# EFL TEACHERS' VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL IMMEDIACY: A STUDY OF ITS DETERMINANTS AND CONSEQUENCES

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**Abstract:**

Student engagement with instructors on a personal level can appear in the form of teacher's immediacy behaviors, which includes two main kinds of immediacy, verbal and non-verbal. Ellis (2004) found when instructors display communicative behaviors similar to immediacy; students' motivation to learn is likely to increase. Previous immediacy research has neglected to address the determinants and consequences of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' immediacy behaviors. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate its determinants as well as consequences by collecting data from a number of EFL teachers and their students. The qualitative data for this study were collected via semi-structured interviews and observations. Two models emerged out of the collected data, including a) the model of the determinants of EFL teachers' immediacy which comprised body gesture, vocal variety, rapport making … b) the model of the consequences of EFL teachers' immediacy including three main categories: affective, cognitive, and perceptive domains. The results of this study showed that among the determinants of teacher immediacy, body gesture and rapport making factors exhibited the highest frequency and among the consequences factors, affective and cognitive were found to be the most frequent ones. The findings can be of particular interest to teachers, educators, and policy makers and can help them in improving the quality of teaching and providing good environment for students to learn.

**Keywords:** immediacy, EFL teachers; qualitative study; determinants, consequences

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## 1. Introduction

The quality of students' learning to a great extent is influenced by the instructor's behaviors. Teacher's behavior in the class not only affects students' learning but also has an effect on different aspects of their attitudes, motivation, cognition, and so on. One of the facets of teachers' behavior is their *immediacy*, which is divided in two important parts: verbal and non-verbal immediacy. This concept was first proposed by Mehrabian (1969, 1972), who found that immediacy behaviors reduce distance, enhance closeness, mirror fondness and emotions, and increase sensory stimulations between communicators. Mehrabian's (1972) seminal research on immediacy paved the way for instructional communication research, particularly with regards to learning.

This communicating behavior has substantial significance for language teachers in comparison with other fields, because language learning is not a prosaic learning. Given that the basis of language education is on communication and interaction, language teachers' behavior and communication play a very important role in the successful teaching and learning. Therefore, language teachers should be aware of different aspects of immediacy such as verbal and non-verbal.

Verbal immediacy includes behaviors such as addressing students by names, asking for students' feedback, using collective pronouns (e.g., ''we'' and ''our''), and engaging in conversations with students before and after class (Gorham, 1988; Rocca, 2007).

When applied to a teaching/learning environment, verbal immediacy behaviors are verbal messages that express the "use of pro-social as opposed to antisocial messages to change student behavior" (Gorham, 1988, p. 41). It includes a host of behaviors such as humor, communicating with students before, after, or outside of class, stimulating willingness to communicate, motivating discussion, praising students' work, using first name both by teachers and students, and being available for students outside of class if they have any questions (Gorham, 1988).

Non-verbal immediacy includes non-spoken actions, such as proximity behaviors, availability of multi channeled communication, and signs of interpersonal closeness and warmth (Andersen & Andersen, 1982). Examples of nonverbal immediacy behaviors comprise having eye-contact, using body language, having a relaxed body posture, using vocal variety (Andersen, 1979). Instructors exhibiting nonverbal immediacy behaviors can pave the way for beneficial outcomes (Comadena, Hunt, & Simonds, 2007; Pogue & Ahyun, 2007; Witt & Kerssen-Griep, 2011).

Guerrero and Miller (1998) discovered that instructor's nonverbal behaviours as seen on videotapes for distance education courses were positively associated with students' initial notion of instructor competence and course content. Similarly, teachers' nonverbal immediacy behaviors have predicted improvement in student motivation (Christophel, 1990; Richmond, 1990), teacher credibility (Frymier & Thompson, 1992; Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998), positive evaluations of teachers (McCroskey, Richmond, Sallinen, Fayer, & Barraclough, 1995) and perceived cognitive and affective learning (Sanders & Wiseman, 1990).

These are behaviors that encourage immediacy and involvement, such as physical closeness, increased direct body and facial orientation, eye gaze, smiling and head nods, and frequent and lively gesturing (Andersen, 1985; Burgoon, 1994; Coker & Burgoon, 1987; Mehrabian, 1971; Patterson, 1983). In learning environments, immediacy behaviors have been demonstrated to increase the teacher's likeableness and warmth (Andersen, 1979; Cappella, 1981, 1983, 1985; Mehrabian, 1967, 1969), show ease of access and approachability (Andersen, 1985),and reveal the teacher's positive attitude (Mehrabian, 1967, 1969). Immediacy behaviors have also been connected to positive outcomes in teacher-student relationships. The ability of teachers to diminish their students' experiences of receiver apprehension can be studied by examining teacher clarity and immediacy in relation to student receiver apprehension during the learning process.

