The Construct of Willingness to Communicate and Its Relationship with EFL Learners' Perceived Verbal and Nonverbal Teacher Immediacy

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Abstract

Given the fact that developing an intimate relationship between teacher and students creates a safe learning environment (Harran, 2006), and because teacher immediacy is proved to increase students' motivation for learning (Velez & Cano, 2008), this study was an attempt to explore the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' perceived teacher immediacy and their willingness to communicate (WTC). To this end, first, a new WTC questionnaire, specific to EFL settings, was developed, piloted, factor analyzed, and then administered on 90 intermediate EFL learners. In the second phase, the participants were required to complete Gorham's (1988) Verbal Immediacy Measure (VIM) and McCroskey et al.'s (1996) Revised Nonverbal Immediacy Measure (RNIM). The findings revealed that there are 7 factors underlying EFL learners' WTC, one of which is teacher immediacy. Further analyses showed that there is a positive relationship between both verbal and nonverbal teacher immediacy behaviors and EFL learners' WTC in EFL classes. It can be concluded that teacher immediacy is one of the constituents of EFL learners' WTC and that their WTC is likely to increase when teachers demonstrate immediacy behaviors while teaching. The present study has implications for language practitioners as well as teacher trainers.

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INTRODUCTION

Looking back over a century of L2 teaching, one can easily see the rise and fall of various teaching methods (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In examining L2 language pedagogy of the present era, it is believed that communicative language teaching (CLT) is going ahead of other methods during the 21st century (Yu, 2009). As Savignon (2005) states, "the essence of communicative language teaching is the engagement of language learners in communication to allow them to develop their communication competence" (p. 16). It is, therefore, assumed that understanding and identification of learners' communication orientation and needs provide a basis for language teachers to design curricula, apply instructional strategies, and improve language teaching effectiveness (Hsu, 2005).

According to Yu (2009), theoretical examination and pedagogical application throughout the current decade have primarily promoted the important role of using language to communicate in L2 learning and teaching. Moreover, it is argued that the ultimate goal of L2 learning should be to engender in language students the willingness to look for communication opportunities and the willingness to communicate (WTC) in them (MacIntyre, Clement, Dornyei, & Noels, 1998). Based on such an argument, MacIntyre et al. further propose that "to create willingness to communicate should be a proper objective for second language education" (p. 27).

Similarly, Matsuoka and Evans (2005) refer to a proverb which says "where there is a will, there is a way" (p. 3), alluding to the fact that even the less proficient learners may be able to communicate in English if they are willing to. On the contrary, one can infer from the aforementioned proverb that highly proficient learners may not be willing to communicate because where there is not a will, there is not a way. Therefore, the notion of WTC would be of note when the standard of EFL learners' communicative competence in English, here Iranian students, is not high enough to let them communicate effectively in the classroom.

In the same way, a review of the related literature has shown that in order to make learners good communicators, engendering learners' WTC gains importance (Cetinkaya, 2005; Hsu, 2005; Matsuoka & Evans, 2005). Most of the previous studies on L2 WTC give an account of linguistic, communicative, and social psychological variables that might

affect students' WTC (Yu, 2009). For example, Cetinkaya (2005) suggests that students' WTC is directly related to their attitude toward the international community and their perceived linguistic self-confidence. Moreover, she concludes that students' motivation to learn English and their personality in terms of being an introvert or extrovert are indirectly related to their WTC through linguistic self-confidence.

Recent research has identified teachers as a key factor in making learning and communication effective, even more so in an English classroom where students' learning relies so much on teachers' teaching (Wen & Clement, 2003). Among the many effects teachers can have on students' educational lives, some researchers have referred to the role of teachers in EFL learners' WTC (Cetinkaya, 2005; Hsu, 2005; Myers & Bryant, 2002; Yu, 2009). Habash (2010) believes that in order to improve the quality of instruction, teachers need to develop strategies for helping students to become more enthusiastic about communicating in their classes. In this respect, he considers the concept of teacher immediacy as a powerful teaching tool in arising students' WTC.

As one recent study explains, the concept of immediacy was first developed by Mehrabian (1969, cited in Swenddal, 2011) who conceptualized immediacy as those communication behaviors that enhance closeness between people. Findings from some communication studies imply that immediacy behaviors might have some general effects on classroom communication (Hsu, 2005). Christophel (1990) emphasizes that by adopting immediacy behaviors in the classroom, teachers can establish a closer relationship with students, which motivates students to talk.

