

Attributes of Effective EFL Lecturer: A Case Study of Afghan EFL Undergraduate Learners' Perspectives at a Public University in AfghanistanHashmatullah Tareen^[1], Sayeed Ahmad Qani^[2] and Attuallah Muhammadi^[3]^[1] English Department, Kandahar University, Afghanistan^[2]^[3] Pashto Department, Kandahar University, Afghanistan

Abstract. The aptitude of the lecturer to assist learners to understand and integrate information, determines students to learn, to inspire students, and to be adored depends on the quality of teaching and learning. Since EFL learners have a direct relationship with the EFL lecturer, it was necessary for the researcher to identify EFL learners' perspectives regarding effective attributes of EFL lecturers. To achieve this, the data were gathered through mix method. The sample size included 104 EFL learners and 5 respondents for interview. The results identified items that received utmost consideration by learners. Items such as encouraging learners and having a positive attitude in general in socio-affective category, having enough expertise in content knowledge category, providing clear explanation and convincing learners' active participation in classroom activities, well prepared for lessons, and being responsible and enthusiastic about the teaching profession, were the strongly agreed and most important items. EFL lecturers should use these outcomes as a benchmark to better understand their practices and the needs of their learners for the heightening of the learning process.

Keywords: Attributes, Effective lecturer, EFL Learners, Perspectives

Introduction

Education is a vital area of a society involving efforts to enable individual in a way that forms the foundation to live life in social harmony and for effective functioning of educational systems and for augmenting learning quality, effective and qualified lecturers are crucial (Shishavan & Sadeghi, 2009; Şahenk, 2010). With regard to effective teacher, William Arthur Ward stated "The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires" (Chen & Lin, 2009). Teaching is a noble career that requires explicit psychological, pedagogical, managerial and social qualifications rather than a career to earn a living (Sabbah, 2018). The amount of learning and the effectiveness of lecturers has undoubtedly direct relationship, that is, effective lecturer provides grounds in any field for improving learning (Hajizadeh & Salahshour, 2014). The aptitude of the lecturer to assist learners to understand and integrate information, determines students to learn, to inspire students, and to be adored depends on the quality of teaching and learning (Lupascu, Pânisoară, & Pânisoară, 2014). Effective lecturers exhibit high expectations for students containing cautious preparation, planning activities, and choose strategies to impel students' learning (Duta, Tomoaica, & Panisoara, 2015).

Improving student learning outcomes is related to effective teaching, especially lecturers' aptitude to stimulate and facilitate such learning (Kourieos, & Evripidou, 2013). Lecturers who make maximum use of instruction time, present materials based on learners' needs, monitor programs, and plan opportunities for learners to apply recently attained concepts and skills have been described as effective lecturers (Khojastehmehr & Takrimi, 2009). Dincer et al. (2013) described effective lecturer as one who has effective factors, classroom management and field knowledge. As per the concept of effective EFL lecturer, the role of effective English language lecturer cannot be ignored by any means and special consideration must be paid to the link between lecturers as the utmost source of language input and learners (Kariminia & Salehizadeh, 2007). Language lecturers have to make rational decisions on how to implement,

foster and sustain motivation throughout the academic year to improve learning (Kourieos, & Evripidou, 2013). With the intention of doing this, lecturers have to look into how their learners perceive effective language teaching (Barnes & Lock, 2010).

Problem Statement

Effective language teaching has become a noticeable issue in the field of education as there has been a great demand for learning foreign languages throughout the world. In the process of foreign language learning, the language lecturer has a very important role on the learners and their success depends on the skills of the lecturers. Despite the importance of knowledge about student perceptions as an informant to effective lecturing and teaching, there are very few studies in the field of English language teaching, especially the Afghan EFL learners' perceptions of effective EFL lecturers as unexplored territory. The present study, therefore, addresses this deficiency. In this regard, Borg (2006) also agreed with the idea that inadequate work in the research literature has been carried out that emphasis is allocated on language lecturers' diverse professional attributes. The outcomes of this investigation provide fresh insights into Kandahar University learners' views about effective EFL lecturers which should be particularly informative to lecturers working in Afghanistan to revisit or discover some crucial features that reinforce teaching practices and enhance the probability of successful language learning. In this regard, this study will attempt to answer the following two research questions:

1. What are the EFL undergraduate learners' perspectives towards the attributes of effective EFL lecturer?
2. Is there any significant difference between EFL learners' perspectives of an effective EFL lecturer?

