

**Willingness to Communicate in the Dutch Bilingual Education Context**

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Masters' Thesis

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June 17, 2020

### Abstract

The English language holds a special place in the Netherlands, functioning more as a second language than as a foreign language (Edwards, 2014). This is reflected in the growing number of bilingual schools in the Netherlands (Messelink, 2018). A total of 116 fifth grade VWO (pre-university) high school students participated in the study, from bilingual (BE) and non-bilingual education (non-BE) streams. Using a multiple regression analysis, it was investigated how various independent variables foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA), social and private foreign language enjoyment (social FLE, private FLE), students' attitude towards English, students' attitude towards their English teacher, the frequency of the teacher's English use, their self-assessment of language skill, and their language skill compared to peers predicted willingness to communicate (WTC), comparing BE and non-BE students. It was found that WTC and students' self-assessment of language skill was significantly higher for BE students than for non-BE students. Additionally, FLCA was significantly lower for BE students. The level of WTC for the BE students was unexpectedly high, resulting in a ceiling effect in the distribution. Because of the non-normal distribution, it was decided not to perform a regression analysis for the BE population. For the non-BE students, attitude towards the English language did not significantly predict WTC, which strengthens the status of English as second language in the Netherlands. Only social FLE significantly predicted WTC for the non-BE students. As such, teachers should strive to provide a safe, predictable, and positive classroom atmosphere.

*Keywords:* Willingness to communicate, foreign language anxiety, private foreign language enjoyment, social foreign language enjoyment, self-assessment

## Introduction

In the Netherlands, the English language is ingrained in almost all facets of Dutch society to the point that it is “scarcely possible to find a Dutch citizen under the age of 50 who does not speak English” (Edwards, 2014, p. 77). As such, English is no longer regarded as a foreign language; it has reached the status of a second language (Edwards, 2014). This new status is reflected in the Dutch education system, as “all levels of education in the Netherlands have been characterised by an increase in English” (Edwards, 2014, p. 38). Recent years have seen a vast increase of introducing bilingual education (BE) in secondary education, which according to Elzenga and de Graaff (2015) mirrors the weight that is placed upon English in the Netherlands. Over 130 high schools in the Netherlands offer BE, and that number continues to grow (Messelink, 2018). This form of education is based on the didactic principles of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to teach non-language related subjects in a foreign language (Denman et al., 2018). By teaching a significant part of the subject matter in a foreign language, the chosen foreign language is acquired during the students’ non-language related lessons (De Graaff, 2013). For almost all these schools, this chosen foreign language is English, to the point that all bilingual education is generally assumed to be English bilingual education (De Graaff, 2013).

This focus on English is also reflected in the Dutch student population. Compared to students from other European countries<sup>1</sup>, relatively many students in the Netherlands perceive English as being more important than other foreign languages (Busse, 2017). Dutch students also report feeling more talented in English and less talented in other languages, and comparatively many Dutch students perceived English to be easier than learning other foreign languages (Busse, 2017). However, reports on Dutch students’ experience of L2 use in class differ. For instance, one study reports that L2 use is considered a challenge by students (Haijma, 2013). Similarly, students report that if they felt that they could not express themselves in English, that they did not enjoy

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<sup>1</sup> Busse surveyed students from four European countries on their attitudes towards English as a foreign language: Bulgaria, Germany, Spain, and The Netherlands.

speaking, and that they did not want to be asked to speak for fear of miscommunication (Bogaski, 2019; Hajima, 2013). However, students also scored low on being scared to speak English for fear of making mistakes, with only a small group of students finding it embarrassing to make a mistake (Bogaski, 2019). Similarly, while some students reported that they did not find it scary or challenging to speak English in the classroom, they did think of speaking as 'spannend', which can be interpreted as a scary kind of exciting or suspenseful (Bogaski, 2019). It seems that the Dutch students' relationship with speaking English as a foreign language in the classroom might not be entirely clear.

Over the past two decades, SLA research has focused on what drives a person to speak in a foreign language. The construct of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) was first defined as "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2" (MacIntyre, et al., 1998, p. 547), or more recently as "the intention to initiate communication, given a choice" (MacIntyre et al., 2001, p. 369). This intention is regarded as the final psychological step before the actual use of the L2 (MacIntyre, 2007). With the current pedagogical shift from more traditional instructional approaches to communicative language teaching (CLT), improving learners' WTC is of greater importance, as those with a strong WTC may fare better in a learning context that focuses on learning through communication (Ellis, 2004). However, not just CLT contexts, but all variations of FL classroom contexts can benefit from higher WTC in students, for student silence can be detrimental to both student and teacher motivation and is easily associated with learner disengagement (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018). As such, increasing WTC is considered to be a major pedagogical goal for L2 teaching (MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010). It has even been suggested that language programs should be evaluated on the degree in which they stimulate WTC in students (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Many studies have been conducted examining how various factors influence L2 WTC in an EFL classroom context. One such variable is the affective variable of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA), first defined by Horwitz (1986) as the anxiety reaction experienced as a result of the "language learning situation" (p. 125). FLCA has been found to be one of the major factors negatively

influencing student WTC (Cao, 2011; Denies et al., 2015; Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018; Khajavy et al., 2018; MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010; Peng & Woodrow, 2010). A related factor is Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE), a concept that captures the positive emotions of learning a foreign language, which has been found to have a consistent positive influence on WTC (Cao, 2011; Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018; Joe et al., 2017; Khajavy et al., 2017; Peng & Woodrow, 2010). Other factors that have been investigated are motivation (Ma et al., 2019; Peng & Woodrow, 2010), volatility (MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010), attitudes towards the FL and the teacher, the teacher's FL use, the students' language level and their relative standing of this language level compared to their peers (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018).

However, almost all studies have been conducted in foreign language contexts where English is used as the foreign language. Furthermore, research on WTC has been mostly limited to Asian contexts (Cao, 2011; Joe et al., 2017; Khajavy et al., 2017; Ma et al. 2019; Munezane, 2015; Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Teimouri, 2017; Zarrinabadi & Abdi, 2011). In Europe, a small number of studies investigated WTC as a foreign language in Spain (Dewaele, 2019) and in England (Dewaele, et al., 2017; Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018). In addition, some studies have been conducted in Pakistan (Ghani & Azhar, 2017), and while English is an official Language in Pakistan, some linguists still consider Pakistan to be an EFL learning environment (Bukhari & Cheng, 2017). It seems few studies have been conducted on how various variables influenced WTC as a second language, which leaves a major part of the WTC construct unexplored. There have been two studies which explored WTC for French as a second language: one in Canada (MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010), and one in the Flemish region in Belgium (Denies et al., 2015). The Belgium context is similar to the Canadian context, as intergroup attitudes between the Dutch-speaking Flemish and the French-speaking Walloons are a source of ideological and sociolinguistic conflict within Belgium (Blommaert, 2011). This kind of interaction is integrated in multiple layers of the WTC pyramid model, which was originally designed for contexts such as these (MacIntyre et al., 1998). For the Flemish secondary school context, Denies et al. (2015) indeed found that the French L2 learning adheres to the WTC models.

Dewaele & Dewaele (2018) note “that relative influence of the different layers may differ according to the geographical, political and historical contexts” (p. 27). It is surprising then, that not more studies have been done in the European context which differs significantly from the Asian and Canadian contexts. Denies et al. (2015) argue that the European context is a fertile ground for L2 WTC research, as multilingualism is one of the key foci of the European Union (Krzyżanowski & Wodak 2011). Moreover, to develop an overarching WTC model, it is vital to understand how students in all contexts manage to “cross the rubicon” from silence to speech (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 567). To this end, an exploration of L2 WTC in the Dutch educational context, with its affinity for English (Edwards, 2014), should provide valuable insights into how the various factors function in a different ESL context.

This present study provides a quantitative analysis of the English L2 WTC of 116 Dutch secondary high school students. This analysis will explore how the predictive influence of the variables from the 48 BE-students differ from those of the 68 non-BE students. First, the theoretical framework will present the WTC model proposed by Macintyre et al. (1998), before providing an overview of the recent research into WTC. Afterwards, it will focus on research into both FLCA and FLE. An overview of the Dutch pedagogical context is provided after which the research questions are presented, before going on to explain the methodology of the study. The results will be presented in the results section and will finally be interpreted in the discussion section. Following the discussion, pedagogical implications of the findings are provided. The study concludes with a critical look into the methodology with suggestions for future research.

## **Theoretical Framework**

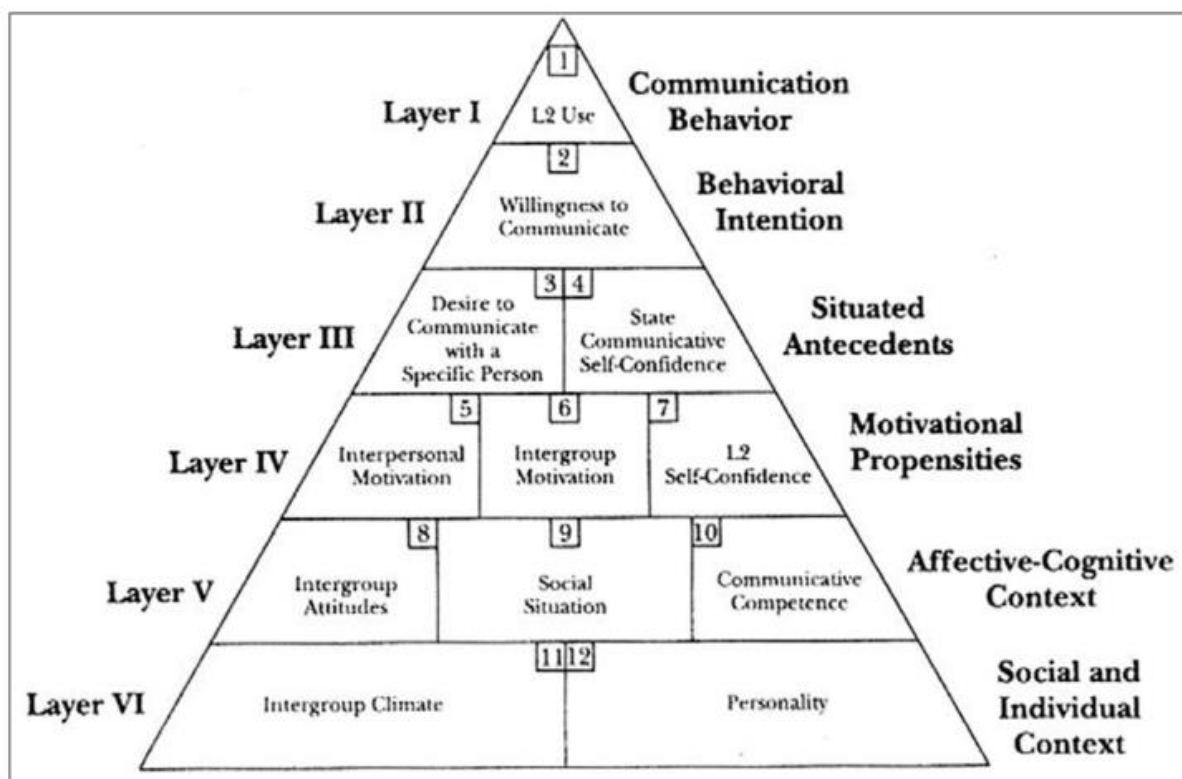
### **Willingness to Communicate**

MacIntyre and Charos (1996) first conducted a study investigating the WTC construct in an L2 context, with the goal of identifying predictor variables, drawn from Gardner’s (1985) socio-educational model of language learning and MacIntyre’s (1994) model of L1 willingness to communicate. This study was conducted in the Canadian context: using psychometric instruments,

ninety-two Anglophone adults learning introductory-level conversational French in evening classes were asked to self-report on various predictor L2 variables, such as perceived competence, motivation, and willingness to communicate. Based on this study, MacIntyre et al. (1998) proposed a heuristic model designed to explain individual and contextual factors for L2 WTC, ultimately explaining and predicting L2 communication (see figure 1). The Pyramid design aims to capture relative distal influence of the various factors which impact the process to initiate communication in the L2 (MacIntyre et al., 2019), starting at its most enduring causes at the bottom of the pyramid, to the more immediate factors in the middle, finally reaching the point of communication at the top of the pyramid.