However, as Hsu (2005) notes, teachers' immediacy has not been emphasized in the language teaching field, as it has in the field of communication. She believes that in L2 learning, communication is focused more on learners' language production than on teachers' relational involvement. A brief review of the literature available shows that although there have been some studies dedicated to factors affecting Iranian EFL learners' WTC, there is not, however, any emphasis on teacher's immediacy as a significant construct contributing to learners' WTC (Barjesteh, Vaseghi, & Neissi, 2012; Riasati, 2012).

Therefore**,** as there is a paucity of research directly investigating the relationship between teachers' both verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviors and EFL learners' WTC, the relationship between these variables was investigated in this study. Furthermore, as the present

WTC scales have been designed as a direct measure of L2 learners' willingness toward approaching or avoiding the initiation of communication in an ESL context (Clement, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003; Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Wen & Clement, 2003), they may not be reliable in EFL contexts. In other words, the items in the WTC scales designed for ESL contexts go far beyond the boundaries of an EFL classroom. Therefore, a questionnaire specific to EFL settings was needed to focus on L2 learners' WTC in an EFL classroom rather than one which gauges their WTC in an environment outside the boundaries of a class. Thus, the current study intended to focus on identifying the perceived verbal and nonverbal teacher immediacy and their relationship with students' WTC in an EFL context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many attempts have been made to discover factors underlying EFL learners' WTC. Matsuoka (2006), for example, investigated how individual difference variables affect Japanese university students' WTC in English as well as their English proficiency. The results showed that communication apprehension, introversion, perceived competence, motivational intensity, and integrativeness were significant predictors of L2 WTC, and that perceived competence and L2 WTC were significant predictors of L2 proficiency. Yu (2009) examined language learners' WTC who were studying English in a Chinese setting. The results suggested that all communication variables, including WTC, communication apprehension, and self-perceived communication competence were significantly correlated with each other in both Chinese and English communication settings. Moreover, the results showed the trait-like nature of WTC construct which remained constant across different communication settings.

In a study conducted in the Iranian context, Riasati (2012) used interviews to explore Iranian EFL learners' perception of factors that affect their willingness to speak English in language classrooms. The results showed that a number of factors, including the task type, topic of discussion, interlocutor, teacher, class atmosphere, personality and self-perceived speaking ability contributed to Iranian EFL learners WTC in English classrooms. In another study, Alemi, Tajeddin, and Mesbah (2013) investigated the relationship between WTC and individual

differences. They concluded that Iranian EFL learners' WTC is somehow affected by their individual differences.

Alongside examining learners' WTC, some prior research has focused on the relationship between teacher's immediacy behaviors and learners' WTC in an ESL setting. Carrell and Menzel (1999) surveyed 256 undergraduate students at a liberal arts university to seek the correlation between teachers' immediacy behaviors and learners' WTC. Although they observed a significant relationship between the teachers' verbal immediacy behavior and the students' WTC in class, no positive relationship was found between the instructors' nonverbal immediacy and students' predisposition to speak in class.

On the other hand, many researchers like Hsu (2005), Saechou (2005), and Harran (2006) confirmed the notion that nonverbal immediacy behaviors increased liking in teacher-student relationships in the classroom. Therefore, in a situation where liking is essential for boosting communication, the use of nonverbal immediacy may work well for the participants (Hsu, 2005). Velez and Cano (2008) also noted that the teachers' immediacy was related to both verbal and nonverbal constructs; it increased the students' good feeling toward the instructors and subject matter, and also decreased the students' apprehension.

However, by reviewing the related literature some controversies were detected. First, there are few studies focusing on the relationship between both verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviors and student's WTC in an English learning context (Carrell & Menzel, 1999; Hsu, 2005). Second, these studies are conducted in ESL rather than EFL settings. Third, as many studies regarding immediacy behaviors have used either a qualitative or a quantitative method (Hsu, 2005), this study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to picture immediacy behaviors more vividly. Moreover, although studies on teachers' immediacy behaviors and their effect on WTC in L2 learning contexts have been carried out in a number of countries and contexts, including Japan, Korea, and Turkey (Hsu, 2006; Kucuk, 2009; Pribyl, Sakamoto & Kesten, 2004), to the best of the researchers' knowledge, no study of this type has ever been conducted in Iran where a large number of individuals are learning English as a foreign language.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the present study was to explore the factors underlying EFL learners' WTC in EFL classrooms. The second objective was to investigate the relationship between students' perceived teacher verbal and nonverbal immediacy and their WTC in an EFL context. Thus, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the components of Iranian EFL learners' willingness to communicate in English in EFL classes?
2. Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviors and their willingness to communicate?

