

**Teachers' Perception of WTC Encouraging Strategies: Their Class Practices, Learners' Interaction and WTC**

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**Abstract**

Inappropriate strategies used by teachers based on erroneous perceptions or diagnosis may decrease learners' Willingness To Communicate (WTC) rather than strengthen it. This study aimed to investigate teachers' perception of willingness to communicate encouraging strategies with observing their practices during the class, learners' interactions and the amount of their WTC. The present study is an experimental research with comparative method adopting a qualitative experimental design with supplementary quantitative analyses. Five Iranian EFL teachers and 31 students from three private language institutes in Tehran participated randomly in this study. The data were collected through questionnaires and observation. The teachers' and learners' behaviors were observed by utilizing two checklists. The analysis of data was performed through independent One Samples t-test and Pearson correlations. Finally, it was concluded that WTC of Iranian EFL learners was more effective under the supervision of high-level teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies compared with that of low-level teachers. In teachers' perception of WTC and their actual practices, correlation between high-level teachers and high-level learners and also, between low-level teachers and low-level learners had a positive linear relationship. It is assumed that the actual learners' interaction was more effective in the high-level learners' group.

**Key words:** Willingness To Communicate (WTC); Teachers' Perception of WTC Encouraging Strategies; Learners' Interaction

**1. Introduction**

Oral communication of language learners has a vital role in language classes (Abebe & Deneke, 2015). The more involvement in communication result in better communicative competence. There is a common belief that communication leads to enhance the vocabulary and structures which they have exposed during preceding lessons and what they have learnt in different contexts (Liu, 2005). This means that regardless of students' backgrounds, some internal and external variables have influence on willingness to communicate of learners in the class. Therefore, investigation into the strategies that teachers uses, also their classroom practices to promote learners' willingness to communicate have received much attention in recent years (Khanh, 2016). Then WTC in L2 learning is an important variable leading to communication practice that can promote L2 learning (MacIntyre, 1998). Teachers play a vital role in encouraging learners' WTC. MacIntyre et al. (1998) mentioned the importance of opportunity and maintained that students' intention must coincide with opportunity to produce communicative behavior. As Walsh (2011) stressed Teachers' WTC encouraging strategies in the class depend on the extent to which teachers raise or block opportunities for learner engagement.

**1.1. Significance of the study**

As Allahyar (2015) states, the growing concern in educational literature and other fields (e.g., sports) is that inappropriate instructions, interaction patterns and strategies, exacerbate the challenges, particularly when teachers' intervention is based on the wrong diagnosis or erroneous perceptions. These challenges have led to failure in many ingenious teaching projects

which have been developed to implement changes in teaching methods in order to improve students' WTC (Slegers, Van den Berg, & Geijsel, 2000). For example, inappropriate strategies used by teachers based on erroneous perceptions or diagnosis may decrease students' initial level of WTC rather than strengthen it (Allahyar, 2015). Also, Empirical research on teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies and their interaction patterns is scarce, especially in whole class settings which is where most students learn English (Ohta & Nakaone, 2004). Due to the lack of empirical data upon which to build policy changes, teachers face problems in bridging the gap between theory and practice (Farhady et al., 2010).

It is expected that this article offers a more insight view of the strategies that teachers can employ in order to foster learners' WTC. Moreover, the finding of the present study by doing questionnaires and observation revealed a number of teachers' perception about the WTC encouraging strategies and the effectiveness of those strategies by observing teachers' classes and also some practical practices for increasing learners WTC.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Willingness to Communicate (WTC)**

At first Burgoon (1976, p.60) defined unwillingness to communicate as the pre-disposition which "represents a chronic tendency to avoid/or devalue oral communication". She mentioned that people with predisposition of anomie, alienation, introversion, low self-esteem and high communication apprehension tend to be unwilling to communicate. The term "Willingness to Communicate" (WTC) was represented by McCroskey and Baer (1985) in first language (L1) communication literature as the probability of engaging in communication when free to choose to do so. Then, since its appearance in second language (L2) teaching and learning literature, WTC has been defined as "a readiness to speak in the L2 at a particular time with specific person, and as such, is the final psychological step to the initiation of L2 communication" (MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010, p.162). WTC has been characterized into the two most discrepant perspectives: WTC as a personality trait, and WTC as a situational construct (Khanh, 2016). Willingness to communicate (WTC) has been proposed as an important variable underlying the interpersonal communication process. It has been suggested that WTC functions as a personality trait, showing stable individual differences over time and across situations (MacIntyre, 1994). While willingness to communicate can largely depend on situational or environmental factors, McCroskey was able to pinpoint a personality characteristic that causes people in the same situations or environments to act differently (McCroskey & Richmond, 1986). The construct of L2 WTC has been speculated to possess both trait and state characteristics (Do'nyei 2005). The trait-level WTC reflects an individual learner's general disposition when confronted with choices to speak the L2, while the state-level WTC is subject to momentary situational influences. Kang (2005, p.288) divided the situational variables affecting situational WTC into categories of topic, interlocutors and conversational context.