**Figure 1**

*The WTC Pyramid Model designed by MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1998)*



Layer VI at the base of the pyramid involves the interaction of the societal factors and the stable personality characteristics of the speaker. These personality characteristics are mostly regarded as genetic and outside of the speaker's control. The societal factors refer to the intergroup climate of

the L1 and L2 community. Deweale & Dewaele (2018) note that ethnicity and intergroup relations play an influential role in the Canadian context for which the model was originally designed, which might not necessarily be applicable to contexts where intergroup relations are perceived as less antagonistic: when the target language is not perceived as a threat the effect of the bottom layer of the pyramid may be much less pronounced. Intergroup relations may be even less influential in the Dutch context, where English as language has been almost completely disconnected from the English culture, and instead holds the status of a lingua franca (Edwards, 2014).

The next layer (V) is concerned with enduring variables that are specific to the individual and their general attitudes, prior history, and motives. Box 9 in this layer describes variables that are less likely to be influenced by a specific social encounter, but are more influenced by the overarching type of social situation that the speaker might find themselves in. Next, box 8 describes how intergroup attitudes are affected by a combination of the speaker's motivation to learn the L2, the speaker's desire to interact or be part of the L2 community, also known as integrativeness, and the speaker's fear of assimilation with the L2 community, which is the fear that one will lose their feeling of identification and involvement with the L1 community by acquiring a L2.

MacIntyre et al. (1998) describe integrativeness and fear of assimilation as two sides of the same coin: one side dampens and the other facilitates L2 communication. This interplay can have drastic effects in intercultural contexts consisting of majority and minority language groups. In short, members of the minority group may feel protective of their cultural and linguistic heritage, resulting in an overall fear of assimilation. In contrast, members of the majority group are less likely to feel that their cultural identity is threatened by learning the language of a minority group. Edwards (2014) notes that especially among the younger Dutch population "the national identity is no longer the cornerstone of an individual's identity; instead, a sense of European or even global identity has emerged" (p. 205). Additionally, Edwards (2014) describes how a vast majority of Dutch people are relatively competent in English and take pride in this fact. This has caused the development of an 'English-knowing' identity. As such, Dutch high school students seem less likely to want to interact or



be part of a community of an English-speaking country like The United Kingdom. Instead, the construct of integrativeness might need to be reinterpreted for the Dutch context to reflect this shift in Dutch identity. Yashima (2012) offers an alternative to integrativeness as the learner's degree of 'international posture', which reflects their "attitudes toward the international community, interest in international vocation, and the tendency to approach and communicate with intercultural partners" (p. 123). Because knowing and speaking English does not conflict with the Dutch identity, Dutch students are not likely to have a fear of assimilation. It could even be possible that among certain subgroups of Dutch people an inability to communicate in English might cause alienation from the group. A final variable of layer V is the speaker's perceived situationally dependent communicative competence. MacIntyre et al. (1998) warn that "WTC will be a function of how the individual perceives his or her competence rather than of its objective development" (p. 555).

In layer IV, "motivational propensities" describe the more variable and highly specific individual factors that lead to a speaker's decision to initiate communication. It describes the more emotional factors like personality traits such as introversion and extroversion, a desire to communicate with someone speaking a particular language and L2 self-confidence. The next layer III consists of the precursors of WTC itself: the desire to communicate with a specific person, and the 'state self-confidence' of the speaker, which refers to confidence related to specific contexts (Vealey, 1986). Layer II represents the speaker's "behavioral intention" to speak, but which does not necessarily require the speaking itself. For example, MacIntyre et al. (1998) describe a classroom situation in which multiple students have raised their hands indicating that they would like to answer a question or speak to the class in some way or other, effectively "commit[ting] themselves to a course of action . . . given the opportunity" (p. 547). In such a situation, it is not uncommon that only some of those students will be speaking. Finally, L2 use is achieved in Layer I. The pyramid shape was chosen because it illustrates how quickly various factors interact and converge to influence the decision to communicate (MacIntyre et al., 2019).

This model considers the WTC construct as a function of stable trait-level and situation-specific variables. However, as an alternative to WTC as a trait-level variable, MacIntyre (2007) proposed a dynamic approach to the WTC construct as a volitional (freely chosen) process:

If we approach the question using a very narrow time frame, that is, if we examine the process of creating a WTC at a specific time with a specific person, we see a fascinating, complex process. The longer term patterns have a role to play, but the interplay of the features of the situation with the psychology of the individual speaker takes on a primary role in this paradigm. (p. 573)

MacIntyre et al. (2019) note that the trait and dynamic approaches serve different pedagogical goals; the shorter term dynamic approach is applicable to the moment to moment act of teaching in the classroom, while the long term approach is helpful for a trait-like perspective on the scale of a semester or for increasing WTC within a specific assignment. The focus in this study lies on the trait-level WTC within a context of the classroom.

While MacIntyre et al. (1998) consider how L2 WTC would function in a classroom context, the model does not limit itself to educational contexts. However, MacIntyre & Doucette (2010) found that a willingness to speak in the classroom is predictive of language use outside the classroom. Thus, to ensure that the definition of WTC is suitable to the EFL classroom, this study adopts Ma et al's (2019) definition of WTC as "a willingness to enter into communication in a spoken way in the language classroom with a person or persons, using a L2" (p. 34).

Taken together, Dewaele & Dewaele (2018) and MacIntyre et al. (2019) have provided a comprehensive overview of the literature on the workings of WTC, and as such this study will primarily discuss the most recent studies.

Dewaele & Dewaele (2018) compared 11 learner internal and external independent variables situated at various levels of the pyramid model among a total of 189 secondary school pupils from two schools based in Greater London. A multiple regression analysis (MRA) was used to identify the best predictors of WTC. The selection of investigated factors was unique in the sense

that it was the first study to link the three concepts of private foreign language enjoyment (FLE), social FLE and foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) to WTC. Other variables included language level, teacher's FL use, student's attitude towards the teacher, relative social standing among students and age. FLCA was the strongest predictor which negatively affected WTC. The level of mastery of the FL was the next strong predictor, followed by teacher's FL use and the student's attitude towards the FL, their social FLE, and their age.

Ma et al. (2019) applied mixed methods such as MRA to investigate the relationship between Thai university learners' English learning motivation and their L2 WTC in the EFL classroom. Through questionnaires, a total of 126 students self-reported a high motivation to learn English and an intermediate WTC. Additionally, it was found that Thai students' instrumental motivation is a strong significant predictor (21%) of WTC, while its integrative counterpart only predicted 16.3% of the variance in L2 WTC. The researchers note that this might be specific to this sample of students as they are all science students who might have more instrumental than integrative reasons to learn English.

Shirvan et al. (2019) presented a meta-analysis on three high-evidence predictors of trait-level L2 WTC: perceived competence, language anxiety, and motivation. The analysis found that perceived communicative competence was most highly correlated with WTC, followed by motivation and anxiety with correlations of .48, .29, and .37 respectively. Shirvan et al. (2019) note that the variation between studies indicates that these correlates are likely affected by "a large number of learner and contextual variables [. . .] such as intergroup processes, personality, self-related cognition, contextual variation in opportunities to use the L2, instructional practices, political or demographic trends, and so forth" (p. 24). The influence of context on the effect of certain factors on WTC is illustrated by Dewaele (2019) who found that FLCA was the strongest predictor of classroom WTC among 210 Spanish EFL learners, explaining 30% of variance. In contrast with earlier research by Dewaele & Dewaele (2018), the findings suggested that attitudes towards the FL explained no unique variance, which could be explained by a difference in motivation. For the

Spanish EFL learners, the motivation for learning English might come from wanting to use English as a lingua franca, compared to the learners of French as a FL in England who might be more motivated by an interest in France and its culture (Dewaele, 2019). As such, context has shown to be an inseparable aspect of investigating WTC and its underlying variables.

### **Foreign Language Anxiety & Foreign Language Enjoyment**

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) was first pioneered by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) who described it as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128). According to Horwitz et al. (1986), FLCA is a specific type of anxiety that learners experience while performing a task unique to the foreign language classroom. It has been well established that FLCA has detrimental effects on WTC (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018; Woodrow, 2006; Wu & Lin, 2014) and on language learning in general (Dewaele & Al-Saraj, 2015; Thompson & Sylvén, 2015). For a more comprehensive review of FLCA see Horwitz (2010) who compiled a curated timeline of 44 papers that show how language anxiety affects learning and communication.

A newer construct compared to FLCA is Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE), which was only recently introduced by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) to capture the positive emotions related to foreign language learning. The authors measured FLE and FLCA among 1746 FL learners and concluded that, while FLE and FLCA are moderately negatively correlated, they do not overlap completely. It was found that they are not opposite ends of the same spectrum, but more akin to two separate but related constructs. They also found that learners appear to experience more FLE than FLCA. Dewaele & MacIntyre (2016) make a distinction between social language enjoyment and private language enjoyment, the former indicating a shared emotional experience of the class, and the latter indicating an internal sense of enjoyment in the face of language learning challenges. It was found that foreign language teachers have a significant impact on FLE (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016). Dewaele et al. (2019) found that among 210 Spanish former and current EFL learners, close to 20% of the variance in FLE was predicted by teacher characteristics such as teacher’s friendliness and

a teacher's foreign accent (Dewale et al., 2019). Additionally, FLCA seemed to be correlated with younger teachers, very strict teachers and teachers who used the FL less in class. Dewaele et al. (2019) argue that FLE seems to be less related to FLCA and to be more dependent on teachers' pedagogical skills.

FLCA has been found to be highly negatively correlated with perceived self-confidence, such that some studies have considered the two constructs as underlying one latent variable named *communication confidence* (Clément et al., 2003; Ghonsooly et al., 2012). However, the degree to which these factors play a role in WTC seems to shift depending on the context. The meta-analysis by Shirvan et al. (2019) found that self-perceived communicative competence had a stronger correlation with WTC than language anxiety. They suggest that "the impact of communication anxiety and perceived competence on one's WTC may be associated to some extent with the learning context or language experience" (p. 6). However, in a study on the effects of language immersion on WTC, Baker and MacIntyre (2000) compared FLCA with the speaker's perceived communicative competence, and found that of the two variables FLCA had a stronger correlation to WTC in the immersion group, and that perceived competence had a stronger correlation to WTC in the non-immersion group. This is in line with findings by Yashima (2012) who found that in contexts with more opportunities for L2 use, anxiety played a larger role. In contrast, some researchers (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009; Thompson & Sylvén, 2015) suggest that with a CLIL-approach, students are less likely to feel anxious because the focus is shifted from the language itself to actively doing something with the language. It is theorized this would make the language acquisition feel accidental, and therefore take away some of the anxiety associated with it.

The effects of CLIL education have not always been consistent in all contexts, but most findings confirm that the CLIL-approach is not detrimental to content learning (de Zarobe, 2015). In a literature review on CLIL-studies, de Zarobe found that CLIL generally increases learner confidence and raises motivation but warned that these effects vary based on learner traits and educational contexts. For instance, Simons et al. (2019) conducted a study including 225 pupils in Flanders and

found that CLIL had a very slight diminishing effect on FLCA over the course of the first year. It must be noted that for some pupils only two lessons were changed to CLIL lessons. While only a slight quantitative effect was found, in interviews both teachers and parents reported significant positive changes in the pupils' communicative attitude and behaviour. Menezes & Juan-Garau (2014) found more significant differences in the Spanish high school context. They showed that CLIL-students' WTC was higher than that of non-CLIL students. This higher WTC remained stable in both English classes and non-language related classes, which suggest part of the WTC construct is a stable personality component such as self-esteem or perceived competence in the FL (Menezes & Juan-Garau, 2014).