METHOD

Participants

To address the research questions a sum of 90 students who had enrolled in English courses in Pars and Sadra Language Institutes in Darab, Fars, were randomly selected to participate in the main part of the study. In addition, about 250 EFL learners participated in the pre-pilot and pilot phases of the study. From among the 90 EFL learners, 33 (33.66%) were male and 57 (63.33%) were female intermediate EFL learners whose age range was between 15 and 27. To help the participants prevent wrong judgment about the immediacy behavior of their teachers, only those students who had been taught by the same instructor for at least two consecutive terms were selected.

Instrumentation

WTC Questionnaire

As all the available WTC questionnaires had been designed for ESL contexts, a new WTC specific to EFL settings was developed. To this end, all the available theories and concepts concerning WTC (Cetinkaya, 2005; Riasati & Nooreen, 2011; Yu, 2009), most of the related studies (Mohammadzadeh & Jafarigohar, 2012; Peng & Woodrow, 2010), the relevant interviews (Hsu, 2005; Riasati, 2012), and the available questionnaires (Baghaei, Dourakhshan, & Salavati, 2011; Carrell &

Menzel, 1999; Hashimoto, 2002; McCroskey, 1992; Xie, 2011) were examined to decide on the underlying constructs of WTC. Then, to establish a conceptual framework to define the qualities of EFL learners' WTC in EFL classrooms, 11 semi-structured interviews were planned and conducted on TEFL specialists (Appendix A). An investigation of the relevant studies, the available questionnaires, and the 11 interviews led to the development of a 29-item WTC questionnaire. Then, the new WTC questionnaire was pre-piloted, piloted, and factor-analyzed. The final product was a 28-item questionnaire (Appendix B) with seven underlying constructs and the reliability index of 0.73.

Verbal Immediacy Questionnaire

To probe the EFL learners' perception of their teachers' verbal immediacy behavior, a verbal immediacy (VIM) questionnaire was employed (Appendix C). This questionnaire, developed by Gorham (1988), included 20 items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 to 4 (0=ever; 1=Rarely; 2=Sometimes; 3=Often; and 4=Almost always.

Nonverbal Immediacy Questionnaire

The Nonverbal Immediacy Measure (NIM), developed by McCroskey et al. (1996), was used to determine L2 learners' perceptions of their instructors' nonverbal immediacy. Originally, this 14-item instrument was created as a low-inference measure with the same reference base for all learners, regardless of the subject matter or learners' culture (Tabasco, 2007). The participants were asked to rate the situation(s) that best described their instructor's nonverbal immediacy behavior on a 5-point Likert scale. The instructors' nonverbal immediacy included behaviors such as looking at the class while talking, and gesturing while talking to the class.

However, earlier studies showed that the items relating to "touching and sitting or standing while teaching" were poor items in all of the samples due to the almost nonexistent touching of students by their teachers in virtually all cultures (Rashidi & Mahmoudi Kia, 2012). Furthermore, previous studies indicated that, sitting or standing, teachers were able to be immediate in both positions. With these items removed, the revised instrument (RNIM) contained 10 items (Appendix D).

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection took almost four months. Data were collected in two phases. All necessary data regarding WTC questionnaire development, including interviews, pre-piloting (asking for experts' view before piloting), and piloting of the developed questionnaire were collected in the first phase of the study during three months. However, the main part of the study, the second phase in which the participants had to complete the validated questionnaires, took about three weeks. The study was conducted in four language institutes in Darab, Fars.

RESULTS

WTC in the EFL Context: Its Construct

As it was mentioned, to develop a WTC questionnaire specific to EFL, all the related studies and the available questionnaires were investigated. Moreover, 11 practitioners and researchers who had a minimum of seven years of experience in L2 teaching and research, were interviewed. The interview transcripts were content analyzed. As a result of the content analysis of the interviews and investigation of the previous studies and questionnaires, 29 concepts were extracted (Table 1).