Immediacy is possible to increase student comfort levels by increasing student positive affect and contributing to positive student-teacher relationships (Frymier, 1994).Instructional communication research has confirmed that behaviors such as appropriate eye contact, the use of gestures, movement in the classroom, smiling, vocal variety, and the use of humor are highly-effective teaching behaviors. Early research conducted in the field of education on these behaviors designated them as "teacher enthusiasm" or "teacher expressiveness" (Abrami, Leventhal, & Perry, 1982; Coats & Smidchens, 1966; Ware & Williams, 1975) while communication researchers have chosen to nominate them as "immediacy behaviors" (Andersen, 1979).

As the previous research specifies, teacher immediacy is an important teaching behavior. It has been tied to more positive affect towards courses and instructors, greater motivation to learn, greater achievement, and greater awareness of control. Despite the importance of immediacy, teachers must do something verbally to take advantage of the benefits of being immediate. Although immediacy can be effective in spite of what teachers say, it is likely to achieve greater result when teachers also are verbally effective in classrooms.

Immediacy is the extent to which communication behaviors improve closeness and reduce physical and/or psychological distance between communicators (Mehrabian, 1969). Immediacy can be traced to Simmel's notion of the stranger and Park's concept of social distance (Rogers, 1999), but the concept of immediacy was proposed by Mehrabian (1969, 1972), who found that immediacy behaviors decrease distance, improve closeness, reflect liking and affect, and increase sensory stimulations between communicators.

Teacher verbal and/or nonverbal immediacy have been connected to students' perceived affective learning and/or cognitive learning in the classrooms in the U.S., and many other cultures (Andersen, 1979; Christensen & Menzel, 1998; Christophel, 1990;Comstock, Rowell, & Bowers, 1995; Gorham, 1988; McCroskey, Fayer, Richmond, Sallinen, & Barraclough, 1996; McCroskey, Sallinen, Fayer, Richmond, & Barraclough,1996; Myers, Zhong, & Guan, 1998; Neuliep, 1997; Rodrı´guez, Plax, & Kearney, 1996; Sanders & Wiseman, 1990; Witt, Wheeless, & Allen, 2004).

Although a positive relationship between teacher immediacy and student learning is well set up (Allen, Witt, & Wheeless, 2006; Andersen, 1979; Gorham, 1988; Witt et al., 2004), there is still debate over how immediacy affects perceived learning. Several immediacy-learning models have been suggested: the learning model (Andersen, 1979), the motivation model (Christophel, 1990; Frymier, 1994) and the affective learning model (Rodrı´guez et al., 1996). To better explain the association between immediacy and learning, these models have been tested and compared empirically in U.S. classrooms (Andersen, 1979; Christophel, 1990; Frymier, 1994; Rodrı´guez et al., 1996), but none of them has been tested with non-U.S. students.

Testing these models in other cultures is important because it helps to find out if these U.S.-based models have cross-cultural validity. Specifically, they differ in value orientations (e.g., collectivism vs. individualism, large power distance vs. small power distance, and high context vs. low context), educational methods (e.g., teacher-centered vs. student-centered), and teachers' roles and responsibilities (e.g., holism-oriented multiple roles vs. the professional role) (Biggs & Watkins, 2001; Ho, 2001; Lu, 1997; Zhang et al., 2007). These differences might actually influence the immediacy-learning relationship.

From a traditional behavior-oriented perspective, three models have been produced to explain the immediacy-learning relationship: the learning model (Andersen, 1979), the motivation model (Christophel, 1990), and the affective learning model (Rodrıguez et al., 1996).

Derived from Andersen's (1979) seminal work, the *learning model* puts forward a direct, linear, and causal relationship between teacher nonverbal immediacy and student affective and/or cognitive learning. This model offers that teachers' immediacy behaviors communicate affect and positive attitude, while teachers' non immediacy behaviors communicate dislike and negative attitude. Thus, teachers' nonverbal immediacy behaviors directly shape student learning without any mediating factors. Although Andersen (1979) failed to find a considerable relationship between immediacy and cognitive learning, this model of direct relationship between immediacy and affective and/or cognitive learning has repeatedly been supported by a number of studies in U.S. classrooms (Gorham, 1988; Powell & Harville, 1990; Sanders& Wiseman, 1990).

