiety, and perceive themselves less competent in communicating with strangers than their male students.
4.5 The Role of Academic Level in Willingness to Communicate, Foreign Language Anxiety and Self-Perceived Communication Competence

The fifth hypothesis assumes that there are significant differences among Sudanese undergraduate EFL students in their willingness to communicate, language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence in English according to their academic levels (preliminary, intermediate, and advanced).

Table 4.5.1 ANOVA: Impact of Academic Level on Willingness to Communicate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WTC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>299.87</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>99.955</td>
<td>.822</td>
<td>.484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>18481.72</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>121.590</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18781.59</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1543.63</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>514.55</td>
<td>1.715</td>
<td>.166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>45609.36</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>300.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47152.99</td>
<td>155</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPCC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>894.63</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>298.21</td>
<td>1.065</td>
<td>.366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>42572.38</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>280.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43467.01</td>
<td>155</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note, WTC: willingness to communicate, SPCC: self-perceived communication competence)
To test this hypothesis, an analysis of variance ANOVA was carried out to examine the differences in willingness to communicate, foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence according to academic level (preliminary, intermediate and advanced students). The results of ANOVA as can be seen in table (4.5.1) above do not indicate any significant effect of academic level on willingness to communicate \([F(3, 152) = .822, \ p = 0.484]\), foreign language anxiety \([F(3, 152) = 1.715, \ p = 0.166]\), or self-perceived communication competence \([F(3, 152) = 1.065, \ p = 0.366]\) across the four language groups.

However, when gender interacts with academic level as can be seen in table (4.5.2) below, there is a significant difference only in willingness to communicate among male students. Therefore, Tukey HSD post hoc test was conducted to uncover the exact nature of these differences. The post hoc comparison as shown in table (4.5.3) below indicates that only the mean score of intermediate students in the third year \((M = 99.20, \ SD = 9.09)\) significantly differ from those in the fifth advanced year \((M = 77.89, \ SD = 13.51)\), with conditions \([F(3,152) = 3.984, \ p = 0.021]\). This suggests that male intermediate students have a higher level of willingness to communicate than do male advanced students.
Table 4.5.2 Interaction between Academic Level and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>WTC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1516.35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>505.45</td>
<td>3.984</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>2791.19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>126.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2336.70</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>778.90</td>
<td>2.283</td>
<td>.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>7504.69</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>341.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SPCC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3102.48</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1034.16</td>
<td>2.858</td>
<td>.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>7961.79</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>361.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>WTC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>176.94</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>58.98</td>
<td>.523</td>
<td>.667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>14213.09</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>112.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14390.03</td>
<td>129</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1425.35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>475.12</td>
<td>1.771</td>
<td>.156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>33808.66</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>268.32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35234.01</td>
<td>129</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SPCC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>262.49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>87.50</td>
<td>.345</td>
<td>.793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>31943.66</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>253.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32206.15</td>
<td>129</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note, WTC: willingness to communicate, SPCC: self-perceived communication competence)
Table 4.5.3 Tuckey HSD Post Hoc Test: Differences in WTC among Male Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) Level</th>
<th>(J) Level</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>85.50</td>
<td>9.71</td>
<td>.215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>99.20</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td>.215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>82.00</td>
<td>10.28</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>77.89</td>
<td>13.51</td>
<td>.583</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Third</td>
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<td>Fourth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.899</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The finding that Sudanese students do not significantly differ in the three variables of willingness to communicate, foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence across the different academic levels, does not support the fifth hypothesis of the study. This
suggests that academic level plays far less significant role, than the other factors in the variation of willingness to communicate, anxiety, and self-perceived communication competence.

Nevertheless, this finding can be partially understood, in reference to the third hypothesis which indicated that self-perceived communication competence accounted for variations in Sudanese undergraduate willingness to communicate among preliminary and intermediate students only. Accordingly, academic levels seem to interact significantly in some instances than others, when investigated in a combined manner.

As such, the only significant effect of academic level in this study is obtained in interaction with gender, in which only male students in the intermediate level have significantly higher level of willingness to communicate than advanced students. This result is unexpected since that it has been anticipated that an increase in language experience and exposure among advanced students would result in a higher degree of willingness to communicate than their intermediate counterparts. However, this finding could be understood in the light of some empirical studies (e.g., Cheng, 2002; Saito & Samimi 1996), reporting that advanced learners scored higher on anxiety than their lower proficient counterparts, which in turn negatively affects their willingness to communicate in the target language.
Nevertheless, this finding is compatible with the findings of the third hypothesis that self-perceived communication competence accounted for differences in willingness to communicate among preliminary and intermediate students, suggesting that affective factors seem to be more beneficial in the early stages of learning a foreign language. Advanced students, on the other hand, might probably tend to be rather non-pragmatic in using the language for functional purposes such as communication, and that they might possibly been more concerned with other language skills such as academic writing and reading in this stage of language learning. In contrast, intermediate students are more likely to seek communication opportunities in this stage of enthusiastic learning and focus on developing their communication competence and oral interaction.
Figure 4.5.1 Estimated Marginal Means of Willingness to Communicate