Table 1: Major themes of the interviews

No.	Concept
	EFL learners are willing to communicate when
1	the class is engaging in an open discussion
2	they are in a small group in class
3	the topic is interesting
4	they have different views from their classmates' views
5	they seat in the back of the class
6	they are prepared for the class
7	their classmates are communicative
8	they are graded on participation
9	the class is engaging in a heated debate
10	they are comfortable with the subject matter
11	they discuss their assignments
12	they have uncommunicative classmates
13	they seat in the front of the class

14	they have different views from teacher's views
15	they are angry about the topic
16	they know the correct answer
17	they are able to help clarify the discussion
18	they dislike their classmates
19	they volunteer the answer to a teacher's question in class
20	they are called upon by the teacher to answer a question in English
21	they talk to their teacher before or after class
22	they ask the teacher a question in class
23	they asking the teacher a question in English in private
24	they present their opinions in class
25	they participate in pair discussions in class
26	they are able to help others answer a question
27	they greet their classmates
28	they give a speech with notes in class
29	they chat with their classmates out of the class

Therefore, a 29-item questionnaire was developed. Then, the new WTC questionnaire was given to three other TEFL experts to probe its content relevancy, clarity of the language, and correspondence to the theoretical underpinnings. As a result of this pre-piloting, one item (item 29) was deleted. Thus, the total number of items in this phase was 28.

To do the pilot study, first, the modified questionnaire with 28 items was administered to 30 intermediate EFL learners. From among the 30 EFL learners, 17 were male and 13 were female. Through this administration, it was ensured that the content, structures, and words used in the items were understandable to the EFL learners, and that no item was ambiguous.

Next, to ensure the content validity of the questionnaire, and to extract the underlying factors, a factor analysis was carried out, using a principal component analysis with oblique rotation (N=220). Out of the 220 participants who completed the WTC questionnaire in this phase, 122 participants (53.75%) were female and 94 participants (45%) were male; however, 4 participants (1.25%) did not mention their gender. To determine the number of factors to be extracted, a few points were taken into consideration to ensure that the minimum eigenvalue was 1.0, that each factor accounted for at least 2.5% of the total variance, and that the minimum loading of every item on each factor was 0.50.

Looking through the results of factor analysis (Table 2), item 28 was found problematic. Although the loading of item 28 reached 0.79, it stood alone under factor 8. Because the number of items under each factor should be more than one, and a 1-item factor does not make sense, this item was deleted. Moreover, with the minimum of 0.5 as the acceptable factor loading, it was found that all the items had high enough loadings, except items 5 and 27 which did not enjoy loading on any factor. That is, item 5, "when I am sitting in the back of the class" and item 27, "when I give a speech with notes in class" were removed. Therefore, the factor analysis run on the questionnaire resulted in 7 extracted factors. Based on the commonalities among the items extracted on each of the factors and according to the concepts they referred to, the extracted factors were labeled as "students' self-perceived communicative competence," "external pressure," "classroom climate," "teacher immediacy," "students' perceived self-efficacy," "group size," and "topic of discussion."

Table 2: Factors, Cronbach's Alpha, questionnaire items, and loadings

Factor (subscale)	α	Questionnaire items	Loadings
Students' Self-Perceived Communicative Competence	.82	6. I am prepared for class.	.51
		10. I am comfortable with the subject matter.	.67
		16. I know the correct answer.	.57
		17. I can really help clarify the discussion	.77
		19. I volunteer an answer to the teacher's question in class	.84
		26. I help others answer a question	.60
External Pressure	.83	8. I am graded on participation	.56
		11. an assignment is being discussed	.81
		12. no one else is talking	.55
		13. I am sitting in the front of the class	.79
		20. I am called upon by the teacher	.83
Classroom Climate	.90	1. The class is engaged in an	.88

		open discussion	
		7. Everyone is talking	.89
		9. The class is engaged in a heated debate	.86
		18. I dislike some of my classmates	.86
Teacher Immediacy	.65	21. I talk to my teacher before or after class	.78
		22. I ask the teacher a question in class	.69
		23. I ask the teacher a question in English in private	.71
Students' Perceived Self-Efficacy	.66	4. my views differ from my classmates' views	.65
		14. my views differ from the teacher's views	.67
		24. I present my opinions in class	.78
Group Size	.63	2. I am in a small group in class	.83
		25. I participate in pair activities in class	.70
Topic of Discussion	.62	15. I am angry about a topic	.73
		3. the topic is interesting	.61

Thus, it was revealed that 7 factors contribute to the construct of WTC in EFL contexts, one of which is teacher immediacy. It was also found that the newly-developed questionnaire is valid with regard to its construct.

