

Age-Appropriate Strategies for Enhancing Willingness to Communicate: A Comparative Study of Iranian EFL Teachers

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Research Paper

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Abstract: Willingness to Communicate (WTC) has been identified as a crucial factor in second-language learning, as it bridges the gap between language competence and actual use. However, while much research has focused on general factors influencing WTC, limited attention has been given to pedagogical strategies, particularly in the Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. This study investigates the age-appropriate strategies employed by Iranian EFL teachers to enhance students' WTC in English, focusing on seventh-grade and twelfth-grade learners. The study employed a qualitative approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews with 20 Iranian EFL teachers from Sabzevar and Mashhad, split evenly between those teaching seventh-grade and twelfth-grade students. Participants were selected through convenience sampling. To ensure rigor, the interview protocol underwent expert review and a pilot test to refine questions for clarity and relevance. Data were collected through in-person interviews, which were audio-recorded with participants' consent. Field notes were also taken to capture non-verbal cues and contextual information. Thematic analysis was conducted in four stages: transcription and familiarization with data, keyword selection, coding, and theme development. The results revealed that strategies for seventh-grade students focused on creating a supportive and engaging environment through interactive games, storytelling, role-playing, and multimedia resources. In contrast, strategies for twelfth-grade students emphasized intellectual engagement and real-world application, including debates on current events, project-based learning, and preparation for standardized English proficiency tests. The comparative analysis highlighted a developmental progression in teaching practices, with younger learners benefiting from emotionally supportive, teacher-led activities, while older students thrived in independent, cognitively demanding tasks. The findings underscore the importance of tailoring pedagogical strategies to students' developmental stages to enhance their WTC and overall language proficiency effectively. These insights have implications for EFL teaching practices, emphasizing the integration of age-appropriate methods, technology, and real-world communication tasks to foster meaningful and confident English usage in diverse educational contexts.

Keywords: Age Groups, EFL Teachers, Instructional Strategies, Seventh Grades, Twelfth Grades, Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

Introduction

The concept of WTC has emerged as a cornerstone in the field of second language acquisition (SLA), drawing significant attention from researchers and educators alike (Cao & Philip, 2006; Dornyei, 2014; Kang, 2005). Rooted in early communication theory, WTC was initially explored in first language (L1) contexts, with the work of Burgoon (1976), Mortensen et al. (1977), and McCroskey and Richmond (1982) establishing foundational constructs such as “unwillingness to communicate,”

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“predisposition to verbal behavior,” and “shyness.” Its adaptation to second language (L2) learning by MacIntyre and Charos (1996) marked a pivotal moment, as they demonstrated how personality traits and social contexts influence both the frequency of L2 use and an individual’s readiness to communicate. MacIntyre et al. (1998) further refined the model, emphasizing that WTC in L2 is distinct from L1 due to differences in communicative competence and situational variables. Defined as “readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2” (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547), WTC has since been recognized as a dynamic, situational construct (Kang, 2005) with profound implications for language learning. Central to its importance is the role of active communication in developing L2 fluency, communicative competence, and overall proficiency (Clement et al., 2003; Hashimoto, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004). However, despite its theoretical richness, facilitating WTC in classroom settings remains a challenge, particularly in contexts like EFL classrooms, where learners are often characterized as passive, reticent, and unwilling to participate (Cheng, 2000; Liu, 2005; Tsui, 1996).

The importance of fostering WTC in EFL classrooms cannot be overstated, as it directly impacts learners’ engagement, communicative success, and academic outcomes (Davis, 2009; Fassinger, 1995; Verplaetse, 2000). Studies consistently highlight that learners who actively participate in L2 communication reap cognitive benefits, develop critical thinking skills, and experience greater affective learning (Kember & Gow, 1994). Despite this, many EFL contexts, particularly in Asian settings, report low levels of WTC among students (Cheng, 2000; Tsui, 1996). Iranian EFL classrooms, for instance, are frequently described as stagnant environments where speaking tasks are minimal and integrated skills are underutilized (e.g., Abedini & Chalak, 2017; Afshar & Asakereh, 2016; Baktash & Chalak, 2016; Ghavamnia & Ketabi, 2015). The lack of communication in such classrooms hinders students’ ability to develop essential language skills, leaving them ill-prepared for real-world interactions (Alvarez et al., 2024; Bahous et al., 2011; Jiménez, 2015; Tok, 2009). Research suggests that teachers play a critical role in addressing this issue, with their discourse and interaction strategies significantly influencing learners’ WTC (Cheng, 2000; Xie, 2010). Teachers who foster self-confidence, reduce anxiety, and introduce engaging topics can create an environment conducive to communication (Lee & Ng, 2009). However, the literature remains sparse on the specific methods teachers employ to enhance WTC in classroom settings, particularly in Iran. This gap highlights the need for targeted research to explore how Iranian EFL teachers promote WTC, especially across different age groups, where developmental factors may also play a role.

Despite the growing body of research on WTC, there is a noticeable lack of studies examining the specific strategies teachers use to enhance WTC in Iranian EFL classrooms. While much attention has been given to the theoretical and situational factors underlying WTC (Kang, 2005; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Syed & Kuzborska, 2020; Zhang et al., 2018), practical insights into how teachers can effectively foster communication in real-world settings remain limited. Moreover, the existing literature tends to focus on general classroom strategies without considering the unique challenges posed by learners of different age groups. For instance, seventh-grade learners may require different motivational and instructional techniques compared to twelfth graders, given their distinct cognitive, emotional, and social development stages. This research aims to bridge these gaps by investigating the strategies employed by Iranian EFL teachers to enhance WTC among seventh and twelfth-grade learners. By identifying age-specific strategies and examining their effectiveness, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the interplay between teacher practices and student engagement.

Literature Review

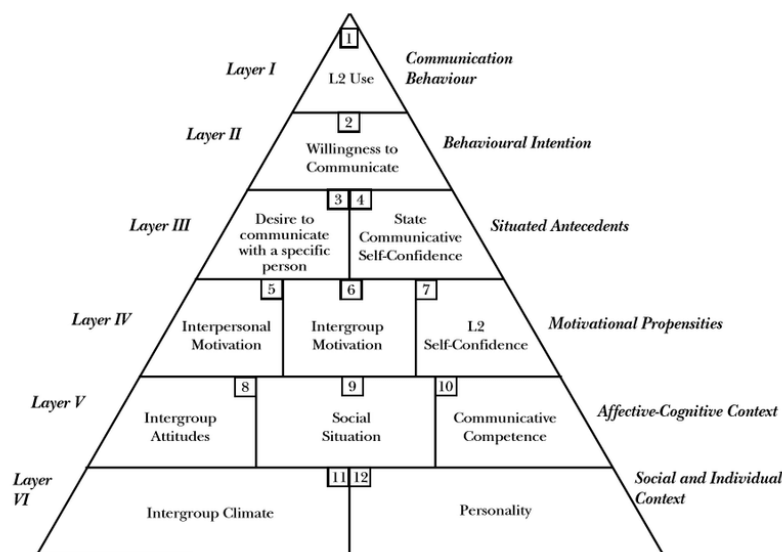
Conceptual Framework of Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