In conclusion, the fifth hypothesis is not empirically supported, suggesting that academic level does not seem to account for significant differences among Sudanese undergraduate EFL students in their willingness to communicate in English, foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence.
4.6 Results and Interpretations of the Semi-Structured Interview

This section deals with the findings of the content analysis of the qualitative data obtained. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 20 male and female participants from the second, third, fourth, and fifth classes. The interviews are thematically analyzed and reported for each question separately. These questions tackle the three variables of the study namely; willingness to communicate, foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence. The results and interpretations of each variable is outlined in the following sections.

4.6.1 Qualitative Findings Pertinent to Willingness to Communicate

The first four questions of the semi-structured interview address the main variable of the study, that is, willingness to communicate in English as a foreign language. The findings of the interviews reveal that almost all students have positive experience communicating in English with foreigners and they were glad and happy to do so. The detailed responses to the first four questions are outlined below, followed by summarizing and interpreting the most significant findings.

**Question 1. Have you had any experience of talking to English native speakers or foreigners (e.g. with foreign teachers, a tourist, internet chatting, etc.)? If yes, how did you feel about it?**

Almost all students responded positively to this question, which indicates that they have experience talking to native speakers or a
foreigner at least once. Those range between English native speakers to foreigners volunteering as teachers or visiting the department for a short period of time, and tourists. For example, the respondent SF2.1 answered that she had an experience talking to a Chinese tourist and an Argentinian visiting teacher, describing her encounter with the latter as “amazing feeling because it was my first time speaking English with foreigners, whilst with the Chinese his English was not clear, so not comfortable mixing English with Chinese language”. Another female student in the second class SF2.2 said that “I have experience speaking and interacting in English with foreigners, it was nice so that I have proved to myself that I can communicate and it is the best way to learn English”. Another one SF2.3 expresses her feeling speaking with English native speakers as “beautiful and that I can learn new things from them”. A male student from the second class SM2.4 states that “it is nice to practice and learn English from native speakers in the right way and to be like him, wonderful”.

Students in the third class also responded similarly, for instant the student SM3.3 stated that “yes, I met so many English native speakers and some foreign tourists. Although my level in English was not sufficient but I felt relaxed because they understood what I wanted to say and let me completed my sentences. I felt greatness because I was the only one in my group at that time to talk with a native speaker”.
A female student from the fourth class SF4.1 answered that “I have a lot of experience communicating in English with foreigners e.g. from Pakistan and native speaker teachers. It is a very awesome experience, when speaking with native speakers I feel very happy, interested and confident”.

Another female student from the fourth class SF4.2 replied that “I feel relaxed communicating with native speakers because I always practice English in the English regular club, and to get benefits from native speakers in some aspects of the language better than with students”.

Another female student in the fourth class said she still had not any experience communicating with native speakers or foreigners. However, a male student SM4.4 described his feeling when communicated with native speakers for the first time as “great and was not hesitated. It was easy and comfortable”.

Those in the fifth class also described their feelings as “interesting, so happy, enjoyable, when they communicate with native speakers or foreigners for the first time in their life”. For instance, a female student SF5.1 said that one needs a lot of experience and effort to express oneself, in their mother tongue language. Another one SF5.6 said that it was great to speak with native speakers and hear their exact accent.
**Question 2.** Do you seek to communicate in English with your teachers or classmates outside the lecture hall?

Regarding this question, the first female respondent from the second class SF2.1 replied that she seeks to communicate only with students but not with teachers, because the teachers - in her opinion - do not want to speak in English, since when I ask them in English they reply in Arabic.

Another male student SM2.4 also seeks to communicate outside the lecture hall when opportunities arise in order to improve speaking ability, discuss and share information with others.

A male student from the third class SM3.2 also stated that “yes, I am motivated and always seek to communicate in English.

Another male student SM3.3 who described himself as a unique student stated that “I am a great believer in communication, and practice and so I even encourage my colleagues to speak in English, and we prohibit speaking in Arabic in our group, by imposing a fine on those who utter an Arabic word during a conversation”.

Nevertheless, a female student from the fourth class SF4.1 responded negatively, in which she said “no, I am trying to speak in English but my friends say no because they say that we cannot understand you. Even if they understand, it is ridiculous to speak in English outside the lecture hall”.

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Interestingly another female student SF4.2 replied “yes, I seek to communicate especially with boys because they are always good at English, and unfortunately girls concentrate on the exam and having higher grades regardless of language proficiency”.

In the fifth class, female student SF5.1 responded “yes, but not really in English just a few words in English, when I cannot find a word in Arabic”.