WTC and Verbal Immediacy

To investigate the relationship between EFL teachers' verbal immediacy and EFL learners' WTC in the classroom, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was estimated. As Table 3 indicates, there was a positive relationship between teachers' verbal immediacy and learners' WTC in EFL classrooms (r=.40) at 0.01 level of significance. This means that the more effective verbal behaviors a teacher uses while interacting with students, the more willing students will be to talk in class (Table 3).

Table 3: Correlation between teachers' verbal immediacy and learners' WTC

Correlation		Verbal	Immediacy
	Pearson Correlation	1	.40 **
WTC	Sig. (2-tailed)		.00
	N	90	90

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

WTC and Nonverbal Immediacy

To probe the relationship between EFL teachers' nonverbal immediacy and EFL learners' WTC in the classroom, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was estimated. It was observed that there was a positive relationship between teachers' nonverbal immediacy and learners' WTC in EFL classrooms (r=.51) at 0.01 level of significance (Table 4). This implies that the more effective nonverbal behaviors a teacher uses while interacting with students, the more willingness students will have to speak in class (Table 4).

Table 4: Correlation between teachers' nonverbal immediacy and learners' WTC

Correlation		Nonverbal	
	Pearson Correlation	1	.51 **
WTC	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	N	90	90

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

DISCUSSION

The main purposes of the study were extraction of the factors underlying EFL learners' WTC in the classroom and investigating the relationship between WTC and teacher verbal and nonverbal immediacy. As far as the factors underlying WTC in an EFL context are concerned, the factor analysis revealed seven factors: (1) students' perceived communicative competence, (2) external pressure, (3) classroom climate, (4) teachers' immediacy, (5) students' perceived self-efficacy, (6) group size, and (7) topic of discussion. Further analyses also revealed significant correlations between WTC and teacher verbal and nonverbal immediacy.

Learners' WTC Factors in EFL Classes

As the findings of the study suggest, the most contributing factor to EFL learners' WTC is their perceived communicative competence in EFL classes. This finding is generally consistent with the findings of previous studies, suggesting that individuals who have a higher perception of their abilities experience less degree of anxiety and benefit from more self-confidence, which leads to an increase in both quantity and quality of learners' communication (Hashimoto, 2002; Cetinkaya, 2005; Yu, 2009). According to Nagy and Nikolov (2007, cited in Riasati, 2012), the most common reason for learners' unwillingness to speak in class is their perception that other students in the class have more knowledge of the language and that learners cannot compete with them. As a result, learners think it is better to remain silent than try to get involved in an unequal competition.

Another factor that is found to exert an influence on learners' degree of WTC is external pressure. This finding is consistent with Carrell and Menzel (1999) who contend that students are more willing to communicate in situations where they are externally pressured to speak. Kang (2005) also believes that as the number of people in a conversation session decreases, the participants' feeling of responsibility to participate in the conversation tends to increase.

On the other hand, Riasati (2012) believes that learners' knowing the fact that they are being graded while speaking causes anxiety. This anxiety will prevent them from showing their real speaking ability. However, it was observed that force, as an important extracted factor, contributed to the participants' WTC. This is closely in line with the findings of Carrell and Menzel (1999) and Kang (2005). In fact, external pressure creates a sense of motivation and increases learners' WTC in the classroom.

The items loaded on classroom climate, the third extracted factor, concern the relationship among EFL learners and depend on L2 fluency of fellow learners in the classroom. Although Kang (2005) reports that learners feel less secure and less willing to communicate when they perceive other group members to be more fluent than they are, it was found that the fluency of fellow learners motivates other students and increases their WTC in the classroom.

Barjesteh et al. (2012) also contend that classroom atmosphere and the close relationship among classmates can either facilitate or hinder

students' participation. They observed that learners tend to speak more in an environment which is friendly enough so that they feel secure and relaxed. This is consistent with Chu (2008) who contended that learners' degree of participation increases as a result of the relaxing environment in which they learn and the degree of familiarity with it. One reason could be the fact that in a relaxing environment, learners get to know and trust each other better; this would contribute to more participation (Riasati, 2012). Moreover, in such an environment, learners feel secure enough to express themselves and communicate; learners are not afraid of making mistakes and being ridiculed.

