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The Role of EFL Teachers' Socio-affective Strategies in Learners' Willingness to Communicate: Learners' Perceptions

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Abstract

The present study set out to develop a willingness to communicate (WTC) questionnaire addressing teachers' socio-affective strategies. It also aimed at exploring learners' perceptions toward these strategies affecting their WTC. Participants of the study, who were selected by a non-probability convenience sampling method, were 153 English as a foreign language learner in three popular English Institutes in Iran. A questionnaire including 45 items was designed by referring to a previously conducted focus group interview of Iranian EFL teachers and the review of the literature. After the questionnaire was administered to and completed by the learners, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed. The analysis yielded 37 items and six factors: (a) creating a positive interaction (8 items), (b) teachers' enthusiasm (6 items), (c) teachers' fairness (5 items), (d) teachers' presence (6 items), (e) teachers' immediacy (6 items), and (f) teaching skills and participation in group activities (6 items). The reliability measures were also examined and the results were satisfactory. The six factors were compared against each other and teachers' enthusiasm and fairness were found to be the most important factor in promoting learners' WTC. Implications for teacher trainers and teachers are discussed and suggestions for further research are offered.

Keywords: Exploratory factor analysis; Reliability analysis; Socio-affective strategies; Validation; Willingness to communicate

INTRODUCTION

The importance of oral participation in English as a foreign language (EFL) class has been recognized because it creates a condition to use the target language (Swain, 2000) and fosters learners' development of performance (Skehan, 1991). It also affords the opportunity of interaction among learners and teachers in EFL situations because as Peng (2012) points out the language class provides the best chance of communication in English (Peng, 2012). This participation has been foregrounded by interactionist approaches to language learning (Long, 1996; Swain, 2000) and has accordingly brought an important construct into prominence, namely, the willingness to communicate (WTC).

Defined as "a readiness into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2" (MacIntyre, Dornyei, Clement, & Noels, 1998, p. 547), WTC has assumed great importance in second language learning in recent years among other individual characteristics both as a trait-like and situated factor. Recently, situated WTC in the classroom, particularly in foreign language situation, has garnered specific attention (Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2016; Pawlak, Mystkowska-Wiertelak, & Bielak, 2016; Peng, 2019; Yashima, MacIntyre, & Ikeda, 2018; Zhang,

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Beckmann, & Beckmann, 2018). Oxford (1997) defined WTC within a classroom context as "a student's intention to interact with others in the target language, given the chance to do so" (p. 449). Cao (2012) also defined WTC in an L2 classroom as "a student's intention to communicate with interlocutors when free to do so. This is contrasted to a situation when a student is called upon by the teacher, and he or she is obliged to respond without having much choice" (p.18). WTC within a classroom context has acquired significance in both ESL and EFL situations because it may cause a tendency in learners to seek opportunities to communicate in the authentic situation outside the classroom situation in ESL (MacIntyre et al., 1998). It may also create the opportunity of interaction among learners and teachers in an EFL situation. However classroom atmosphere is not always conducive to learners' WTC because learners' WTC may be affected by both learner-internal and learner-external factors (Dewaele, Gkonou, & Mercer, 2018). One of the key learner-external factors in EFL classrooms is teachers' characteristics. While the positive effect of teachers' interactional strategies not only on students' participation in class (Arnold, 2019; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Peng, 2020; Thararuedee & Wette, 2020; Author et al., 2019), but also on their educational outcomes (Mercer & Howe, 2012) has been recognized, there exist few valid and comprehensive instruments measuring the role of teachers' socio-affective strategies in learners' WTC in Iranian context as a foreign language situation directly. Then given the determining role teachers play in fostering learners' WTC, the present study intends to develop a questionnaire to measure the role of teachers' socio-affective strategies in learners' WTC, validate it and examine learners' perception of teachers' strategies which may promote their WTC. Although EFL teachers may sense the role of their interactional strategies in their learners' WTC, reliable and valid instruments are required to give them a very accurate picture of their learners' perceptions towards the strategies they adopt in their classes. Therefore, this instrument may function as an awareness raising instrument for teachers so that they can improve their facilitating strategies and avoid debilitating ones.