The *motivation model* posits an indirect linear relationship between teacher immediacy and student cognitive and affective learning, which is mediated by students' motivation to learn (Christophel, 1990; Christophel & Gorham, 1995; Richmond, 1990). This model, proposed by Christophel (1990) and Richmond (1990), and further tested by Frymier (1994) and Christophel and Gorham (1995), contended that students' motivation to learn acts as the central causal mediator between teacher immediacy and student learning. Immediate teachers cause higher motivation in students, which, in turn, assists students' affective and cognitive learning.

The *affective learning* model posits an indirect linear relationship between teacher nonverbal immediacy and student cognitive learning, which is mediated by student affective learning rather than student motivation (Rodrı´guez et al., 1996). This model

argues that cognitive learning is the ultimate end, and affective learning is only a means to the end (Rodrı́guez et al., 1996). Immediate teachers cause students to encourage affect for the teacher and/or the subject, which in turn causes students to learn cognitively. Rodrı́guez and colleagues (1996) asserted that the affective learning model is superior to the motivation model theoretically and statistically because it offers a more relevant and prudent theoretical explanation of immediacy-learning relationship, and it produces less statistical error. The three behavior-oriented models all pose a linear immediacy-learning relationship. The *integrating* model contains the four variables identified in the three previous models: immediacy, motivation, affective learning, and cognitive learning.

## 2. Purpose of the Study

Based on Mehrabian (1969), teachers' nonverbal and verbal behaviors together generate a kind of psychological closeness between them and students. If teachers use effective verbal and nonverbal behaviors with their students, they have actually increased perceptions of immediacy and encouraged interpersonal encounters. As a result, students would feel closer to the teachers. In this regard, Mehrabian (1971) believed that people are drawn toward persons they like, evaluate and prefer them highly. On the other hand, they avoid or move away from people they dislike, evaluate negatively or do not prefer. This shows the significant of immediacy behavior concerning professions dealing with people.

The main purpose of this study was to delve into EFL teachers' immediacy (verbal and non-verbal). In particular, it explored teacher immediacy and its determinants and consequences among EFL teachers from private institutes. To the researchers' best knowledge, only a few studies have been focused on dimensions of immediacy and its consequences. The fact that almost no comprehensive study has been conducted on this important issue among EFL teachers brought us to conduct a research with the aim of filling the present gap. To this end, the following research questions were posed and examined in the present study:
1. What are the determinants of EFL teachers' immediacy?
2. What are the consequences of EFL teachers' immediacy?

## 3. Method

The participants of this study comprised participants of interviews (including teachers and students) as well as participants of observation phase (teachers); the demographic information of teachers are presented here:

### 3.1 Participants of interview
The sample of the study included four students studying in EFL classes in institutes; also, seven teachers from private institutes and high schools of Mashhad, Iran which took part in the semi structured interview phase. The demographic information

obtained from the participants is as follows: the age range of participants varied from 19 to 38, two males and 6 females.

## 3.2 Participants of the observation phase

In this part of the study, the researchers observed classes of three teachers in three different language institutes. All teachers agreed to be observed by the researchers. The teaching style and the verbal and nonverbal features of teacher's and students' communication were the subject of observation. Two out of three teachers were female and one was male. One of the female teachers had MA degree and the other had BA. The male teacher had BA degree.

## 3.3 Instruments

In order to accomplish this study, we used a triangulated qualitative method. In order to increase the validity of investigation, the researchers utilized a combination of observation and interview with the teachers and students. The Gorham's (1988) scale for verbal immediacy and Richmond, Gorham and McCroskey's (1986) scale for non-verbal immediacy inspired the researchers in the interview phase. In the followings, these two instruments are briefly explained:

Gorham (1988) developed items by asking forty-seven advanced undergraduate students enrolled in upper-division communication courses to think of the best teachers they had had and write a list of their specific behaviors. After adjusting the characteristics and behaviors he could specify 20 items for measuring teacher's verbal immediacy. All items were scored on a five-point Likert scale. 1 stood for never, 2 stood for hardly ever, 3 stood for occasionally, 4 stood for often and 5 stood for extremely. In the present study, Gorham 's (1988) verbal immediacy scale was translated from English to Persian, then, using back translation method, the scale was translated into English again and accuracy of translation was confirmed by three experts in Mashhad universities. Some sample items of this questionnaire are mentioned bellow:

My teacher ……………………
1. Uses personal examples or talks about experiences she/he has had outside of class.
2. Asks questions or encourages students to talk.
3. Get into discussions based on something a student brings up even when this doesn't seem to be part of his/her lecture plan.
4. Uses humor in class.
5. Addresses students by name.