Teacher immediacy was the fourth factor extracted from the WTC questionnaire. According to Hsu (2005), the immediate relationship between learners and the teacher is perceived by the teacher as a motivating factor for learners to talk in English. Teacher immediacy is believed to be associated positively and significantly with students' WTC in English classes (Rashidi & Mahmoudi Kia, 2012). In other words, students' WTC is likely to increase when teachers demonstrate immediacy behaviors while teaching. Alemi and Pashmforoosh (2012) also confirmed that we need more supportive teachers who encourage learners to be more communicative in class. Thus, the way teachers behave can affect the teaching and learning process, and it can be a factor affecting students' willingness or unwillingness to communicate in class. Indeed, the available literature confirms the findings of the present study in this respect and acknowledges the important role of teachers in facilitating or inhibiting learners' participation.

Another factor which is found as contributing to students' WTC in EFL classes is their perceived self-efficacy. In fact, perceived self-efficacy refers to "a judgment of one's ability to organize and execute given types of performances" (Bandura, 1977, cited in Idrus, Salleh, & Abdullahi, 2011, p. 110). It is found that the concept of self-efficacy plays a significant role not only in one's general achievements, but also in one's specific performance (Wang, 2011). According to Idrus et al. (2011), one way to predict an individual's level of ability in performing a certain task is through gauging their level of perceived self-efficacy.

Several studies have determined that self-perception of one's own ability plays a role in human performance. Magogwe and Oliver (2007) claim that self-efficacy is one of the elements that could shape a learner's ability to communicate effectively. Rahil et al. (2006) also believe that secondary school students' achievement in English language improves

when students have high self-efficacy in the language. In another study, Hairuzila and Subarna (2007) focused on ESL students' self-efficacy at a private university and found that the students had high levels of self-efficacy regarding their ability to speak in English. They also mentioned that those who were more confident in their ability performed better than those with low self-efficacy. Wang (2004) also believes that whether the participants choose to actively engage in the activity or to avoid speaking English in a context might also be associated with their self-efficacy to speak English in that particular context.

Group size is another factor extracted from EFL learners' WTC, which can affect language learners' WTC. Kang (2005) also identified group size as an important factor contributing to WTC in the classroom. In fact, the comparatively larger size of a class gives less opportunity to each individual to communicate (Cao & Philp, 2006). McCroskey and Richmond (1991) also claimed that the larger the number of interlocutors, the less willing the individual is to communicate. In line with the results of this study, Cao and Philp (2006) found that WTC is determined by such factors as group size, familiarity with interlocutor, the degree of interlocutors' participation in the discussion, familiarity with the topic which is being discussed and self-confidence. Xie (2011) also revealed that the number of interlocutors (group size) and familiarity with interlocutors both exert an influence on learners' WTC.

To the EFL learners of this study, topic responsibility and topic interest were the essential features of a certain topic contributing to their WTC in EFL classes. As Kang (2005, p. 285) contends, some particular topics may bring about greater "responsibility" to involve, i.e. one feels the need to discuss a topic because it is intrinsically and instrumentally interesting to him or her. According to Riasati (2012), one's lack of knowledge, interest, and preparation for a certain topic can greatly influence one's perceived competence because one feels he or she has nothing to contribute and hence prefers to remain silent. Thus, such affective constraints can considerably reduce willingness to speak. Similarly, Nazari and Allahyar (2012) observed that teachers influence learners' WTC by addressing factors, such as learner self-confidence and anxiety or through choosing topics of learners' interests. Therefore, the topic of discussion plays a vital role in making learners willing or unwilling to speak.

Teachers' Verbal Immediacy and Learners' WTC in EFL Classes

The results of this part of the study suggest that there is a positive relationship between teachers' verbal immediacy behaviors and students' WTC in EFL classrooms. This finding is in line with Christenen and Menzel's (1998) study in which teacher verbal immediacy is found to correlate positively with overall willingness to communicate. Carrel and Menzel (1999) also surveyed students' perceived learning, willingness to talk in class, and teacher verbal and nonverbal immediacy with reference to both teacher and student gender. In their study, they found that teachers' verbal immediacy is positively related to WTC. In short, based on the results of the relevant studies, teachers' verbal immediacy behaviors have a significant impact on learners' WTC in the classroom.