Literature Review

Teachers' socio-affective strategies

In MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) pyramid model, WTC has been connected to several variables, among which social and individual context, affective- cognitive context, and motivational propensities relate this construct to social and affective variables. Within motivational propensities, interpersonal motivation is attributed to two purposes: control and affiliation. When the communication is led through control, it exerts limitations on the role relationships of the parties involved in communication and when it is managed through affiliation, it is affected by personal characteristics of communicators (MacIntyre et al.'s, 1998). This can affect any communication situation especially second/foreign language learning situations where students' self-image is vulnerable due to lack of "mastery of their vehicle for expression –language" (Arnold, 2009, p.147). Therefore, foreign language (FL) teachers need to adopt specific strategies to create a safe environment in the classroom to facilitate communication and foster student participation. Some of these strategies pertain to teachers' social and affective strategies. Socio-affective strategies are related to social-mediating activities and transacting with others (O'Malley, O'Malley, & Chamot, 1990).These strategies were originally identified by Oxford (1990) as learning strategies on the premise that "the learner is a "whole person" who uses intellectual, social, emotional, and physical resources and is not merely cognitive/ metacognitive information processing machine" (p.128). Hence it seems "Success [in language learning] depends less on materials, techniques and linguistic analyses and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom"(Stevick, 1980, p. 4). This is what justifies teachers' social and affective strategies significance in the teaching-learning endeavor. These strategies are, in fact, a part of teachers' social and emotional competence (SEC). Teachers with high social and emotional com-

petence have high self-awareness, hold pro-social values and take responsibility for their decisions. They also know how to manage their emotions and behavior to arouse enthusi-asm and enjoyment of learning in students and regulate their behaviors (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

The role of teachers' strategies has already been documented in classroom atmosphere. In a study by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) par-ticipants found the classroom environment positive because the teachers had been posi-tive, used humor sensibly, were well-organized, respectful, and praised students for good performance. MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) pointed out that not only do teachers' positive emotions engender pleasant feelings but they also improve learners' ability to no-tice things in the classroom environment and heighten their awareness of language input. Furthermore, teachers' care and empathy en-courage learners' risk taking and alleviate their anxiety (Dewaele, 2015; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2013; Lamb, 2017). In fact, a good teacher can handle negative emotions fruitfully and channel them towards learning the lan-guage (Dewaele, 2015). Of course, besides harnessing their learners' emotions, teachers "should also be able to regulate their own emotions to ensure they are in the right frame of mind to create positive rapport with learn-ers, generate enjoyment and manage any anxi-eties" (Dewaele et al., 2018, p.126). In other words, creating a pleasant emotional atmos-phere in the classroom depends on both learn-ers and teachers and is vital for learning to happen (Dewaele, Witney, Saito, & Dewaele, 2017).

Teachers' Role in Learners' WTC

A considerable amount of literature has been published on teachers' role in learners' WTC (Fallah, 2014; Hsu, Watson, Lin, & Ho, 2007; Lee & Ng, 2009; Peng, 2012; Peng, 2020; Vongsila & Reinders, 2016; Walsh, 2002; Author et al.., 2019; Zarrinabadi, 2014). To determine the effects of teachers' choice of language on learners' face-to-face classroom participation, Walsh (2002) asked eight expe-rienced teachers to audio-record two 30-minute of their classes containing teacher-fronted activity with examples of teacher–learner interaction. Using conversation analy-sis, he found that teachers' choice of language could have an impact on constructing or ob-structing of learners' involvement, and there were some ways through which teachers could improve their talk to encourage learner talk. Applying WTC and teachers' immediacy questionnaire, Hsu et al. (2007) investigated the role of teachers' non-verbal immediacy behavior in learners' WTC by analyzing the data from 235 students in two technology in-stitutions in Taiwan. Via multiple regression analyses, they found touching, relaxed body position, looking at the board or notes, and gestures as strong predictors of learners' will-ingness to communicate. Lee and Ng (2009) investigated the differential impact of two interactional patterns (teacher-fronted and facilitator-oriented versus learner-oriented and facilitator-oriented) on Chinese students' reticence. Having videotaped the lessons for analysis, they found teacher interactional strategy as a major determinant factor of the student's reticence but not the only motivator. In another major study which set out to determine the interrelationship between shyness, motivation, communication self-confidence, teacher im-mediacy and learners' WTC, Fallah (2014), applying structural equational model, found significant positive paths from motivation and communication self-confidence to L2WTC, from immediacy to motivation and from moti-vation to self-confidence and negative paths from shyness to self-confidence and motiva-tion and from teacher immediacy to shyness. In addition, through the mediation of self-confidence and motivation, shyness and teacher immediacy were found to indirectly affect L2WTC. In his qualitative study (focused essay technique), Zarrinabadi (2014) had fifty undergraduate students of English Language and Literature write about their experiences of conversation with the people in different situa-tions which would encourage or discourage the learners to communicate in L2. The results of open and axial coding showed that teachers' wait time, decision on the topic, error correc-tion and support had an influential role in the