### **2.2. Previous Studies**

Research into (WTC) has been increased since 1990s in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) and the concept of WTC derived from first language (L1) communication research (Peng, 2013). MacIntyre et al. (1998) states that WTC consist of two ways; trait like and situational properties and it represents the last step before overt behavior. Learners with the high level of WTC tend to engage in more communication than those with low levels. MacCroskey and associates (1985) have shown that WTC is related to such attributes as communication apprehension, perceived communication competence, introversion –

extraversion, self-esteem and so forth. They conceptualized WTC as a personality trait rather than as a situation-based variable. MacIntyre (1998) treat it as a situational variable with both transient and enduring influences. There are many variables that have the potential to change and individuals' WTC. The degree of acquaintance between communicators the number of people present, the formality of the situation, the degree of evaluation of the speaker, the topic of discussion, and other factors can influence a person's WTC. Cao and Philip (2006) concluded that, the effect of group size, interlocutor familiarity and interlocutor participation on occurring WTC could be explained by the situational nature of WTC. Cao (2013) considered three dimensions: individual characteristic such as self-confidence, personality, emotion and perceived opportunity to communicative, classroom environmental condition such as topic, task interlocutor, teacher and group size; linguistic factors then she concluded these three factors should combined together. Maftoon and Najaf (2012) conducted a research on WTC among kids in Iranian setting. They came to these conclusion that WTC was a personality characteristic that influenced L2 development in kids. Allahyar (2015) conducted a research to investigate Teachers' perceptions, interactions patterns and strategies towards Iranian EFL students' willingness to communicate or reticence. The result showed that teachers' differential use of interaction patterns and strategies in relation to WTC and reticent students in a whole class setting. Overall, teachers interacted less frequently with the reticent. Teachers allowed more volunteered turns for the WTC while designating the reticent twice as many turns as the WTC. In addition, teachers extended their transactions with the WTC for longer turns which led to WTC students' dominance in classroom interactions. Vongsila & Reiders (2016) conducted a research to investigate teachers' perceptions of their role in fostering WTC. The result showed that teachers do believe WTC is important that they have significant role to play in encouraging it and teachers employ a wide range of strategies to do so. They also concluded that there was a mismatch between teachers' perceptions and their classroom practice.

### **2.3. Statement of the Problem**

A common problem faced by many language teachers is the students' unwillingness to speak and participate in classroom activities (Riasati, 2014). As a logical prerequisite to communication practice, learners need to have Willingness to Communicate (WTC) before they engage in L2 interaction (Macintyre et al., 1998). Teachers can encourage students' participation in the classroom through more appropriate interactional patterns and strategies. To circumvent the willingness to communicate in learners, the teachers have recently been called upon to revisit their language use and strategies (Shamsipour & Allami, 2012). For all these reasons, having a low rate of willingness to communicate and later developing negative senses of self can be a huge hindrance for EFL learners to advance their academic and further their professional development in the long term.

The present study figured out teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies by observing activities and practices in their classes, also by observing learners' interactions; this study observed learners' WTC and the effectiveness of those strategies that have been used by teachers to increase learners' WTC (Both trait-like and situational WTC). These strategies have been clarified by comparison between learners' WTC and teachers' perceptions and their classroom practices.

### **2.4. Research Questions**

1. Does teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies have statistically significant effect on the WTC of Iranian EFL learners?

2. Is there statistically significant relationship between teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies and their actual practices of WTC encouraging strategies?
3. Does teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies have statistically significant effect on the actual learners' interaction?

### ***2.5. Research Null Hypotheses***

1. Teachers use of different WTC encouraging strategies have no statistically significant effect on the learners' WTC differently.
2. There is no statistically significant relationship between teachers' perception of WTC and their actual practices of WTC encouraging strategies.
3. Teachers use of different WTC encouraging strategies have no statistically significant effect on the actual learners' interaction differently.