Literature Review

The emphasis on teaching effectiveness hinges on the fact that effective learning is thoroughly allied with effective teaching. The issue of effective lecturer has been examined by several researchers (Khojastehmehr & Takrimi, 2009; Shishavan & Sadeghi, 2009; Dincer et al., (2013); Hajizadeh & Salahshour, 2014; Moradi & Sabeti, 2014; Moradi & Sabeti, 2014; Sabbah, 2018; León, 2018; Basri, 2019; Suparman, 2019; Alzobiani, 2020; Obeidat, 2020) consisting four categories: socio-affective, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and organization and preparation.

EFL learners perceive content knowledge to be an essential aspect in portraying an effective English lecturer (Khojastehmehr & Takrimi, 2009; Hajizadeh & Salahshour, 2014; Moradi & Sabeti, 2014). As per the knowledge of content, effective lecturer as the main source of language available to learners with rich knowledge can assist learners to overcome the worries in communication (Shishavan & Sadeghi, 2009). According to Dincer et al. (2013), effective EFL lecturers should be superior in knowledge of subject matter, especially English lexicon and pronunciation, care about learners' proficiency level and incorporate lessons based on learners' background. Similarly, learners considered effective lecturers highly qualified for EFL teaching whose knowledge in the field and target language is good (Basri, 2019). In terms of the knowledge aspect, according to Obeidat (2020), EFL learners viewed EFL lecturers as significant with knowledge attributes, especially knowledge of English language culture, grammar and vocabulary and also competent in communication. Likewise, learners remarkably favored lecturer competency who is versatile with respect to their lexicon (León, 2018).

EFL learners, according to Moradi and Sabeti (2014), conceive pedagogical knowledge as a second category in characterizing effective EFL lecturers. For example, the presentation phase, the practice phase, and the production stage. Likewise, effective language lecturer is one who deploys diverse techniques and varying classroom instructional techniques, adapts

materials from textbook, engages learners in communicative activities, monitoring group activities, encourages participation, integrates technology in teaching, uses simple poetry and short stories in teaching, using real-life examples, providing clear explanation, asking questions in the middle and by the end of each session, designing effective exams by including varying questions and interactive lessons (Khojastehmehr & Takrimi, 2009; Suparman, 2019; Obeidat, 2020). Similarly, creating autonomous learning environments and facilitating active learning are techniques designed for motivating learners is a prevailing attribute of effective lecturers (Dincer et al., 2013; Said, 2017). On the other hand, EFL learners did not appreciate lecturers whose lessons bored learners and did not comprehend what lecturers delivered (Basri, 2019). Instead, lecturers have to push learners to participate actively in the learning process in order to be considered effective, especially learners with low confidence.

According to Khojastehmehr and Takrimi (2009), another feature of effective lecturer is related to socio-affective by establishing a strong rapport with learners. For instance, EFL lecturers should be kind, flexible, supportive, encouraging, cheerful, fair, and equitable with learners. Similarly, teaching effectiveness, according to Suparman et al. (2019) and Sabbah (2018), is characterized by establishing good interpersonal and friend-to-friend relationships with learners. Important to realize, learners are apparently interested in building positive relationships with their lecturers to make the classroom free of anxiety (Alzobiani, 2020). Correspondingly, Dincer et al. (2013) and Obeidat (2020), asserted that effective lecturers should build good and friendly relationships with learners, care about their needs, listen to learners, understand their problems, be patient, be kind and have positive attitude. Moreover, Said (2017) also advocated an encouraging rapport and frequent contact between effective lecturers and learners in and out of classroom. The author further added that EFL learners appreciate lecturers who embrace a demeanor that communicates that they are approachable and always welcome learners into their offices because a friendly connection between lecturers and learners inside and outside of classes will have positive effect on learners' motivation. In addition to that, Dincer et al. (2013) further stated that effective lecturers should be sensible, open-minded, flexible, optimistic and patient. EFL learners, however, sensed that some of the EFL lecturers did not address learners with their names, assist learners, and secure learners' comprehension (Basri, 2019).