learners' WTC and unwillingness. Vongsila and Reinders (2016), using miscellaneous instruments (interviews, questionnaires and observations), explored teachers' perceptions of their role in promoting WTC in a New Zealand ESOL class. The results confirmed the teachers' belief in their influential role in learners' WTC. Notwithstanding some matches between the teachers' belief and their practices of some strategies (warm up strategies, group cohesiveness, topic choice, talk time, open-ended versus closed questions, wait time, students' topic initiation), classroom observations did not find any examples of teachers' encouragement of learners' use of language outside the classroom situation. Author et al. (2019) also investigated the role of teachers' socio-affective and pedagogic strategies in learners' WTC. Having conducted a focus group interview with EFL teachers in Iran, they found teachers' immediacy, support, fairness, choice of the topic, and teaching style as facilitating factors and teachers' role, style and institutional expectations as debilitating factors in learners' WTC. Currently, Peng (2020) investigated the effect of teacher interaction strategies on learners' WTC by recording observations and follow up interview of the learners. The results showed that teachers' use of open or referential questions in the I-move and F-move, adjusting wait time after ques-tioning, and close observation of learners' private speech and contextual and multimodal clues led to students' WTC.

Several questionnaires have been designed to assess WTC. McCroskey (1992) developed a generic WTC questionnaire; however, Peng and Woodrow (2010) recommended that it not be used in instructional context because the situations depicted in the questionnaire were more appropriate for communicative situa-tions. In another effort, Weaver (2005) devel-oped a questionnaire for instructional context including both spoken and written WTC; how-ever, the reliability index and interlocutors were not determined in his questionnaire. Khatib and Nourzadeh (2015), in Iran, designed a questionnaire for instructional context including communicative self-confidence, integrative orientation, situational context of L2 use, topical enticement, learning responsibility, and off-instruction communication. The questionnaire was validated via exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. Another WTC questionnaire for foreign language context, was designed by Tavakoli and Davoudi (2017) in Iran. As a result of exploratory factor analysis, the oral WTC was divided into three dimensions: WTC with a teacher, a classmate and a stranger. The effect of inter-locutors, age and gender was also investigated on these dimensions.

Whilst extensive research has been carried out on the role of teachers in learners' WTC, there still exists a gap in the literature. The methods used so far are either qualitative or conducted via previously developed questionnaires, that is, Willingness to Talk in Class Scale (Menzel & Carrell, 1999) and verbal and non-verbal immediacy questionnaire (Gorham, 1988). The first questionnaire measures WTC and the latter measures only one teacher variable and other teacher factors addressing teachers' socio-affective strategies have been ignored. Accordingly, it is vital to develop an instrument to include these factors and examine learners' perceptions in this regard. Therefore, this study, which is a follow up to Author et al., 2019, aimed to address the following research questions:

1. Does the WTC questionnaire addressing teachers' socio-affective strategies have an acceptable index of reliability and validity among Iranian EFL learners?

2. Do EFL teachers' socio-affective strategies have any roles in learners' WTC as perceived by Iranian EFL learners?

3. Which one of the teachers' socio-affective strategies has the most significant role in learners' WTC as perceived by Iranian EFL learners?

METHOD

Participants

The participants of the study, totally 153, included intermediate, high-intermediate and advanced English female learners in three popular English Institutes in Tabriz, Iran. The sampling was non-probability convenience sampling (Dornyei, 2007). The students were

bilinguals of Turkish and Persian and were taking general English courses (four-skill courses) with the age range of 13-57 (*M*=19.93, *SD*.=7.02).

Instrument

The development of the questionnaire was informed by a focus group interview previously conducted by Author et al. (2019). We meant to include teachers' personal experience in the EFL context of Iran in the questionnaire. Some items were also borrowed from various previously designed and validated questionnaires (Gorham, 1988; Khojastehmehr & Takrimi, 2008; Moafian, Ostovar, Griffiths, & Hashemi, 2019; Park & Lee, 2006; Saeidi & Jabbarpour, 2011). We then consulted Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) to construct the questionnaire (sampling of the questinnaire content, sequencing, grouping and wording.). The first section included the learners' demographic information and the second part elicited the learners' attitude toward the strategies fostering learners' WTC. The questionnaire included both variables of the study, that is, WTC and teachers' socio-affective strategies. To avoid wordiness the phrase 'I am willing to communicate when my teacher' was omitted from the beginning of all items and was put as a prompt at the top of the questionnaire; therefore, the items started with the verb phrases pertinent to teachers' socio-affective strategies (e.g., respects all ideas). The questionnaire comprised 45 items addressing socio-affective strategies. Each item was rated in a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (5) *strongly agree*. The questionnaire was translated into Persian (the participants' language) (Dornyei & Csizer, 2012) to ensure the comprehensibility of the items.