## **3. Methodology**

### ***3.1. Participants***

For the purpose of this study, 31 Iranian EFL learners (males) and 5 teachers (males and females) selected randomly from three English Language Institute in Tehran, Iran. The age range of learners was between 12-40 years old and the age range of teachers was 25-50 years old. The learners had intermediate up to advanced level of proficiency from different classes and the experience level of teachers for teaching was more than one year of teaching.

### ***3.2. Instrument***

This study carried out the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) questionnaire for the learners in order to collect the necessary data about their WTC (see appendix A). This questionnaire is adopted from Simic (2014) master thesis with some changes on it. Another questionnaire used for measuring and identifying teachers' WTC encouraging strategies (see appendix B). This questionnaire is adopted from Vongsila & Reinders (2016). This study also used a checklist for observing learners' interactions during the class (see appendix C); this checklist is designed by the researcher. Another checklist for observing teachers' practices in the class (see appendix D); this checklist is designed by the researcher. It is necessary to say that the validity of all questionnaires and checklists are confirmed by the procedure of approving expert opinion of two professors of faculty.

### ***3.3. Procedures***

First, the researcher observed 5 classes of three different private language institute in Tehran by sitting in the class without any interferences during the class time. All 31 learners and 5 teachers in the program fulfilled the questionnaires at the end of the class. The researcher observed their classes while he was completing two checklists. Teachers and learners divided into high-level and low-level then a comparison between two groups occurred. Finally, observation form the classes compared with the datum from questionnaires in order to understand that teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies can be practicable or not and these strategies can be used in the class or not.

### ***3.4. Data Analysis***

Data analysis involved mainly two stages. First, data collected from the questionnaires were processed by using SPSS software. Quantitative data from questionnaires were also factor analyzed. These factors then became themes that were compared with themes analyzed from the qualitative observation data. Secondly, Descriptive statistics were used to analyze classroom WTC behavior. Measures of frequency were chosen because they indicate how often a particular behavior or phenomenon occurs and they are obtained by counting the number of occurrences.

Finally, a comparison between these data and those observation that have been recorded on the checklists had been done by the researcher.

#### **4. Results and Discussions**

##### **4.1. Testing Normality of Data**

All three null-hypotheses of the study will be explored through assuming the normality of the data besides its specific assumptions. (Table 1) displays the skewness and kurtosis statistics and their ratios over the standard errors:

*Table 1.  
Test of normality*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error
Low-Level Students	19	22.00	60.00	36.0500	9.42268	.840	.512	.799	.992
High-Level Students	12	12.00	31.00	21.0000	4.89898	-.042	.512	-.484	.992
High-Level Teachers	3	3.00	11.00	7.0500	2.18789	.063	.512	-.843	.992
Low-Level Teachers	2	2.00	9.00	4.3000	2.00263	1.157	.512	1.428	.992
Valid (listwise)	N 36								

Since all the ratios were within  $\pm 1.96$ , the data were considered normally distributed enough to allow running Independent One-Sample T-Test for the first and the third question and Pearson Product Moment correlation for the second question as parametric tests.

##### **4.2. Investigating First Null-Hypothesis**

Independent One Samples t-test was used in order to reveal the effects of teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies on the WTC of Iranian EFL learners. Besides, application of parametric statistical analyses is acceptable if a number of assumptions are recognized. The assumption of normality of the analyzed data was tested through the skewness and kurtosis statistics (Table 2) in the present study; it was required to verify homogeneity of variances of the data sets.

*Table 2.*

*Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Perception of WTC Encouraging Strategies on the WTC of Iranian EFL learners*

	Teachers' Perception WTC	of N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Mean	Error
Score	High-Level Teachers	3	7.0500 E	2.18789	.48923	
	Low-Level Teachers	2	4.3000 E	2.00263	.44780	

The actual difference in the mean scores between high-level teachers in comparison with the low-level teachers is quite large. As (Table 2) indicates the mean score for the high-level teachers (M=7.05, SD=2.18) was significantly different from that of the low-level teachers (M=4.3, SD=2).