Knell & Chi (2012) conducted a study including a total of 175 Chinese primary students in both immersion and non-immersion English tracks, finding significantly lower language anxiety combined with higher WTC in the immersion track. However, students from higher grades reported higher levels of FLA which authors attribute to increased academic stress put on students to perform. Somers and Llinares (2018) conducted a study on two bi-lingual language tracks in Madrid. They found that students in the high intensity track reported significantly higher FLCA compared to students in the lower-intensity track (Somers and Llinares, 2018). It seems then that the beneficial effects on anxiety that could be provided by CLIL education might simultaneously be diminished by the increased academic expectations of a prestigious educational track or by the overall increased expectations of higher grades.

What emerges from the literature is that the road to increasing WTC is complex and highly context dependent. The positive influence of CLIL is promising, but its effects have not been found to be consistent across studies. Shirvan et al. (2019) argue that the "language learning context can affect WTC and its correlation with other variables" (p. 25) and therefore call for more studies to examine the role of the language learning context. No research so far has investigated the predictive variables of WTC in the Dutch Bilingual Education (BE) and non-Bilingual Education (non-BE) contexts. Because of the unique relationship the Dutch have with the English language, an

investigation into these factors might provide valuable insights into the workings of WTC. That is what this study aims to do.

## **The Present Study**

### **The Dutch Educational Context**

English is the only compulsory foreign modern language subject in all streams and years of Dutch secondary education. It is one of the three official 'core subjects' alongside the Dutch language and Mathematics ("Engels – achtergrond," 2019). In the final year, to do well on final exams, students are expected to have a minimum proficiency in English using the CEFR as guidance. For the VWO level, students are expected to have a B2 level proficiency in all skills but reading which is required to be at a C1 level ("Welk ERK-niveau," n.d.). When a school chooses to provide bilingual education at the VWO level, at least 50% of the non-language lessons must have English as the instructional language in the lower forms (the first three years), and a minimum of 1150 study hours in the upper forms. To ensure students are adequately prepared for their final exams, which are held in Dutch only, all exam subjects except for English in the last two or three years are taught in Dutch. Most schools also provide additional international activities like student exchanges, which put the focus of English in an international context ("Veelgestelde vragen," n.d.). Students who wish to pursue a university education will likely require English as 20% of bachelors are taught completely in English, while almost 70% of masters are taught in English ("Engels in het onderwijs," n.d.).

### **Attitude to English**

Busse (2017) explored students' attitudes toward learning English and found that Dutch students showed relatively little interest in other foreign languages compared to English. The attitude towards their English teacher was especially impactful on the Dutch students' attitude towards English, and compared to students from other European countries, Dutch students barely remarked positively on teachers of other foreign languages. In addition, unlike students in other European contexts, Dutch students expressed feeling interested and engaged with English "irrespective of whether they enjoy English learning in the classroom" (p. 578, Busse, 2017). Similarly, Bogaski (2019)

found that students considered speaking in class less fun than speaking English outside the classroom. Their interest in English appeared to be derived from a high contact with English media outside the classroom (Busse, 2017). Edwards (2014) found that the vast majority of young people, in addition to learning English at school, acquire English through media (books, TV, etc.) and through their interactions with foreign friends and acquaintances. There appears to be a widespread assumption in the Netherlands that English is part of everyday life in the Netherlands (Edwards, 2014), which might result in a base positive attitude towards English. As such, a student's attitude towards English might thus not be a significant predictor for a student's willingness to communicate.

### **Pedagogical Relevance**

Because the Dutch context appears dissimilar from other contexts, the factors on Dutch students' willingness to communicate might also have different impacts. Knowing which factors have the greatest effect on WTC can be immensely helpful to EFL teachers in the Netherlands, as it will allow them to focus their efforts on improving those variables which have the most benefit to students. Moreover, for students learning English in bilingual education, as their relationship with English changes, certain factors might become relatively less or more impactful on students' WTC. For example, the attitude towards English as a language might be relatively less important for BE students. Knowing this enables EFL teachers in bilingual education to prioritize the variables that have the most impact. This study aims to provide insight into how certain factors function within the Dutch context, both within the bilingual educational context and the non-bilingual educational context.

### **Research questions**

In this study the following research questions will be investigated:

1. To what extent do the independent variables and WTC differ between the Bilingual Educational context and the non-Bilingual Educational context?
2. Which variables are the best predictors of WTC in the Dutch high school context in the Bilingual Educational context and the non-Bilingual Educational context?



3. To what extent does the influence of the variables differ between the Bilingual Educational context and the non-Bilingual Educational context?

### **Methodology**

This study originally meant to replicate the methodology of the study done by Dewaele and Dewaele (2018) with the intention of facilitating comparison between the different classroom contexts.

However, a few deviations have been made to better suit the Dutch context and the dataset.

As such, this section will begin with an outline of the methodology of Dewaele and Dewaele (2018).

Following that, it will be explained how the participants for this study were selected, after which the research instruments used in this study are explained in detail. Next, for each research question it is explained which statistical tool was most suitable for answering the research questions. Finally, it will be explained how the validity of the assumptions of the statistical tools about the data were checked.

#### **Dewaele and Dewaele's Methodology**

Dewaele and Dewaele (2018) set out to test if and to what extent various independent variables significantly predicted the dependent variable WTC. The independent variables investigated were private FLE, social FLE, self-assessment of language Level, relative standing among peers, FLCA, teacher's FL use, attitude towards FL, attitude towards the teacher, test results, age, and the number of languages spoken. The authors used single 5-point Likert items for the following variables: language level, relative standing among peers, attitude towards FL, and the attitude towards the teacher. 5-point Likert scales were used for the following continuous variables: private FLE, social FLE, FLCA and WTC. The reliability of these scales was measured using the Cronbach alpha statistic, which showed high internal consistency for all scales.

Next, the authors confirmed that the dependent variable WTC was normally distributed. First, the authors used a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test which showed the data were slightly skewed toward the high end of the scale. However, after drawing a Q-Q plot to visually inspect the distribution the authors decided that the distribution was close enough to normal to use the

parametric tools. Next, a preliminary Pearson correlation was done to identify which independent variables were significantly linked to WTC. Next, it was confirmed by using the variance of inflation factor (VIF) that the intercorrelations between the independent variables were low enough to avoid multicollinearity in the regression analysis. The VIF was lower than 1.77, which does not exceed the often-used cut-off value of 5 for detecting multicollinearity (Sheather, 2009). Finally, an MRA was used with WTC as the dependent variable to find a significant regression equation with the predictive independent variables. An MRA is used to create a regression model when more than one factor influences an outcome (Sheather, 2009).

### **Participants**

The students who participated in this study all came from a high school located near Utrecht. The school has a certification for bilingual education by the Dutch organisation for internationalization in education (Nuffic). The English department of the school was approached with the question of whether the school would be willing to participate in the study. After the department approved the study, an anonymous online questionnaire using Google Forms was sent to the contact person of the school who distributed the link to the individual teachers. The questionnaire was accompanied with the following instructions for the students:

- *Read the questions carefully before answering.*
- *The questions are completely anonymous, so please answer them as honestly as possible.*
- *Please do not discuss the questions while answering.*
- *The first question will ask you if your mother language is English. If your mother language is English, the questionnaire will finish automatically.*

A total of 116 fifth grade VWO (pre-university) high school students participated in the study. Of the 116 students, 68 followed English Bilingual Education and 48 did not. For the purposes of this study they will be considered as two separate populations (BE and non-BE). The non-BE population included 18 males and 29 females, ranging from 15 to 18 years old. Four students had an additional nationality next to Dutch, none of them from an English-speaking country. One student

had an additional non-English first language other than Dutch. The BE population included 38 males, 29 females, and one student who chose not to include their gender. The ages ranged from 15 to 18 years old. Four students had an additional nationality next to Dutch, none of them from an English-speaking country. One student had an additional non-English first language next to Dutch.

### **Research Instruments**

The full questionnaire used in this study can be found in Appendix A. For this study, 8 independent variables were selected from Dewaele and Dewaele's (2018) study to determine their influence on WTC in the Dutch context:

- Private Foreign Language Enjoyment (Private FLE)
- Social Foreign Language Enjoyment (Social FLE)
- Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA)
- Attitude towards English
- Attitude towards the English teacher
- Frequency of teacher's English use
- Self-assessment of language skill
- Language skill compared to peers

The questionnaire started with a demographics section from which the information in the previous section was retrieved. The questionnaire continued with an item asking students about their own perceived level of English on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "beginner level" (1) to "advanced level" (5). Next, students compared their own English skill level with their peers in their class using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "far below average" (1) to "far above average" (5).

Students were asked to rate their attitude towards the English language on a 5-point Likert scale. Possible answers ranged from "very negatively" (1) to "very positively" (5). Next, they were asked how satisfied they were with their English teacher using a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from "very unsatisfied" (1) to "very satisfied" (5). The next question asked students to rate the frequency

of use of English in class by the FL teacher using a 5-point Likert scale, with answers ranging from “(Almost) Never” (1) to “(Almost) Always” (5).

Next, the students were asked to answer 9 items for the FLE scale, 8 items for the FLCA scale, and 9 items for the WTC scale. The scales were originally in English, but they were translated to Dutch to reduce any friction and misunderstanding on the part of the students. The questionnaire was reviewed by peers to ensure legibility and clarity.

### ***FLE Scale***

The FLE scale was directly extracted from the study by Dewaele and Dewaele (2018). The included items reflected the two FLE dimensions: four items for Social FLE and five items for Private FLE. The original scale included six items for private FLE, but one item was accidentally excluded. The students were asked to what extent they agreed with the statements about their current English lessons. They responded using a 5-point Likert scale with answers ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5). Items included statements such as “In class, I feel proud of my accomplishments” and “It’s a positive environment”. Items were positively phrased. A scale analysis of the Social FLE and Private FLE scales revealed acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach alpha = .698 and .754 respectively). The item “We laugh a lot” from the Social FLE scale was excluded to slightly improve the reliability from the scale to .719.

### ***FLCA Scale***

The Foreign Language Anxiety Scale was designed to reflect physical symptoms of anxiety, nervousness, and lack of confidence (Horwitz et al., 1986). This study used the same list as the one used by Dewaele and Dewaele (2018). Students were asked to respond to statements that indicated anxiety such as “even if I am well prepared for FL class, I feel anxious about it”. Possible answers ranged from “completely disagree” (1) to “completely agree” (5). Two items were phrased to indicate low anxiety and six were phrased to indicate high anxiety. The low anxiety items were reverse coded so that high scores reflect high anxiety for all items on this measure. A scale analysis of the whole dataset revealed high internal consistency (Cronbach alpha = .839). Finally, one reverse

coded item “I don’t worry about making mistakes in English class” was excluded from the scale to improve the reliability of the scale to .877.

### ***WTC Scale***

The WTC scale used in this study was adapted from Peng and Woodrow (2010), who adapted their scale from Weaver (2005). Unlike the scale used by Dewaele and Dewaele (2018), which partly measures WTC in L2 contexts outside the classroom (e.g. being an actor in a play, or playing a game in English), the questions adapted from Peng and Woodrow measure WTC specifically in the L2 classroom context. Students were asked how willing they were to speak in different classroom contexts using a 6-point likert scale with answers ranging from very unwilling (1) to very willing (6). The original scale contained 10 items and was designed for the Chinese EFL classroom context. For this study, one of the items was excluded because it was not something that would generally be asked of students in the Dutch EFL classroom context (i.e. giving a short self-introduction without notes to the class in English). Finally, one item asked how willing students were to give a short speech in English to the class about their hometown with the help of notes. To adapt this to the Dutch EFL classroom context, it was changed to “I am willing to give a short presentation in English to the class with notes.” A scale analysis of the whole dataset revealed high internal consistency (Cronbach alpha = .820).

### ***Analysis***

First, outliers were identified in the data as these can distort relationships and significance tests (Osborne & Waters, 2002). One student in the non-BE population responded with “Very unwilling” to all nine items resulting in a WTC score of 1. This outlier respondent was excluded from the sample to satisfy the assumption of normal distribution which is required for regression analysis (Osborne & Waters, 2002). No other outliers were found.