With regard to organization and preparation, EFL learners seem to give importance to lecturer's sense of responsibility towards the job to unveil enthusiasm for teaching English (Dincer et al., 2013; Sabbah, 2018) and should be lively, active, using class time wisely and punctual in the class, returning the learners' papers with precise informational feedback and correction on time and have abilities about effective classroom management strategies (Salahshour & Hajizadeh, 2013; Dincer et al., 2013; Suparman, 2019). With regard to feedback which is the essential part of teaching and learning, effective EFL lecturers should assess learners' existing performance and provide immediate feedback, for example, on accurate or inaccurate pronunciation, structure of a sentence and word choice will help learners become more competent (Said, 2017). Additionally, Said revealed that EFL learners require their lecturers to be effective by allocating sensible amount of time for prompt completion of assignments, tasks, and oral presentations. Effective lecturers, according to Basri (2019) and Obeidat (2020), should have well-preparation for teaching the materials and ensure they are ready to handle the class to inspire the learners.

Research Design

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. The present study was a case study that employed a descriptive approach to explore learners' perceptions concerning effective lecturers. The case study enables the researcher to achieve great insight into a case where the focus is on a specific context (Yin, 2013). Furthermore, qualitative research,

especially interview also caters and seeks to examine human behavior, human characteristics, emotions, experiences, perceptions of the participants and attitudes which quantitative research cannot. Similarly, the interview is a significant tool for collecting the data which involves oral communication between the researcher and the participant (Mathers, Fox and Hunn, 1998, p. 1).

Population and Sampling

The participants and respondents of this case study were all EFL learners from Kandahar University where their perspectives were discovered. A random sample of 104 EFL learners (79 male & 25 female) participated in this study from the total population of 143. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), for a population of 140 subjects, a sample size of 103 subjects is required to represent the whole population. With regard to qualitative study, the selection of participants intends to locate information-rich individuals and site for the study (Collins, 2010). In addition to that, the researcher purposefully selected and invited five EFL (three male & two female) learners who studies in English Departments in Education Faculty at Kandahar University because in line with this, an appropriate sampling technique should be purposeful and it should be based on the assumption that researcher wants to discover, understand and gain insight (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016).

Instrument

For this particular study, the researcher employed an adapted questionnaire developed by (Barnes & Lock, 2013) for data collection comprised of four main categories (29 items based on seven-point 7=strongly agree, 6=agree, 5=slightly agree, 4=no feeling, 3=slightly disagree, 2=disagree and 1=strongly disagree Likert Scale). These categories are: Socio-affective (12 items), knowledge of content (4 items), pedagogical knowledge (6 items) and organization and preparation (7 items). Also, the researcher adopted the instrument for the interview developed by (Badshah, 2016) to support the questionnaire. Prior to data collection, the instrument for the interview and the questionnaire were consulted with the content expert to establish validity. Based upon their constructive feedback, changes in terms of wording were made to the questionnaires.

Questionnaire Reliability

To examine the internal reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated which indicate that four of the categories reported above .70 alpha levels. Questionnaire category alpha levels are as follows:

Table 1. Reliability of the questionnaire

Categories	Number of Items	Items Deleted	Alpha
Socio-affective skills	12	-	.90
Content knowledge	4	-	.75
Pedagogical knowledge	6	-	.83
Organization and preparation	7	-	.88

Data Collection and Ethical Issues

According to Kirk (2007), important ethical issues are involved in any social research including that into education, which deals with the beliefs, values, and lives of people. Since this study involves the EFL learners, therefore, it was a requirement to seek approval from the university, dean of the faculty, and head of the department prior to data collection. The data was collected through a questionnaire and interview from EFL learners. Precisely, prior to the

interview, the respondents were informed in advance about the purpose, the nature of the study, issues, and the procedures of the interview.