Interestingly, another female student SF5.5 responded “yes, certainly I want to speak in English with the whole world, when I cannot find someone I would then create an imaginary figure within myself to speak to”.

**Question 3.** In what situations do you feel most willing to communicate in English (in pairs, small groups, whole class; with teachers, close friends, classmates, etc.?)

To this question, two female students in the second class preferred communicating in pairs because they feel more comfortable in this setting. However, another female student SF2.1 preferred communicating with friends because as she said “friends give a chance to speak confidently and do not care about grammatical errors and they know what I am speaking about”. Similarly, another female student SF2.2 preferred communicating with classmates rationalizing that “if I made mistakes they can correct me, but with teachers and higher
persons I feel shy and interruption, I want to be normal”. In the same vein another student from the third class justified communicating with friends “because there are similarities in our language”.

However, other students from the third class preferred communicating with teachers due to their expertise. For instance, a male student SM3.2 replied that “I prefer communicating with teachers because they are well-educated and I can gain benefits from them”. Similarly, student SM3.3 responded that “I prefer communicating with teachers of course, because they have a great experience, it is fruitful if I make mistakes they correct me and they have knowledge that I can gain from them”. In the same context, a male student in the fourth class SM4.4 replied that “mostly with teachers, because they indicate what is right and wrong”. Similarly, another female student from the fifth class SF5.6 preferred communicating in groups and with teachers to tell the exact way of speaking.

In contrast, another female student SF4.1 preferred “speaking in pairs because he/she can understand me and never mistaken me and always encourages me”. Similarly, a male student SM4.5 replied that “friends, because it is easy to talk with them, but with a teacher I feel a distance”.

Two of those in the fifth class tend to take any communication opportunities they might have. For instance, a female student SF5.1 responded “all of them, as EFL student I need to practice a lot”. The
second one SF5.2 replied “I communicate with all no matter what, I admit practice makes perfect, and thus I grab chances which only come once”.

**Question 4. What are the reasons why you do not want to communicate in English?**

Students from the second class responded to this question by mentioning reasons like being shy, or the other person cannot speak English well, and when the place is unsuitable for speaking or when they meet the other persons for the first time.

The most notable reasons of unwillingness to communicate in English among students in the third class were: the other person cannot speak English very well; speaking with people they do not know or unfamiliar with; when they cannot understand or do not have an idea about what other people are talking about. The unique student SM3.3 stated that “sometimes you come across communities who do not speak English and they may consider you arrogant.

The potential reasons behind unwillingness to communicate among the students of the fourth class were: shyness, difficult words and not being able to express oneself properly.

The most obvious reasons among the students in the fifth class were: shyness, lack of motivation, poor language level, boredom, and insufficient vocabulary.
Interestingly, a female student SF5.1 mentioned that “I do not like talking in English, because other people say that you are a philosophizing girl. Sudanese people have a problem when someone talks in English in public”. Similarly, a male student SM5.4 justified his unwillingness to communicate because “the environment and society around me is not encouraging”.

From the aforementioned responses to questions 1-4, regarding communicating in English in the classroom context, there are different findings. For instance, some of the students feel more secure to communicate preferably with friends, since that they are virtually equal in their language command and as such no distance is anticipated. On the other hand, some students prefer communicating with teachers because they think that teachers are well-educated and more knowledgeable and therefore those students might gain more benefits from their teachers who served as good mentors of the target language. Based on these findings, the researcher suggests that it is quite essential to provide learners with various communicative and interactive opportunities among the learners and teachers alike. By doing so, each learners irrespective of his preference, would find an opportunity to initiate communication either with a class-mate or a teacher, and in all likelihoods, the student would in turn enhance his language by
communicating comfortably with a close friend or supportive teacher. Furthermore, teachers could also play a substantial role in encouraging reluctant students by initiating communication with them in a supportive manner and focusing on language fluency rather than grammatical accuracy. Because speaking with teachers would give those students better chances to improve their language than just communicating only with their equal friends, who might have limited command of the language, and so in the long term would get that further as their counterparts who communicate with their teachers without hesitation.

Regarding the reasons that might lead to unwillingness to communicate, the findings reveal that students might avoid communication in English language due to a number of personal, societal or linguistic factors such as: shyness, lack of motivation, unsupportive environment, insufficient vocabulary, low language command, and most notably when communicating with strangers and unfamiliar persons.

4.6.2 Qualitative Findings Pertinent to Foreign Language Anxiety

The second section of the semi-structured interview tackled the second variable namely foreign language anxiety, which was reflected in the fifth, six and seventh questions. The responses to this section are detailed below, followed by summarizing and interpreting the findings.

**Question 5. How do you feel when your teacher asks you some questions in front of the whole class?**
The responses to this question among the students of the second class were: trying to answer, feeling anxious and hesitated to answer, and it is a good chance in order to be responsible.

However, some of those students in the third class stated that they would be relaxed since they are just our class-mates, so no need to shy away or be nervous. Others felt proud to be selected in front of the whole class and as such were more confident in these situations.