Teachers' Nonverbal Immediacy and Learners' WTC in EFL Classes

The observed positive relationship between EFL teachers' nonverbal immediacy and EFL learners' WTC in the classroom is consistent with Lin (2003) who believes that teachers' nonverbal immediacy is significantly correlated with students' WTC in the classroom. Rashidi and Mahmoudi Kia (2012) also found that teacher immediacy may have an impact on students' WTC in the classroom. Therefore, to make students more willing to communicate in English, teachers need to be more concerned about the kind of the nonverbal behaviors they use in their language classrooms.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Looking through the factors extracted, one can easily find L2 WTC as a function of situational and contextual factors, such as topic, teacher, classroom climate, and individual psychological traits. Therefore, being in the same line with MacIntyre et al. (1998), this study also highlights that WTC is a dynamic situational concept that can change dynamically rather than a trait-like predisposition (Kang, 2005).

The findings also prompt instructors to reflect on their learners' WTC in classroom communication. The specific factors contributing to

learners' WTC in EFL classes, highlighted in the findings, yield important clues as to instructors perceptions of learners' communication. Students will have a greater likelihood of emotionally and cognitively engaging in a course when the instructor demonstrates and cares in following the factors or motives which encourage communication in the classroom.

Moreover, it appears that both verbal and nonverbal behaviors of the instructor are related to certain aspects of students' WTC in the classroom. Although a multitude of other variables may affect the interactions between students and instructors, insight into simple verbal and nonverbal communication, such as smiling, vocal expressiveness, and relaxed body position, allows instructors to give specific detailed thought to their instruction. Once identified, immediacy variables can be directly taught to new teachers to improve student-teacher relationship, student motivation, and cognitive learning (Gorham, 1988).

Teachers constantly communicate to students through body language, glances, gestures, and facial expressions; therefore, instructors need to exercise care and consistency in providing students with positive gestures and expressions. By praising students' efforts, using humor in the classroom, encouraging students to talk, and being open and willing to interact with students outside the class through email, social networks, etc. teacher educators can begin to model behaviors to candidates which will enable them to develop the skills of verbal and nonverbal immediacy (Velez & Cano, 2008).

Bio-data

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. How can teachers make learners willing to communicate in the classroom?
2. How does students' formal assessment affect learners' willingness to communicate in the classroom?
3. Does learners' personality type influence their willingness to communicate? If yes, how?
4. How does other learners' L2 proficiency affect one's WTC in the classroom?
5. How willing are the learners to communicate when they are prepared for the classroom?
6. What is the role of classroom atmosphere in making learners willing to communicate in the classroom?
7. Is the classroom decoration an important factor in fostering learners' WTC in the classroom? If yes, how?
8. In what situations do learners feel most willing to communicate? In pairs, in small groups, or with the teacher in the whole class? Why?
9. What kinds of tasks do you find useful in making students willing to communicate in the classroom?
10. What topic characteristics do you describe as contributing to learners' WTC in the classroom?
11. Does learners' communication in English out of class affect their WTC inside the classroom?

Appendix B: WTC Questionnaire

Gender: □Male   □Female
Age: ……
Proficiency Level:
□Pre-intermediate □Intermediate □Upper-intermediate   □Advanced

DIRECTIONS: Below are 28 situations in which a person might choose to communicate in an English class. For each item, circle the number 0–4 which indicates the extent to which you would be willing to communicate in the given situation. Thank you.

0 = Never; 1 = Rarely; 2 = Sometimes; 3 = Often; 4 = Almost always

Note: In case there are other situations not mentioned here, please add them in the space provided.

	I'm willing to talk in English when	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost always
1	the class is engaged in an open discussion.	0	1	2	3	4
2	I am in a small group in class.	0	1	2	3	4
3	the topic is interesting.	0	1	2	3	4
4	my views differ from my classmates' views.	0	1	2	3	4
5	I am sitting in the back of the class.	0	1	2	3	4
6	I am prepared for class.	0	1	2	3	4
7	everyone is talking.	0	1	2	3	4
8	I am graded on participation.	0	1	2	3	4
9	the class is engaged in a heated debate.	0	1	2	3	4
10	I am comfortable with the subject matter.	0	1	2	3	4
11	an assignment is being discussed.	0	1	2	3	4
12	no one else is talking.	0	1	2	3	4
13	I am sitting in the front of the class.	0	1	2	3	4
14	my views differ from the teacher's views.	0	1	2	3	4
15	I am angry about a topic.	0	1	2	3	4
16	I know the correct answer.	0	1	2	3	4
17	I can really help clarify the discussion.	0	1	2	3	4
18	I dislike some of my classmates.	0	1	2	3	4
19	I volunteer an answer to the teacher's question in class.	0	1	2	3	4
20	I'm called upon by the teacher to answer a question in English.	0	1	2	3	4
21	I talk to my teacher before or after class.	0	1	2	3	4
22	I ask the teacher a question in class.	0	1	2	3	4
23	I ask the teacher a question in English in private.	0	1	2	3	4
24	I present my opinions in class.	0	1	2	3	4
25	I participate in pair activities in class.	0	1	2	3	4
26	I help others answer a question.	0	1	2	3	4