WTC in language learning is a multifaceted construct that has been extensively theorized and researched, particularly through MacIntyre et al.’s (1998) WTC model, which provides a comprehensive understanding of the variables influencing L2 communication. This model, depicted in

Figure 1, conceptualizes WTC as a pyramid with six layers, each containing different variables that influence an individual's decision to initiate communication in a second language. The top layers—Communication Behavior, Behavioral Intention, and Situated Antecedents—highlight situational factors that are transient and context-specific. These include the immediate desire to communicate, influenced by variables such as state communicative self-confidence and the interlocutors' participation. In contrast, the lower layers—Motivational Propensities, Affective-Cognitive Context, and Societal and Individual Context—represent more enduring, trait-like influences such as personality, intergroup climate, and L2 communicative competence. MacIntyre et al. (2001) explain that these variables collectively account for the individual differences in L2 communication initiation. This model's utility lies in its ability to dissect the complex interplay of factors that either encourage or inhibit communication in educational settings, particularly relevant for understanding how Iranian EFL teachers might foster WTC in their students. Moreover, Halliday's (1985; 1994) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) complements this model by offering a lens through which the linguistic choices made by learners can be analyzed. SFL, with its focus on language as a tool for social interaction, allows for an examination of how learners' linguistic decisions reflect their WTC in classroom discussions. Jacob and Ward (2000) emphasize that “SFL focuses on the way in which language serves as a toll for communication and on how people choose which bits of language to deploy” (p. 5). By integrating these theoretical frameworks, the study aims to not only identify the situational and trait-like factors affecting WTC but also to understand the linguistic manifestations of this willingness in the classroom discourse, thus providing a robust theoretical foundation for examining age-appropriate strategies among Iranian EFL teachers.

Figure 1

The Heuristic Model of Variables Influencing WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547)



Age Dynamics in Language Learning and WTC

The relationship between age, language learning, and WTC is intricate, involving a blend of cognitive, affective, and contextual influences (Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak, 2017; Pawlak et al., 2016; Wei & Xu, 2022). The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) suggests that younger learners may have an advantage in achieving native-like proficiency due to their heightened neuroplasticity (Rashidova et al., 2025), which could theoretically enhance their WTC (MacIntyre et al., 2003; Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak, 2017). This advantage is often reflected in younger learners' higher WTC, which can be attributed to their lower levels of anxiety and greater intrinsic motivation towards learning a new language (Borkowska, 2022; MacIntyre et al., 2003). However, the term 'negative association' in this context requires clarification. Here, a negative association implies that as age increases, WTC might decrease in certain situations, suggesting an inverse relationship (Amiryousefi,

2018; MacIntyre et al., 2003; Yetkin & Özer, 2022). This contrasts with the preceding statement, which highlights the generally positive correlation between youth and WTC. For instance, research by Li & Li (2022) has shown that in specific contexts, such as meaning-focused tasks, older learners might exhibit a lower WTC. This finding presents a contrast to the earlier notion that younger learners are typically more willing to communicate due to their developmental advantages. This negative association does not negate the benefits of cognitive maturity that come with age, which can provide older learners with enhanced emotion regulation strategies (Hertzog et al., 2008). However, these benefits are often offset by increased anxiety and reduced confidence in language use, which can inhibit WTC (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017). Cultural contexts, particularly those with a strong emphasis on respect for authority or teacher-centered learning environments, can further suppress older learners' WTC in formal settings (Zarei et al., 2029). The theoretical discussions around the CPH reveal its limitations, as individual differences like motivation play a significant role in language learning beyond the critical period (Peng & Woodrow, 2010). Cao (2009) suggests that age should not be seen as a static determinant but rather as a dynamic factor influenced by the learning environment, advocating for a nuanced understanding that considers both the developmental advantages of younger learners and the cognitive and motivational strengths of older learners. This understanding is crucial for language teachers in designing strategies that are sensitive to the age-related dynamics of WTC among Iranian EFL learners, ensuring that teaching practices are tailored to enhance communication willingness across different age groups.

Pedagogical Strategies to Enhance WTC

Pedagogic strategies, as defined by Feinman-Nemser & Flodden (1986) and Shulman (1986, 1987, cited in Gatbonton, 2000), involve teachers' methods to manage language learning effectively, including error correction, wait time, and cognitive congruence. Error correction, despite debates on its effectiveness (Krashen, 1982; 1985), has been shown to support L2 acquisition when implemented appropriately (Doughty & Varela, 1998; Ellis, 2010). Research by Rahimi & Zhang (2016) on Iranian learners supports immediate corrective feedback, aligning with Mackey's (2007) findings on the timing of feedback. Wait time, as discussed by Tobin (1987) and Rowe (1986), positively correlates with student engagement, suggesting that EFL teachers could use extended wait times to encourage more thoughtful participation. Cognitive congruence, as described by Schmidt & Moust (1995), involves adapting teaching to the learners' linguistic level, supporting Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis. This adaptation ensures comprehension, which is vital for WTC. Additionally, motivational strategies based on Lewin's (1942) Field Theory suggest that reducing barriers to communication might be more effective than merely increasing motivation. This approach is reflected in Cao and Philp's (2006) findings, where situational variables like group size and familiarity with peers significantly influence WTC.

Past scholars have emphasized the necessity for ESL teachers to implement the right strategies that can encourage students to be more engaged in classroom activities that entail communication (Sheybani, 2019). It is crucial to note that any strategies aimed to improve WTC among L2 learners should examine how to assist learners in overcoming L2 communication challenges, which underscores the crucial role of teachers as the primary key player (Ayedoun et al., 2019). When learning a second or foreign language, speaking it can induce anxiety and apprehension, potentially resulting in isolation or a refusal to communicate (Woodrow, 2006). Hence, it is imperative to integrate the best strategies in enhancing learners' WTC to cater to these predicaments that may impede their communicative experience.

According to Zohrabi and Bimesl (2022), motivational strategy is one of the most contributing strategies in promoting learners' WTC. Motivational propensities are deemed as the strongest contributing factors influencing learners' WTC in English language (Basöz & Erten, 2019). In this line, Saeedakhtar et al. (2018) indicated that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were significantly correlated with L2 WTC. Previous studies also highlight the importance of topic selection strategies in designing lessons that can maximize learners' motivation for communication (Zarrinabadi et al., 2014). The researchers discuss the crucial role of motivating learners in enhancing

their WTC with emphasis on topic selection and error correction strategy. When a topic is well-compelling, students are more ready to participate in class activities, hence improving their WTC in the classroom. Teachers should therefore choose topics that resonate with students' interests, cultural backgrounds, and current events to stimulate engagement.

Marashi and Eghtedar's (2021) study underscores the importance of motivation in enhancing WTC, highlighting how flipped classroom instruction significantly bolstered both motivation and WTC in EFL learners. Their findings suggest that providing learners with interactive, student-centered environments can lead to improved communication outcomes. Error correction is another critical strategy, where the timing and method of feedback can significantly influence WTC. Research by Rahimi & Zhang (2016) on Iranian learners supports immediate corrective feedback, aligning with Mackey's (2007) findings on the effectiveness of timely feedback. However, previous studies have hypothesized that students' reluctance to speak may be related to their fear of criticism and evaluations (Darasawang & Reinders, 2021). It becomes imperative for teachers to be cautious in correcting mistakes and providing feedback to prevent students from becoming demotivated in using the language in their classroom interactions (Nilson, 2021).