The responses of the students in the fourth class were: not having a problem to respond if knowing the answer; being relaxed and try to express one’ points of view confidently.

The answers of some of the interviewed students in the fifth class were: feeling anxious; being little bit confused and worried to say something wrong. Whilst other students such as SF5.1 said “I feel confident about myself, it motivates me to show them how I can communicate”; and SF5.2 replied “I feel proud because the teacher trusted me than the others, even when I do not know the answer I will take my chance to speak”.

**Question 6. What makes you nervous and anxious about speaking in English?**

The responses to this question among the investigated students of the second class were: being shy; talking with strangers; bad mood and tiresome. In addition, a male student 2.2 stated that “currently there is
nothing that makes me anxious, but in the past when I was in the first level I used to be anxious when mispronouncing some words, but now it is okay when making mistakes my teachers would correct me which is beneficial for me”.

The responses of those in the third class were: shyness, speaking in front of a big number of people; when unsure about the answer; speaking with a group of strangers; when having no idea or something in mind to say; when my language level is lower than the interlocutor; when someone uses a difficult language and words. However, the unique student did not seem to have any anxiety and he is eager to speak with native speakers to have a chance to practice and hear their right pronunciation.

The responses to this question from the students in the fourth class were: insufficient vocabulary; not finding proper words; lack of information about the topic; and when not knowing the other persons (strangers).

The most notable responses of those in the fifth class were: lack of ideas; mispronouncing something; when the listener does not understand; and lack of confidence.

**Question 7. Do you feel afraid when you communicate in English that your friends might laugh at you or judge you, if you make some mistakes?**
The responses to this question amongst the interviewed students in the second class ranged between yes, sometimes and no. On the other hand, a male student SM2.4 replied “No, without mistakes I wouldn’t learn anything, mistakes challenge me to be better. I do not care about errors, I just practice speaking”.

The same was also reported among the third class students, for instance, one student SM3.5 said “yes in the past used to be afraid when I was in the first semester, but now not”. The unique student SM3.3 replied “I never came across such feelings because sometimes I feel overconfident. In the same vein, another male student SM3.2 said “no, because all of us are the same L2 learners, it is normal to commit mistakes as a natural processing of learning, even in our mother tongue we make mistakes”.

Similarly, two students in the fourth class reported the same, in which the first one responded “basically not, as human we make mistakes and we learn from them”. The second one also stated that “no one can dare to do that, if I commit mistakes I am not afraid, it is natural because it is not our language”.

The responses as detailed above in questions 5-7, indicate that some students feel anxious to speak in front of a group or strangers, while others do not seem to experience anxiety when speaking in public. The
reasons behind the anxiety of some students are: mispronunciation, insufficient vocabulary, talking with strangers, lack of ideas, lower language level, fear of committing mistakes, and fear to be criticized by others. These findings are in line with previous one, which clearly demonstrate that willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety are related. Notwithstanding, some students reported that they tended to be anxious in the previous level, specifically in the first year of their study but now not anymore. This indicates that language anxiety seems to decrease as students advance in their study, which suggests that advanced students might feel less anxious and more competent in language use than their premier counterparts, due to advancing their language level and having more experience in handling anxiety-provoking situations. Additionally, they might possibly have more language awareness, by understanding that making mistakes is inevitable and a natural part in the language learning process. Furthermore, some students also felt less anxious in communicating or committing mistakes, because they were aware of the fact that they are speaking a foreign language, which is not their native language and as such making mistakes is anticipated.
4.6.3 Qualitative Findings Pertinent to Self-Perceived Communication Competence

The last part of the interview in the eighth and ninth questions, addressed the third variable of the study, which is self-perceived communication competence. The responses to this part of the interview are reported below, followed by summarization and interpretation of the findings.

**Question 8. Do you think you tend to communicate more or less frequently than your classmates?**

The responses to this question amongst the interviewees in the second class were: more; middle; I cannot lose any chance to practice anywhere, anytime; and I am the first volunteer to speak in classroom activities.

The responses of the interviewees in the third class were: less, I do not like participating; yes, more than others as much as possible; more, because I have more English speaking friends in Facebook and WhatsApp. The unique student, however, replied “yes, targeting to get chances but sometimes because I am a democratic person I prefer to let chances for others to speak”.

The responses to this question among the interviewees students in the fourth and fifth classes varied between more, less, and average.
**Question 9.** How do you feel about your overall communication competence in English compared to your classmates?

Regarding this question, a female student in the third class stated “I am someone who communicates in English easily and I am not afraid to speak with anyone. Another male student in the same class replied “I like communicating and debating in English - even in Arabic I am a talkative by nature, it is my interest and I was chosen to be the leader of the English language club”.

