

# The Correlation between Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness To Communicate Among Students of Arabic As A Foreign Language

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## Abstract

A language is an important tool for communicating with people around the world, especially for educational purposes. Many foreign language classes are being offered in a lot of institutions nowadays. However, learning and communicating using a new foreign language may cause learners to be anxious in the classroom compared to speaking their first language. Hence, the present study aimed to investigate students' level of foreign language anxiety and determine its relationship with the willingness to communicate in Arabic as a foreign language. 110 students taking Arabic as the third language course at an advanced level, which is the third level, from a public university in Malaysia were chosen to complete two questionnaires, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety scale and Willingness to Communicate scale. The findings of this study reveal that the level of language anxiety among students was moderate, and there is a negative correlation between foreign language class anxiety among the students and their willingness to communicate, which indicates that students' willingness to communicate decreases when their anxiety level increases. From this study, students' anxiety affects their communication in class. Thus, it is suggested that the instructors encourage students to speak in class and do activities to reduce their anxiety as well as boost their confidence.

**Keywords:** Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, Willingness to Communicate, Arabic as A Foreign Language, Language Learning

## Background of the Study

Learning a foreign language (FL) has been related to anxiety, where language learners are revealed to experience tension, stress, fear, worry and uncertainty when they are in the FL classroom. This situation becomes a phenomenon in FL learning because the anxiety that students face in learning FL can affect their perceptions towards the language and subsequently affect their achievement and performance in learning. Many studies regarding

this phenomenon have been done, such as Horwitz et al (1986) suggested that foreign language anxiety (FLA) can be identified by communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety. These FLA can be caused by three primary factors: the learner, the educator and instructional practice. Studies also revealed that FLA is more associated with speaking skills in the FL classroom than listening, writing, and reading skills (Aida, 1994; Horwitz et.al., 1986; Young, 1990).

Regarding the teaching and learning of the Arabic Language in Malaysia, although most Malaysian learners have started to learn Arabic since primary school, they still try to avoid communicating in Arabic when asked to do so during Arabic lessons. According to Ismail et al (2020), even religious secondary school students were anxious and fearful of speaking Arabic as a second language, especially when facing oral tests, because they could not organize and present their speech correctly and confidently. Studies have shown that a high level of anxiety occurs mostly related to understanding and speaking the target language (Alghali, 2016). In other words, this feeling is believed to affect students' willingness to communicate in the FL classroom. Developed from the Heuristic Model of Variables Influencing Willingness to Communicate (WTC) by MacIntyre et al (1998), many studies on WTC in FL have identified that anxiety is one of the various personal attributes affecting learners' WTC.

### **Problem Statement**

Studies have shown that there are various advantages to learning FL. As Marion and Shook (2012) reported, people who speak more than one language can perform better on tasks that need conflict management. Zhang (2021) added that being bilingual or multilingual can make someone see a situation from another perspective besides helping the person increase his international trade opportunities. Apart from the advantages, many FL learners still experience anxiety in the classroom due to several reasons, which are communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. (Horwitz et al., 1986) Meanwhile, according to Young (1991), low self-esteem and competitiveness are the primary sources that cause students' anxiousness.

The anxiety, in turn, will affect the students' FL learning negatively. Students that experience anxiety in FL class tend to have a vocabulary deficit in describing themselves and speaking in the target language, avoid communicating using FL, and some may skip the FL class to alleviate their anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994). In addition, Matsuoka (2008) mentioned that communication apprehension is the strongest factor in decreasing students' WTC. Dewaele (2019) further explained that the strongest predictor of WTC is FLA. When the relevant studies are examined, the importance of further investigating the relationship between FLA and WTC is well established in terms of Arabic as a foreign language. Therefore, this study aims to identify students' level of FLA as well as to determine its relationship with the WTC in Arabic as a foreign language.

### **Research Questions**

Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions:

1. What is the student's level of foreign language anxiety?
2. What is the relationship between the level of foreign language anxiety and the willingness to communicate?

## Literature Review

### Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA)

At the beginning of research on language anxiety, no solid definition explained this phenomenon in students. It was considered a trait-state anxiety point of view that was not attributed to language learning context (Horwitz et al., 1986; Trang, 2012). Generally, anxiety can be defined as a situation where apprehension and unclear fear that is indirectly associated with an object occurs in humans. In the context of foreign language anxiety (FLA), it is "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning" (Macintyre & Gardner, 1994).