*Table 3.*  
*Independent Samples Test of Teachers' Perception of WTC Encouraging Strategies on the WTC of Iranian EFL learners*

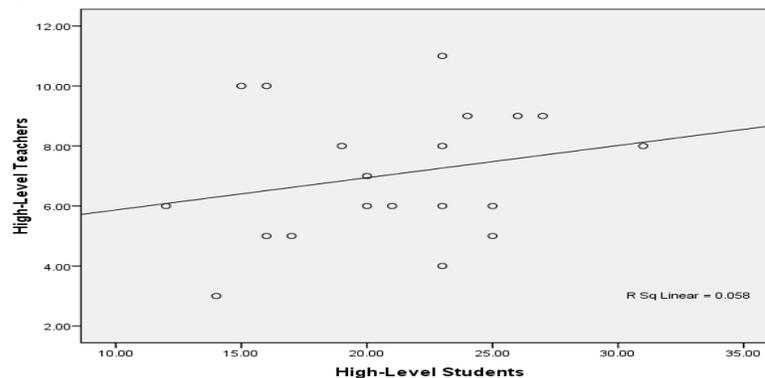
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Score Equal variances assumed								
1.064	.309	4.146	38	.000	2.75000	.66323	1.40737	4.09263
Equal variances not assumed								
		4.146	3.771E1	.000	2.75000	.66323	1.40703	4.09297

Moreover, there was a statistically significant difference at the  $p < .05$  level in the scores of the two groups (Table 3). Briefly, the mean difference between the two groups was significant, and it is assumed that WTC of Iranian EFL learners was more effective under the supervision of high-level teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies compared with that of low-level teachers.

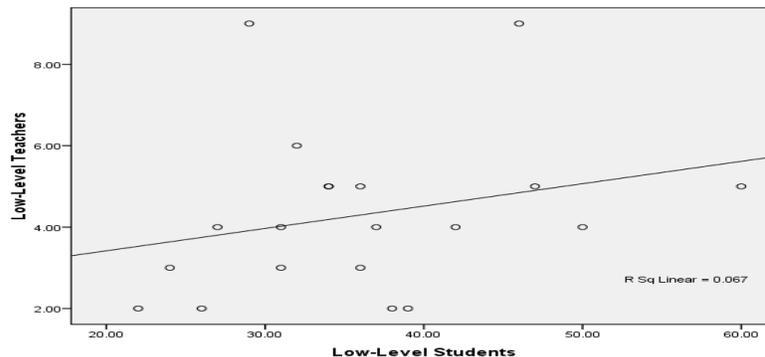
#### **4.3. Investigating Second Null-Hypothesis**

Tables below contain the findings obtained from performing Pearson correlations between the total scores of teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies and their actual practices of WTC encouraging strategies. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity.

It assumes that the relationship between the two variables should be a linear one. As shown in Scatter Plot in (Figure 1 and 2), the majority of the dots fell on the diagonal, indicating that the relationship was a positive linear relationship between the first and the second figures:



*Figure 1. Scatter Plot Relationship between High-Level Teachers and High-Level Students*



*Figure 2. Scatter Plot Relationship between Low-Level Teachers and Low-Level Students*

The spread of dots (Figures 1 and 2) did not form a funnel shape; i.e. They were not wide at one end and narrow at the other end. Thus, it can be claimed that the assumption of homoscedasticity was met, and finally, the results displayed in (Tables 4 and 5), can be used to build the correlation as follows:

*Table 4.  
Correlation between the High-Level Teachers and Students*

		High-Level Teachers	High-Level Students
High-Level Teachers	Pearson Correlation	1	.241
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.307
	N	3	15
High-Level Students	Pearson Correlation	.241	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.307	
	N	15	12

As it is reported in (Table 4), findings of the data analysis in terms of Pearson correlation showed us that there is not a strong positive linear correlation between the results of the high-level teachers and learners,  $r = .241$ ,  $p > .05$ .

*Table 5.  
Correlation between the Low-Level Teachers and Students*

		Low-Level Teachers	Low-Level Students
Low-Level Teachers	Pearson Correlation	1	.259
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.271
	N	2	21
Low-Level Students	Pearson Correlation	.259	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.271	
	N	21	19

As it is shown in (Table 5), findings of the data analysis in terms of Pearson correlation showed us that there is not a strong positive linear correlation between the results of the low-level teachers and learners,  $r = .259, p > .05$ .

**4.4. Investigating Third Null-Hypothesis**

Independent One Samples t-test was used in order to reveal the effects of teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies on the actual learners' interaction. Besides, application of parametric statistical analyses is acceptable if a number of assumptions are recognized. The assumption of normality of the analyzed data was tested through the skewness and kurtosis statistics (Table 1) in the present study; it was required to verify homogeneity of variances of the data sets.

*Table 6.*

*Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Perception of WTC Encouraging Strategies on the actual students' interaction*

Learners		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Scores	High-Level Students	12	2.1000	4.89898	1.09545
	Low-Level Students	19	3.6050	9.42268	2.10697

The actual difference in the mean scores between high-level students in comparison with the low-level students is quite large. As (Table 6) indicates the mean score for the high-level students ( $M=2.1, SD=4.89$ ) was significantly different from that of the low-level students ( $M=3.6, SD=9.42$ ).