| 27 | I give a speech with. notes in class. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 28 | I chat with my classmates out of class. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

I'm willing to talk in English when …………………………………

Appendix C: Verbal Immediacy Measure

Gender: □Male   □Female
Age: ……
Proficiency Level:
□Pre-intermediate   □Intermediate   □Upper-intermediate   □Advanced

How many terms have you been studying English by this teacher?

DIRECTIONS: Below are a series of descriptions of the things some teachers have been observed saying in their classes. Please respond to each of the statements in terms of the way you perceive your current teacher communicating towards you or others in your class. For each item, circle the number 0-4 which indicates the behavior of your teacher. Your answers are confidential.

0 = Never; 1 = Rarely; 2 = Sometimes; 3 = Often; 4 = Almost always

No	Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost always
1	Uses personal examples or talks about experiences he/she has had outside of class.	0	1	2	3	4
2	Asks questions or encourages students to talk.	0	1	2	3	4
3	Gets into discussions based on something a student brings up even when this doesn't seem to be part of his/her lecture.	0	1	2	3	4
4	Uses humor in class.	0	1	2	3	4
5	Addresses students by name.	0	1	2	3	4
6	Addresses me by name.	0	1	2	3	4
7	Gets into conversations with individual students before or after class.	0	1	2	3	4

8	Has initiated conversations with me before or after class.	0	1	2	3	4
9	Refers to class as "my class" or "what I am doing".	0	1	2	3	4
10	Refers to class as "our class" or "what we are doing".	0	1	2	3	4
11	Provides feedback on my individual work through comments on papers, oral discussions, etc.	0	1	2	3	4
12	Calls on students to answer questions even if they have not indicated that they want to talk.	0	1	2	3	4
14	Invites students to telephone or meet with him/her outside of class if they have question or want to discuss something.	0	1	2	3	4
15	Asks questions that have specific, correct answers.	0	1	2	3	4
16	Asks questions that solicit viewpoints or opinions.	0	1	2	3	4
17	Praises students' work, actions, or comments.	0	1	2	3	4
18	Criticizes or points out faults in students' work, actions or comments.	0	1	2	3	4
19	Has discussions about things unrelated to class with individual students or with the class as a whole.	0	1	2	3	4
20	Is addressed by his/her first name by the students.	0	1	2	3	4

Appendix D: Revised Nonverbal Immediacy Measure

Gender: □Male   □Female
Age: ……
Proficiency Level:
□Pre-intermediate   □Intermediate   □Upper-intermediate   □Advanced

How many terms have you been studying English by this teacher?

DIRECTIONS: Below are a series of descriptions of the things some teachers have been observed doing in their classes. Please respond to each of the statements in terms of the way you perceive your current teacher communicating towards you or others in your class. For each item, circle the

number 0-4 which indicates the behavior of your teacher. Your answers are confidential.

0 = Never; 1 = Rarely; 2 = Sometimes; 3 = Often; 4 = Almost always

No	Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1	Gestures while talking to class.	0	1	2	3	4
2	Uses monotone/dull voice when talking to class.	0	1	2	3	4
3	Looks at class while talking.	0	1	2	3	4
4	Smiles at the class as a whole, not just individual students.	0	1	2	3	4
5	Has a very tense body position while talking to the class.	0	1	2	3	4
6	Moves around the classroom while teaching.	0	1	2	3	4
7	Looks at the board or notes while talking to the class.	0	1	2	3	4
8	Has a very relaxed body position while talking to the class.	0	1	2	3	4
9	Smiles at individual students in the class.	0	1	2	3	4
10	Uses a variety of vocal expressions while talking to the class.	0	1	2	3	4