Teacher immediacy, as discussed by Amini and Weisi (2019), is also vital. Teachers unaware of the importance of offering immediacy may cause a distance with their students, which will eventually impede learners' WTC. This is aligned with Zarei et al. (2019), where the researcher highlighted that teacher immediacy behaviors, such as using eye contact and a sense of humor, enhance the relationship with students, which is essential to improve WTC. These behaviors create a supportive classroom environment where students feel valued and understood, reducing the fear associated with communication.

Group dynamics play a significant role as well. Vongsila and Reinders (2016) emphasize that students will have a more positive environment for communicative practices when communicating in small groups, as it is proven to reduce learners' anxiety. However, it is important to note that some learners might have excessive self-awareness, leading to harsh self-criticism, which in turn lowers self-esteem and makes them reluctant to interact with others in social situations (Fallah, 2014). Therefore, teachers must be sensitive to these dynamics, perhaps by structuring activities that gradually build confidence, starting with pair work before moving to larger group interactions.

WTC in EFL classrooms is a dynamic construct influenced by various sociocultural, psychological, and pedagogical factors. Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping learners' WTC by employing strategies that align with students' age, proficiency levels, and classroom contexts. The following review synthesizes findings from 17 studies on strategies used to foster WTC, with a particular focus on EFL learners in different educational and cultural contexts. Through an integrative analysis, we highlight the implications of these studies, identify research gaps, and contextualize the research questions for the current study.

Recent Empirical Studies

WTC in EFL classrooms is a dynamic construct influenced by various sociocultural, psychological, and pedagogical factors. Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping learners' WTC by employing strategies that align with students' age, proficiency levels, and classroom contexts. The following review synthesizes findings from the most recent related studies on strategies used to foster WTC, with a particular focus on EFL learners in different educational and cultural contexts.

Zarei et al. (2019a) examined both teachers' and learners' perceptions of pedagogical strategies in Iranian EFL classrooms. While teachers and students agreed on the importance of wait time, discrepancies emerged regarding motivational strategies, error correction, and teacher congruence. This aligns with Yusri & Sulaiman (2024), who explored Malaysian ESL teachers' strategies and found teacher immediacy, corrective feedback, classroom climate, and topic selection to be crucial. Both studies underscore the role of teacher-student alignment in fostering WTC, with an emphasis on cultural and contextual sensitivity. Similarly, Zarei et al. (2019b) focused on Iranian

cultural norms and identified socioaffective strategies, such as fostering positive relationships and dynamic teaching styles, as vital. However, these were often hindered by institutional constraints and teacher-centered approaches, echoing Nazari & Allahyar (2012), who emphasized reducing teacher talk and increasing wait time to create more inclusive environments.

Multiple studies demonstrated the effectiveness of explicit communication strategy (CS) training. Vafadar et al. (2020) and Mesgarshahr & Abdollahzadeh (2014) both found that CS instruction significantly increased Iranian students' WTC. While Vafadar et al. highlighted interactional strategies as most effective, Mesgarshahr & Abdollahzadeh emphasized the role of reflective practices in sustaining WTC gains. These findings were corroborated by Anani Sarab & Jabbarzadeh Sani (2024), who showed that CS training improved self-confidence and reduced anxiety among elementary learners, suggesting that CSs are adaptable across proficiency levels.

Research also highlights the importance of innovative approaches to increasing WTC. Farouck (2016) demonstrated that project-based learning reduces communication anxiety by making learning more relevant and interactive, a finding echoed by Azizi et al. (2022), who found that active learning fosters self-regulated learning and motivation. Similarly, Lin (2017) found that problem-based learning significantly enhances WTC, particularly through collaborative tasks and real-world problem-solving. These studies jointly suggest that learner-centered approaches are effective in fostering communicative competence.

Age and context are critical factors in determining the effectiveness of strategies for fostering WTC. Hoang & Bui (2023) and Bui et al. (2022) focused on Vietnamese EFL learners and emphasized tailoring strategies to students' preferences, such as warm-ups, topic choice, and motivational techniques. These findings resonate with Shamsudin et al. (2017), who found that debate was more effective than philosophical inquiry for enhancing WTC among adult learners, suggesting that age-appropriate strategies vary in their efficacy. Likewise, Munezane (2015) examined university students in Japan and found that goal-setting combined with visualization significantly boosted WTC compared to visualization alone. In contrast, studies like Ducker (2021), which used peer-peer strategy sharing, revealed the importance of fostering self-efficacy and group dynamics, particularly among younger learners.

Teacher support consistently emerged as a key factor in fostering WTC. Borasheva (2024) emphasized the importance of teacher immediacy, autonomy support, and a positive classroom climate in reducing communication anxiety. This aligns with findings from Hoang & Bui (2023), where students expressed a preference for warm and supportive classroom environments. These studies reinforce the notion that a teacher's interpersonal behavior and classroom management style are crucial determinants of learners' WTC. The integration of technology also plays a role in enhancing WTC. Ayedoun et al. (2019) demonstrated that embodied conversational agents incorporating communication strategies and affective backchannels can increase WTC by providing a low-anxiety environment for practice. This study highlights the potential of technology, particularly in contexts where face-to-face interaction is limited.

A recurring theme across studies is the interplay between teacher practices, learner characteristics, and classroom environments. While Zarei (2019a) and Yusri & Sulaiman (2024) emphasize teacher immediacy and feedback strategies, Farouck (2016) and Azizi et al. (2022) advocate for learner-centered approaches, such as project-based and active learning. Age and context further mediate these strategies' effectiveness, with younger learners benefiting more from interactive and game-based methods, while older learners respond better to goal-setting and debate. Moreover, the integration of technology, as shown by Ayedoun et al. (2019), offers innovative ways to enhance WTC, particularly in technologically advanced settings. Despite the extensive body of research, a gap still remains. There is a need to investigate and compare the age-appropriate strategies for fostering WTC in the Iranian context. While studies like Vafadar et al. (2020) and Anani Sarab and Jabbarzadeh Sani (2024) explore CS training, they do not differentiate between strategies for younger and older learners. Even though research has identified several factors and strategies related to WTC, more context-specific studies are needed to explore the unique dynamics of WTC in different

educational settings, especially across different age groups in EFL contexts. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the strategies utilized by Iranian EFL teachers to enhance the willingness to communicate of their seventh and twelfth-grade students. The following research questions will guide the investigation. To address this gap, the following research questions are proposed:

Research Question One: What strategies do Iranian EFL teachers utilize to increase seventh-grade students' willingness to communicate in English?

Research Question Two: What strategies do Iranian EFL teachers utilize to increase twelfth-grade students' willingness to communicate in English?

Research Question Three: How do the strategies used with seventh-grade students compare to those used with twelfth-grade students?

Methodology

Design of the Study

This study utilized a qualitative research design to explore the WTC strategies employed by Iranian EFL teachers in two distinct grade levels: seventh and twelfth grades. The study employed semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection tool, offering flexibility for in-depth exploration of teachers' perspectives while adhering to a structured framework (Brinkmann, 2013). To ensure the rigor and reliability of the findings, the data were analyzed using thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), which is recognized for its ability to identify and interpret meaningful patterns within qualitative data. This design allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the contextual, demographic, and professional factors influencing teaching practices in Iranian classrooms.