*Table 7.*

*Independent Samples Test of Teacher' Perception of WTC Encouraging Strategies on the actual students' interaction*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper	
Scores Equal variances assumed	4.307	.045	-6.338E0	38	.00000	-15.05000	2.37473	-19.85739	-10.24261
Equal variances not assumed			-6.338E0	2.857E1	.00000	-15.05000	2.37473	-19.91003	-10.18997

Moreover, there was a statistically significant difference at the  $p < .05$  level in the scores of the two groups (Table 7). Briefly, the mean difference between the two groups was

significant, and it is assumed that the actual students' interaction was more effective in the high-level students' group.

#### **4.5. Interpretation**

Despite of the complexity of the Communicative Approach to language teaching, this paper deals with speaking as one of its expected outcomes. Rather than trying to identify new factors which influence learner's willingness to communicate, in this study I have focused on determining whether and to what extent the currently discussed factors are relevant to the teachers' perception. Moreover, due to the fact that this study included participants from two settings, high-level and low-level in teachers and learners, we can also view it through the perspective of a comparative study.

Within the first part of this study, it became apparent that certain factors are, generally speaking, seen as most influential by the majority of the participants. As this study is dealing with speaking, Confidence in my speaking skills was chosen by altogether 74.19% of the participants. Wish to practice speaking of the participants ranked second. However, regardless of how confident the participants are during speaking, their wish to practice their speaking skills could help them override their potential inhibition. Personality of learners can help them to speak, shy person has some inhibition in his/her speaking because of that it is in third place of rank. Two additional factors that were ranked fourth and fifth were get a good grade and classroom atmosphere. So, fear of teachers' evaluation and fear of class moods have specially effect on learners' WTC.

Although preparation is crucial for both high and low-level learners but high-level learners tend to speak more voluntarily and without preparation. They do acknowledge its importance in successful speaking to some extent (MacIntyre et al. 1998). So, teachers should pay attention to the low-level learners' preparation and they should force low-level learners to be prepared before the class.

The majority of the learners especially low-level learners tend to speak about their interest but most of the teachers didn't pay attention to their learners' interest. All the teachers selected the topic by themselves and low-level teachers changed the topic more than high-level teachers. Riasati (2014) states that for learners, topic familiarity, topic interest, and topic preparations are the essential features of a particular topic. So, it can show that teachers should keep the interest of the learners and they should pay more attention to the interest of learners about the topic, while widening their personal teaching repertoire at the same time and low-level teachers should have more constancy in their topics.

Result showed that High-level learners felt more self-confident, because of that, they expressed their opinion more than low-level learners and they felt more confident in their speaking than low-level learners. Also, high-level teachers' encouragement was more than low-level teachers. According to Cao & Philip (2006), Lack of self-confidence in the whole class situation can reduce WTC, so with lack of self-confidence, participation in the whole class interaction could be comparatively low. So, teachers should give low-level learners more self-confidence by encouraging and praising them. Low-level learners needed more supporting from their teacher than high-level learners and low-level teachers should support their learners more by helping them and giving some words and information for learners' sentences.

All the teachers in the research believed that interruption of learners during speaking can reduce learners' ease of speaking and self-confidence. All teachers corrected their learners during speaking a lot. Low-level teachers tended toward interruption more than high-level

teachers and they stopped learners' speaking more than high-level teachers. According to Meng (2009), Encouragement can give learners self-confidence and are more important than constant correction in the speaking class. So, teachers, especially low-level teachers should not interrupt learners during their speech and they should correct them after speaking. They should give self-confidence to shy person in their speaking also, teachers should pay attention to the learners' personality and they should give time of speaking equally to the all learners.

Learners in the research felt completely agree about feeling comfortable in speaking with their close friends and speaking with close friend may be assigned to a good relationship between interlocutors. Also, Familiarity of teachers with learners in high-level teachers was more than low-level teachers and high-level teachers paid more attention to learners' cultural background. Cao & Philip (2006) stress that Learners feel comfortable with their classmates and WTC may differ during the time depending on the familiarity of learners with each other. According to Vongsila & Reinders (2016), familiarity of teachers with interlocutors have influence on WTC positively whereas new peers have the opposite effect. So, teachers should group learners in pair or group working in a familiar group but teachers rarely use pair and group working in their teaching and low-level teachers should be more familiar with the learners and their cultural background.