Procedures

Having been piloted on 20 learners to resolve vagueness or problems with language and format (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007), some of the questions in the questionnaire were recoded and the format was adjusted to promote comprehensibility. Permission was also obtained from the institute principals, and then the questionnare was administered to 153 learners in three English institutes and were completed in 20-28 minutes at the presence of the first researcher to ensure accuracy and high response rate.

Data Anaysis

Reliability and exploratory factor analyses were conducted to evaluate the construct validity and reliability of the questionnaire applying SPSS v 22. A p value <0.05 was considered significant. The sufficiency and suitability of the data was measured through the Bartlett's test of sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO). Maximum likelihood (ML) extraction method with an oblique rotation was applied to run exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Also, the result of Kaiser's criterion was examined by the scree plot and 0.4 was considered as the factor loading cut off point.

RESULTS

An exploratory factor anlysis (EFA) was run and the construct validity of 45 items were measured. As the cut-point was considered 0.4, eight items (8-15-20-22-25-32-40 and 41) were excluded from the original questionnaire due to low factor loading. As a result of the EFA analysis, the 37 items were categorized to seven factors. The Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) was coducted to measure the sampling adequacy (see table 1).

Table 1
Kasiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Kasiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.8
Bartlett s Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2123.27
	Df	666
	Sig.	0.000

The value of KMO =0.8 was obtained and because this value was larger than 0.5, it was concluded that the number of samples was very suitable for performing factor analysis. According to the table above, the value of Bartlett is equal to 2123.27 with a significant level of p = 000.0. This means that the factors have been categorized correctly, and there is a high congeric correlation among items in each factor.

Table 2

Variances and Eigenvalues of Factor Analysis for Teahers' Socio-affective Strategies and Learners' WTC

Components	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4	10.81	10.81
2	3.23	8.75	19.56
3	2.95	7.97	27.53
4	2.83	7.66	35.2
5	2.52	6.82	42.02
6	2.25	6.09	48.11
7	1.69	4.56	**52.68**

Based on the information in Table 2, the highest eigenvalues are observed with, respectively, 4, 3.23, 2.95, 2.83, 2.52, 2.25, and 1.69 relating to the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh factors. The first factor with the eigenvalue of 4 and the explained variance of 10.81 had the highest eigenvalue and explained variance among factors. In total, the seven factors out of 37 items accounted for 52.68% of the variance, which is suitable because in factor analysis 50% of the variance must be explained.

Table 3

Factor Loadings of the Questionnaire Items with Varimax Rotation

Subscales	Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Creating positive interaction	Item 27	0.65						
	Item 10	0.62						
	Item 14	0.58						
	Item 28	0.57						
	Item 17	0.55						
	Item 5	0.53						
	Item 37	0.52						
	Item 6	0.51						
Teachers' Enthusiasm	Item 4		0.74					
	Item 13		0.67					
	Item 9		0.67					
	Item 16		0.59					
	Item 42		0.56					
	Item 44		0.53					
Teachers' Fairness	Item 11			0.74				
	Item 3			0.67				
	Item 23			0.64				
	Item 34			0.54				
	Item 24			0.51				
Teachers' presence	Item 33				0.74			
	Item 36				0.61			
	Item 18				0.56			
	Item 39				0.55			
	Item 12				0.54			
	Item 7				0.53			
Teachers' immediacy	Item 1					0.619		
	Item 38					0.618		
	Item 30					0.57		

	Item 31	0.55		
	Item 2	0.53		
	Item 19	0.51		
	Item 29		0.69	
	Item 35		0.6	
	Item 21		0.57	
Teaching skills and cooperation in group activities	Item 43			0.81
	Item 45			0.63
	Item 26			0.56

As can be seen in Table 3, based on the factor loadings rotated by Varimax method, 37 items were identified related to the seven factors, which are listed in the table along with their factor load-ing coefficients. Because of similar magnitudes of some factors in EFA analysis, the sixth and seventh factor were categorized under one factor; accordingly, the analysis resulted in six factors and 37 items including creating positive interaction (items 5, 6, 10, 14, 17, 27, 28, 37), teachers' enthusiasm (items 4, 9, 13, 16, 42, 44), teachers' fairness (items 3, 11, 23, 24, 34), teachers' presence (7, 12, 18, 33, 36, 39), teachers' immediacy (1, 2, 19, 30, 31, 38), teaching skills and participation in group activities (21, 26, 29, 35, 43, 45) (See Table 4).