In other words, FLA is "a feeling of worry experienced concerning a foreign language, either trait or state in nature" (Brown, 2000). As Horwitz et al (1986) explain, FLA is "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process". It is also revealed that the feelings of apprehension, worry, and dread will lead to the appearance of symptoms in FL learners such as having difficulties concentrating, becoming forgetful, sweating, palpitating, and freezing in class, going blank prior to exams, and feeling shy about joining the classroom. Horwitz et al (1986) suggested FLA can be identified by communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Communication apprehension is a type of shyness where one feels fear or anxiety in communication with people. It is also a type of situational anxiety linked to interpersonal communication and oral expression (Argaman & Abu Rabia, 2002; Maclyntyre & Gardner, 1994). When asked to speak in the FL, students often struggle with speaking, asking, and responding to questions in class for a variety of reasons, including poor grammar, a limited vocabulary, and imprecise pronunciation, hence failing to perform the communication process smoothly and successfully (Rumiyati & Seftika, 2018).

Secondly, fear of negative evaluation is when someone feels anxious about being evaluated by others, distressed over a negative evaluation made by someone, and anticipation about being negatively evaluated in some situations, especially in the FL context (Watson and Friend, 1969). It also can be referred to as academic evaluation and personal evaluation of the learners of the FL based on their performance in class (Toth, 2010). Students frequently experience anxiety over the prospect of making errors in front of teachers and friends and the humiliation resulting from such an evaluation (Rumiyati & Seftika, 2018).

Finally, test anxiety is an occurrence of apprehension specifically on academic evaluation, also defined as uneasiness in academically evaluative situations (Horwitz and Young, 1991). It is a fear of failure in any form of tests and exams, such as quizzes, assignments, and evaluations in the FL classroom (Wu, 2010). Students believe they must obtain a high score on quizzes, examinations, and assignments, thus creating an unfavourable learning environment, particularly in FL classrooms (Toyama & Yamazaki, 2018).

Young (1991) mentioned in his research that factors of FLA can be divided into three primary factors: the learner, the educator, and instructional practice. The learner has a significant relationship with interpersonal and personal anxiety, including fear of speaking in the FL, low self-esteem (Liu & Jackson, 2008), lack of practice, limited vocabulary knowledge and incomprehensible input, and fear of committing mistakes (Liu, 2006). It should also be emphasised that culture affects the anxiety students experience when learning the FL in the classroom (Getie, 2020).

Next, the educator-teachers have a role where their beliefs and attitudes affect students' anxiety in the FL classrooms where students are afraid of getting an evaluation by teachers, the need to gain the instructor's approval, and their relationship with teachers and instructors (Naser & Njir, 2019). According to other studies, anxiety develops when teachers fail to consider their students' circumstances during the teaching and learning process and causes students to experience apprehension and uncertainty (Weda & Sakti, 2018).

Lastly, Instructional practice where classroom environments are vital in controlling students' anxiety in the FL classroom (Naser & Njir, 2019).

Other factors that contribute to the emergence of students' language anxiety is much related to their motivation to learn foreign language. Gardner et al (1985) define motivation as the combination of the struggle to learn the language, the desire for attaining the goal of learning the language and creating a good attitude toward learning a new language. He also explained that along with anxiety, Motivation is the most influential factor in foreign language learning. Liu and Chen (2015) stated that motivation could become a significant predictor of language anxiety as they conducted a study on the association between language anxiety and motivation. They discovered a relationship between motivation and anxiety and concluded that students who are anxious are more worried with low motivation, which leads to poor skill in speaking a foreign language. Another study by Cetin and Macit (2022) found a negative significant correlation between foreign language anxiety and motivation in foreign language learning. The findings suggest that students who are highly motivated to study a foreign language have lower levels of anxiety in the classroom, and vice versa. Therefore, creating non induce anxiety environment is very important to increase students' motivation, thus reducing their foreign language anxiety in classrooms. The teacher's role is vital, and it is encouraged to do activities with students and increase expressions of appreciation and encouragement.

### **Willingness to Communicate**

Initially, WTC was studied in the context of first-language communication. Considered a personality trait, it describes how individuals exhibit similar tendencies in various communication contexts (McCroskey & Bear, 1985). It is also described as the intent to communicate when the opportunity arises. It can be defined as "an individual's personality-based predisposition to approaching or avoiding the initiation of communication when free to do so" (McCroskey, 1997).