In conclusion, the findings of the qualitative data provide a deeper understanding of the investigated topic and supplement the qualitative results. In this vein, Dörnyei (2007) indicates that qualitative research has several strength points such as from thoroughly investigating a small sample size, it is possible to gain an insider perspective, which might help making sense of highly complex situations. Likewise, Moyer (2008) postulates that context is central to qualitative work where the experience is more important than a set of separate variables. The results of the empirical data mainly focus on the holistic picture of the investigated variables, while the qualitative findings essentially underlie the experiential and individual instances concerning the investigated phenomenon.
From the responses to questions 8-9 above, it can be postulated that most of the participants indicate an average self-perceived communication competence in comparison to their peers. Interestingly, some responses imply that personality attributes might well be considered in regard to self-perceived communication competence. For instance, a student who have a high level of willingness to communicate, describes himself as being talkative and enjoying verbal discourse even in Arabic, which suggests that personality characteristics might account for such differences in willingness to communicate and self-perceived communication competence. That is to say, the tendency towards willingness to communicate is probably to be transferred in some instances from the mother tongue into the foreign language.

4.6.4 Conclusions
The detailed qualitative findings of the semi-structured interview provide further evidence and support for the obtained quantitative investigation. The qualitative findings should be considered as a complementary and integral part of the qualitative data in a mixed method framework of study. The empirical data gives general indications about the relationship between the study variables, whereas the qualitative one assists in gaining more in-depth understanding of the investigated phenomenon.
Accordingly, the hypotheses of the study are further supported by the results of the semi-structured interview. For instance, the different responses indicate that students who are willing to communicate in English tend to be less anxious and more likely to perceive themselves as communicatively competent, which support the first hypothesis. Furthermore, language achievement and self-perceived communication competence are considered to be good indicators of students’ level of willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety, which are also in line with the second and third hypotheses. Gender differences are also reported in which male students tend to be more willing to communicate in English as opportunities arises and that female students as suggested by some responses tend to focus on excelling at exams and obtaining higher grades than being communicatively competent. This result clearly supports the fourth hypothesis of the study regarding gender differences willingness to communicate. Finally, based on the responses of the interviewees, the qualitative findings demonstrate that academic level can play a role in willingness to communicate in English and foreign language anxiety. For instance, some students suggested that they tended to be anxious when they were in the preliminary year due to lower language level and inexperience of communicating in English, but as they advance throughout the study
they could handle their anxiety and in turn communicate in English more confidently. This result partially supports the fifth hypothesis, by suggesting that foreign language anxiety is more likely to be experienced in the early and preliminary stages of language learning.
Chapter Five

Summary of Results and Recommendations

This chapter summarizes the results and overall findings of the study, and based on these findings theoretical, practical and methodological implications are postulated, and a number of recommendations are proposed. Finally, further future lines of research are suggested.

5.1 Summary of Results

This study sought to investigate willingness to communicate in English among Sudanese undergraduate EFL students, in relation to foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence. It further aimed at examining the impact of actual language achievement as measured by overall GPA, academic level and gender differences on willingness to communicate, anxiety and self-perceived communication competence.

The established literature in the field considers willingness to communicate as an essential part of language learning, which profoundly enhances students’ oral proficiency and communication competence. However, willingness to communicate is influenced by many potential factors such as foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence. Foreign language anxiety has a negative impact on willingness to communicate, whilst self-perceived communication competence positively affects one’s willingness to
communicate in the target language. This implies that students who have higher levels of self-perceived communication competence tend to be more willing to communicate and engage in communication opportunities, and would also feel less anxious irrespective of their actual language proficiency.

The results of the empirical investigation indicate that willingness to communicate and self-perceived communication competence are positively correlated, whilst foreign language anxiety has a negative impact on both willingness to communicate and self-perceived communication competence. Regarding anxiety types, fear of negative evaluation is the most potential predictor of unwillingness to communicate, followed by communication apprehension, whilst test anxiety is the least prevalent anxiety type among the study sample.

Language achievement as measured by overall GPA also partially predicts differences in both willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety. However, self-perceived communication competence is the most important and determinant factor than actual language achievement in predicting willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety, especially among preliminary and intermediate students, but not among advanced students.

The results further reveal that there are gender differences, in which female students tend to be more anxious, have lower
communication competence when communicating with native speakers and strangers than their male counterparts. Nevertheless, no gender differences are indicated in terms of the overall willingness to communicate and self-perceived communication competence. Regarding academic level, the empirical findings could not indicate any differences in willingness to communicate, self-perceived communication competence, or anxiety between the different academic levels. However, when academic level interacts with gender, there is a significant difference between the third and fifth male students only, in which intermediate male students are more willing to communicate in English than those in the advanced level.