### ***Research Question 1***

To test for the differences between the BE and the Non-BE groups McKnight and Najab (2010) suggest two tests: the independent samples t-test or the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test. The

t-test requires the variable compared to be measured at the interval or ratio level and to be normally distributed. In contrast, the Mann-Whitney U test can be used to test for differences between two groups on an ordinal variable with no specific distribution (McKnight & Najab, 2010). As such, the Mann-Whitney U test was used for the ordinal variables in this study (Attitude English, Attitude Teacher, Teacher's English use. Self-assessment English skill, Compared English skill). To determine the distribution for the continuous variables (WTC, Social FLE, Private FLE, and FLCA), histograms were made (see figures 2 to 5). The histograms show that WTC and FLCA are not normally distributed for the BE students. The histograms were not visually conclusive for the variables Social FLE and Private FLE, therefore a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was performed which provides statistics on normality (Osborne & Waters, 2002). The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (see Table 1) indicate that both variables in both groups do not follow a normal distribution as the significance levels ( $P$ ) are all below 0.05 (Massey Jr, 1951). The statistic generated by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is also included in table 1 for clarity. As the variables do not meet the assumptions of normality, the Mann-Whitney U test was performed to compare the means for both the continuous and the ordinal variables.

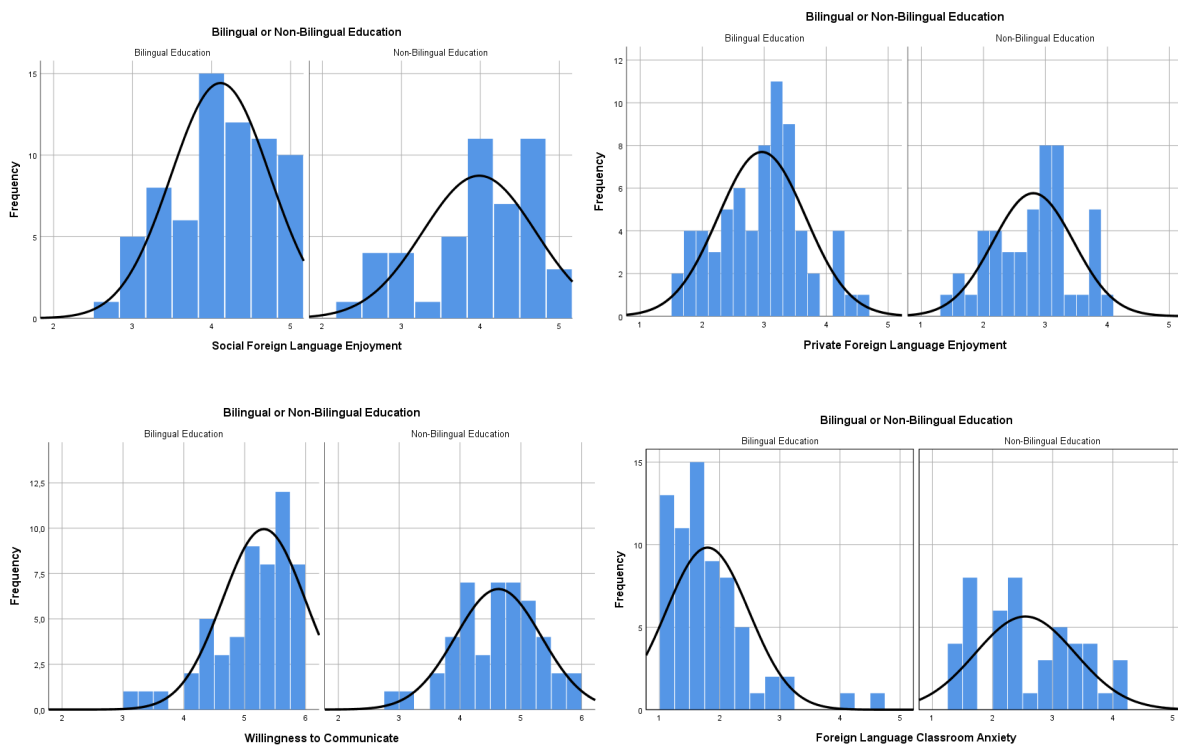
**Table 1**

*Results Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Private FLE and Social FLE of the Bilingual Education (BE) sample and the Non-Bilingual Education (Non-BE) sample.*

	Population	Statistic	$df$	$P$
Private FLE	BE	0,110	68	0,041
	Non-BE	0,129	47	0,049
Social FLE	BE	0,135	68	0,004
	Non-BE	0,189	47	0,000

## Figures 2 to 5

*Social FLE, Private FLE, WTC, and FLCA histograms ranging from low (1) to high (5)*



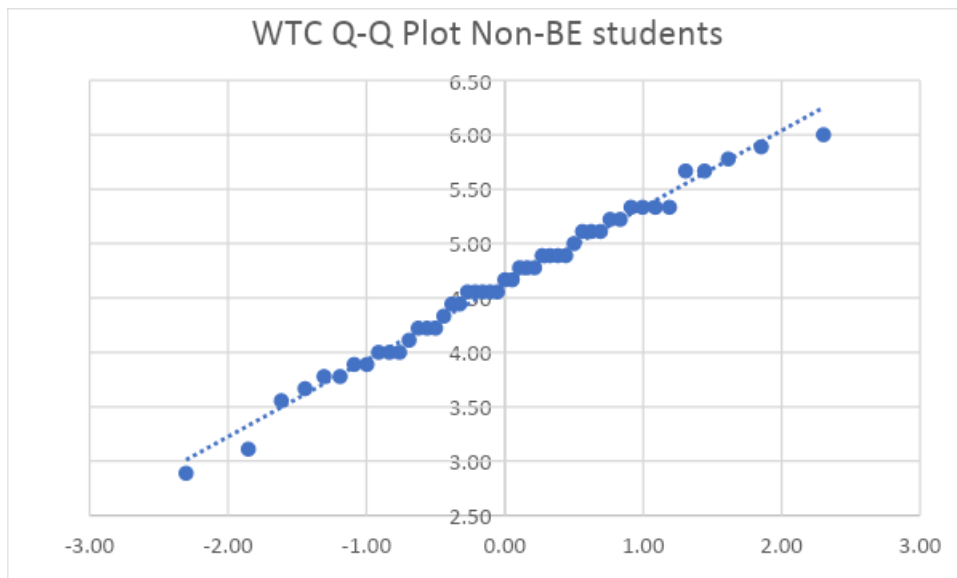
### Research Question 2

To answer the question of which independent variable is the best predictor of WTC it was decided to use an MRA, as this is used to create a regression model when more than one factor influences an outcome such as WTC (Sheather, 2009). The MRA will be used to show the relative influence on WTC by the selected independent variables. The validity of the model was determined after which the MRA was performed.

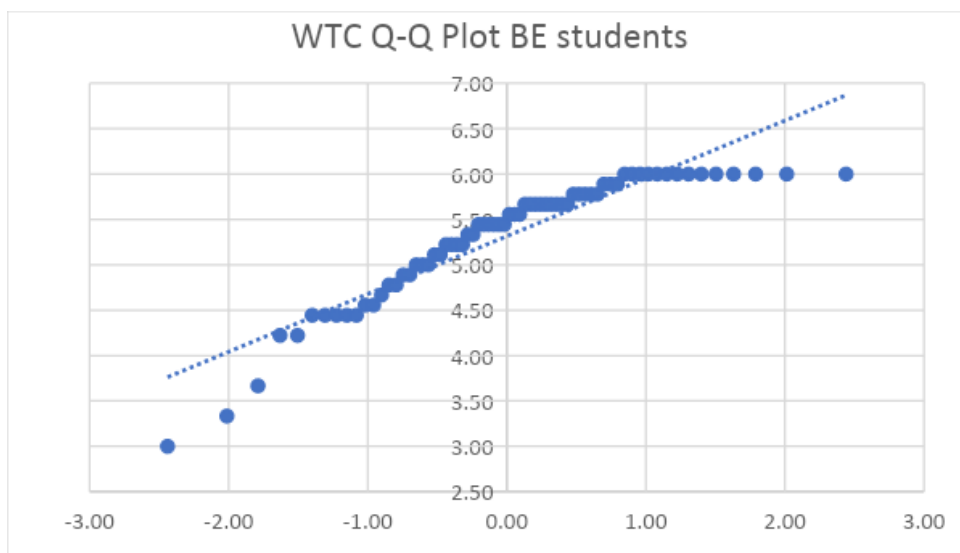
First, it was determined whether the distributions for the WTC scores of the BE and non-BE populations were normal, which is one of the assumptions that requires testing before doing an MRA (Osborne & Waters, 2002). For the non-BE population, a Q-Q plot (see figure 6) shows that the points fall on a straight line, which suggests that the data is normally distributed (Das & Resnick, 2008). This can also be seen in the histogram (see figure 4). Similarly, a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicates that the WTC scores follow a normal distribution as the result is not significant,  $D(47) = 0.07$ ,  $p = 0.200$ .

**Figure 6**

*Normal Q-Q plot of WTC of Non-Bilingual Education students*

**Figure 7**

*Normal Q-Q plot of WTC of Bilingual Education students*



For the BE population, a Q-Q plot indicated that the distribution is skewed to the higher levels of the scale (see figure 7), which is confirmed by the histogram (see figure 4). A total of 14 students in the BE population responded with “very willing” (6) to all nine contexts, resulting in a ceiling effect. Some students may have a higher WTC than “very willing” but were unable to report this willingness using the scale. This has resulted in a dataset which is censored at the upper level. Because the



distribution of the BE sample was non-normal, it was decided not to use a multiple regression for analysis as this would violate one of the assumptions for doing an MRA (Sheather, 2009). The use of more complex analytical tools, such as a principal component analysis, which could have been used to analyse the dataset, were outside the scope of this research. As such, it was decided to limit the analysis to the non-BE sample. Therefore, it was not possible to answer research question 3 in this research.

A Pearson correlation was done to reveal which variables were significantly linked to WTC ( $p < 0.05$ ) (see table 2). It was decided not to do a Bonferroni correction, as this study is restricted to a small number of planned comparisons with pre-planned hypotheses, in which case Armstrong (2014) advises not to do such a correction. The correlation showed that three variables were significantly correlated with WTC: Social FLE, Self-assessment of English Skill, and FLCA. Private FLE, Attitude towards FL, Attitude towards the Teacher, and the Teacher's FL use were not significantly correlated with WTC. Next, an MRA was performed with WTC as the dependent variable and the significantly correlated factors (social FLE, Self-assessment of English skill, and FLCA) as independent variables.

**Table 2**

*Pearson correlation analyses between independent variables and WTC*

Independent variable	Pearson $r$	$P$
Social FLE	0,36	0,007
Self-assessment English Skill	0,27	0,034
FLCA	-0,25	0,047
Compared English Skill	0,21	0,076
Private FLE	0,11	0,223
Attitude FL	0,08	0,287
Attitude Teacher	0,05	0,365
Teacher's FL use	0,05	0,378

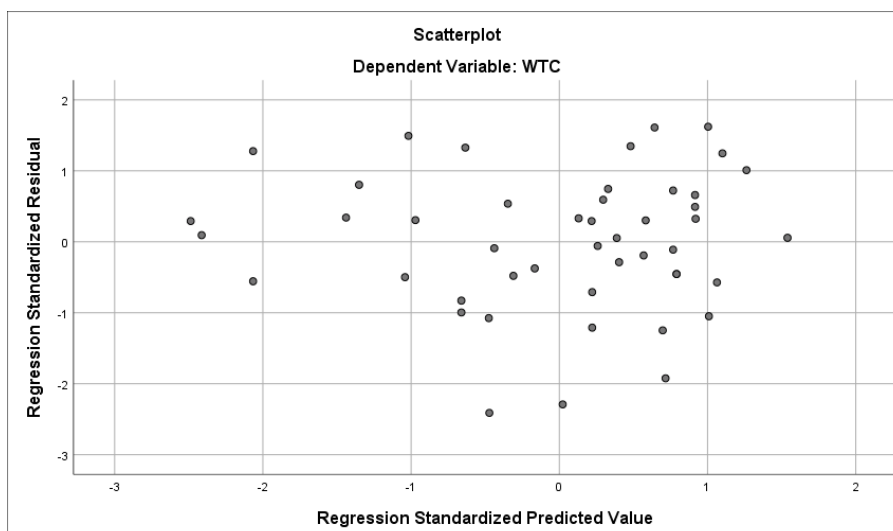
It should be noted that Green (1991) suggests that the minimum sample size for a multiple regression should be 50, with an additional 8 observations per variable. For a total of 3 significant independent variables the recommended size would be 74 observations. Unfortunately, because of limited access to the school and because of complications caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the

sample size of the non-BE population does not meet those requirements. However, it was decided to continue with the multiple regression analysis while taking into account the smaller sample size.