In the context of a foreign language, WTC can be defined as a deliberate decision to initiate communication in the second language with a particular person at a specific moment. In other words, it also can be defined as a "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2" (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

In the existing literature, the pyramid-shaped model proposed by MacIntyre et al. (1998) to characterise the construct of L2 WTC has been generally adopted to frame the L2 WTC study.

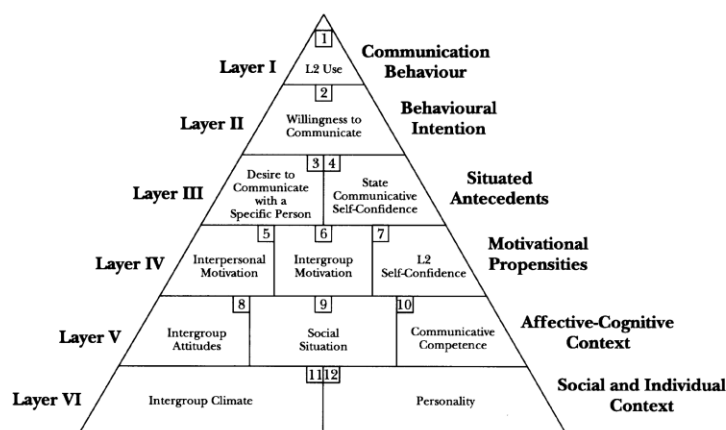


Figure 1: Heuristic Model of Variables Influencing WTC

According to this model, the top three layers (e.g., actual L2 use, behavioural intention for L2 communication, and desire to communicate with a particular person) are viewed as more dynamic, situation-specific influences on L2 WTC. In other words, the variables that influence the patterns of L2 WTC and communication tend to be inconsistent and dynamic over time, depending on the communication context. In contrast, the bottom three layers (e.g., motivational tendencies to communicate in L2 with others, affective and cognitive context, and societal and individual contexts) represent more stable, trait-like variables that influence L2 WTC and communication behaviours consistently across time and context.

Since then, numerous studies have supported the WTC model proposed by MacIntyre et al. (1998) from trait-like, situation-specific, dynamic, and situated perspectives. The proponents of trait-like WTC, which focuses primarily on individual characteristics to explain WTC in L2 communication, have identified various personal attributes affecting L2 learners' WTC, including self-confidence Yashima (2002), anxiety Hashimoto (2002); Yu (2011), motivation and attitude Hashimoto (2002), personality MacIntyre & Charos (1996). In contrast, situation-specific WTC-oriented researchers have identified contextual factors such as classroom environment (Peng & Woodrow, 2010). Other researchers have reconceived L2 WTC as a dynamic and situated (rather than linear and static) process in which individual (trait-like) and contextual (situation-specific) variables interact consistently during communication (Cao, 2011; Hsu, 2015).

## Past Studies

### Foreign Language Anxiety in Arabic Language Classroom

Among the studies about FLA that have been done related to the Arabic language was the study by Zaidi et al (2019), which focused on the status of language stress and anxiety in the FL (Arabic and English) at the elementary school level. The major objective of the study included the extent of language stress and anxiety among both language learners. The survey method was used to collect the related data for the current study. The required information was collected from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) on five points Likert scale. For this purpose, a questionnaire was personally administered to 320 students in various schools of district Bahawalpur, involving the public and private sectors. Data revealed that students were involved with high stress and anxiety levels while studying the Arabic language, but in the case of English language learning, it remained moderate. One of the reasons could be because of the different levels of English and Arabic language exposure they

had in the past. This shows that it is important for educators to recognize and give attention to learners' past language learning since it will help educators comprehend and interpret anxiety and nervousness-related practices in a few learners and help them talk with less anxiety in class.

Another past study was done by Hasan and Al-Hasani (2019), which aimed to discover the factors behind anxiety about learning Arabic among the students of two language centres in Dhaka, Bangladesh. This study focused on anxiety during the learning process. A descriptive survey research design was employed for this study. A questionnaire was distributed to 150 students to collect the required data using purposive sampling. Collected data were analysed by using percentages and chi-square at 0.05 alpha levels. Among the reasons for anxiety in learning Arabic are the personal barrier, knowledge source barriers, human resource barriers and technical barriers. The previous study affirmed that anxiety has a vital effect among Arabic language learners caused by several factors. And based on these factors that the study has identified, it showed that overcoming this problem is the responsibility of all parties, not only the learners. The current study can conclude from this study that the factors of anxiety among FL learners vary, which not only come from the learners but also from the language institution or centre itself.