The qualitative data analysis of the semi-structured interview further provided an in-depth and insightful understanding of the underlying antecedences and instances of willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety. For instance, shyness as a personality attribute, insufficient vocabulary, and unfamiliar interlocutors are among the most notably mentioned reasons behind the unwillingness to communicate in English among the interviewed students. Furthermore, some students feel more secure to communicate with friends and classmates, because of their equal level of language command and as such no psychological or intellectual distance is anticipated, whereas
others rather prefer communicating with teachers to gain more knowledge and to be corrected when committing mistakes.

5.2 Implications and Recommendations

Based on the research results and findings, a number of implications and recommendations are proposed as follows:

1. Language teachers and instructors should pay more attention to students’ psychological aspects that might affect their communication behaviour. Teachers and instructors should also be aware of these factors in order to provide an encouraging language learning atmosphere that might reduce students’ oral anxiety and in turn increase their willingness to communicate in the foreign language. This recommendation is based on the study finding, demonstrating that self-perceived communication competence is the best indicator of foreign language anxiety than students’ actual language achievement, which further implies that psychological and affective variables play a potential role in foreign language learning and communication.

2. Teachers and instructors should encourage their students and provide them with equal communication opportunities irrespective of their actual language achievement and grade point average. By doing so, the students with higher actual language achievement would further develop their oral proficiency and at the same time those with lower
actual language achievement would have better chances to improve
their oral communication levels and in turn overcome the psychological
barriers as low language achievers.

3. A special attention should be directed towards the affective factors
among preliminary and intermediate language learners. This has
already been indicated by the most interesting finding of the study,
suggesting that psychological and affective variables are more
influential in the beginning and intermediate academic levels. This
might lead to imply that affective variables such as willingness to
communicate, self-perceived communication competence and foreign
language anxiety are very crucial especially in the early stages of
language learning. On the other hand, as students advance through their
study course and get more experience with the language, other factors
would more likely come into effect such as meta-cognitive and learning
strategies.

4. Based on the above-mentioned implication, it seems that anxiety might
play a debilitative effect in the early stages of language learning till the
intermediate and plateau stages of language learning, and a rather
neutral or partially facilitating effect in the most advanced stages of
language learning. This could be explained by rationalizing that
advanced and experienced learners are more likely to be able to handle
anxiety-provoking situations or minimize the negative effect of anxiety
due to their advanced mastery of the language. Whereas, students in the early stages would be debilitated by foreign language anxiety, which diverts their cognitive functions from the language learning process and as such reduces their willingness to communicate in the target language.

5. Varieties in the topics discussed in the foreign language classrooms should be considered, and additionally, instructors and interlocutors should establish a rapport relationship with their students in order to eliminate any insecurities towards strangers and high profile persons. This is due to the consideration that willingness to communicate reflects rather situational instances than personality traits. For instance, the extent to which one might perceive to communicate is determined by a number of potential factors such as topic, interlocutor and context.

6. Teachers and instructors should create supportive environment and relaxed speaking atmosphere for their students in order to communicate more freely without any fears of committing mistakes, which are considered as a natural part of the language learning process. This recommendation is justified in terms of the new finding in this study; which reveals that fear of negative evaluation is the most prevalent type of anxiety, seems to be quite problematic among Sudanese EFL students, and might reflect societal and cultural implications. For instance, in a collectivistic culture such as that in Sudan might
influence the nature of anxiety and accordingly willingness to communicate. In such cultures, students seem to be concerned about the opinions and judgements of others and pay a great deal of attention towards what others might think of them and their communication abilities.

7. Communicative language teaching should be emphasized in language learning, by using authentic teaching and learning materials. Additionally, extracurricular activities such as regular language clubs and language tandem partners either face-to-face or via online platforms should be encouraged. Moreover, in the age of social media and advanced communication technologies, students are advised to use these gadgets in order to enhance their communication competence, by using various technologies and social media such as Facebook, Skype and WhatsApp for communication purposes with native speakers and foreigners alike. In such platforms and social media, it is increasingly becoming easier to find and befriend with native speakers and other language learners from across the globe with minimal efforts and huge benefits. By doing so, students would compensate the lack of native speakers in Sudan and absence of immersion programs nowadays, especially when learning English as a foreign language, in which students have very few chances to practice the language outside the classrooms.
In conclusion, this study has further theoretical, practical and methodological implications and contributions to our knowledge of willingness to communicate in foreign language learning, since it is the first of its kind that addresses the notion of willingness to communicate among Sudanese EFL students. Therefore, the findings and outcomes of this study might be considered by decision makers, instructors and educators in language learning, syllabus design, and language education policy in Sudan, in order to draw their attention to the crucial role of affective factors in communication and in second/foreign language learning in general. Furthermore, the outcomes of the study are also of utmost significance for language learners, in which it would aid them in understanding the underlying mechanism and antecedents of willingness to communicate, and how it is mediated by psychological and affective factors such as foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communication competence.