High-level learners' proficiency had effect on their speaking and most proficient learners spoke more than the others and High-level teachers let their learners more to speak in the class. Baghaei and Dourakhshan (2012) concluded that there is a moderate correlation between learners' WTC and their proficiency in English as a foreign language. So, teachers should let low-level learners to speak more than high-level learners in the class and more proficiency lead to more WTC and for speaking more in the class, learners should increase their level of proficiency. Lack of proficiency should not be a barrier in front of low-level learners for speaking. Also, low-level teachers should reduce their amount of talk time and they should let their learners to speak more.

Speaking in a group could only foster learners' willingness to communicate in that given moment and low-level learners feel ease in group speaking. According to Riasati (2014), researches indicate that learners prefer to speak in pairs and group rather than speaking individually, because of same proficiency level of learners, they feel more comfortable to speaking with learners who know about each other. So, teachers should let more to the low-level learners to speak in the group or pair working.

All the learners in the research believed that mistakes are a sign of learning. Low-level learners have some fear about their mistakes but high-level learners didn't pay attention to their mistakes. According to Cutrone (2009), overt correction discourages learners from speaking and will increase anxiety in the classroom. So, teachers should not correct learners immediately and they should let them to speak, after speaking correction in errors but not in mistakes can reduce learners fear about correction.

The majority of learners told that to feel relaxed is important for WTC and low-level learners need more relaxing atmosphere than high-level learners. Also, high-level teachers are more willing to reduce learners' anxiety than low-level teachers. High-level teachers cared more about class atmosphere by reducing stress and grouping learners in a familiar group, while low-level teachers didn't care about friendliness of learners in order to group them and they didn't pay attention to removing stress from the learners. As Riasati (2014) states that relaxed situation can lead to better acquaintance and trustworthiness of learners to each other. Nagy and Nikolov (2007) propose that a student-friendly and supportive environment can lead to more WTC. So,

teachers should create friendly, relaxed and stress-free atmosphere but it was not observed in all classes and low-level teachers should pay more attention into learners' anxiety and they should encourage them more than high-level learners also, teachers should encourage learners to reduce their shyness for speaking. Low-level teachers should pay more attention to the atmosphere of the class.

High-level learners felt less embarrassment and they spoke more voluntarily than low-level learners and totally the amount of talk time for high-level learners was more than low-level learners but high-level learners cared more about their speaking when nobody laugh at them. Also, low-level learners spoke more in group than high-level learners. High-level learners were more volunteer to answer the question. According to Vongsila & Reinders (2016) Increasing students' talk time can lead to encourage WTC through interaction with peers rather than with their teachers. So, teachers should let their low-level learners to speak more than high-level learners and they should control the class for ridiculing each other's in the class. Teachers should let their low-level learners speak more in pair and group working rather than speaking in front of the class.

High-level teachers' perception of WTC tended to learner-centered class but low-level teachers tended to teacher-centered class but it was not observed during the class. According to Meng (2009), Language teachers should always keep in mind that in any situation, students should always be the center of the classroom and the center of learning and cultivating students' communicative competence depends greatly on the practical use as the language and the frequent interaction with the peers. So, teachers should create learner-centered class and low-level teachers should pay more attention to that.

Low-level teachers changed their language from L2 to L1 or L1 to L2 more than high-level teachers and high-level learners changed more than low-level learners. According to Jarvis & Pavlenko (2008), in L1 to L2 transfer, older learners transfer more than younger learners in the area of phonology, not in the areas of lexis or morphology. But in L2 to L1 transfer, older learners transfer less than younger learners. So, teachers should pay more attention to their low-level learners for transferring from L2 to L1 in their language and they should pay more attention to their high-level learners for transferring from L1 to L2.

The researcher compared data analysis and observation and it is concluded that teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies have statistically significant effect on the learners' interaction and WTC of Iranian EFL learners in 7 factors from 10 factors in whole and it shows that 70% of teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies have significant effect on learners' interaction and WTC. So, there is a positive effect between teachers' perception and learners' interaction and their WTC. In data analysis, it was proved that WTC of Iranian EFL learners was more effective under the supervision of high-level teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies compared with that of low-level teachers and also, the actual learners' interaction was more effective in the high-level learners' group.

There was a positive correspondent between teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies and their actual practices of WTC encouraging strategies in 6 factors from 11 factors in whole. It showed that 54% of teachers' perception of WTC and their actual practices have correspondence with each other. So, it has a positive linear correlation with each other, as in data analysis proved that there is not a strong positive linear correlation between teachers' perception and their actual practices.