Richmond, Gorham and McCroskey's (1986) scale was applied in current investigation in order to generate ideas for interview. The original scale consisted of 16 items which was adjusted based on their adaptability to Iran context. "Touches students in the class", "Sits on a desk or in a chair while teaching" are the items which have been eliminated because of the observed contradiction to the Iranian society and low reliability. Items 1, 3, 6, 8, and 9 were non-immediate and were reversed scored when summing. Each item presented a particular example of an instructor nonverbal

immediacy behavior and students were asked to indicate how often their instructor displayed this behavior. In order to achieve desirable goals, the instrument was translated into Persian. Content validity of it was checked by three experts in Mashhad universities and its reliability computed via Cronbach's alpha was discovered to be 0.71. Some sample items of English questionnaire are mentioned bellow:

My teacher ………………… .
1. Sits behind desk while teaching.
2. Gestures while talking to class.
3. Uses monotone/dull voice when talking to class.
4. Looks at class while talking.
5. Smiles at the class as a whole, not just individual students.
6. Has a very tense body position while talking to the class.

### 3.4 Data collection

The data collection of this study took place in fall 2017. Before gathering the data, all of the ethical points were explained to the participants. So they quite voluntarily took part in this study, and there was no obligation for them. The participants were ensured that their speech will remain private and confidential.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The collected data from both interview and observation phases were entered into MAXQDA version 10 in order to be coded and analyzed. It provides valuable visual maps and code frequency tables. Firstly, data, which were gathered through the interviews and observation, were transcribed and then the transcriptions were coded. All the coded data were well discussed by the three researchers of the present study. Secondly, the data collected were numbered in terms of two general classifications: determinants and consequences.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 The Model of Teachers' Verbal and Non-Verbal Immediacy Determinants

As indicated by Figure 1, the two main categories of EFL teachers' immediacy contain a number of subcategories. For instance, verbal dimension of teacher immediacy encompasses teacher self-disclosure, rapport making, and oral participation. The non-verbal dimension includes body gesture, proximity, and vocal variety. Each of these subcategories embraces various elements.
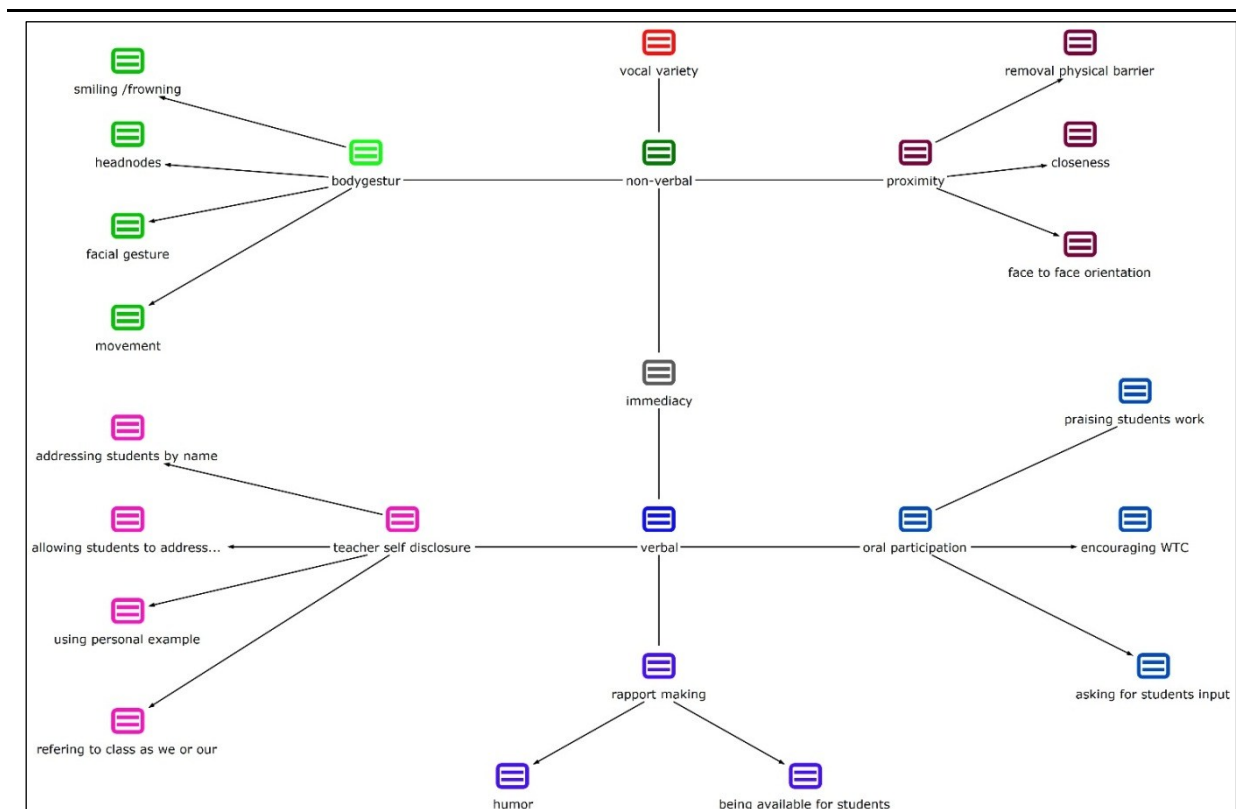
**Figure 1:** The model of the determinants of EFL teachers' immediacy