The homoscedasticity of the data was tested, which is an assumption of an MRA (Osborne & Waters, 2002). The scatterplot of the residuals (see figure 8) shows a slight heteroscedasticity in the dataset. Despite this result, it was decided to proceed with the regression analysis, as the heteroscedasticity does not bias the regression coefficients or influence model fit (Astiva & Zumbo, 2019). It might, however, result in a higher chance of a Type I error, which is also known as a false positive result, which should be considered when interpreting the results (Astiva & Zumbo, 2019). After that, the intercorrelations between the independent variables were tested to make sure that none of the variables carried information that was too similar. To avoid multicollinearity, the predictors should be correlated with less than 0.8 (Sheather, 2009). The correlations between the independent variables were not too strong as to cause multicollinearity (see table 3). Additionally, the VIF values for all independent variables were lower than 1.862, which suggests a lack of strong multicollinearity as they do not exceed the cut-off value of 5 for detecting multicollinearity (Sheather, 2009).

### Figure 8

*Scatterplot of the residuals of WTC*



**Table 3***Inter-correlations between the independent variables (Pearson r)*

	Self- assessment English Skill	Social FLE	FLCA
Self-assessment English Skill	1		
Social FLE	0,246*	1	
FLCA	-0,673**	-0,225	1

\*p&lt;0.05 \*\*p&lt;0.005

Finally, the Durbin-Watson statistic was used to test the assumption that the residuals are not linearly autocorrelated (Chatterjee & Simonoff, 2013). The statistic (0.404) indicated that the model was autocorrelated, which is far below the value of 2 which would indicate a lack of autocorrelation (Chatterjee & Simonoff, 2013). This should be considered when interpreting the results.

### Results

The means of the variables for the non-BE and BE students can be found in table 4. Histograms of the results for each variable can be found in Appendix B. The WTC score's possible values range from one to six and the possible values of the independent variables range from one to five. A Mann-Whitney U test indicated that the means of the BE students for Frequency of Teacher's English use, WTC, and Self-assessment of English skill were significantly higher than those for the non-BE students. The mean for FLCA was significantly lower for the BE students than for the non-BE students. The means for Attitude towards English, English Skill Compared to Peers, Private FLE, Social FLE, and Attitude Towards English Teacher did not differ significantly between the groups (see Table 5). The implications of these results will be discussed in the discussion section.

**Table 4***Means and standard deviations for WTC and all independent variables*

	Non-BE students (n = 47)		BE students (n = 68)		Significant difference*
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	
WTC	4,631	0,705	5,315	0,682	+
FLCA	2,544	0,830	1,798	0,690	+
Private FLE	2,804	0,651	2,962	0,705	-
Social FLE	3,986	0,715	4,113	0,627	-
Attitude English	4,064	0,895	4,309	0,718	-
Attitude Teacher	3,596	0,925	3,456	1,112	-
Teacher's English use	3,574	0,853	4,956	0,270	+
Self-assessment English skill	3,681	0,755	4,221	0,569	+
Compared English skill	3,340	0,841	3,206	0,659	-

\*+ indicates a significant difference between groups, - indicates an insignificant difference between groups.

**Table 5***Mann-Whitney U test results comparing Bilingual Education and Non-Bilingual Education samples*

	Mann-Whitney U	Z	P (two tailed)
Teacher's English use	312	-8,602	0,000
WTC	730	-4,95	0,000
FLCA	733	-4,934	0,000
Self-assessment skill	1001,5	-3,911	0,000
Attitude English	1370,5	-1,416	0,157
Compared skill	1387	-1,323	0,187
Private FLE	1388	-1,201	0,231
Social FLE	1467	-0,755	0,452
Attitude Teacher	1508,5	-0,533	0,598

As discussed in the methodology section, it was decided not to do a predictive analysis for the BE-students sample. For the non-BE students sample, a multiple linear regression was calculated using the enter method to predict the dependent variable WTC based on Social FLE, Perception English Skill and FLCA. A significant regression equation was found ( $F(3, 43) = 2.852, p < .048$ ),  $R^2 = .166$ ,  $R^2_{adjusted} = .108$ . Participants' predicted WTC is equal to  $3.165 + .126 (SKILL) - 0.74 (FLCA) + .299 (SOCIALFLE)$ , where all independent variables are measured on a scale of 1 to 5 (see table 6). In the

model, Social FLE was a significant predictor of WTC, but perception English Skill and FLCA were not significant predictors of WTC (see table 6). A partial regression plot of the significant independent variable was included (see figure 9).

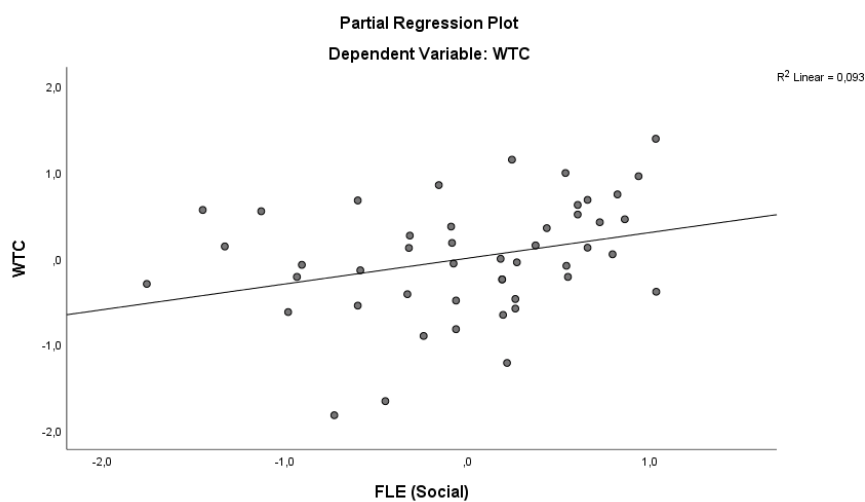
**Table 6**

*Multiple regression analysis with WTC as dependent variable*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
Social FLE	0,30	0,14	0,30	2,1	0,041
FLCA	-0,07	0,16	-0,09	-0,5	0,645
Perception English Skill	0,13	0,18	0,13	0,71	0,482

**Figure 9**

*Partial regression plot for the effect of Social FLE on WTC*



## Discussion

Both the BE and non-BE populations had high WTC scores, but the BE students reported significantly higher scores, which is promising for the bilingual education track. For both groups, students reported their Social FLE to be higher than their Private FLE, indicating that students value the shared emotional experience in the classroom, but that their personal enjoyment of the language is less intense (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016). The English students in the study done by Dewaele and Dewaele (2018) do not report a difference between social and private FLE, which might be an indication of the difference between the opinions of French by English students and English by Dutch

students. French is considered a prestigious language in England because of its connection to France, a country with a perceived sophistication (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018) compared to English in the Netherlands which is considered as a lingua franca, which might make it less exciting to learn.

Teacher's English use was significantly higher for BE students than for non-BE students. Almost all BE students reported that their English teacher spoke English "(almost) always", which is not surprising as this is a key element of bilingual education. However, Simons & Decoo (2009) warn against completely banishing L1 use in the classroom: "when L1 use is wholly prohibited this can damage the trust in the learning process" (p. 9). It could even stimulate students' translation reflex. In contrast, responsible use of the L1 can be reassuring to learners and can lead to greater learning gains (Simons & Decoo, 2009). However, students' WTC for BE students seems to be very high, which could indicate that this damaging of trust has not occurred for these students. It has been found that frequent FL use did improve WTC for English students (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018). In contrast, for the non-BE students in this study, no correlation was found between the Teacher's FL use and WTC. This could indicate that the relationship between teacher's behaviour and WTC is not as clear as previously thought.

Furthermore, the Mann-Whitney U test showed that the means for WTC, and Student's Self-assessment of English skill were significantly higher for BE students than for non-BE students. It is tempting to draw conclusions from the high WTC for BE students, but these would be premature. Thompson and Sylvén (2015) conducted a study including 177 Swedish high school students. They found significant differences in anxiety levels between CLIL and non-CLIL groups before their curriculum had started, which they suggest might be explained by a lower innate anxiety in CLIL pupils. As such, Thompson and Sylvén (2015) note that it is crucial to determine the pre-existing individual differences in language anxiety between the CLIL and non-CLIL groups to make any meaningful claims on a "CLIL-effect" (p. 5). For the current study, it might very well be possible that BE students have a higher innate WTC than non-BE students. Because no pre-test was done in this study, no real claims can be made on the effects of BE on WTC or FLCA. However, the stark

differences between the groups might mean that for some students, bilingual education is the key to enhancing WTC.

Student's self-assessment of English Skill was also significantly higher for BE students than for non-BE students, while FLCA was significantly lower for BE students. Again, while it is too soon to make conclusions about BE education as there was no pre-test done to establish initial differences between the groups, this result is promising for BE education. For the non-BE students, FLCA and self-assessment of skill was found to be significantly negatively correlated (-0.65), strengthening the claim that anxiety and perceived competence are reciprocally related (Denies et al., 2015). Denies et al. (2015) also found a similar correlation between perceived competence and anxiety (-0.50) in the classroom context. This result lends support to the decision in some studies to combine these two constructs as one latent variable named *communication confidence* (Clément et al., 2003; Ghonsooly et al., 2012).

The multiple regression analysis showed that only Social FLE significantly predicted WTC, while FLCA and self-assessment of English skill did not. This strengthens the previous findings of the importance of a fun and positive classroom environment for incentivizing communication between students (Cao, 2011; Dewaele et al., 2019; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Joe et al., 2017; Khajavy et al., 2017; Peng & Woodrow, 2010). Additionally, a classroom culture should be stimulated that allows for mistakes to be made without fear of ridicule. FLE has been found to be positively affected by the teacher's friendliness and by creating a challenging and interesting emotional classroom environment (Dewaele, 2019; Dewaele et al. 2019). It should be noted that while FLCA was not found to significantly predict WTC in this study, previous studies on L2 WTC have found a relationship between FLCA and WTC (e.g. Denies et al., 2015; Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010). Similarly, self-assessment of skill has been found to be a positive factor for initiating communication (Clément et al., 2003; Denies et al., 2015). As such, these factors should not be disregarded in the pedagogical context as important factors for stimulating WTC. A closer look at

these factors in a larger study might provide more insight in their relative influence in the Dutch context.

Finally, the attitude towards English was not significantly correlated with WTC. It should be noted that even if the correlation had been significant, it would have been relatively weak (0.08). This result is striking, compared to the correlation found in the study done by Dewaele & Dewaele (2018) who found a strong correlation (0.45) between the Attitude towards the FL and WTC for French as an L2. The authors credit the positive perception of the French culture in the UK with this correlation. In contrast, the English language is not closely associated with any country or culture in the Netherlands (Edwards, 2014). This lack of a correlation strengthens the assumption that for Dutch students, speaking English is less motivated by appreciation or interest in the language, but is driven by simply being Dutch (Edwards, 2014). It is effectively expected that learning English is part of growing up in the Netherlands. This could mean that the students' personal feelings about language do not come into play when deciding to speak. The more intricate workings of this drive could be investigated through qualitative research.