Participants

This study employed a convenience sampling method for participant selection. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling approach in which participants are selected based on their accessibility and availability to the researcher (Edgar & Manz, 2017). While this method is practical and time-efficient (Taylor et al., 2015), it can introduce potential biases due to the limited representation of the broader population (Stratton, 2021). To address these concerns, efforts were made to ensure diversity in the participants' demographic and professional profiles, including teaching experience, gender, grade level, and school type, as described below. Participants were recruited through a combination of announcements and invitations shared during local teacher training workshops, professional development seminars, and online forums (social media platforms like Telegram, Instagram, etc.) for EFL educators in Iran. These platforms provided a pool of teachers who were actively engaged in enhancing their teaching practices and willing to contribute to research focused on improving classroom strategies. Teachers were informed about the purpose and scope of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

The participants were teachers from both public and private schools (like non-profit schools), representing a range of urban and suburban settings. The study focused specifically on seventh- and twelfth-grade classrooms, which are critical stages in the Iranian school system. Seventh-grade students are typically in the early stages of English language acquisition, while twelfth-grade students are preparing for the university entrance exam, where English proficiency is a key component. These distinct grade levels provided an opportunity to examine how teachers' strategies varied based on students' developmental and educational needs.

Recognizing the limitations of convenience sampling, the study took deliberate steps to mitigate potential biases and enhance the representativeness of the sample. The sample included

teachers with teaching experience ranging from 3 to 25 years, ensuring that insights were drawn from both novice and highly experienced educators. Both male and female teachers were included to capture a range of perspectives on classroom strategies and teacher-student interactions. Teachers from both public and private schools were recruited to reflect the diversity of educational contexts in Iran, including variations in resources, student demographics, and instructional practices. An equal number of seventh- and twelfth-grade teachers (10 each) were included to explore differences in strategies used for younger learners and those at the final stage of secondary education. Table 1 provides a detailed summary of the teachers' demographic characteristics.

Table 1

The Demographic Information of the Participants

Name	Gender	Age	Grade Level	University Degree	Teaching Experience	School Type	School Location
Ali	Male	45	12th	B.A.	20 years	Public	Urban
Fatemeh	Female	36	12th	M.A.	10 years	Private	Urban
Reza	Male	50	12th	B.A.	25 years	Private	Urban
Sara	Female	32	12th	B.A.	7 years	Public	Suburban
Parisa	Female	38	12th	B.A.	12 years	Public	Urban
Mohammad	Male	42	12th	M.A.	18 years	Public	Suburban
Leila	Female	29	12th	B.A.	5 years	Public	Urban
Hossein	Male	39	12th	B.A.	15 years	Private	Urban
Nazanin	Female	34	12th	B.A.	9 years	Public	Suburban
Mahdi	Male	47	12th	B.A.	22 years	Public	Suburban
Roya	Female	27	7th	B.A.	3 years	Public	Urban
Zahra	Female	40	7th	M.A.	16 years	Public	Urban
Farhad	Male	35	7th	B.A.	10 years	Public	Urban
Elham	Female	33	7th	B.A.	8 years	Private	Urban
Shirin	Female	31	7th	B.A.	6 years	Public	Suburban
Nima	Male	28	7th	B.A.	4 years	Public	Urban
Maryam	Female	44	7th	B.A.	19 years	Public	Suburban
Hamid	Male	37	7th	B.A.	14 years	Private	Urban
Mina	Female	30	7th	B.A.	5 years	Public	Urban
Yasmin	Female	48	7th	M.A.	23 years	Public	Urban

Instruments

The semi-structured interview (Appendix A) served as the primary instrument for data collection in this study. The interview questions were carefully constructed by one of the researchers to align closely with the study's specific objectives, ensuring their relevance and focus (Brinkmann, 2013). Notably, the development of the questions was informed by prior research on WTC and EFL teaching strategies (Mesgarshahr & Abdollahzadeh, 2014; Nazari & Allahyar, 2012; Yan et al., 2024). These studies provided a theoretical foundation for designing the questions and guided the exploration of key themes related to the research aims. Semi-structured interviews were chosen for their flexibility, allowing the researcher to explore participants' responses in depth while adhering to a broad framework of pre-prepared questions. This method enabled the collection of rich qualitative data and facilitated a deeper understanding of teachers' perspectives and classroom practices.

To ensure inter-rater reliability, a systematic process was employed. Two independent coders (other than the two researchers of this study) reviewed a subset of the interview transcripts and applied the coding scheme developed for the study. Their coding results were compared, and any discrepancies were discussed and resolved to achieve consensus. This process ensured that the data analysis was consistent and reliable across different raters. To further enhance the reliability and validity of the interview questions, a pilot test was conducted with a small sample of participants (5 participants) before the main study. This dry run allowed the researcher to identify and address ambiguous wording, eliminate sources of confusion, and refine the questions for greater clarity and

effectiveness. Additionally, the interview questions underwent evaluation by a panel of experts. These experts reviewed the content, provided feedback, and suggested modifications to improve the content validity of the instrument. This multi-step approach ensured that the interview protocol was both reliable and well-aligned with the study's objectives.

Data Collection

The data collection process was carefully designed to ensure methodological rigor and reliability. Semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection method, as they allowed for flexibility in exploring participants' perspectives while maintaining a consistent framework across interviews. Twenty Iranian EFL teachers were recruited through convenience sampling. Inclusion criteria required participants to be actively teaching seventh or twelfth grades in public or private schools within Sabzevar and Mashhad, ensuring that all participants shared various professional backgrounds, including teaching experience, grade level, etc. Exclusion criteria included individuals who were not currently employed as EFL teachers in these specific grades or regions, as well as those unwilling to share their insights. Participants were initially contacted through recruitment forms and provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and ethical considerations, including confidentiality and voluntary participation. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their inclusion in the study. Interviews were scheduled at times and locations convenient to the participants to minimize disruptions to their teaching responsibilities, and each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. To ensure comprehensive data collection, audio recordings were made with participants' consent, and field notes were taken to capture non-verbal cues and contextual details that could contribute to the analysis. This rigorous approach ensured that the data collected was both thorough and representative of the target population.

Data Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were analyzed using the four major steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) in thematic analysis: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, and reviewing themes. This is part of a broader six-step process of thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (Figure 2). This method was chosen due to its flexibility and suitability for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns within qualitative data.

The analysis began with familiarization, where the researchers repeatedly read the interview transcripts to gain an in-depth understanding of the data. During this phase, initial notes were made to highlight interesting or significant points related to the participants' translation experiences. This process was critical to maintaining the integrity of the data and ensuring that participants' voices were authentically represented. Immersion in the data followed, with repeated reading of the transcripts to thoroughly understand their content and identify initial patterns. During this phase, key quotations were selected to vividly illustrate participants' experiential evidence and align with the purpose of the research. The inclusion of these quotations serves to humanize the data, providing rich, contextual insights into the participants' perspectives.

The next step focused on carefully reading and analyzing the data to identify recurrent patterns and keywords. These keywords, drawn directly from participants' expressions, captured the essence of their experiences and perceptions. Particular attention was paid to ensuring that the selected keywords accurately reflected the core messages conveyed in the data. This meticulous approach ensured that key aspects of the participants' realities were preserved and emphasized.