Data Analysis

In terms of data analysis, quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics by using the SPSS statistical software. Mean and Standard deviation for every item were calculated in general. Meanwhile, independent sample t-test was calculated. As per the qualitative data analysis, the researcher first transcribed the audio-recorded interview and then manually categorized the central themes and sub-themes emerging from the interview transcriptions. Qualitative data analysis contains identifying, coding, and categorizing emerging themes found in the data (Woods, 2011). As per the validation of the qualitative analysis, the research took an outside peer perspective into consideration by examining the assumptions and thoughts of learners about Effective lecturers. To further enrich the trustworthiness of the findings, the respondents were invited for member check to review, make changes to their insights and share further information.

Findings

Quantitative Analysis

Demographics

Table 2 below presents the demographic information of the participants.

Table 2. Demographic information of the participants

	Characteristics	No. of Participants	Percentage
Gender	Male	79	76.0
	Female	25	24.0
Level of Education	Freshman	21	20.2
	Sophomore	11	10.6
	Junior	30	28.8
	Senior	42	40.4
Total	104	100.0	100.0

RQ 1: What are the Afghan EFL undergraduate learners' perspectives towards the attributes of effective EFL lecturer?

Table 3. Socio-affective skills

Effective EFL Lecturer:	Mean	SD
Encourages learners	6.13	1.196
Has a positive attitude in general	6.02	1.277
Understands the students educational background	5.94	1.087
Understands the different student levels	5.88	1.264
Is friendly	5.87	1.207
Listens to learners	5.87	1.270
Cares about students	5.82	1.413
Has a sense of humor	5.74	1.292
Develops interpersonal relationships with learners	5.73	1.345
Is patient	5.69	1.141
Shares personal life experiences	5.44	1.306
Has charisma	5.35	1.305

Table 3 presents the mean scores for the socio-affective skills. All of the items had mean scores between the ranges of five to six. The highest mean score is obtained for the item “Effective EFL lecturer encourages learners” with a mean score of 6.13 (SD=1.196). This is followed by “Effective EFL lecturer has a positive attitude in general” and “Effective EFL lecturer understands the students’ educational background” with mean scores of 6.02 (SD=1.277), 5.94 (SD=1.087) and 5.88 (SD=1.264) respectively. This indicates that the dominant items EFL learners perceived the most are effective EFL lecturers encourage learners, have positive attitude, understand the educational background of learners and understand the different student levels. Most importantly, nobody perceived any item negatively.

Table 4. Knowledge of content skills

Effective EFL Lecturer:	Mean	SD
Is well qualified for EFL lecturing	6.11	1.096
Has a good knowledge of vocabulary	5.98	1.238
Has a good knowledge of grammar	5.67	1.273
Has a good knowledge of English language culture	5.67	1.444

Table 4 illustrates the mean scores for the category of knowledge of content skills. All of the items had the mean scores between the range of five to six (slightly agree to agree), indicating that such characteristics are desired by EFL learners.

Table 5. Pedagogical knowledge

Effective EFL Lecturer:	Mean	SD
Gives clear explanations	6.26	.935
Encourages student participation in class	6.14	1.056
Uses a variety of teaching methods	6.14	1.127
Uses group work	6.11	1.096
Uses good examples	6.01	1.347
Integrates technology in teaching	5.69	1.408

Table 5 demonstrates the mean scores for the category of EFL lecturer’s pedagogical knowledge. All of the items indicate the degree of agreement for pedagogical qualities of effective EFL lecturers. This indicates that EFL learners consider pedagogical knowledge significant for EFL lecturers to be effective.

Table 6. Organization and preparation

Effective EFL Lecturers:	Mean	SD
Is well prepared for every lesson	6.01	1.227
Is enthusiastic about EFL teaching	5.87	1.002
Gives learners plenty of time for assignments/ tasks	5.86	1.310
Is disciplined and punctual in the class	5.70	1.467
Assesses learners fairly	5.64	1.358
Is using class time wisely	5.62	1.450
Returns papers with feedback on time	5.38	1.737

Table 6 shows the mean scores for all seven items indicating the degree of slightly agree. It is interesting to note that well preparation for every lesson was highly endorsed by EFL

learners. Overall, this designates that all of the items were perceived important for effective EFL lecturers.