Overall, the results of this study may suggest that an appreciation for the English language is not what drives Dutch high school students to speak. This might mean that in order to generate WTC, teachers should shift the lesson content from one based on English culture and interacting with native speakers, to one based on communication with English as a lingua franca, which is how English appears to be used in the Netherlands (Edwards, 2014). In addition, to increase the greatest predictor of WTC in this study, social foreign language enjoyment, teachers could aim to foster a socially safe and friendly classroom atmosphere (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016). This could also inhibit foreign language classroom anxiety (Horwitz, 2006). Finally, perceived language competence could be improved by providing a predictable learning environment, moderately challenging tasks, necessary instructional support, and by giving feedback based on self-improvement which provides learners with insight in the controllable variables that lead to success or failure (Wu, 2003).



## Conclusion

This study began with the claim that English holds a special place in the Dutch language context as a second language instead of as a foreign language. An original finding is that attitude towards English fails to be significantly correlated with Willingness to Communicate (WTC), suggesting that this macro intergroup dimension functions differently in the Netherlands than it does in language contexts in which English functions as a foreign language. This lends weight to Edwards' (2014) claims that English in the Netherlands has achieved second language status, which is a dimension that is not often considered in foreign language acquisition research.

Additionally, the influence of how much teachers speak English on the students' decision to speak is not clear. Teacher's frequency of English use did not significantly correlate with Non-Bilingual Education (Non-BE) students' WTC, but the Bilingual Education (BE) students' WTC was significantly higher than the Non-BE students' WTC, which suggests that consistent use of English as the language of instruction might play an important role. Finally, the finding that Social Foreign Language Enjoyment (Social FLE) holds power to lift WTC fits with most previous research findings (Dewaele et al., 2016; Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018; Dewaele, 2019; Khajavy et al., 2018). Teachers should strive to create a fun and positive class dynamic in which students feel comfortable to speak. Even though Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) was not found to be significantly predictive of WTC in this study, previous research has shown FLCA to be damaging to WTC (Denies et al., 2015; Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018). As such, teachers should minimize fear of mistakes and aim to reduce ridicule by peers. The remaining pedagogical implications of the findings in this study can be found at the end of the previous section.

This study has various limitations which should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. The first limitation is that the respondents of this study all came from the same school, and as such these results cannot be generalized for the whole of the Netherlands. Next, when using a multiple regression analysis, it should be considered that it is assumed in the interpretation of the model that the dependent variable, WTC in this study, is caused by the

independent variables (Chatterjee & Simonoff, 2013). However, in practice, the relationships between the variables could be cyclical, such that variables strengthen each other in turn. This kind of effect is not new to L2 acquisition research: a similar model was suggested by Yashima (2013) who proposed a “primary motivational cycle” in which “motivation leads to learning behaviour and knowledge/skill acquisition, which, in turn, leads to perceived competence which leads to perceived competence” (p. 41). As such, this assumption of causation should be considered when interpreting the results. Next, as mentioned in the methodology, there is a slight heteroscedasticity in the dataset. The heteroscedasticity does not bias the regression coefficients or influence model fit, but it might have resulted in a higher chance of a positive result when this does not exist in practice (Astiva & Zumbo, 2019).

Unfortunately, because of the temporary Covid-19 restriction, this study had a smaller sample size than was originally planned for. Because of the restrictions, only two non-BE classes were able to respond to the questionnaire. This might have been the cause of the autocorrelation that is found in the dataset, which is a major limitation of this study. Autocorrelation occurs when variables are subjected to similar external conditions (Chatterjee & Simonoff, 2013). In this study, these external conditions are most likely the combined effects of students being in the same class with the same set of teachers. Next, the smaller sample size might decrease the ability of the model to show important effects, as “these might not be statistically significant at typical levels simply because of insufficient data” (Chatterjee & Simonoff, 2013, p. 29). This might explain why the multiple regression analysis in this study resulted in only one significant predictor, while the study done by Dewaele and Dewaele (2018) resulted in six significant predictors.

Some choices in the methodology of this study could have been made differently to improve the reliability of the study. First, no back-translation method was employed to verify the compatibility of item translations from English to Dutch, which might explain lower internal consistencies of the FLE scales compared to those in Dewaele and Dewaele’s (2018) study. Next, one reverse coded item in the FLCA scale, “I don’t worry about making mistakes in English class” had a

very low correlation with the overall variable of FLCA and deleting the item resulted in a higher reliability of .877. Some students might have not been aware of the negative phrasing of the item, which could have resulted in less accurate results for this item. Future research may weigh the upsides of an inverted item with the downsides of possible inaccurate results.

Finally, the BE students reported a relatively low FLCA and relatively high WTC, compared to participants in other studies (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018; Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Denies et al, 2015). This caused a ceiling effect for the WTC score and a flooring effect for the FLCA score, resulting in censored data. It appears that the WTC and FLCA scales do not allow the researchers to effectively distinguish between those students who have a high WTC and those who have a very high WTC. This is not necessarily a problem for pedagogical contexts, because when students score that high on WTC or that low on FLCA, educational efforts should probably focus on improving other aspects. However, for academic purposes, these scales might result in data that is not particularly suitable for statistical analysis requiring normally distributed data. When it is expected that student groups might have a very low FLCA or very high WTC, this should be considered during instrument selection and design. A possible way to account for this is to make the scale more granular to allow for more nuanced answers from students. For instance, the Likert scales could have items with more levels that include answers such as an “extremely willing to communicate” or “always willing to communicate” response. The scales might also benefit from including more varied items to account for the various contexts in which student might or might not be willing to communicate.

In this study, a multiple regression analysis was used to analyse the responses from the non-BE group, but not the responses from the BE group because that dataset was not suitable for regression analysis. Other statistical tools that do not assume normality in the distribution of data, such as a principle component analysis (PCA), might have been suitable to analyse the BE group. PCA is often used to interpret large datasets with many variables by reducing the dimensionality of such datasets and by minimizing information loss (Jolliffe & Cadima, 2016). As such, in possible future

research this type of analysis might be able to compare the relative influence of effects between the non-BE and the BE group.

To compare the variables between the BE and Non-BE groups, a Mann-Whitney U test was used. However, this test only shows whether the difference between the groups is significant or not, but it does not give an indication of relative strength of this difference (McKnight & Najab, 2010). In future studies, if the data allow, the more powerful independent samples t-test could be used to provide an indication of how much the groups differ.

Research into Bilingual Education in the Netherlands has mostly focused on linguistic attainment (Admiraal et al., 2006; Denman et al., 2013), motivation (Elzenga & De Graaff, 2015; Oattes et al. 2020; Mearns & De Graaff, 2018; Mearns et al., 2017) and other attitudinal factors such as 'the intention to make an effort' (Denman et al., 2018). However, research into WTC has been scarce. Moreover, the results in this study may suggest that students' personal feelings about the English language do not come into play when deciding to speak. The question also remains whether this effect is truly unique to English or if Dutch students' WTC for other foreign languages such as German and French is influenced differently. A larger scale study that looks at the interrelations of these factors, considering the unique aspects of English as a second language in the Netherlands, could lead to valuable insights into what makes students want to speak English and other foreign languages in the Netherlands. In addition, a complementary qualitative approach might provide a deeper understanding of why certain factors have the influence that they do.

This study provides a valuable avenue of future research into bilingual education. Compared to the non-BE group, the BE group reported significantly higher WTC, assessed their English skill more highly, and reported significantly lower FLCA. Bilingual education may be responsible for these differences, but to what degree can only be determined in future research using longitudinal studies. These add to research done by recent studies investigating the relationship between motivation and bilingual education over the span of several years (e.g., Sylvén and Thompson, 2015; Mearns et al., 2017). Given the growing number of schools that provide bilingual education in the Netherlands

(Messelink, 2018), it is important that its effects on WTC, FLCA and other factors are further explored to provide a solid foundation for this growth.

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## Appendix A

This questionnaire was originally presented to the students in Dutch but is provided here in both Dutch and English for accessibility. The Headings were not included in the original questionnaire, but they have been added here for clarity.

### Part 1: General Questions

1. Volg je op het moment tweetalig onderwijs?
  - a. Ja
  - b. Nee
2. Leeftijd
3. Geslacht
  - a. Vrouw
  - b. Man
  - c. Zeg ik liever niet
  - d. Anders . . .
4. Wat is je nationaliteit? (als je een dubbele nationaliteit hebt, geef dan beide aan)
5. Wat is je moedertaal? (als je meerdere moedertalen hebt, geef dan allen aan)

### Part 2: Attitudes

Maak de volgende zinnen compleet.

1. Mijn Engels is op een . . .

Beginnersniveau (1) – Gevorderd niveau (5)

2. Vergeleken met mijn klasgenoten beschouw ik mijn niveau van Engels als . . .

Ver onder gemiddeld (1) – Ver boven gemiddeld (5)

3. Ik beschouw de Engelse taal als . . .

Zeer negatief (1) – Zeer positief (5)

4. Over mijn docent ben ik . . .

Zeer ontevreden (1) – Zeer tevreden (5)

5. Mijn vakdocent Engels spreekt in de les

(Bijna) nooit Engels (1) – (Bijna) altijd Engels (5)

### Part 3: Foreign Language Enjoyment

In hoeverre ben je het eens met de volgende stellingen over je huidige Engelse les op een schaal van helemaal oneens (1) tot helemaal mee eens (5)?

Private Language Enjoyment

1. Ik raak niet verveeld
2. Ik geniet van de Engelse lessen
3. Ik ben een waardevol lid van de Engelse klas
4. In de les ben ik trots op mijn prestaties
5. Het is cool om Engels te kunnen (spreken/lezen/etc.)
6. Het is leuk [accidentally excluded]

### Social Language Enjoyment

7. De Engelse les is een positieve omgeving
8. Mijn klasgenoten zijn aardig
9. Er hangt een goede sfeer
10. We lachen vaak [Excluded]

### Part 4: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety

In hoeverre ben je het eens met de volgende stellingen over je huidige Engelse les op een schaal van helemaal oneens (1) tot helemaal mee eens (5)?

1. Zelfs als ik goed voorbereid ben voor de Engelse les, voel ik me er nerveus over.
2. Ik heb altijd het gevoel dat andere leerlingen beter Engels spreken dan ik.
3. Ik voel mijn hart in mijn borst kloppen als ik wordt uitgekozen om Engels te spreken in de Engelse les.
4. Ik maak me geen zorgen over het maken van fouten in de Engelse les. [Reverse]
5. Ik voel me zelfverzekerd als ik Engels spreek in de Engelse les. [Reverse]
6. Ik word nerveus en raak door de war als ik Engels spreek in de Engelse les.
7. Ik raak in paniek als ik Engels moet spreken zonder voorbereiding in de Engelse les.
8. Ik schaam me ervoor om uit mezelf te antwoorden zonder dat de docent mij uitkiest in de Engelse les.

### Part 5: Willingness to Communicate

Hoe bereid ben je om de volgende activiteiten te doen in de Engelse les op een schaal van zeer onbereid (1) tot zeer bereid (5)?

1. Ik ben bereid om een rollenspel te doen voor de klas in Engels (zoals bestellen in een restaurant).
2. Ik ben bereid om een korte presentatie te geven voor de klas in Engels met een spiekbriefje.
3. Ik ben bereid om een gesproken zin te vertalen van Nederlands naar Engels in mijn groepje.
4. Ik ben bereid om de docent in Engels te vragen om te herhalen wat zij/hij zei in Engels als ik het niet begrijp.
5. Ik ben bereid om een rollenspel te doen in Engels aan mijn tafel samen met een klasgenoot (zoals bestellen in een restaurant).
6. Ik ben bereid om de klasgenoot die naast mij zit in Engels te vragen naar de betekenis van een Engels woord.
7. Ik ben bereid om mijn groepsgenoten te vragen naar de betekenis van een Engels woord.
8. Ik ben bereid om mijn groepsgenoten te vragen hoe ik een woord moet uitspreken in Engels.
9. Ik ben bereid om de klasgenoot die naast mij zit in Engels te vragen hoe je een bepaalde zin zegt in het Engels.

