**English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers’ Roles in Enhancing Learners’ Willingness to Communicate**

**S. Yahya Hejazi 1; Abbas Zare-ee 2;**

*1 PhD candidate in TEFL, University of Tehran; Email:* [*s.yahya.hejazi@ut.ac.ir*](mailto:s.yahya.hejazi@ut.ac.ir)

*2 Associate professor of TEFL, University of Kashan; Email:* [*Zare-ee72@kashanu.ac.ir*](mailto:Zare-ee72@kashanu.ac.ir)

**Abstract**

EFL learners require Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in order to be communicatively competent. WTC is, therefore, considered a necessary condition for language learning. Previous research on WTC has confirmed that various individual, social, situational, and contextual variables affect EFL learners’ tendency for communication. Given the paucity of research on the role of teachers in enhancing learners’ WTC, the present study was designed to explore how teachers can improve students’ willingness to communicate. To this end, nine randomly-selected university EFL teachers (5 males & 4 females) with varying teaching experience responded to a written interview questionnaire originally developed by Vongsila and Reinders (2016). The teachers reported their perceptions of their roles in encouraging students’ WTC, their opinions about relevant factors (e.g., anxiety, group size, self-confidence, culture, etc.), and their strategies for promoting WTC. The resulting interview data were content analyzed. The findings indicated that EFL teachers acknowledge their significant role in enhancing WTC and motivating L2 use. In addition, teachers reported that factors like self-confidence, shyness, anxiety, and classroom atmosphere considerably affect students’ WTC and require different strategies to tackle. The findings not only provide insights for the better understanding of WTC but also offer pedagogical implications for language education programs.

**Keywords:** *Willingness to communicate, Teachers’ Roles, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Language Teaching, Reticence*