### **Willingness to Communicate in Arabic Language Classroom**

A study conducted by Mahmoodi and Moazam (2014) investigated the relationship between the willingness to communicate (WTC) and the foreign language achievement of Arabic students. The participants were 44 undergraduate Arabic students studying at Bu-Ali Sina University-Hamedan, Iran. For data collection purposes, a Five-digit Likert-scale questionnaire of Willingness to Communicate in a Foreign Language Scale (WTCFLS) containing 20 statements was administered. Additionally, each student's Arabic language achievement was assessed in terms of their average. Using SPSS, the results of Pearson's Correlation (2-tailed) indicated that, overall, the correlation was significant between WTC and Arabic language achievement. This result showed that WTC is influenced by L2 achievement. Therefore, this issue needs attention from teaching practitioners.

Past studies on Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate in the Arabic language

Ibrahim (2013) investigated the effect of attitudes and emotions on the desire to use Arabic in communication in a second language learning context, in this case, learners of Arabic as a second language at the Malaysian University of Islamic Sciences. A number of 225 students from the Islamic Science University of Malaysia voluntarily participated in the study. The students represented four faculties of the university. A model of "willingness" to communicate in the second language was tested using Structural Equation Modeling and was found to fit the data accurately. The study found that language competence was an antecedent of language communication confidence, while language confidence was significantly and statistically correlated with WTC and language proficiency. The study also showed that male learners are more liable to language anxiety, which affects their competency and ability to use the target language. This indicates that gender also plays a role in second language use, which educators need to put into consideration in their teaching approach.

**Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate in Foreign Language Classroom**

Many studies have investigated foreign language anxiety and willingness to communicate among learners studying Arabic and other languages, especially regarding issues like their interpersonal communications, their participation in the FL class and the effect of anxiety on their performance in speaking. There have been many studies on FLA and WTC. The study by Liu and Jackson (2008) is done to study the unwillingness to communicate and anxiety of Chinese learners of English as FL study. The respondents for this study are 547 first-year non-English majors' students from Tsinghua University. All of them were required to take English listening and speaking courses, and they had different backgrounds in terms of English study. The instruments used in this study are the Unwillingness to Communicate Scale, Language Class Risk-Taking Scale, Language Class Sociability Scale, and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale. It was discovered that many of the students were willing to participate in interpersonal conversations, but many of them were unlikely to risk speaking English in class. Besides, their unwillingness to communicate is strongly linked to their FLA and their access to English. The research suggested that instructors must reduce the students' anxiety by enlightening them on the importance of speech communication in the first class.

Another study has been investigated by (Djafri and Wimbari, 2018). This research zooms into FLA among learners of different FLs, which are English, French, Japanese, Korean and Arabic and its relationship with students' motivation and their perception of teachers' behaviours. The respondents for this study are 182 second-grade undergraduate students majoring in the five FLs from an Indonesian university. The instruments used are the Foreign Language Anxiety Scale and Student Motivation Scale. Students' Perception of Teachers' Behaviors scale and open-ended questions. It is revealed that Japanese learners have the biggest FLA due to the different writing systems and difficulty in reading and writing the Japanese characters, where there is an addition of the characters along with the increment of the class level; beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. It is followed by Arabic, which has a different writing system too, but it is not as difficult as the Japanese language since the alphabet acquired during the initial period remains the same. In addition, it has been discovered that there is a significant difference in FLA between Latin (English and French) and non-Latin language learners (Japanese, Korean and Arabic). This is due to the difference in the writing system since Indonesian learners are more familiar with Latin, as Bahasa Indonesia uses the same writing system. Meanwhile, students' motivation does not significantly correlate with the anxiety of learning FLs in contrast to the perception of teachers' behaviours, such as harsh comments and demoralizing words linked to the higher level of FLA. Therefore, it is suggested that teachers should encourage students to communicate in class and create fun language games to reduce their anxiety.

**Methodology****Research Design**

This research adopted a quantitative descriptive approach. To fulfil the objectives of this study, the researchers administered questionnaires to determine the levels of FLA and WTC among the students. The study then utilised Pearson correlation to establish this study's hypothesis.

**Hypothesis**

The hypothesis of this research is as follows:

1. H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant correlation between students' level of foreign language anxiety and their willingness to communicate.
2. H<sub>1</sub>: A significant correlation exists between students' level of foreign language anxiety and their willingness to communicate.