To present a vivid picture of the yielded categories and subcategories, each dimension is tabulated and the corresponding definitions and examples of the protocols are displayed in Table 4.1.

**Table 4:** Conceptualization of Factors and Sub factors of
the Determinants of EFL Teachers' Immediacy

| Immediacy | Sub factors | | Examples : |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nonverbal Immediacy | a)Body gesture | 1-Movement | I often use my hands and when students make mistake. I use body language to show them that they made a mistake. |
| | | 2-head nods | I use head nods to confirm their answers. |
| | | 3-smiling/frowning | I usually smile but try to keep the authority in class, and I seldom frown if I see bad behavior from a student. |
| | | 4-facial gesture | I use facial gesture to show them that they are making a mistake or to confirm. |
| | b)Proximity | 1-removal of physical barriers | I walk most of the time and come back to my desk when I am tired. |
| | | 2-face to face orientation | I try to have a face-to-face orientation in class. |
| | | 3-Closeness | I usually go near them to look at their home works or to speak to them. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | c)Vocal variety | | I usually change the tone of my voice while teaching because it prevents the teaching to become boring for the students. |
| Verbal Immediacy | a)Teacher self - disclosure | 1-using personal examples | My teacher often uses examples of his experiences to show a concept. |
| | | 2-referring to class as 'we' or 'our' | My teacher often says 'we', instead of I. |
| | | 3-allowing students to address him or her by first name | I rarely allow my students to address me by my first name because it is a teacher- student relationship. |
| | | 4-addressing students by their first name | Students like being addressed by first name and I do too .We both feel more comfortable in this way. |
| | b)Rapport making | 1-humor | I use humor to make the class atmosphere fun and enjoyable and attract their attention to lesson. |
| | | b-being responsive to students | I try to answer their questions outside of the class and give my email to them. |
| | c)Oral participation | 1-encouraging WTC | The teacher asks for more after a student volunteers to answer. |
| | | 2-asking for students' input | My teacher asks for the students' opinions about a title, word… |
| | | 3-praising students' work | I often praise my students' correct responses, especially for lower levels. |

It should be taken into consideration that the data were collected using two methods, interview and observation.

The frequency of each factor and sub-factor is represented in the following table.

**Table 4:** Frequency of the Identified Codes of Determinants of Teachers' immediacy

| Code -ID | Position | Parent code | Code | All coded segments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26 | 3 | immediacy\non verbal | body gesture | 15 |
| 21 | 4 | immediacy\non verbal\body gesture | movement | 14 |
| 28 | 6 | immediacy\non verbal\body gesture | facial gestures | 10 |
| 29 | 7 | immediacy\non verbal\body gesture | smiling/frowning | 10 |
| 22 | 9 | immediacy\non verbal\proximity | face to face orientation | 3 |
| 24 | 10 | immediacy\non verbal\proximity | closeness | 10 |
| 25 | 11 | immediacy\non verbal\proximity | removal of physical barriers | 1 |
| 17 | 12 | immediacy\non verbal | vocal variety | 9 |
| 5 | 15 | immediacy\verbal\teacher self- disclosure | using personal examples | 5 |

| 12 | 16 | immediacy\verbal\teacher self-disclosure | referring to class as we or our | 2 |
| 10 | 17 | immediacy\verbal\teacher self-disclosure | allowing students to address instructors by their first name | 2 |
| 14 | 18 | immediacy\verbal\teacher self-disclosure | addressing students by name | 9 |
| 31 | 19 | immediacy\verbal | rapport making | 1 |
| 4 | 20 | immediacy\verbal\rapport making | humor | 11 |
| 9 | 21 | immediacy\verbal\rapport making | Being available for students | 21 |
| 30 | 22 | immediacy\verbal | oral participation | 1 |
| 7 | 23 | immediacy\verbal\oral participation | asking for students' input | 4 |
| 8 | 24 | immediacy\verbal\oral participation | encouraging WTC | 5 |
| 11 | 25 | immediacy\verbal\oral participation | praising students' work | 9 |