5.3 Suggestions for further Research

Based on the implications and conclusions of the current study, a number of future lines of research are proposed. First, it would be interesting if cross-cultural investigations on willingness to communicate are conducted in comparison to other nationalities, in order to reveal how cultural norms and attitudes might influence the
initiation and frequency of willingness to communicate. Additionally, self-perceived communication competence could also be cross-culturally investigated. Otherwise, if cross-cultural investigations are not feasible, it is advisable to study the impact of cultural dimensions on willingness to communicate and self-perceived communication competence.

Second, this study investigated students learning English as a major subject, and thus it is recommended to further investigate the same variables on non-major students, which might yield different results than those reported here and further uncover other elements of willingness to communicate.

Third, to overcome the gender imbalance of this study, it is suggested to examine the role of gender on willingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety in a more balanced sample size, to exactly explore the nature of gender differences in those variables.

Fourth, this study mainly focused on investigating willingness to communicate, foreign language anxiety, and self-perceived communication competence among students as personality entities. Therefore, future studies are advised to incorporate teachers’ influences such as teaching methods used, error correction strategies and attitudes towards students’ willingness to communicate.

Fifth, willingness to communicate seems to be context-specific, that is one’s willingness to communicate tends to fluctuate across a
number of variables such as topics and interlocutors. Thus, further empirical investigations are suggested to thoroughly examine the nature of these situational antecedences and variables that might affect willingness to communicate in a given situation.

Sixth, this study was mainly targeted undergraduate EFL students, and so future investigations are suggested to be conducted on other foreign languages in Sudan, and also examine willingness to communicate, self-perceived communication competence and anxiety in the secondary school level, which is a crucial stage in language learning and it is still not addressed regarding these variables.

Seventh, although this study employed a mixed research method, by combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods, still the study was rather qualitatively-oriented, and as such a more comprehensive qualitatively orientated investigation has to be considered in future lines of research.
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Appendix (A): Willingness to Communicate in a Foreign Language Scale (WTC-FLS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statements</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>If I encountered some native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) in the street, restaurant, hotel etc. I hope an opportunity would arise and they would talk to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>If I encountered some native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) in the street, restaurant, hotel etc. I would find an excuse and would talk to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>If I encountered some native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) who are facing problems in my country because of not knowing our language, I take advantage of this opportunity and would talk to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I am willing to accompany some native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) and be their tour guide for a day free of charge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I am willing to talk with native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) have interesting experiences that I would like to share.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>If someone introduced me to a native-speaker of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) I would like to try my abilities in communicating with him/her in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>If I encountered some non-native speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) in the street, restaurant, hotel etc. I hope an opportunity would arise and they would talk to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>If I encountered some non-native speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) in the street, restaurant, hotel etc. I would find an excuse and would talk to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>If I encountered some non-native speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) who are facing problems in my country because of not knowing our language I take advantage of this opportunity and would talk to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I am willing to accompany some non-native speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) and be their tour guide for a day free of charge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I am willing to talk with non-native speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Non-native speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) have interesting experiences that I would like to share.

If someone introduced me to a non-native speaker of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.), I would like to try my abilities in communicating with him/her in English.

In order to practice my English, I am willing to talk in English with my classmates outside the class.

I am willing to ask questions in English in the classes at the university.

I am willing to talk and express my opinions in English in the class when all my classmates are listening to me.

I am willing to have pair and group activities in the class so that I can talk in English with my classmates.

In order to practice my English I am willing to talk in English with my professors outside the class.

I am willing to give a presentation in English in front of my classmates.

In group work activities in the class when the group is composed of my friends, I am willing to speak in English.

In group work activities in the class when the group is NOT composed of my friends, I am willing to speak in English.
Appendix (B): Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

5 = Strongly agree

4 = Agree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

2 = Disagree

1 = Strongly disagree

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.

2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.

3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.

4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.

5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.

6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.

7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.

8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.

9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.

10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.

11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.
12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.
14. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.
16. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.
17. I often feel like not going to my language class.
18. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.
19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.
21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.
23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.
24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.
25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.
28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.

31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.

32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.

33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.
Dear student,

This questionnaire is designed to gather students’ perception of their own communication competence as well as foreign language anxiety and willingness to communicate in English Language. The results of the data would be used for scientific purposes only and will be treated confidentially and anonymously.

Thank you very much for your participation

Personal Data:
Gender: Male ( ) Female: ( )
Academic Year: 1st ( ) 2nd ( ) 3rd ( ) 4th ( ) 5th ( )
Your cumulative average grade: ...........

First: Self-perceived Communication Competence

Directions: Below are twelve situations in which you might need to communicate. People's abilities to communicate effectively vary a lot, and sometimes the same person is more competent to communicate in one situation than in another. Please indicate how competent you believe you are to communicate in each of the situations described below. Indicate in the space provided at the left of each item your estimate of your competence.

Presume 0 = completely incompetent and 100 = competent.