Table 4
Factors and Related Items

Factors	Items	I am willing to communicate when my teacher
Creating positive interaction	5	respects all ideas
	6	listens to students attentively
	10	asks questions or encourages the learners to talk
	14	honors students' comments and questions and seeks their input
	1	has an interaction with the learner and engages the learner's attention
	27	pays attention to students who need more help
	28	calls on students to answer questions even if they have indicated that they don't want to talk
	37	incorporates ideas and suggestions from the learners
	4	enjoys teaching
Teachers' enthusiasm	9	has the ability to stimulate learners to learn
	13	is a dynamic and energetic person
	16	uses humor in class
	42	smiles at the class as a whole, not individual students
	44	refers to class as "our class" or what "we" are doing
Teachers'fairness	3	pays attention to all students
	11	avoids discriminating against learners
	23	avoids favoring some students over others
	24	is impartial in grading
	34	involves all students in learning
Teachers' presence	7	is aware of what is happening in the class
	12	walks into the classroom while teaching
	18	avoids complaining about her/his job
	33	does not feel bored and frustrated in the class
	36	is not distracted in the class
	39	avoids being the only speaker in the class
Teachers' immediacy	1	avoids making fun of the learners
	2	avoids being too strict in the class
	19	addresses me by name
	30	boosts my self-confidence
	31	Keeps eye contact with all students
	38	smiles at individual learners in class
Teaching skills and participation in group activities	21	is interested in the subject matter he/she is teaching
	26	is involved in class activities
	29	equal opportunities for learners' participation in the classroom
	35	is well-prepared for the presentation of the new lesson
	43	avoids looking at the board or notes while talking to the class
	45	asks open ended questions

Table 5
Reliability Values of Items in the Questionnaire

Variables	Items	Reliability
Creating a positive interaction	8	0.72
Teachers' enthusiasm	6	0.75
Teachers' fairness	5	0.73
Teachers' presence	6	0.74
Teachers' immediacy	6	0.71
Teaching skills and participation in group activities	6	0.74
Teachers' Socio-affective Strategies and Learners' WTC	37	0.91

As Table 5 shows, after conducting factor analysis for the questionnaire of teachers' socio-affective strategies and learners' WTC, reliability was calculated for six identified factors using Cronbach's alpha the value of which were above .7, which shows internal consistency of the items within the factors. The total reliability of the questionnaire, estimated via Cronbach's alpha was, .91. Consequently, the reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed too.

Research question 2: Do EFL teachers' socio-affective strategies have any significant roles in learners' WTC as perceived by learners?

To answer this question a one-sample T-test was carried out (See Table 6).

Table 6
One Sample T-test

Items	*N*	*Df*	*M*	*SD*	*Sig*	*T*
Creating positive interaction	153	152	4.3	0.25	0.000	64.29
Teachers' enthusiasm	153	152	4.64	0.37	0.000	53.75
Teachers' presence	153	152	4.61	0.44	0.000	44.86
Teachers' fairness	153	152	4.38	0.47	0.000	35.9
Teachers' immediacy	153	152	4.4	0.45	0.000	38.34
Teaching skills and participation in group activities	153	152	4.11	0.42	0.000	32.67
Teacher's socio-affective strategies and learners' WTC	153	152	4.41	0.26	0.000	66.84

The Table above illustrates the results of one-sample T-test for the variables of teachers' socio-affective strategies and learners' WTC. A one-sample t-test found the mean index for the role of six teacher factors with α=.5, p < .5, and *df*= 152 larger than *t critical*. Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers' socio-affective strategies in all six factors have a significant role in learners' WTC (3.66 <*M*< 5). The following tables indicate the mean index of each item in all six factors separately.

Table 7
The role of Creating Positive Interaction in Learners' WTC

Items	N	Df	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig	T
Q27	153	152	4.64	0.54	0.000	37.46
Q10	153	152	4.77	0.44	0.000	49.13
Q14	153	152	4.65	0.5	0.000	40.56
Q28	153	152	1.5	0.72	0.000	25.37
Q17	153	152	4.8	0.39	0.000	56.01
Q5	153	152	4.81	0.42	0.000	52.64
Q37	153	152	4.42	0.71	0.000	24.7
Q6	153	152	4.81	0.38	0.000	57.93
	153	**152**	**4.3**	**0.25**	**0.000**	**64.29**

As can be seen from Table 7, one sample t-test found a significant effect of this teacher factor in learners' WTC. The mean index of 4.3, at α= .05 level, ρ < .05, *t*= 64.29, *df* =152, is larger than *t critical*. The mean score of each item also indicates that

they all have a significant effect on learners' WTC ($\rho < .05$, $3.66 < m < 2.33$) except for item 28, which has a marginal effect ($\rho < .05$, $1 < m < 2.33$).