## **5. Conclusions and Implications**

It is assumed that teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies have statistically significant effect on the learners' interaction and it showed that 70% of teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies have significant effect on learners' interaction and WTC. So, there is a positive effect between teachers' perception and learners' interaction and their WTC. In data analysis, it was proved that WTC of Iranian EFL learners was more effective under the supervision of high-level teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies compared with that of low-level teachers and the actual learners' interaction was more effective in the high-level learners' group. There was a positive correspondent between teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies and their actual practices of WTC encouraging strategies in 6 factors from 11 factors in whole. It showed that 54% of teachers' perception of WTC and their actual practices have correspondence with each other. So, it has a positive linear correlation with each other, as in data analysis proved that there is not a strong positive linear correlation between teachers' perception and their actual practices.

As a result of the statistical analyses all three null hypotheses of the study were rejected. Teachers use of different WTC encouraging strategies have statistically significant effect on the learners' WTC differently and WTC of Iranian EFL learners was more effective under the supervision of high-level teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies compared with that of low-level teachers. Also, there was a positive linear relationship between teachers' perception of WTC and their actual practices of WTC encouraging strategies and finally, teachers use of different WTC encouraging strategies have statistically significant effect on the actual learners' interaction differently and it was more effective in the high-level learners' group.

Although there have been extensive research studies in the literature regarding teachers' perception of WTC encouraging strategies, for instance, Allahyar (2015) conducted a research to investigate Teachers' perceptions, interactions patterns and strategies towards Iranian EFL students' willingness to communicate or reticence, and, Vongsila & Reiders (2016) conducted a research to investigate teachers' perceptions of their role in fostering WTC, The present study can add another dimension to the field of considering WTC encouraging strategies. Eventually, it needs to be mentioned that most of the teachers don't use WTC encouraging strategies in their teaching and they use old and false technics for making conversation.

### **5.1. Pedagogical Implications**

Learners should feel confidence in their speaking for communication. Preparation is crucial in communication. Teachers should reduce their talk time in their class. Asking open question instead of closed question for continuation of speaking. Learners' interest in topic is important for WTC. Error correction should occur after speaking. Teachers should support the learners for continuation. Teachers should encourage learners for speaking. Teachers should reduce learners' anxiety. Classes should be learner-centered but all classes are teacher-centered. Learner's familiarity should be high in interlocutors. Class atmosphere should be friendly, relaxed and stress free. Teachers familiarity with the learners should be high.

Some delimitation of the study is: All of the students were Iranian and in Tehran province. The focus of this study was only on the speaking skill in the class. The study only focused on intermediate and Advanced level of proficiency of learners. This study was carried out on the participant over the age 12, so the results could not be generalized to students below this age. Future research can be specialized on fewer strategies that teachers use in their class. Participants of learners can be extended to male and female and the number of learners and

teachers can increase for getting better results. This study could be replicated with learners at higher and lower levels of language proficiency.

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**Appendices:**

*Appendix A*

**Learners' Questionnaire**

This questionnaire is completely anonymous and all the data collected will be used for the purposes of writing a Master research paper about language learning experience. Thank you for your time and effort!

**Part I.** Age: \_\_\_ Gender:  Male  Female

How long have you been studying English? \_\_\_\_

What level are you now:  Beginner,  Lower intermediate,  Upper-intermediate,  Advanced

Do you speak any other foreign language, apart from English? Yes No

If your answer is yes, please state which language(s) you speak, and what level you are at:

\_\_\_\_\_ beginner, lower intermediate, upper intermediate, advanced

\_\_\_\_\_ beginner, lower intermediate, upper intermediate, advanced

\_\_\_\_\_ beginner, lower intermediate, upper intermediate, advanced

In your opinion, which of the following factors make you willing to speak during your English classes? Choose 5 factors and grade them (1= most important).