### Participants

The participants in this study were 110 students from a Malaysian public university who were enrolled in an advanced course in Communicative Arabic Language as a third language at the third level. The selection of students at the advanced level was influenced by the fact that they were already familiar with the Arabic language in terms of its language systems and concepts, hence assisting them in completing the questionnaires for this study.

### Research Instruments

Researchers used the foreign language classroom anxiety scale and the willingness to communicate scale to collect data and information from respondents to achieve the two objectives of this study.

1. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) scale

To determine the level of foreign language classroom anxiety, the researchers adopted a scale named Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety by Horwitz et al. (1986). This scale is a self-assessment instrument for measuring language anxiety in learning a foreign language.

This scale consists of 33 items to measure the language anxiety of students. The tool's creators used the Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions of the scale items. Each item is rated using a five-point graduated scale: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly agree (1-2-3-4-5).

This scale consists of 3 components of FLCA as follows

Table 1

*Components of FLCA*

Components	No of item
Communication apprehension	1, 4, 9, 14, 15, 18, 24, 27, 29, 30, 32
Fear of negative evaluation	2, 7, 13, 19, 23, 31, 33
Test anxiety	3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28

2. Willingness To Communicate (WTC) scale

The researchers adapted the willingness to communicate scale by Darasawang and Reinders (2021) to collect data on students' willingness to communicate.

This scale consists of three sections: perceptions of WTC, communicative self-confidence, and frequency of Arabic use. Initially, this scale was developed in the context of English as a foreign language; however, the researchers modified a few items so that they would apply to Arabic as a foreign language.

This scale used a Likert scale with multiple response types to obtain responses from respondents.



Table 2

*Components of WTC*

<b>Components</b>	<b>Type of response</b>
Perceptions of willingness to communicate	Very unwilling, somewhat unwilling, neutral, somewhat willing, and very willing.
Communicative self-confidence	Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree.
Frequency of Arabic use	Never, rarely, sometimes, often, always

**Data Collection Procedure**

This research used the FLCA and WTC scales to answer its objectives. The researchers first transferred the scale into e-forms using "Google Form" to easily manage and store the responses and data. The links to the scales were then sent to the respondents via the Telegram and WhatsApp apps. The respondents had a week to complete the scales and send them to the researchers.

**Data Analysis Procedure**

After the data and responses from the respondents were collected, the following tests were carried out to fulfil the study's objectives.

1. To determine anxiety levels among Arabic foreign language students  
Following the respondents' responses on the FLCA scale, the researchers converted the responses into data to be read as numbers to calculate the mean and measure the level of FLA using SPSS. The measure relied on the suggestion from Al-Khasawneh (2016) that there are three levels of FLA:
  - I. Low: 1.00-2.33
  - II. Moderate: 2.34-3.66
  - III. High: 3.67-5.00
2. To identify the correlation between FLCA and WTC  
To achieve the research objectives, the FLCA and WTC results were utilized to determine whether there is a correlation between FLCA and WTC among students using SPSS software, and the Pearson correlation test was employed. The researchers then analyzed the data using the outcomes from the tests.

**Findings****Demographic of Participants**

There were 110 participants in this study; 63% were female, and 37% were male. Approximately 63% of participants are between 22 and 24 years old, and the vast majority, 94%, hold a diploma. 53% of respondents studied Arabic in elementary and secondary school prior to enrolling in the Arabic language as a foreign language course at UiTM.

**Normality Test**

This research employed two scales: the FLCA scale and the WTC scale. After collecting responses from the participants, the researchers conducted a normality test (Kolmogorov-Smirnov) to evaluate whether the scales were normally distributed or vice versa.

Table 3

*Normality Test*

	Normality Test		
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
<b>FLCA</b>	.079	110	.090
<b>WTC</b>	.053	110	.200*

Table 3 demonstrates that the FLCA scale obtained the value of the normality test 0.090, which is greater than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . As for the WTC scale obtained, the value of the normality test is 0.200, which is also greater than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . It can be concluded that these two scales have normal distribution as the values are greater than 0.05, suggesting that these scales are normally distributed to the participants. The normal distribution values for the FLCA scale and WTC scale were indicated in Figure 1 and Figure 2 based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