Table 8
The Role of Teachers' Enthusiasm in Learners' WTC

Items	N	df	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig	t
Q4	153	152	4.84	0.39	0.000	58.13
Q13	153	152	4.75	0.46	0.000	46.81
Q9	153	152	4.73	0.59	0.000	35.94
Q16	153	152	4.73	0.56	0.000	38.11
Q42	153	152	4.47	0.67	0.000	26.89
Q44	153	152	4.34	0.71	0.000	23.45
	153	**152**	**4.64**	**0.37**	**0.000**	**53.75**

The results, as shown in Table 8, indicate that teachers' enthusiasm has a significant effect on learners' WTC. The mean score of 4.64, at $\alpha = .05$ level, $\rho < .05$, $t = 53.75$, $df = 152$, is larger than *t critical*. The mean score of each item also indicates that they all have a significant effect on learners' WTC ($\rho < .05$, $3.66 < m < 5$).

Table 9
The Role of Teachers' Fair Treatment in Learners' WTC

Items	N	Df	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig	T
Q11	153	152	4.8	0.5	0.000	44.55
Q3	153	152	4.79	0.46	0.000	47.91
Q23	153	152	4.33	0.93	0.000	17.69
Q34	153	152	4.67	0.59	0.000	35.08
Q24	153	152	4.48	0.74	0.000	24.65
	153	**152**	**4.61**	**0.44**	**0.000**	**44.86**

The table illustrates that teachers' fair treatment has a significant effect on learn-ers' WTC. The mean score of 4.61, at $\alpha = .05$ level, $\rho < .05$, $t = 44.86$, $df = 152$, is larger than *t critical*. The mean score of each item also reveals that they all have a significant effect on learners' WTC ($\rho < .05$, $3.66 < m < 5$).

Table 10
The Role of Teachers' Presence in Learners' WTC

Items	N	Df	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig	T
Q33	153	152	4.6	0.78	0.000	25.36
Q36	153	152	4.62	0.75	0.000	26.79
Q18	153	152	4.77	0.54	0.000	40.66
Q39	153	152	4.43	0.72	0.000	24.56
Q12	153	152	4.42	0.76	0.000	22.98
Q7	153	152	3.44	1.08	0.000	5.05
	153	**152**	**4.38**	**0.47**	**0.000**	**35.9**

From Table 10, it can be seen that teach-ers' presence has a significant effect on learners' WTC. The mean score of 4.38, at $\alpha = .05$ level, $\rho < .05$, $t = 35.9$, $df = 152$, is larger than *t* critical. The mean score of each item also reveals that they have a significant effect on learners' WTC ($\rho < .05$, $3.66 < m < 5$). However, item seven has a modest effect on learners' WTC ($\rho < .05$, $2.33 < m < 3.66$).

Table 11
The Role of Teachers' Immediacy in Learners' WTC

Items	N	df	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig	t
Q1	153	152	4.26	0.95	0.000	16.46
Q38	153	152	4.48	0.66	0.000	27.39
Q30	153	152	4.72	0.54	0.000	39.45
Q31	153	152	4.44	0.69	0.000	25.64
Q2	153	152	3.86	0.92	0.000	11.53
Q19	153	152	4.62	0.64	0.000	31.08
	153	**152**	**4.4**	**0.45**	**0.000**	**38.34**

From Table 11, we can see that teachers' immediacy has a significant effect on learners' WTC. The mean score of 4.4, at α= .05 level, ρ < .05, t= 38.34, df =152, is larger than *t critical.* The mean score of each item also reveals that they all are sig-nificant factors in learners' WTC (ρ < .05, 3.66 < m < 5).

Table 12
The Role of Teaching Skills and Participation in Group Activities in Learners' WTC

Items	N	df	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig	T
Q29	153	152	4.81	0.63	0.000	35.2
Q35	153	152	4.84	0.41	0.000	54.87
Q21	153	152	4.77	0.5	0.000	43.72
Q43	153	152	3.37	1.1	0.000	4.16
Q45	153	152	2.51	1.24	0.000	4.79
Q26	153	152	4.33	0.93	0.000	17.76
	153	**152**	**4.11**	**0.42**	**0.000**	**32.67**

As Table 12 shows teaching skills and participation in group activities have a significant effect on learners' WTC. The mean score of 4.11, at α= .05 level, ρ < .05, t= 32.67, df =152, is larger than *t* critical. The mean score of each item also reveals that they have a significant effect on learners' WTC (ρ < .05, 3.66 < m < 5) except for items 43 and 45, which have a modest effect on learners' WTC (ρ < .05, 2.33 < m < 3.66).