As can be seen in Table 4, the principal codes can be listed as follows:

1. Teachers' verbal immediacy (being responsive to students, n=21)
2. Teachers non-verbal immediacy (body gesture=15)
3. Teachers non-verbal immediacy (movement, n=14)

4. Teachers' verbal immediacy (humor, n=11)

5. Teachers non-verbal immediacy (facial gestures, n=10)

4. Teachers non-verbal immediacy (smiling/frowning, n=10)
5. Teachers non-verbal immediacy (closeness, n=10)
6. Teachers non-verbal immediacy(vocal variety, n=9)
7. Teachers verbal immediacy (addressing students by name, n=9)
8. Teachers verbal immediacy (praising students work, n=9)

It is implied from Table 4that rapport making (being responsive to students) stood in the first place and teachers' nonverbal immediacy(body gesture)had the second highest frequency amongst other factors. Teachers, sense of humor, a sub-factor of verbal immediacy, came in the third place.

## 4.2 The Model of the Consequences of Teachers' Immediacy
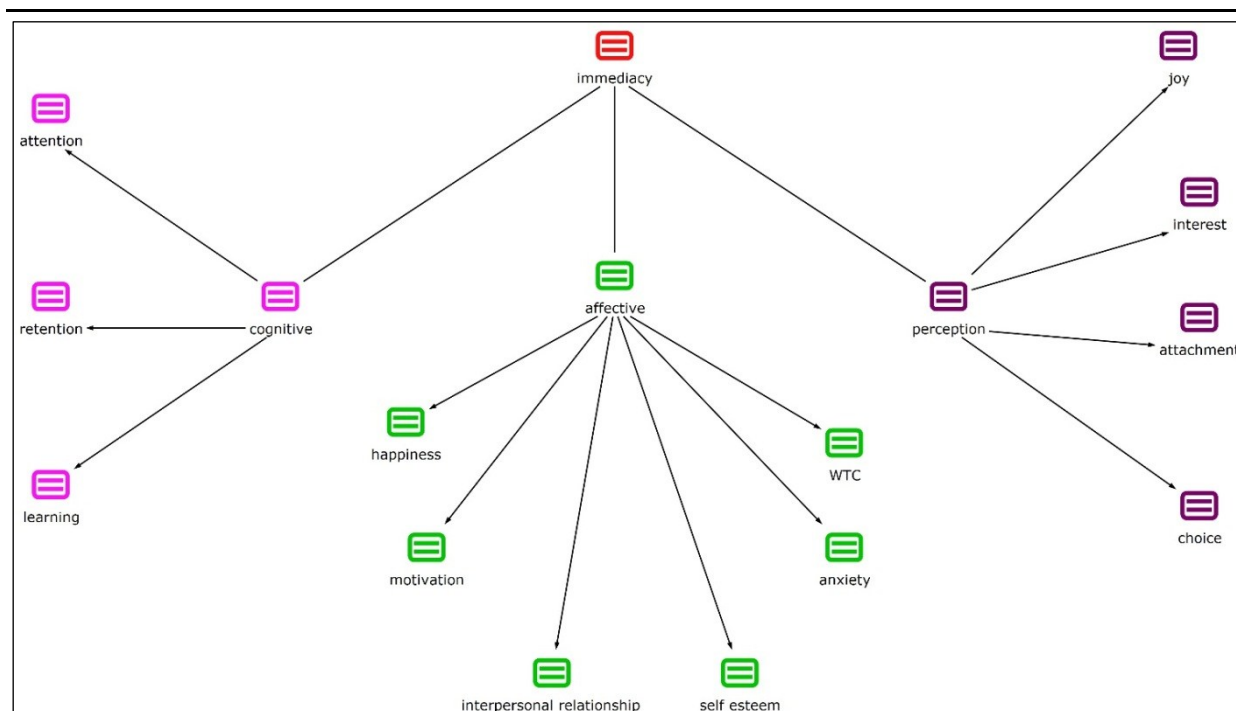
**Figure 2:** The model of the consequences of EFL teachers' immediacy

As shown in Figure 2, wide ranges of factors were identified as the consequences of teachers' immediacy. The most remarkable result emerged from the data is that affective enhancement factors were amongst the highly mentioned factors evolved from immediacy. The following examples in Table 5 are provided to clarify the above-mentioned points.