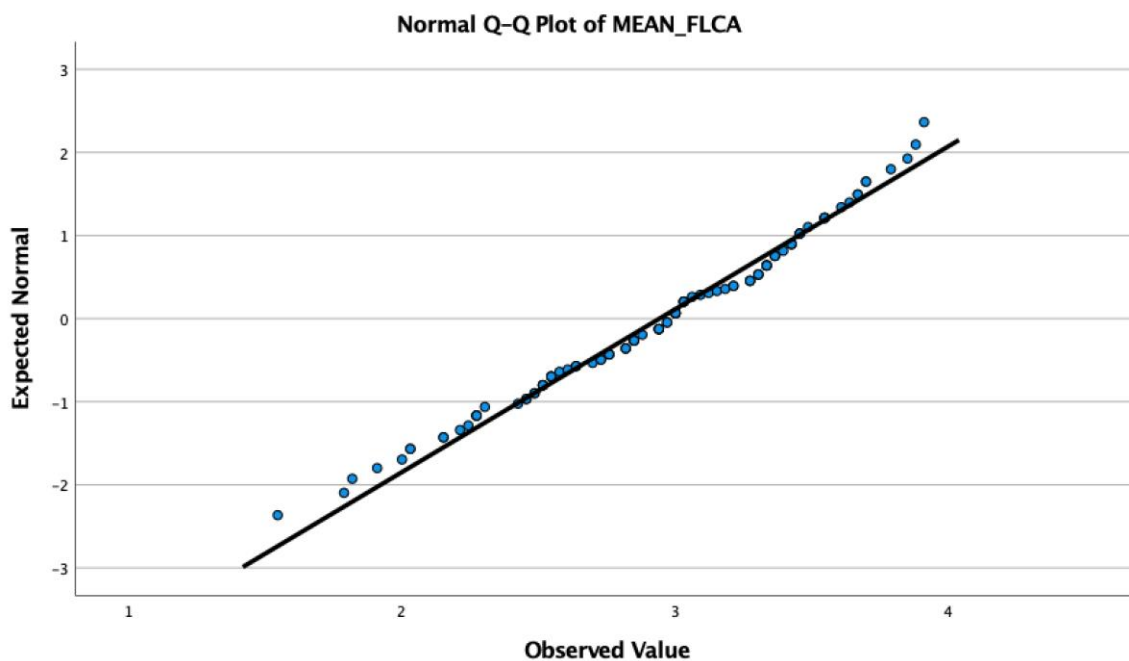


Figure 2: Normal Distribution- Kolmogorov-Smirnov for FLCA Scale

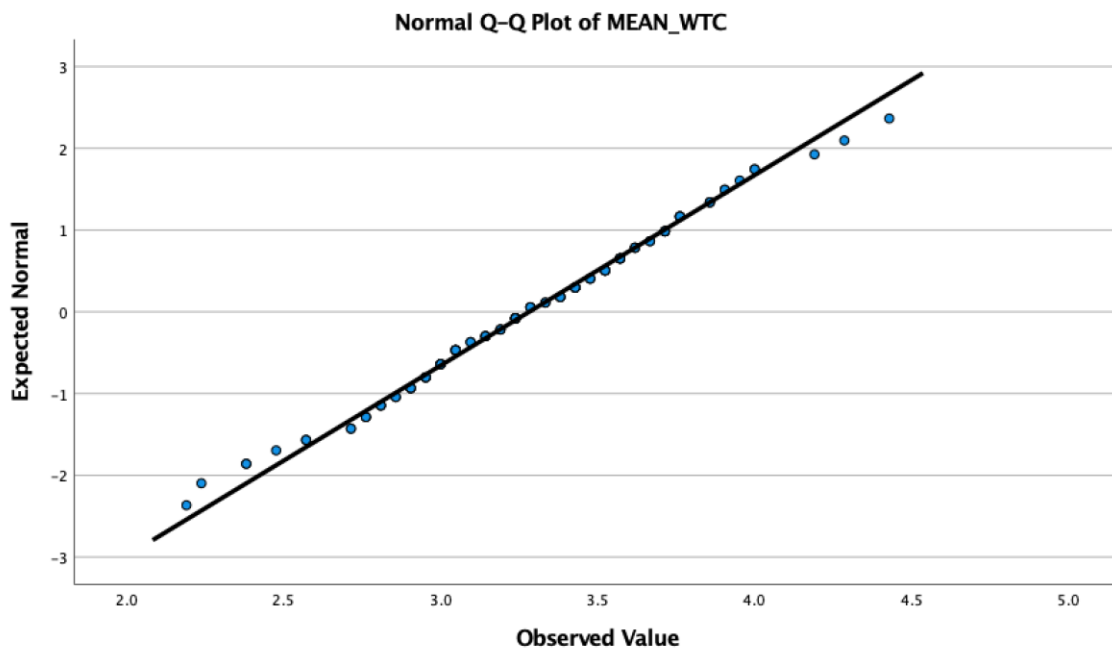


Figure 3: Normal Distribution- Kolmogorov-Smirnov for WTC Scale

### Objective 1: Level of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety among Students

To accomplish the first objective of this study, the researchers presented the FLCA scale with 33 items to the participants. The researchers then converted the responses into numerical data and used mean values and standard deviation to assess participants' anxiety levels in FL classrooms. The researchers next analyzed the mean values for each component of the FLCA to determine which had the greatest impact on language anxiety.

Table 4

*Level of FLCA*

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>MEAN_FLCA</b>	110	1.55	3.91	2.94	.509
<b>Valid N</b>	110				

According to table 4, the mean value of FLCA among students was 2.94, and the standard deviation was 0.509, with a sample size of 110 students. The mean value ranged from 1.55 to 3.91.

As shown from the preliminary data, it can be concluded that the level of language anxiety among students was moderate, as Al-Khasawneh (2016) suggested in his article on classifying the level of language anxiety in FL classrooms.

Table 5

*The Mean Value of FLCA Components*

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>MEAN_CA</b>	110	1.27	3.82	2.95	.53305
<b>MEAN_NE</b>	110	1.57	4.29	2.95	.71107
<b>MEAN_TA</b>	110	1.67	4.07	2.93	.48605
<b>Valid N</b>	110				

Table 5 illustrates the components of FLCA, including communication apprehension, fear of negative assessment, and test anxiety. N=110 is the sample size, and 110 is the valid N. The average scores for each component are fairly close, with test anxiety having a mean score of 2.93 and communication anxiety and negative evaluation both having mean ratings of 2.95.

The communication apprehension scale has a minimum score of 1.27 and a maximum score of 3.82, with a standard deviation of 0.53305. With a standard deviation of 0.71107, the minimum and maximum scores for a negative evaluation are 1.57 and 4.29, respectively. They are 1.67 and 4.07, respectively, for test anxiety, with a standard deviation of 0.48605. These figures imply that the participants' anxiety in all components of the FL classroom is moderate.