Research question 3: Which one of the teachers' socio-affective strategies has the most significant roles in learners' WTC as perceived by learners?

To answer this question, Friedmann test was employed in order to rank the role of each factor in learners' WTC (See Table 13 and 14).

Table 13
Ranking Teachers' Socio-affective Strategies and Learners' WTC

Variables	Mean Rank
Creating positive interaction	2.67
Teachers' enthusiasm	4.68
Teachers' fairness	4.62
Teachers' presence	3.33
Teachers' immediacy	3.45
Teaching skills and participation in group activities	2.25

As Table 13 shows, teachers' enthusiasm ranks the highest with 4.66; teachers' fairness ranks the second high with 4.62; teachers' immediacy ranks the third with 3.45; teachers' presence ranks the fourth with 3.33; creating positive interaction ranks the fifth with 2.67; and teaching skills and participation in group activities rank the last with 2.25.

Table 14
The Results of Friedman Test for Ranking

N	153
χ^2	227.72
Df	5
Sig	0.000

As can be seen in Table 14, χ2= 227.72, significance level of p=0.000, and less than .5, the ranking of teachers' socio-affective strategies is reliable. In other words, teachers' enthusiasm and fairness are the most important and teaching skills and participation in group activities is the least important.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

The initial objective of this paper was to develop a questionnaire to analyze the role of teachers' socio-affective strategies in learners' WTC. The results of EFA revealed the scale has reasonable psychometric properties including reliability and validity. Consequently, it can be employed by teachers and researchers as a reliable scale addressing teachers' socio-affective strategies affecting learners' WTC.

The findings for the second research question indicated a significant effect of teachers' socio-affective strategies, namely, creating positive interaction, teacher's enthusiasm, teachers' fairness, teachers' presence, teach-ers' immediacy, and teaching skills and partic-ipation in group activities on learners' WTC. Regarding teachers' enthusiasm, fair treat-ment, and immediacy, all items were per-ceived to have equally significant role in learners' WTC. However, some items in teachers' creating positive interaction, pres-ence and teaching skills and participation in group activities were found to have a modest effect. Referring to teachers' creating positive interaction, all items were found to promote WTC except for item 28 which was about teachers' asking learners questions when they are not inclined to talk. This teacher's gesture may sound aggressive for some learners and induce anxiety, which has been found to hinder WTC (Khajavy et al., 2016; Peng & Woodrow, 2010). This is supported by Field Theory of Lewin (1951) in which he proposed two kinds of forces: driving forces and restraining forces. He asserted that to motivate an action, restraining forces, in this case the teacher's coercive behavior, should be reduced. This is also in compliance with the Planned Behavior Theory of Ajzen (1988) which holds that intention is a prerequisite for behavior. Therefore, if a learner does not intend to talk, teacher's effort may be in vain. Regarding teaching skills and participation in group activities, items 43 (avoids looking at the board or notes while talking to the class) and 45 (asks open ended questions) ranked lower than the other items. This may be due to the fact that some learners are not self-confident enough, which might be related to their state or trait-like self-confidence proposed by MacIntyre et al. (1998) in their pyramid model. Therefore, they would rather not have an eye contact with the teacher while participating in learning activity. Also, open ended questions require extended and different answers; as a result, less competent students may withdraw and avoid talking. This is of course in contrast with Author et. al (2019) study in which they found these types of questions encouraging and stimulating.

In order to discover which teacher factor had the most significant role in learners' WTC, Friedman Test was run. From among six factors, teacher's enthusiasm and fairness were found to rank the highest. This result is in line with Author et al. (2019), which was a focus group study of EFL teachers' percep-tions about teacher factors and learners' WTC. Therefore, the present study shows a conver-gence between teachers' and learners' attitude. Teachers' enthusiasm matters because it affects learning positively while presenting a lesson (Anttila, Pyhältö, Soini, & Pietarinen, 2017); improves their rapport with students (Daly & Kreiser, 1992); makes the experience memo-rable (Steele, 2009); and predicts students' emotions in the classroom (Becker et al., 2014 as cited in Anttila et al., 2017). Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016b) have emphasized the influ-ential effect of teachers on learners' language enjoyment and their lesser impact on language anxiety, making the need to understand the determining role of positive emotion in WTC. Also, in a study conducted by Gholam Hassan Khajavy, Peter D. MacIntyre, and Elyas Barabadi (2018) it was found that enjoyment had a strong relationship with WTC at both the individual level and the classroom level. Within a classroom, the results suggested that students who enjoy learning more also tend to be more willing to communicate. Teachers' fairness can also have a prominent role in fostering WTC because it may lead to a friendly atmos-phere in the classroom between learners and encourage talk. According to Gorard (2012) pupils' feelings of teachers' fairness may not only matter for academic but for 'civic' reasons. He noted students receiving unfair treatment are prone to behave in a way that will affect

their learning process, and in general, students in classes and schools where a lot of unfairness exists may not learn well.