- Confidence in my speaking abilities
- Wish to practice speaking
- Wish to make a good impression on the teacher
- Wish to get a good grade
- My personality
- Mood
- Interest in the topic
- Pair work
- Group work
- Relationship with my fellow students
- Relationship with my teacher
- Classroom atmosphere
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part II.** Please circle the number which best describes your feel:

*Table 8.*

*Learners' Questionnaire table*

No.	Statements	Completely Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Completely Disagree
1.	I need to feel prepared to speak freely.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I like to talk about a topic if I am interested in it.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I am confident when speaking English.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I like to speak English.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I like to speak English with foreigners.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I feel comfortable speaking to native speakers of English.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I like to do presentations on my own.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I need to feel relaxed to speak freely in class.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I am more willing to speak when I know nobody will laugh at me.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I think mistakes are a sign of learning.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	For me, preparation is the key for successful speaking.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I think an interesting topic is important for speaking skill.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I am satisfied with my speaking skills.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I feel at ease when speaking in my English class.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I feel confident when I speak to my peers.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I enjoy speaking in groups.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I enjoy speaking in a relaxing atmosphere.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I see the classroom as a place to practice my speaking.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I like to speak even if I make mistakes occasionally.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I feel comfortable speaking with my close friends.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you very much for helping us with our research. If you have any comments about this questionnaire, please type them in the below

.....

*Appendix B*

**Teachers' Questionnaire**

**Topic:** Teachers' perceptions of Willingness to Communicate in an EFL classroom. The purpose of this questionnaire is to 1) identify the factors that affect students' willingness to communicate inside the EFL classroom, and 2) to explore what activities teachers employ in class to encourage willingness to communicate. Your answers will be anonymous.

**Part I. Background Information**

1. Please indicate your gender and age:

A:  Male       Female      B: Age: \_\_\_\_

2. Please indicate your experience in teaching English (including previous jobs)

Less than 1 year       2 – 5 years       6 – 10 years       11- 15 years

More than 15 years

3. What is your highest qualification in language teaching? (Please write your answer below) .....

Willingness to communicate (WTC) is usually defined as a speaker's willingness to speak in class and outside the class. If you do not think that this definition accurately describes willingness to communicate, please provide your own definition in the box below.....

.....

**Part II.** Please circle the number which best describes your feel:

*Table 9.*

*Teachers' Questionnaire table*

No.	Statements	Completely Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Completely Disagree
1.	I should encourage shyness learners to speak.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I think, learners should encourage each other.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I need to be familiar with interlocutor.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I give self-confidence to learners.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I think group work can foster WTC.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I think peer work can foster WTC.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I like stress free atmosphere in the class.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I correct learners' speaking mistake immediately	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I choose task type and practices	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I organize learners in familiar group for talking	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I have cultural background about learners	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I think class should be teacher-centered	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I should speak more than the learners	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I pressure weak learners to speak	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I choose learners to answer my questions	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I choose the topic for speaking.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I just speak English	1	2	3	4	5

18.	I think, students must speak just English.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I let the learners speak in front of the class	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I think, learners should speak more than the teacher	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you very much for helping us with our research. If you have any comments about this questionnaire, please type them in the box below.

.....

**Appendix C**

Table 10.

Learners' checklist table

No.	Statement	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
1.	Number of times to Present own <i>opinion</i>						
2.	Number of times to be <i>Volunteer to answer</i> the question						
3.	Number of times to be <i>volunteer to speak</i> in the class						
4.	Number of asking <i>question</i> from the teacher						
5.	Number of asking the teacher for <i>clarification</i>						
6.	Number of times to <i>respond</i> to other opinion						
7.	Change from <i>L2 to L1</i>						
8.	<i>Support</i> other opinion						
9.	<i>Supporting</i> by the other						
10.	The amount of <i>group speaking</i>						
11.	Number of <i>Changing the topic</i> of discussion						
12.	Number of answering to the <i>closed question</i>						
13.	Number of answering to the <i>open question</i>						
14.	The amount of <i>Talk time</i>						

No.	Statement	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
1.	The amount of <i>Talk time</i>					
2.	Number of <i>question</i>					
3.	Number of <i>topic change</i> by the teacher					
4.	Number of <i>Error correction</i> during speaking					
5.	Number of <i>Error correction</i> after speaking					
6.	Number of <i>interrupting</i>					
7.	Number of <i>supporting</i> the learners					
8.	Number of <i>open questions</i>					
9.	Number of <i>closed questions</i>					
10.	Number of times to <i>encourage</i> learners WTC					
11.	Number of times to reduce <i>anxiety</i> of learners					
12.	<i>Learner centered</i> or <i>teacher centered</i>					
13.	The amount of <i>intimacy</i> (High, middle, low)					
14.	<i>Class atmosphere</i> (friendly, relax, stress free)					
15.	<i>Group size</i>					
16.	<i>Familiarity</i> with the learners (High, middle, low)					
17.	Pay attention to <i>cultural background</i> (high, middle, low)					

**Appendix D**  
*Table 11.*  
*Teachers' checklist*  
*table*

Strategies: .....

Practices: .....