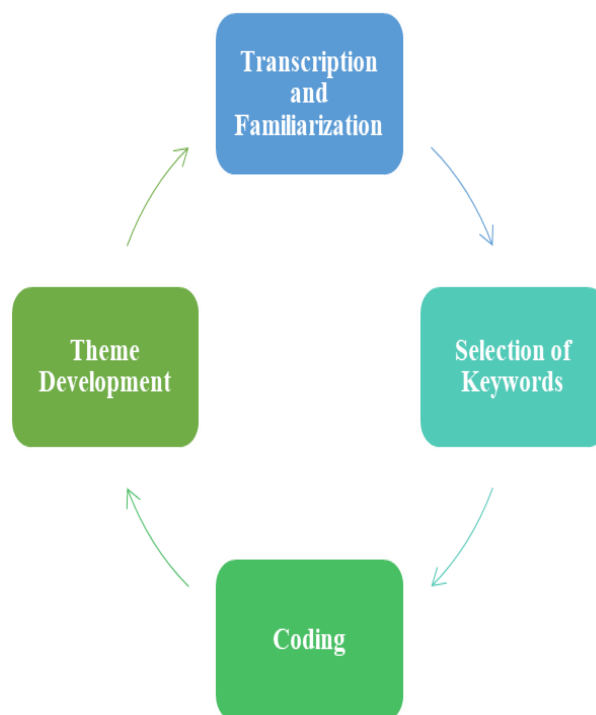
In the third step, codes—short phrases or individual words—were assigned to segments of the data that represented significant themes or ideas. This process was instrumental in reducing the complex text into smaller, more manageable units without losing the richness of the data. Keywords identified in previous step played a pivotal role in informing the coding process, serving as a foundation for transforming raw data into meaningful insights. To ensure the reliability of the coding

process, findings were reviewed collaboratively by multiple researchers, enhancing the validity of the identified themes.

Finally, the codes were grouped into overarching themes that revealed patterns and relationships within the data. This step required moving beyond the detailed analysis of individual codes to a more abstract interpretation. Themes were developed to capture patterned meanings that connected the research questions with the data, offering deeper insights into the strategies used by Iranian EFL teachers to enhance students' WTC. To validate the themes, the findings were cross-checked against the research questions and reviewed by multiple researchers to ensure consistency and reliability.

Figure 2

Process of Thematic Analysis (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006)



Results

This section presents the strategies implemented by Iranian EFL teachers for both seventh-grade and twelfth-grade students to enhance their WTC. Through a meticulous thematic analysis of the interview data, the researcher identified distinct themes that reflect the varied approaches used by teachers to foster greater engagement in English communication among their students. These themes offer insightful perspectives on the pedagogical techniques that teachers of young adolescents consider most effective in encouraging active participation. The following subsections detail these themes, supported by direct excerpts from the interviews, which enrich our qualitative understanding of the application and perception of these strategies in the classroom setting. Additionally, Figure 3 outlines the themes identified, providing a schematic to see the findings at a glance of an eye.

Figure 3

Strategies Employed by Iranian EFL Teachers to Improve Students' WTC



First Research Question

Interactive Games and Language-based Activities

One of the prominent themes that emerged from the interview data was the use of interactive games and language-based activities. The teachers unanimously expressed the effectiveness of this approach in breaking the ice and encouraging students to use English without inhibition. Roya, an experienced EFL teacher, emphasized how interactive games *"really get my seventh-graders talking"* and help them forget they are speaking in a foreign language. Similarly, Zahra and Farhad noted that language-based activities with a competitive element make students eager to use English and create a lively atmosphere where they are willing to take risks with the language. These findings highlight the potential of interactive games and activities to reduce anxiety and create a more enjoyable learning environment that promotes greater WTC among young learners.

Use of Visual Aids and Multimedia Resources

Another significant theme that emerged was the use of visual aids and multimedia resources. Four participants in the study consistently highlighted the effectiveness of these tools in engaging students and fostering their active participation in English communication. Nima, for instance, observed that *"Colorful posters and flashcards grab my students' attention and make them eager to describe what they see."* Fatemeh further noted that *"the use of short video clips, and interactive whiteboards stimulate students' interest"*, leading to more spontaneous English usage. These findings suggest that incorporating visually appealing and technologically-enhanced resources can play a crucial role in creating a more inclusive and engaging environment that boosts students' willingness to communicate in the target language.

Storytelling and Role-playing Exercises

Storytelling and role-playing exercises also emerged as a prominent theme in the study. Hamid, Maryam, and Mina emphasized the power of these activities in providing an immersive and imaginative context for language use, which helps students overcome their hesitation and communicate more freely in English. Hamid, for example, noted that when he tells stories in English, *"my students become so engrossed that they naturally start asking questions and making comments without realizing they're using English."* Maryam and Mina further highlighted the benefits of combining storytelling with role-playing, where students can *"become different characters and express themselves with greater confidence in the target language"*.

Peer-to-peer Speaking Activities in Small Groups

Peer-to-peer speaking activities in small groups were also identified as an effective strategy for enhancing WTC among seventh-grade students. Farhad believed that *"dividing the class into smaller groups creates a less intimidating environment, where even the quieter students start to open up and use more English"*. The teachers noted that the collaborative nature of these activities and the mutual support provided by peers contribute to the reduction of anxiety and the creation of a more supportive atmosphere for language practice.

The Incorporation of Popular Culture and Age-appropriate Content

The incorporation of popular culture and age-appropriate content was another theme that emerged from the interviews. Yasmin for instance reported that *"using topics and themes that align with students' interests and daily lives can significantly increase their enthusiasm and willingness to express themselves in English"*. Hamid shared his experience of bringing in topics from popular movies or video games, which led to an *"immediate increase in students' enthusiasm to speak"*.

English." Nima further emphasized that using age-appropriate content that reflects students' interests "makes English feel more relevant to their lives", encouraging them to share their opinions and engage in meaningful communication.

Positive Reinforcement and Reward Systems

Positive reinforcement and reward systems were also highlighted as effective strategies for promoting WTC among seventh-grade students. The participants, including Yasmin, Mina, Hamid, Shirin, and Maryam, emphasized the power of praise, verbal encouragement, and point-based systems in boosting students' confidence and desire to communicate in English. For example, Mina said that "even small rewards and consistent positive feedback can make a significant difference in motivating students to take risks and actively participate in English conversations".

Creating a Safe and Supportive Classroom Environment

Additionally, the teachers mentioned the importance of creating a safe and supportive classroom environment as a crucial factor in fostering WTC. Farhad stressed the need for emotional safety, "a judgment-free atmosphere", and a friendly teacher-student dynamic, as these elements help students "feel more comfortable and willing to attempt speaking in English, even if they make mistakes".

Use of Songs and Music

Finally, the use of songs and music, as well as the integration of technology and educational apps, emerged as additional strategies that the teachers found effective in enhancing WTC among seventh-grade students. The participants highlighted how catchy tunes, rhythm, and music can "help students remember language patterns and use them more spontaneously in conversations". Moreover, the integration of technology, such as language learning apps, interactive platforms, and video creation tools, was reported to generate excitement, reduce anxiety, and boost students' confidence in using English, both inside and outside the classroom.