_____1. Present a talk to a group of strangers.
_____2. Talk with an acquaintance.
_____3. Talk in a large meeting of friends.
_____4. Talk in a small group of strangers.
_____5. Talk with a friend.
_____6. Talk in a large meeting of acquaintances.
_____7. Talk with a stranger.
_____8. Present a talk to a group of friends.
_____9. Talk in a small group of acquaintances.
_____10. Talk in a large meeting of strangers.
_____11. Talk in a small group of friends.
_____12. Present a talk to a group of acquaintances.

Second: Foreign Language Anxiety

Please tick (✓) the response that best suits you

5 = Strongly agree

4 = Agree

3 = Undecided

2 = Disagree

1 = Strongly disagree

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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I feel nervous when I can't write or express myself in the foreign language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I feel anxious when the teacher asks me a question that I have not prepared for.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I feel nervous and confused when the language teacher is unsuccessful in</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>I fear speaking or asking the teacher in my foreign language class.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>I feel anxious when listening to a passage in my listening/speaking class.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>I get nervous when there is a lot of vocabulary that I don't understand being used in my foreign language class.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>I feel nervous using the foreign language outside of the college or class.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>I am not nervous speaking the foreign language in front of my classmates.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>I get nervous when I arrive late to class or the day following my absence.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>I get anxious when there are too many foreign language students registered in my class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I feel anxious when I see classmates better than me in my foreign language class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I feel comfortable in speaking with my foreign language teacher.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I feel anxious in reading/writing and grammar class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I get upset due to the method of testing in the foreign language class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I get anxious when I feel that I can't speak well in front of other language students not in my class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I get nervous when looking at my grades.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>I tremble when I know that I'm going to</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>I feel nervous when talking in the foreign language to someone I just met.</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>I get nervous when the language teacher gives us a lot of things to do in so little time.</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>I feel overwhelmed by the number of grammatical rules I have to learn in the foreign language.</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>I fear pronouncing words incorrectly in my foreign language class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I fear failing my foreign language class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>I feel low self-confidence about speaking the foreign language in front of the class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>I feel anxious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>I feel nervous when I am around more experienced foreign language users.</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>I don't feel anxious when learning a foreign language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>I feel anxious when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>I feel anxious when I want to volunteer to say something but can't find the proper words to say it in my foreign language class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>I feel nervous at English exam time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>I feel nervous when standing or giving a presentation in front of the class.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Third: Willingness to Communicate in English Language

Please tick (✓) the response that best suits you

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>If I encountered some native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) in the street, restaurant, hotel etc. I hope an opportunity would arise and they would talk to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>If I encountered some native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) in the street, restaurant, hotel etc. I would find an excuse and would talk to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>If I encountered some native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) who are facing problems in my country because of not knowing our language, I take advantage of this opportunity and would talk to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I am willing to accompany some native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) and be their tour guide for a day free of charge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I am willing to talk with native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Native speakers of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) have interesting experiences that I would like to share.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>If someone introduced me to a native-speaker of English (British, American, Canadian, Australian) I would like to try my abilities in communicating with him/her in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>If I encountered some non-native speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) in the street, restaurant, hotel etc. I hope an opportunity would arise and they would talk to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>If I encountered some non-native speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) in the street, restaurant, hotel etc. I would find an excuse and would talk to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>If I encountered some non-native speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) who are facing problems in my country because of not knowing our language I take advantage of this opportunity and would talk to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I am willing to accompany some non-native speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) and be their tour guide for a day free of charge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I am willing to talk with non-native speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Non-native speakers of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.) have interesting experiences that I would like to share.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>If someone introduced me to a non-native speaker of English (Japanese, Pakistani, French, etc.), I would like to try my abilities in communicating with him/her in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>In order to practice my English, I am</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Description</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I am willing to ask questions in English in the classes at the university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I am willing to talk and express my opinions in English in the class when all my classmates are listening to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I am willing to have pair and group activities in the class so that I can talk in English with my classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>In order to practice my English I am willing to talk in English with my professors outside the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I am willing to give a presentation in English in front of my classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>In group work activities in the class when the group is composed of my friends, I am willing to speak in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>In group work activities in the class when the group is NOT composed of my friends, I am willing to speak in English.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix (D) Questions of the Semi-Structured Interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Have you had any experience of talking to English native speakers or foreigners (e.g. with foreign teachers, a tourist, internet chatting, etc.)? If yes, how did you feel about it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Do you seek to communicate in English with your teachers or classmates outside the lecture hall?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>In what situations do you feel most willing to communicate in English? (in pairs, in small groups, in a whole class; with close friends, with teachers, with classmates, etc.)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>What are the reasons why you don’t want to communicate in English?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>How do you feel when your teacher asks you some questions in front of the whole class?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>What makes you nervous and anxious about speaking in English?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Do you feel afraid when you communicate in English that your friends might laugh at you, if you make some mistakes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Do you think you tend to communicate more or less than your classmates?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>How do you feel about your overall communication competence in English compared to your classmates?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>