RQ 2: Is there any significant difference between EFL learners' perspectives of an effective EFL lecturer?

Table 7. Independent sample t-test: effective EFL lecturer and gender

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig
Socio-Affective Skills	Male	79	2.18	.888	1.426	102	.157
	Female	25	1.88	.971			
Knowledge of Content	Male	79	1.97	.974	.246	102	.806
	Female	25	1.92	.954			
Pedagogical Knowledge	Male	79	2.14	.997	.634	102	.528
	Female	25	2.00	.816			
Organization and Preparation	Male	79	1.87	1.055	-.706	102	.482
	Female	25	2.04	.935			

Students' perspectives on the attributes of effective EFL lecturers were computed based on gender using independent sample t-test as indicated in Table 7. The results of the independent sample t-test indicate that there is no significant difference in attributes of effective lecturer between male and female in terms of socio-affective skills ($t(102) = 1.426, p=.157$, knowledge of content ($t(102) = .246, p=.806$, pedagogical knowledge ($t(102) = .634, p=.528$ and organization and preparation ($t(102) = -.706, p=.482$). This means that the four categories did not have any significance and learners share the views on the attributes that make an effective EFL lecturer. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Qualitative Analysis

Based on the data obtained from the respondents during interviews, the following themes were identified to confirm the data obtained from the questionnaire.

Table 8. Professional attributes of effective EFL lecturer

Questions	Theme	Respondents	Comments
Professional Attributes of EFL lecturer	Teaching Methods	3, 4 & 5	Use methods for various activities
	Enthusiastic	1, 2 & 3	Having sense of responsibility
	Expert in subject matter	1, 3	Having rich knowledge in subject
	Patient	1 & 2	Open to their learners
	Well-prepared	4	Preparing lessons based on new materials and technology
	Homework & Feedback	2	Knowing learners' weaknesses

Table 8 illustrates the mentioned themes by the respondents about the attributes of effective lecturer. Common theme perceived by them are teaching with deploying different methods and being enthusiastic about teaching profession. In addition to the same question, EFL learners also perceived that effective lecturers should be an expert in subject matter, submissive, and prepared well for lessons. In this regard, some responses are provided below.

Theme 1: Teaching Method

The first theme emerged from the data highlighted the perceptions of the respondents about the attributes of effective lecturer. When asked about these attributes, three respondents

provided similar responses that effective lecturers should employ various teaching methods for classroom activities as stated below.

"EFL lecturer has to use range of new teaching methods for a better output because every activity has its own purpose. Using different teaching methods during teaching, we would be able to attain our purpose." (Respondents 3, 4 & 5)

Theme 2: Enthusiastic

The second theme perceived from the interview is that effective lecturer has to be enthusiastic as stated below.

"The more enthusiastic lecturer is, the more effective it will be on students to turn the subject into an interesting subject. Lecturer cannot ask learners to learn the subject with hustle unless lecturer is not enthusiastic." (Respondents 1, 2 & 3)

Theme 3: Expert in Subject-Matter

The third theme perceived from interviews is that EFL lecturer has to have dominance over the subject he/she teaches and has to be knowledgeable as stated below.

"When there is effectiveness, there should be professionalism which means being expert in subject by any means and holding a degree in the subject so teachers will be able to teach and guide the students toward the goal and achieve objectives they have been seeking." (Respondents 1 & 3)

Theme 4: Patient

When asked the respondents about the qualities of effective lecturer, two of them agreed to have patience as stated below.

"Being patient is another attribute for an EFL lecturer to be owned by every EFL lecturer. An EFL lecturer unquestionably needs to deal with the students of different levels and have the ability to handle variety of situations in appropriate ways is extremely important." (Respondents 1 & 2)

Theme 5: Well-Prepared

One of the respondents mentioned that well preparation for every lesson is one of the key attributes of effective lecturer as stated below.