All these findings provide valuable insights into the multifaceted approaches employed by experienced EFL teachers to foster willingness to communicate among seventh-grade students. From the use of interactive games and multimedia resources to the incorporation of storytelling, role-playing, and peer-to-peer activities, the teachers have leveraged a diverse range of strategies to create an engaging, supportive, and language-rich environment that encourages young learners to actively participate in English communication. The study underscores the importance of considering the unique needs and preferences of this age group, as well as the crucial role of the teacher in curating a classroom culture that nurtures students' confidence, reduces their anxiety, and ultimately, inspires them to embrace the challenge of communicating in the target language.

Second Research Question

Debate and Discussion Forums on Current Events

One of the prominent themes that emerged was the use of debate and discussion forums on current events. The teachers emphasized the power of this approach in making the language feel relevant and necessary for the students. Fatemeh, an experienced EFL teacher, highlighted this, stating, "When I introduce topics from the news, students become eager to share their opinions in English. It makes the language feel relevant and necessary." Parisa shared her experience with structured debates, "Organizing formal debates on controversial issues not only improves their English but also their critical thinking skills. They're motivated to research and articulate their arguments clearly." Hossein further noted, "Discussing current events in English helps students see the language as a tool for global communication, not just a school subject. It significantly increases their willingness to engage."

Project-based Learning with Oral Presentations

Another significant theme that emerged was the use of project-based learning with oral presentations. Ali, an experienced EFL teacher, shared, "*I assign research projects on topics that interest my students, and they present their findings orally to the class. This really motivates them to use English.*" Reza concurred, stating, "*Project-based learning gives students a sense of ownership and encourages them to express their ideas more freely.*" Fatemeh noted the collaborative aspect, saying, "*Group projects foster teamwork and create natural opportunities for students to communicate in English with their peers.*"

Simulation of Real-life Scenarios

Simulation of real-life scenarios also emerged as a prominent theme in the study. Nazanin highlighted the versatility of this approach, stating, "*We simulate various travel situations, from booking hotels to asking for directions. This really motivates students to communicate more naturally in English.*" Ali emphasized the impact on students' motivation, noting, "*When we recreate real-life scenarios, students see the immediate relevance of English in their future lives, which greatly increases their willingness to participate and communicate.*"

Peer Teaching and Mentoring Opportunities

Peer teaching and mentoring opportunities were found to be particularly effective in fostering a supportive learning environment and boosting students' confidence in using English. Reza, an experienced EFL instructor, shared his insights: "*When I allow stronger students to explain concepts to their peers, I notice a significant increase in overall class participation.*" Parisa highlighted the dual benefits of this approach, stating, "*Peer teaching not only helps the struggling students but also reinforces the knowledge of those doing the teaching.*"

Use of Authentic Materials

The use of authentic materials, such as news articles, podcasts, and videos, emerged as another significant theme. Ali shared, "*Using current news articles in class sparks lively discussions and encourages students to express their opinions in English.*" Fatemeh highlighted the motivational aspect, stating, "*When students realize they can understand authentic English content, their confidence and willingness to communicate will be higher.*" Parisa emphasized the versatility of this approach, noting, "*Podcasts on various topics allow students to choose content that interests them, making them more eager to discuss and share their thoughts.*"

Collaborative Problem-solving Activities

Collaborative problem-solving activities were also identified as an effective strategy for enhancing WTC among twelfth-grade students. Reza, an experienced EFL instructor, shared his insights: "*When I present students with real-world problems to solve together, their engagement and willingness to communicate in English increases dramatically.*" Mohammad highlighted the cognitive benefits, stating, "*Collaborative problem-solving not only improves language skills but also enhances critical thinking and teamwork abilities.*"

Incorporating Critical Thinking and Analytical Tasks

Incorporating critical thinking and analytical tasks was another prominent theme that emerged from the study. Mohammad shared his perspective: "*When I introduce tasks that require students to analyze and evaluate information critically, I notice a significant increase in their willingness to articulate their thoughts in English.*" Parisa highlighted the cognitive benefits, stating, "*Critical thinking tasks*

not only improve language skills but also prepare students for the analytical demands of university and future careers, which motivates them to communicate more actively."

Preparation for Standardized English Proficiency Tests

Finally, the study revealed that preparation for standardized English proficiency tests, such as IELTS and TOEFL, can also be an effective strategy for enhancing WTC among twelfth-grade students. Leila shared her insights: "*When students understand that effective communication is crucial for success in standardized tests like IELTS or TOEFL, their willingness to practice speaking and writing in English increases dramatically.*"

In conclusion, the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the diverse range of strategies employed by experienced EFL teachers to foster willingness to communicate among twelfth-grade students. From the use of debate and discussion forums on current events to the implementation of project-based learning, simulation of real-life scenarios, peer teaching, and the integration of authentic materials, the teachers have leveraged a multifaceted approach to create an engaging, challenging, and supportive learning environment that encourages older learners to actively participate in English communication. The study underscores the importance of considering the unique needs and interests of this age group, as well as the crucial role of the teacher in curating learning experiences that are relevant, meaningful, and intellectually stimulating, thereby nurturing students' confidence and motivation to embrace the target language as a tool for self-expression, critical thinking, and global communication.

Third Research Question

The strategies employed by Iranian EFL teachers for seventh-grade and twelfth-grade students differ significantly, reflecting the developmental, cognitive, and academic needs of each group. For younger seventh-grade learners, the focus is on creating a supportive, engaging, and multi-sensory environment. Strategies such as interactive games and language-based activities, and the use of visual aids and multimedia resources are emphasized to leverage students' digital familiarity and short attention spans. Other techniques include storytelling and role-playing exercises, and peer-to-peer speaking activities in small groups, which provide engaging and age-appropriate experiences. Incorporating popular culture and age-appropriate content and positive reinforcement, and reward systems are also used to maintain motivation and interest. Additionally, creating a safe and supportive classroom environment (8.70%) and using songs and music serve as foundational strategies to ensure a positive classroom experience for younger learners.

In contrast, strategies for twelfth-grade students prioritize academic rigor and real-world application. Key methods include the use of authentic materials and project-based learning with oral presentations, which foster communication skills, critical thinking, and preparation for real-life interactions. Similarly, collaborative problem-solving activities and debate and discussion forums on current events align with the cognitive abilities and future academic or professional needs of older students. Advanced strategies, such as simulation of real-life scenarios, emphasize practical language use, while peer teaching and mentoring opportunities, and incorporating critical thinking and analytical tasks highlight the capacity for independent learning. Twelfth-graders also prepare for standardized English proficiency tests, reflecting the growing formal language assessment requirements.

The progression from simpler, teacher-led methods for seventh graders to complex, independent strategies for twelfth graders underscores the thoughtful adaptation of teaching approaches to students' developmental stages. By tailoring methods to students' maturity, cognitive growth, and future needs, Iranian EFL teachers effectively enhance willingness to communicate and support language development, preparing students for advanced academic and professional communication tasks. The frequency percentages of each theme are presented in Figure 4 and 5.