## English Version

### Part 1: General Questions

1. Do you currently receive Bilingual Education?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. Age
3. Gender
  - a. Woman
  - b. Man
  - c. Rather not say
  - d. Other . . .
4. What is your nationality? (If you have a dual nationality, provide both)
5. What is your first language? (If you have multiple first languages, provide all)

### Part 2: Attitudes

Finish the following sentences:

1. My English is at a . . .  
Novice level (1) – Advanced level (5)
2. Compared to my peers my English level is . . .  
Far below average (1) – Far above average (5)
3. My attitude towards the English language is . . .  
Very unfavourable (1) – Very favourable (5)
4. My attitude towards my teacher is . . .  
Very unfavourable (1) – Very favourable (5)
5. In class my English teacher speak English . . .  
(Almost) never (1) – (Almost) always (5)

### Part 3: Foreign Language Enjoyment

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your current English lessons on a scale from Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree (5)?

Private Language Enjoyment

6. I don't get bored
7. I enjoy it
8. I'm a worthy member of the FL class
9. In class, I feel proud of my accomplishments
10. It's cool to know a FL
11. It's fun [accidentally excluded]

Social Language Enjoyment [included for clarity]

12. It's a positive environment
13. The peers are nice
14. There is a good atmosphere
15. We laugh a lot [excluded]

#### **Part 4: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety**

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your current English lessons on a scale from Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree (5)?

1. Even if I am well prepared for FL class, I feel anxious about it
2. I always feel that the other students speak the FL better than I do
3. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in FL class
4. I don't worry about making mistakes in FL class (reverse)
5. I feel confident when I speak in FL class (reverse)
6. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my FL class
7. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in FL class
8. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my FL class

#### **Part 5: Willingness to Communicate**

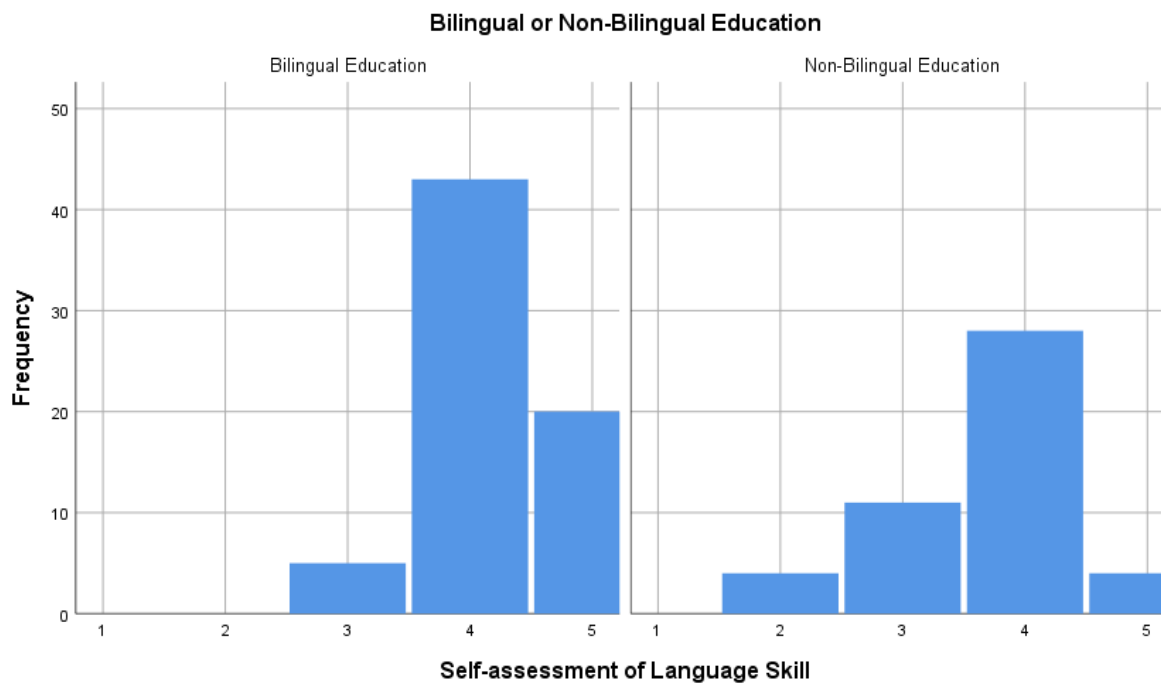
How willing are you to do the following activities in English class on a scale from very unwilling (1) to very willing (5)?

1. I am willing to do a role-play standing in front of the class in English (such as ordering food in a restaurant).
2. I am willing to give a short presentation in English in front of the class with notes.
3. I am willing to translate a spoken utterance from Dutch into English in my group.
4. I am willing to ask the teacher in English to repeat what he/she just said in English because I didn't understand.
5. I am willing to do a role-play in English at my desk, with my peer (such as ordering food in a restaurant).
6. I am willing to ask my peer sitting next to me in English the meaning of an English word.
7. I am willing to ask my group mates in English the meaning of word I do not know.
8. I am willing to ask my group mates in English how to pronounce a word in English.
9. I am willing to ask my peer sitting next to me in English how to say a certain English phrase in English.

## Appendix B

**Figure B1**

*Self-assessment of English Skill ranging from novice (1) to advanced (5)*



**Figure B2**

*English skill compared to peers ranging from far below average (1) to far above average (5)*

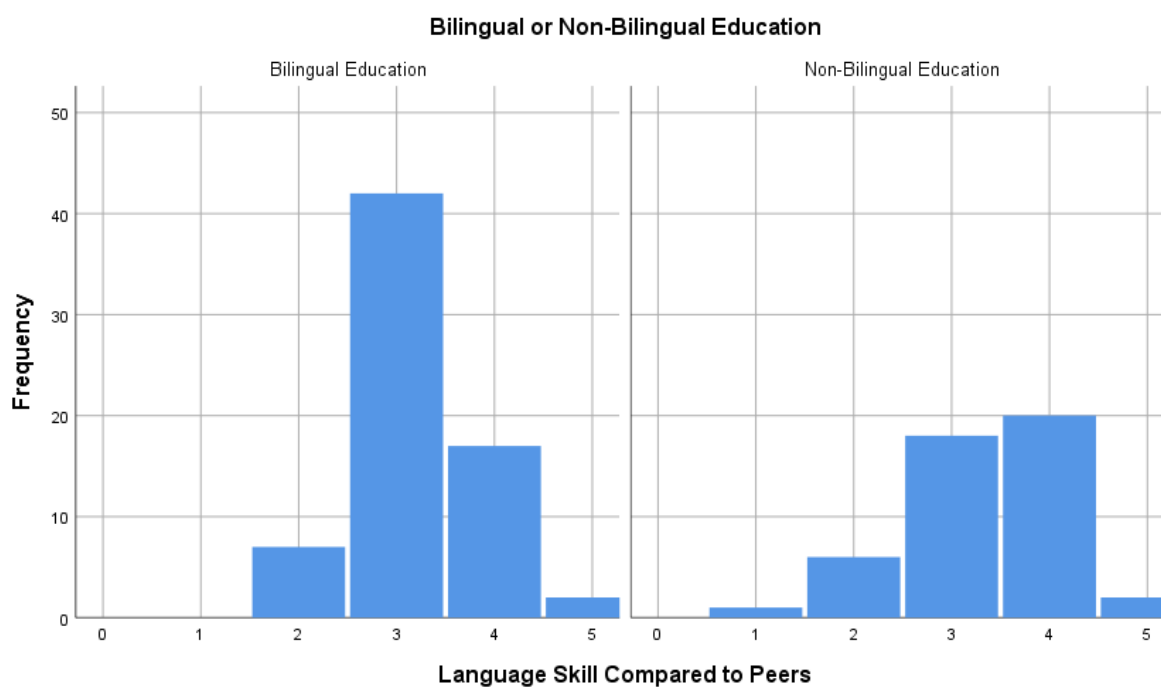




Figure B3

*Attitude towards English ranging from very unfavourable (1) to very favourable (5)*

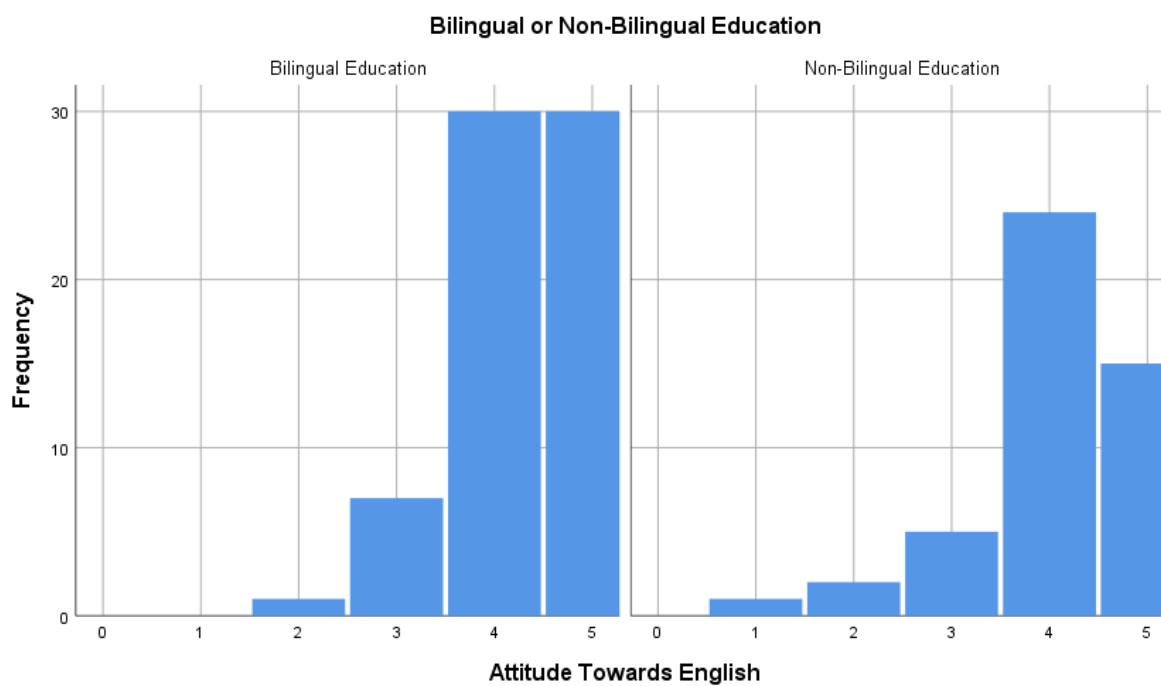


Figure B4

*Attitude towards English teacher ranging from very unfavourable (1) to very favourable (5)*

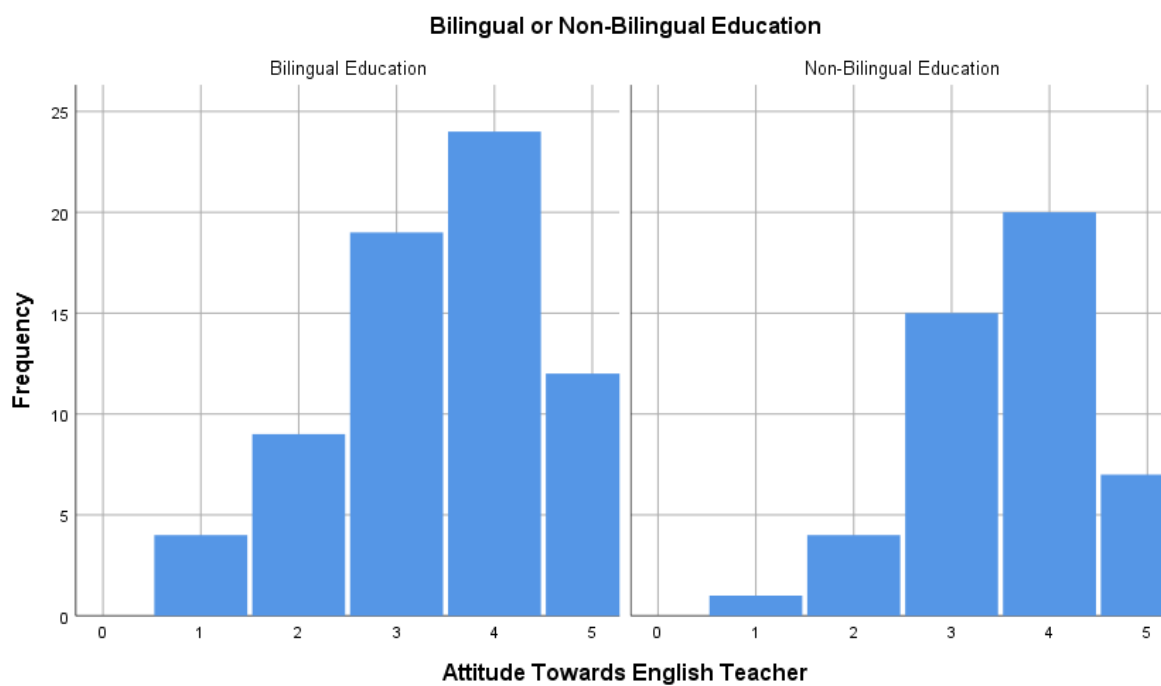


Figure B5

Frequency of teacher's English use ranging from (almost) never (1) to (almost) always (5)