**Table 5:** Conceptualization of Factors and Sub factors of
the Consequences of EFL Teachers' Immediacy

| Teachers immediacy consequences: | Sub- factors: | Examples : |
|---|---|---|
| | 1-learning | Body language affects the students learning. |
| a)learning (cognitive) | 2-attention/ concentration | Walking through rows causes the students to pay more attention to lesson. |
| | 3-retention | When our teacher uses a personal example to explain the meaning of a word or a grammar point we will learn them better, it can be kept in our mind as well. |
| b)emotional(affective) | 1-happiness | Using humor create happiness in them. |
| | 2-self- esteem | Praising the students' works by our teacher gives us a sense of self-esteem. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 3-anxiety | They like it and I also feel more comfortable if I call the students by their first name. |
| | 4-motivation | Our teacher uses the words our or we in class and asks for our input. This motives us to learn more. |
| | 5-interpersonal relationship | Sometimes a student tells me about her problem and I try to solve it by advice or other ways. |
| c)attitude(perception) | 1-attachment | My teacher often walks in class and solve the students problems. This is very useful and gives us a sense of attachment. |
| | 2-interest | Speaking about different things in the class makes me more interested in learning English. |
| | 3-joy | When I can address my teacher by his first name, I will enjoy learning in my class. |
| | 4-choice | We don't have permission to call our teacher by her first name. |
| | 5-WTC | Our teacher asks questions that don't have one answer, so he asks about other students' answers and opinions. In this way, he encourages WTC. |

The following table (Table 6) presents the frequency of each category and subcategory of the consequences of teacher immediacy.

**Table 6:** Frequency of the Identified Codes of Consequences of Teacher's Immediacy

| Code-ID | Position | Parent code | Code | All coded segments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 4 | immediacy\perception | choice | 3 |
| 6 | 5 | immediacy\ perception | interest | 7 |
| 5 | 6 | immediacy\ perception | joy | 7 |
| 15 | 9 | immediacy\ affective | Interpersonal relationship | 22 |
| 14 | 10 | immediacy\ affective | motivation | 9 |
| 13 | 11 | immediacy\ affective | anxiety | 15 |
| 12 | 12 | immediacy\ affective | Self-esteem | 6 |
| 11 | 13 | immediacy\affective | happiness | 13 |
| 10 | 15 | immediacy\ cognitive | attention | 16 |
| 9 | 16 | immediacy\ cognitive | retention | 7 |
| 8 | 17 | immediacy\ cognitive | learning | 12 |
| 16 | 3 | immediacy\ perception | attachment | 9 |
| 17 | 8 | immediacy\affective | WTC | 8 |

The list below basically shows the most frequent codes resulted from teachers' immediacy consequences are as follows:

1) Affective (interpersonal relationship) n=22
2) Cognitive (attention) n=16

3) Affective (anxiety) n=15
4) Affective (happiness) n=13

As can be seen, affective domain received the highest frequency (n=22) followed by cognitive factors (n=16).

## 5. Discussion

This study explored the determinants and consequences of EFL teachers' immediacy. Based on the identified codes obtained via a qualitative method integrating interview and observation, the following outline shows the categories of determinants of teachers' immediacy:
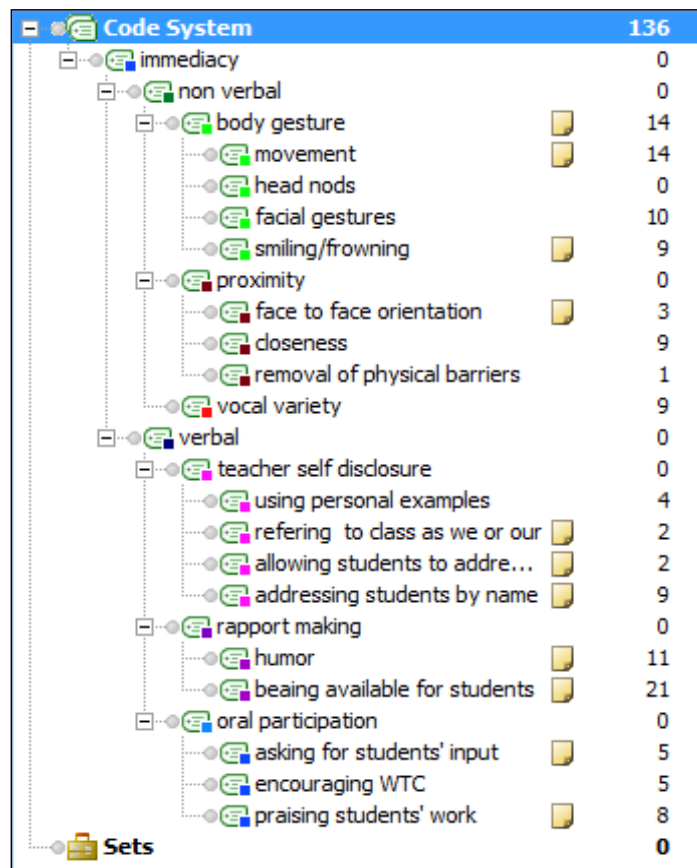
Nonverbal immediacy behaviors include three categories:
1) Body gesture
2) Proximity
3) Vocal variety

Verbal immediacy behaviors include three categories:
1) Teacher self-disclosure
2) Rapport making
3) Oral participation

Each main category includes some sub factors which are shown below:



**Figure 4:** The general scheme of the determinants of EFL teachers' immediacy

Among the above categories, body gesture and rapport making factors exhibited the highest frequency.