Figure 4

Percentage Distribution of Teaching Strategies for Seventh-Grade Iranian EFL Students

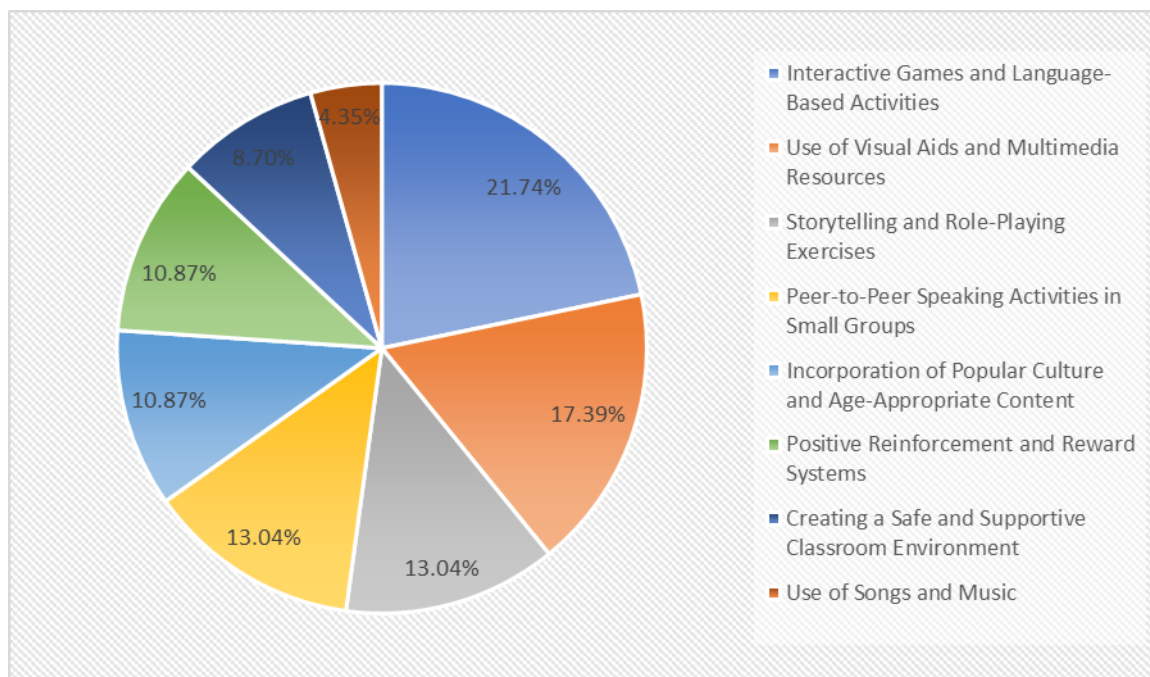
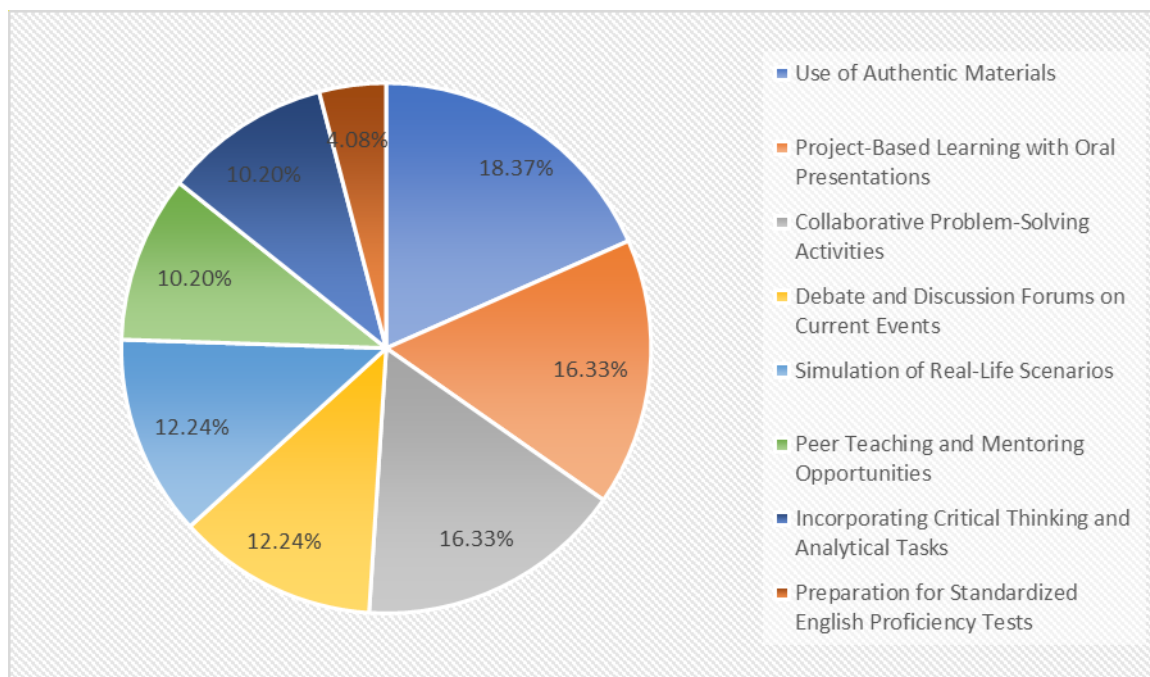


Figure 5

Percentage Distribution of Teaching Strategies for Twelfth-Grade Iranian EFL Students



Discussion

The present study aimed to explore age-appropriate strategies employed by Iranian EFL teachers to enhance students' WTC in English, particularly by comparing techniques used with seventh-grade and twelfth-grade learners. The results revealed a clear differentiation in strategies, reflecting the

developmental, cognitive, and social needs of both age groups. These findings align with previous research and contribute to a broader understanding of how pedagogical practices must be tailored to the characteristics and expectations of learners. This discussion will contextualize the findings within the theoretical frameworks of WTC and age-related dynamics in language learning, address possible explanations for the results, reflect on limitations, and conclude with implications for future research and teaching practices.

In line with MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) heuristic model of WTC, this study underscores the interplay of situational and enduring factors in influencing students' communication behavior. For seventh-grade students, strategies such as interactive games, visual aids, storytelling, and the use of songs and music were highly effective. These techniques align with the top layers of MacIntyre's WTC model, particularly "situated antecedents," as they reduce anxiety and enhance students' state communicative self-confidence. Additionally, integrating popular culture and creating judgment-free environments cater to the affective-cognitive layer of the model, addressing younger learners' need for emotional security and engagement. This confirms the findings of Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Pawlak (2017) and Pawlak et al. (2016), who emphasized the importance of reducing anxiety and fostering intrinsic motivation in younger learners.

For twelfth-grade students, strategies shifted toward debate, project-based learning, and critical thinking tasks, reflecting the cognitive maturity and academic needs of older adolescents. These methods align with the lower layers of the WTC model, particularly motivational propensities and the affective-cognitive context, where long-term goals (e.g., academic success, proficiency tests) and cognitive engagement play a more significant role. The use of authentic materials, simulation of real-life scenarios, and preparation for standardized tests further supports the notion that older students' WTC is driven by relevance and practicality, as suggested by Cao (2009) and Li & Li (2022). These strategies also align with Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Linguistics framework, which emphasizes language as a tool for meaningful interaction and real-world application.