**Objective 2: The correlation between the level of FLCA and WTC**

The second objective of this study is to examine the relationship between FLCA and students' communication willingness. The researcher requested the participants to complete two scales: the FLCA and the WTC. After collecting the responses, the researchers transformed the data into mean values and employed Pearson correlation to get the research outcome. The suggested hypothesis for this test is that there is no association between students' level of FLCA and their level of WTC ( $h_0$ ) and that there is a correlation between students' level of FLCA and their level of WTC ( $h_1$ ). The test results are displayed as follows:

Table 6

*The Mean Value of FLCA and WTC*

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>MEAN_FLCA</b>	110	1.55	3.91	2.94	.50962
<b>MEAN_WTC</b>	110	2.19	4.43	3.28	.42943
<b>Valid N</b>	110				

Table 6 shows the FLCA and WTC mean values for foreign language classrooms. N=110 is the sample size, and 110 is the valid N. The average FLCA score is 2.94, with a 0.50962 standard deviation. Scores on the FLCA range from 1.55 to 3.91, respectively. The mean WTC score is

3.28, with the standard deviation is 0.42943 and 2.19, and 4.43 are the minimum and maximum WTC scores, respectively.

Table 7

*Pearson Correlation for FLCA and WTC in Comparison*

		MEAN_FLCA	MEAN_WTC
<b>MEAN_FLCA</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	-.385**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	110	110
<b>MEAN_WTC</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.385**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	110	110

Table 8

*Pearson Correlation for FLCA and WTC*

	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2- tailed)	95% Confidence Intervals (2-tailed) <sup>a</sup>	
			Lower	Upper
<b>MEAN_FLCA - MEAN_WTC</b>	-.385	<.001	-.534	-.213

Based on Tables 7 and 8, the Pearson correlation coefficient between Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC), with a sample size of 110 is  $-0.385^{**}$ . The correlation is statistically significant at  $p < .001$  (two-tailed), indicating a moderate negative relationship between FLCA and WTC. Therefore,  $H_0$  is rejected.