Teachers' immediacy behavior was the third factor to be found effective in learners' WTC. This finding corroborates with several studies (Fallah, 2014; Frymier & Houser, 2016; Gholam Hassan Khajavy, Peter D MacIntyre, & Elyas Barabadi, 2018; Yu, 2011; Author et al., 2019; Zarrinabadi, 2014). Teachers' immediacy behaviors such as using a first name basis, smiling at the learners, having an eye contact, and arousing their self-confidence may reduce the power relation between the teacher and the student; consequently, the teacher's presence will embolden the learner (LeFebvre & Allen, 2014).This will create an approach-oriented behavior (J. Andersen, Nussbaum, Pecchioni, & Grant, 1999) and greater verbal interaction (P. Andersen & Andersen, 1982).

Teachers' presence is another determining factor which may promote learners' WTC. According to Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) , "Presence from the teacher's point of view is the experience of bringing one's whole self to full attention so as to perceive what is happening in the moment" (p. 267). Dewey (1933) used the adjective 'alive' to define this concept. He emphasized that teachers must monitor and interpret the students' 'intellectual reactions' all the time and attentively (p.18). In fact, considering presence, it seems that when teachers are "non-selectively" present to students; move around the class during presentation (Meijer, Korthagen, & Vasalos, 2009); and are alert and engaged with each individual, they may be able to encourage WTC. Additionally, teachers' presence may signal to learners that what they do and say is valuable because the teacher is listening carefully and evaluating what they say positively.

The strategy which was rated the last among other factors was teaching skills and teachers' involvement in group activities. It is difficult to explain this result but a possible explanation for this might be that girl students may favor teachers' socio-affective strategies to their teaching skills. This also accords with Park and Lee (2006) study in which they found that the girls preferred teachers' socio-affective strategies to their teaching skills while the boys inclined towards the opposite. Another possible explanation for this is that power relationship between teachers and students is still strong in Iran (Author et al., 2019), so teachers' close involvement in group activities may negatively affect learners' WTC and participation. In fact, a teacher who is too immediate may be misunderstood and cause learners to withdraw from the communication (McCroskey, Teven, Minielli, & Richmond McCroskey, 2014); therefore, it is incumbent on teachers to adapt their teaching approach to cater to their learners' needs, expectations, and cultural context.

The present study confirms some findings of the previous studies and contributes addi-tional evidence that suggests teachers have a facilitating role in engendering learners' WTC. Despite having rigorous psychometric properties, the limitation of the study cannot be ignored. First of all, the participants were limited to females because the differences in conversation style of boys and girls might have affected the results (Tannen, 1992). Therefore, a sepa-rate research on boys will complement the study. Furthermore, self-reporting has its own limitations and might not necessarily provide the full picture of the teachers' use of the socio-affective strategies; as a result, it may not reflect reality of the classroom behavior. Further research needs to examine more closely, via observation or videotaping, the links between teacher factors and WTC. Finally, as the data were gathered from three popular English Institutes from just one province (East Azerbaijan), the sample was limited to 153 learners. Consequently, with a small sample size, caution must be applied, as the findings might not be transferable to other educational centers or other cultural contexts.

This study may especially offer some insightful hints for teacher trainers. Since teachers' socio-affective strategies occupy a substantial role in students' WTC and consequently language learning, it is imperative that teacher training courses raise EFL teachers' awareness intentionally and systematically so that teachers understand and inte-

grate them into their teaching. In addition, teachers need to reflect on their use of these strategies. Although, it may be difficult for teachers to evaluate their strategies and tactics in the classroom, because some of these strat-egies become automatized by passing of the time; hence, they should be given opportuni-ties for analysis, evaluation, and reflection during their education program. This study can also provide a fruitful lens for teachers to reflect on what strategies to employ in the classroom to enhance their relationship with their students. Raising teachers' awareness of the significance of emotions helps them improve their relations with students and the subject matter; as a result, they can create a congenial and secure atmosphere for the students to be involved in the process of learning.

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