The differences between the two age groups highlight the dynamic nature of WTC, as suggested by Amiryousefi (2018) and Gkonou & Mercer (2017). Younger learners benefit from strategies that prioritize emotional engagement and reduce the fear of making mistakes, while older learners respond to methods that emphasize intellectual stimulation and future-oriented goals. These findings also echo the Critical Period Hypothesis (Rashidova et al., 2025), suggesting that younger learners' heightened neuroplasticity and intrinsic motivation make them more receptive to creative and interactive activities, while older learners' cognitive maturity allows them to appreciate tasks requiring analytical and critical thinking.

The findings align with previous studies that emphasize the importance of age-appropriate strategies in fostering WTC. For younger learners, interactive and multisensory methods such as games, visual aids, and storytelling resonate with their developmental stage and shorter attention spans (Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak, 2017). Teachers in this study frequently highlighted the role of these methods in reducing anxiety and creating a safe, enjoyable learning environment, consistent with findings by Borkowska (2022) and Zarei et al. (2019). The emphasis on positive reinforcement and peer-to-peer activities also supports previous research by Vongsila and Reinders (2016), who found that small group dynamics and positive teacher-student interactions significantly enhance younger learners' WTC.

For older learners, the study's findings align with research emphasizing strategies that prioritize autonomy, critical thinking, and real-world application. Debate, project-based learning, and authentic materials cater to twelfth-grade students' need for intellectual engagement and practical skills (Farouk, 2016; Munezane, 2015). The focus on preparing for standardized tests such as IELTS and TOEFL reflects the academic and professional pressures faced by older students, echoing findings by Hoang & Bui (2023) and Ayedoun et al. (2019). These methods also address the affective barriers to WTC, such as anxiety and fear of criticism, by providing structured, meaningful opportunities for communication.

However, while younger learners demonstrated a higher overall WTC, older learners' willingness appeared to be more context-dependent, influenced by the relevance and perceived value of the tasks. This pattern aligns with research by Amiryousefi (2018) and Yetkin & Özer (2022), who observed that older learners are more likely to engage in communication when tasks are directly tied to their academic or professional goals. The integration of authentic materials and real-life scenarios in the twelfth-grade classroom reflects this need for relevance, as highlighted by Cao and Philp (2006). Additionally, the study corroborates findings by Borasheva (2024) and Zarei et al. (2019a), which emphasize the role of teacher immediacy and a supportive classroom climate in fostering WTC across all age groups.

Conclusion and Implications

This study examines the strategies used by Iranian EFL teachers to enhance students' WTC in English. The findings demonstrate the teachers' ability to tailor their instructional approaches to the developmental needs of seventh-grade and twelfth-grade learners. For the younger seventh-grade students, the strategies focus on creating an engaging, supportive, and multi-sensory learning environment, utilizing techniques like positive reinforcement, educational technology, interactive games, and songs. These approaches aim to make vocabulary learning enjoyable and accessible for the younger age group. In contrast, the strategies employed with the older twelfth-grade students involve more academically rigorous and real-world-oriented techniques. These include the use of authentic materials, project-based learning with oral presentations, collaborative problem-solving activities, and preparation for standardized English proficiency tests. This shift reflects the growing demands placed on students as they prepare for higher education and future careers. The study also highlights the evolving role of peer interaction, with more opportunities for peer teaching and mentoring in the twelfth-grade classroom, compared to the greater emphasis on teacher-led activities for the seventh-graders. The findings suggest that Iranian EFL teachers have a strong understanding of the importance of tailoring instructional approaches to the cognitive, social, and linguistic needs of different age groups, ultimately enhancing students' willingness to communicate in English and preparing them for the linguistic and communicative challenges they will face beyond the classroom.

The study's findings have important implications for EFL teachers, curriculum designers, and policymakers. First, the results underscore the necessity of employing age-appropriate strategies to foster WTC in English classrooms. For younger learners, teachers should prioritize activities that promote emotional engagement, such as interactive games, storytelling, and the use of visual aids and music. These strategies not only reduce anxiety but also create a fun and stimulating learning environment, which is crucial for maintaining younger students' interest and motivation. Additionally, the use of positive reinforcement and peer-to-peer activities can help build students' confidence and encourage them to take risks with the language. Teachers should also incorporate age-appropriate content, such as popular culture and themes that resonate with students' daily lives, to make learning more relevant and enjoyable. For older learners, the study highlights the importance of strategies that emphasize intellectual and practical engagement. Activities such as debate, project-based learning, and critical thinking tasks provide students with opportunities to apply their language skills in meaningful and challenging contexts. The use of authentic materials, such as news articles, podcasts, and real-life scenarios, can help students see the relevance of English in their academic and professional lives, thereby increasing their motivation to communicate. Teachers should also consider incorporating preparation for standardized tests, such as IELTS and TOEFL, as these tasks are directly tied to older students' goals and aspirations. Moreover, fostering a supportive and collaborative classroom environment remains essential for all age groups, as it helps reduce anxiety and encourages students to participate more actively in communication. At a broader level, curriculum designers and policymakers should ensure that EFL programs are flexible enough to accommodate the diverse needs of learners at different stages of development. Teacher training programs should emphasize the importance of age-appropriate strategies and provide educators with the tools and resources needed to implement these methods effectively. Additionally, schools and institutions should promote a learner-centered approach that prioritizes students' interests, goals, and preferences,

while also addressing cultural and contextual factors that may influence WTC. By adopting these practices, educators can create an inclusive and dynamic learning environment that supports students' language development and prepares them to use English confidently in real-world settings.

Despite its valuable insights, the study is not without limitations. First, the qualitative nature of the research, while providing rich and detailed data, limits the generalizability of the findings. The reliance on teacher-reported strategies and perceptions may introduce bias, as teachers might overemphasize the effectiveness of their methods or underreport challenges. Future studies could incorporate student perspectives and quantitative measures of WTC, such as surveys or classroom observations, to provide a more comprehensive understanding. Second, the study's focus on Iranian EFL classrooms may limit the applicability of its findings to other cultural or educational contexts. As noted by Zarei et al. (2019b) and Yusri & Sulaiman (2024), cultural norms and institutional constraints significantly influence teaching practices and student behaviors. For example, the teacher-centered approach prevalent in many Iranian classrooms might limit opportunities for student-centered activities that promote WTC. Comparative studies across different cultural settings could help identify universal versus context-specific strategies for enhancing WTC. Third, while the study highlights the importance of age-appropriate strategies, it does not account for individual differences within each age group, such as personality, language proficiency, or learning styles. Research by Cao (2009) and Gkonou & Mercer (2017) suggests that these factors significantly influence WTC and should be considered when designing interventions. Future research could explore how individual learner characteristics interact with age and pedagogical strategies to shape WTC.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

1. Can you describe the overall approach you take to enhancing your students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in English?
2. What specific strategies do you employ to increase seventh/twelfth-grade students' WTC in the classroom? Can you provide some examples of how you implement these strategies in your lessons?
3. What factors do you consider when selecting strategies to improve seventh/twelfth-grade students' WTC? How do you ensure these strategies are tailored to meet the needs and learning preferences of this age group?
4. What strategies have you found to be particularly effective in seventh/twelfth-grade students' WTC? How do you assess the impact of these strategies on your students' language development and communication skills?