According to the data, there is a negative correlation between FLCA and WTC, which means that as FLCA increases, WTC decreases, and vice versa. This indicates that students who experience higher anxiety levels in the FL classroom are typically less willing to speak in the target language of that classroom.

### Discussion

The current study attempts to shed light on the correlation between FLCA and WTC among learners of Arabic as an FL. The first aim of this study is to investigate the level of FLCA among those learners. The result of FLCA scales by Horwitz showed that students' Arabic language anxiety is on the moderate level, with test anxiety as the most dominant aspect. These

findings are consistent with Miskam and Saidalvi (2019); Al-khasawneh (2016); Cagatay (2015), who found moderate level of anxiety reported by the participants in their studies. It can be assumed that this moderate level resulted from the participants' background, where their previous years of learning Arabic helped them reduce their anxiety level in learning Arabic as an FL at the university. As Afiqah (2015) concluded, this factor influences language anxiety. As the number of years of learning Arabic increases, the language anxiety level will decrease. However, although it seems that their anxiety level is acceptable, this level can somehow affect their performance in learning a foreign language by discouraging them from expressing their thoughts, influencing their willingness to communicate (Wu & Lin, 2014) as well as hindering the development of communicative competence in the long run (Cagatay, 2015).

As for the FLCA component, the result indicates that test anxiety is the most dominant aspect, followed by communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation. The reason could be that one of our participants' tests is role-play, which is considered their final test and contributes quite a high mark in their continuous assessment mark. Research (Fuji, 2021) concluded that WTC had a weak but negative correlation with language anxiety in form-focused activities such as role-plays and spontaneous speaking activities. In other words, the higher the learner's anxiety, the lower the learner's WTC. Specifically, (Ismail et al., 2020) found that the aspect of anxiety when facing oral Arabic tests attained the highest mean among students, which shows that students often undergo speaking anxiety when facing oral Arabic tests. Thus, it is important to identify the factors of test anxiety in learning a foreign language which is emphasized by Aydin et al (2020) that the anxiety test also has certain influences on the foreign language learning process and achievement.

The second research question of this study probed the correlation between FLCA and WTC. According to Pearson's Correlation Analysis results, there is a negative correlation between the two variables. Based on the research results, the higher level of anxiety in an Arabic language classroom, the more reluctant the learners will be to communicate in the class, and if their anxiety decreases, the more they are willing to communicate. The current study's findings are in accordance with the previous studies (Fujii, 2021; Rastegar & Karami, 2015; Tabataba'ian & Birjandi, 2012). Similarly, Baran-Lucarz (2014), who emphasised pronunciation anxiety, discovered that the more anxious the participants were about their pronunciation, the less eagerly they participated in speaking activities in the foreign language classroom.

## **Conclusion**

### **Summary of Findings and Discussion**

This study tried to determine anxiety levels among students in an Arabic classroom and how FLCA relates to the WTC among themselves. Based on the findings suggests that the majority of these undergraduates have moderate levels of anxiety. The dominant factor that contributes to this issue is test anxiety. Even though the anxiety level might seem acceptable, it is important for lecturers to find ways to reduce the anxiety level because of its effect on students' performance. We suggest that lecturers can help the students in the aspect of test preparation by identifying the factors that contribute to test anxiety, especially tests related to oral and speaking skills.

It was also discovered that there is a negative correlation between FLCA and the WTC, which indicates that a high level of FLCA results in low participation of the students in communication throughout the Arabic class. Therefore, it is obvious that students' anxiety

affects their communication in class. Hence, if the instructors aim to increase students' WTC in the classroom, they must acknowledge their students' anxiety and try to reduce it by encouraging them to participate in the class's speaking activities. It is suggested for future researchers to investigate how anxiety among learners in Arabic foreign language classes can be reduced. This study will have practical implications for instructors of Arabic language and curriculum designers as they look to improve the effectiveness of Arabic language communication and eventually promote this communication universally.

### **Pedagogical Implications and Suggestion for Future Research**

This study can help teachers to understand students' anxiety among students of third language in tertiary education, which in turn can make the teachers find ways to reduce the students' anxiety in the classroom. Eventually, they can overcome their anxiety, become more confident and able to communicate better in the classroom. Furthermore, it will have practical implications for instructors of Arabic language and curriculum designers as they look up to improve the effectiveness of Arabic language communication. It is suggested for future researchers to investigate how anxiety among learners in Arabic foreign language classes can be reduced to help learners get rid of it. Besides, the study can also serve as a guide for the instructors to create a more supportive and encouraging environment.

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