"In my point of view, well-prepared for the lessons and try to have new things and new material in class for the learners." (Respondent 4)

Theme 6: Homework and Feedback

The last theme emerged from the data is homework and providing feedback as key parts of daily activities.

"Without homework, teachers can't understand how much students improved on the other hand students are not assessed which means they can't find out about their mistakes and weaknesses in targeted subject." (Respondent 2)

Discussion

This study investigated the effective attributes of EFL lecturers as perceived by Kandahar University learners in English Department which confirmed those acknowledged in the literature. As per socio-affective skills are concerned, these learners identified effective EFL lecturer as one who encourages the learners and should have patience. For example, effective lecturer has to often praise them, provide approval and positive reinforcement and deal with unexpected situations during teaching. The study also found that effective lecturers should have positive attitude in general. This means that lecturers should be supportive and should create respectful atmosphere. These findings are in substantial agreement with those of Khojastehmehr and Takrimi (2009), Alzobiani (2020) and Dincer et al. who stated that effective lecturers should establish supportive, fair and encouraging environment and be flexible and patient. The study also revealed that EFL lecturers must have profound knowledge about the content or the subject being taught. Learners felt it is important to be knowledgeable

for achieving teaching and learning goals. As per the knowledge of content, effective lecturers as the main source of language available to learners with rich knowledge can assist learners to overcome the worries in communication (Shishavan & Sadeghi, 2009).

Moreover, the learners gave more weight to lecturer's clear explanation and encouraged learners' active participation in classroom activities. According to these learners, providing clear and precise explanations and involving learners actively in learning activities are crucial factors in characterizing an effective English language teacher. This is also confirmed by Suparman (2019) that effective language lecturer engages learners in communicative activities, monitors group activities, encourages participation, provides clear explanations, asking questions in the middle and by the end of each session. EFL learners also placed higher value on using a variety of teaching methods. An effective EFL lecturer, according to these learners, understands and uses a wide variety of teaching techniques. This finding is in line with Obeidat (2020) who found that effective language lecturer deploys diverse techniques and varying classroom instructional techniques. Also, this study discovered that there were no statistically significant differences between genders' perspectives on what makes an effective EFL lecturer. However, this finding does not match with the study by Ramazani (2014) who reported statistical significance in the qualities of EFL lecturers based on gender in favor of female learners.

Furthermore, the results from the quantitative and qualitative data revealed that well preparation for every lesson and being enthusiastic about EFL teaching are key characteristics of effective lecturer. The factor enthusiasm was given much consideration by EFL learners in a study conducted by (Sabbah, 2018), while well preparation was found less important by EFL learners (Basri, 2019). In addition, the responses from the respondents pointed out that effective lecturer is one who frequently assigns EFL learners homework and provides timely feedback. This finding is in accordance with the study carried out by Said (2017) who indicated that EFL lecturers should assess learners' existing performance and provide immediate feedback. For instance, feedback on accurate or inaccurate pronunciation, structure of a sentence, and word choice will help learners become more competent.

Conclusion

This study identified effective attributes EFL lecturer perceived by EFL learners at Kandahar University. The data for this particular research was collected quantitatively and qualitatively. The results revealed that encouraging learners and having positive attitude in general in socio-affective category, having enough expertise in content knowledge category, providing clear explanation and convincing learners' active participation in classroom activities, well preparation for lessons and being responsible and enthusiastic about the teaching profession were the strongly agreed and most important items. It is noteworthy to say that nobody perceived any undesirable or strongly disagreed item.

Limitations and Recommendations

In this study, limitations must be noted. First, although the sample had diverse educational levels, it was only limited to Kandahar University with a sample size of 104 and this could not be generalized to other public universities in Afghanistan. Second, the study did not include the perceptions of EFL lecturers about the attributes in the questionnaire.

Based on the limitations of this study, recommendations for future studies on the same topic are listed as below.

1. It is recommended to include population from other public universities so that the findings could be more generalizable to a larger sample size.
2. Further investigations are required to include EFL lecturers for comparing the perceptions.

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