Figure 5 summarizes the consequences of EFL teachers' immediacy
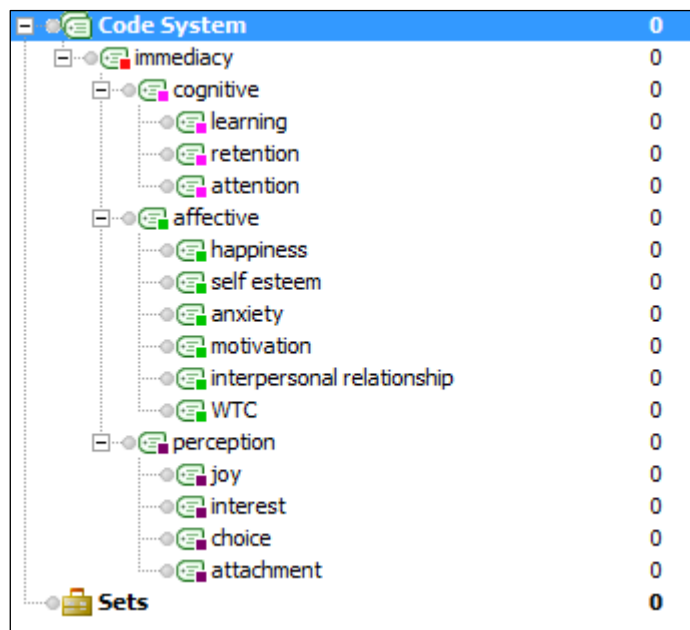


**Figure 5:** The general scheme of the consequences of EFL teachers' immediacy

Among these categories, affective and cognitive were found to be the most frequent consequences of teacher immediacy.

When it comes to discussing the determinants of teacher immediacy, decline in sense of proximity beliefs (removal of physical barrier) is the most frequent factor. Proximity literally refers to the state of being close to someone or something. It can be developed via three main sources of influence, including face-to-face orientation, closeness, and removal of physical barrier. More generally, teachers should deal with students who are human beings and it should be taken into consideration that the more proximity a teacher has, the more he can be successful in his job. The same goes for cognitive factors, which were amongst the most frequent consequences of teachers' immediacy.

The present study was done through qualitative method, which can be its first limitation. Thus, for increasing the validity it would be better to utilize both qualitative and quantitative methods. Despite the contributions of this study, the results should be interpreted in the view of methodological limitations. First, some of the verbal and nonverbal behaviors may not be relevant in today's classroom environments and in Iranian context (e.g., is addressed by his/her first name by the students) because it is not very common in public schools. Second, the current findings could be limited to Iranian students and teachers. It would be interesting to examine whether similar or different patterns of findings would be observed in students from other EFL countries. Third, for ensuring generalizability, a large number of classes should take part in the study while collecting this amount of data would be a tough and time consuming job. On the other

hand, the higher the number of required participants, the higher the number of potential unwillingness to cooperate. Fourth, though the researchers ensured the participants about the confidentiality of their answers, conservative answers were expected in some cases.

## 6. Conclusions

The present research took the initiative to explore the determinants and consequences of EFL teachers' immediacy behaviors-- which is directly linked to EFL teachers' profession. Foreign language teaching is fundamentally associated with regular interactions among teacher and students. Two models emerged out of the qualitative data. The determinants of EFL teachers' immediacy were clustered in the light of two broad dimensions: verbal and non-verbal. The good news is that both verbal and nonverbal factors are important in teachers' communicative behaviors. The consequences encompassed cognitive, affective, and attitudinal domains. The findings of the present study offer significant implications for teachers by informing teachers of the sources of their behaviors. This information can stimulate them to pay more attention to their verbal and non-verbal behaviors. By so doing, they are expected to create a lovely and enjoyable classroom atmosphere beneficial to learning.

Furthermore, institute and school authorities should try to update their educational systems to support their teachers in cooperative and well- equipped settings. They should also develop training programs, which seek to pinpoint up-to-date techniques and enable teachers to modify their classes to the ones which have more affective and engaging functions.

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