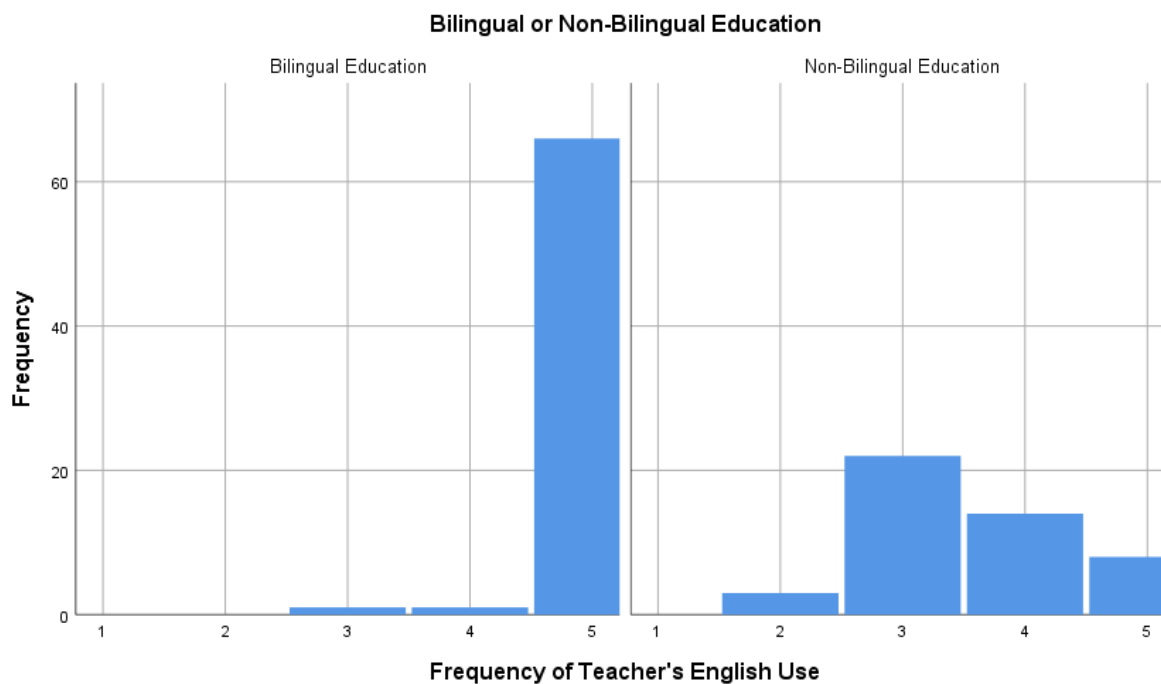


Figure B6

Social Foreign Language Enjoyment Score ranging from low (1) to high (5)

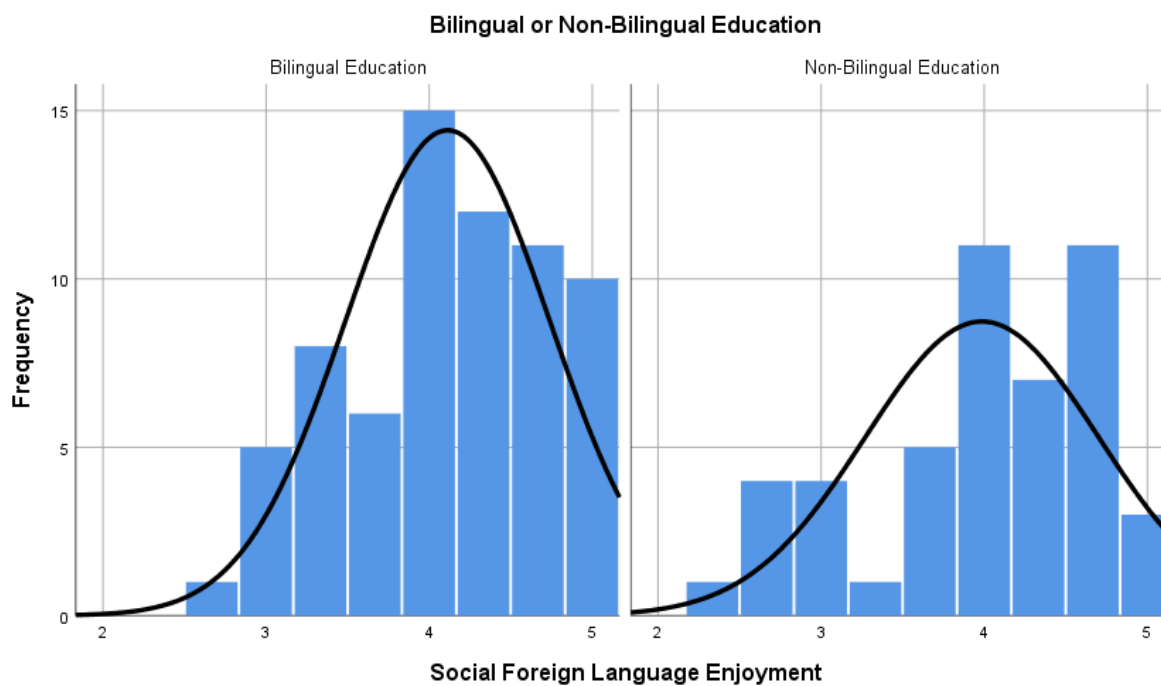


Figure B7

*Private Foreign Language Enjoyment Score ranging from low (1) to high (5)*

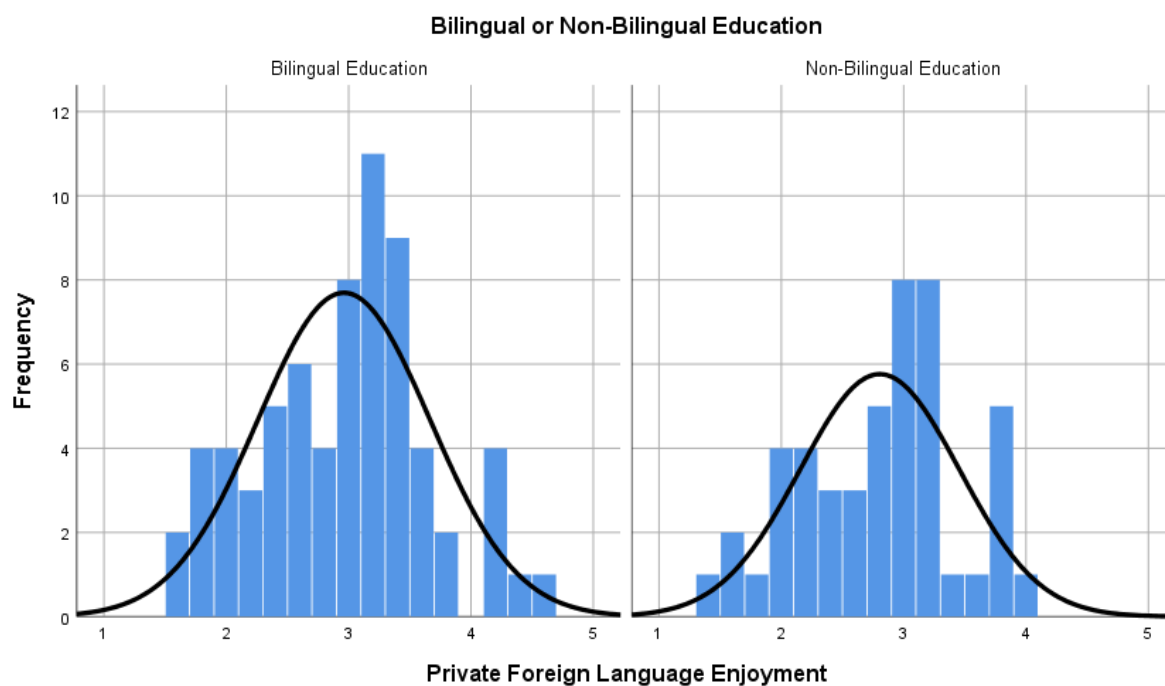
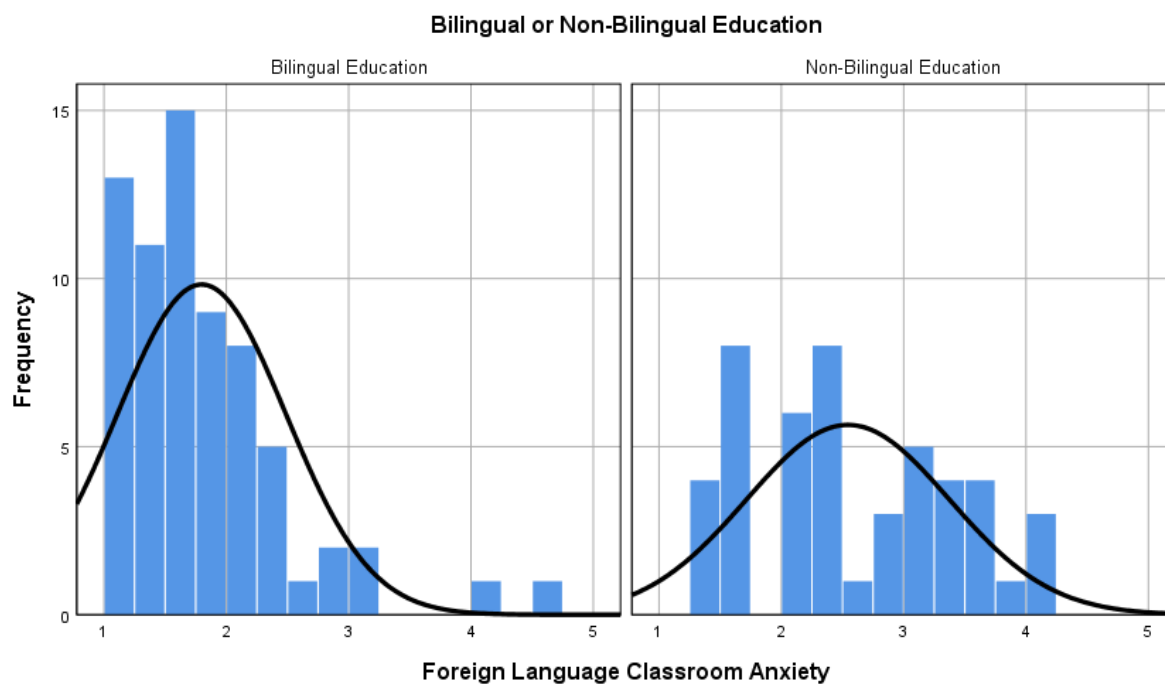


Figure B8

*Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Score ranging from low (1) to high (5)*



**Figure B9**

*Willingness to Communicate Score ranging from low (1) to high (6)*

