



KEY ATTRIBUTES OF EFFECTIVE ENGLISH TEACHERS: HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENT PERSPECTIVES IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

The role of an English teacher in effective language teaching is crucial. Their behaviour, methodology, and relationship with students have a significant impact on their performance. This study examined the attributes of an effective English teacher from the perspective of higher secondary students in Pakistan. A mixed method approach was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data through a self-explanatory questionnaire. Simple random sampling was used to collect data from 100 students. Quantitative data were collected on 5 point Likert scale highlighting the personal qualities, the professional qualities and the pedagogical skills of English teachers. These qualities of effective English teachers were further extended by adding some more characteristics using qualitative data approach. In conclusion, this study provided an opportunity for teachers to check their self-suitability as “effective English teacher” as well as to recognize the students’ expectations about effective English teachers. Consequently, the study also provides a platform for teachers and researchers to understand and promote effective English teaching practices and encourages further research on the topic to fill the gap of relevant studies.

Keywords: *Effective English Teachers, English Language Teaching (ELT), Higher Secondary Education, Pakistan, Student Perspectives, Teacher Attributes*

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1. Introduction

English is rapidly becoming more important language used universally for communication. Especially after recent technological advancements and increased international mobility, English brought a large amount of people of different cultures and countries closer to each other (McKay, 2018; Rao, 2019). People are beginning to understand the importance of learning the English language other than their native language. Language learning in general, and English language learning in particular, is more important than ever. Therefore, new frameworks for understanding English as a global language have emerged, including English as a Lingua Franca (Imran et al., 2024). This reflect the inclusive nature of English usage in today's interconnected world.

Effective teaching and learning is a topic of concern to virtually everyone involved in the teaching and learning process (Anwar et al., 2021). Effective learning is largely dependent on effective teaching (Gilakjani, 2017). An effective method of teaching has been the ultimate goal of any language. For quality education, effective teaching is second to none. The factors that affect the effectiveness of the teaching process have always been the concern of every foreign language (Hartshorne et al., 2018; McKay, 2018). Excellent and proficient teachers are the most important components of any educational system and ensure quality learning. The research studies reinforce the idea that a good teacher and the actions he or she takes in the classroom have a vital role in motivating students to learn effectively and efficiently (Abramovich et al., 2019; Imran et al., 2024; Subakri, 2023). Good teachers also have an important role in students' academic performance and their teaching skills can greatly influence student learning outcomes (Bal-Taştan et al., 2018; Banerjee et al., 2017; Khan et al., 2017). While in general effective English teaching teachers may share some characteristics, there are also some teaching techniques that differentiate them, depending on the level they teach. It is more important to examine the learners' perceptions of learning and teaching (Awan & Shafi, 2016; Hidri et al., 2024).

The importance of English language teaching in Pakistan is strongly connected with the use of English in official communication, legal proceedings, business, technology, and competitive examinations for both national and international opportunities in education and employment (Mirza & Gottardo, 2023). Consequently, English language teaching has become a key focus within the education system and has been adopted as the medium of instruction in most public schools, extending from primary education to university levels (Jadoon et al., 2020; Manan et al., 2022). Despite its importance, English

teaching in Pakistan faces significant challenges, particularly in rural public schools (Gull et al., 2020). The quality English language education in Pakistan is limited public and private institutions, accessible to the children from privileged families (Manan, 2019). In contrast, students in rural areas often attend underfunded schools where teachers lack adequate qualifications, professional training, and exposure to modern English teaching methodologies and technologies (Gull et al., 2020; Manan, 2019).

The present study attempts to comprehensively investigate the students' perception and identify their views and beliefs of an effective English teachers in rural area of District Swabi, Khyber pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. This study was conducted with a research question that "What are the key attributes of effective English teachers according to the students of higher secondary level?" The objective of the current study was to identify the perception of students of higher secondary level about the personal qualities, professional qualities, and pedagogical skill of the English teachers.

2. Research Method

2.1. Research Design

To investigate the key attributes of effective English teachers based on students' perceptions, a convergent parallel mixed-methods design was employed to triangulate quantitative trends (closed-ended questions) with qualitative insights (open-ended responses), strengthening validity. This approach is particularly valuable to explore the key attributes of effective English teachers, as it combined the strengths of numerical data with the depth of contextual insights.

2.2. Population and Sample

The population of the current study were the high and higher secondary schools of District Swabi, KP-Pakistan. The study was conducted in rural area where educational institutions/schools are designated separately for male and female students. The researcher chose to focus on female high and higher secondary schools for data collection. This decision was influenced by cultural norms, as the researcher, being female, was more readily permitted to visit and gather data from female schools compared to male schools. Consequently, male schools were excluded from the selected population for this research. A total of five schools were randomly selected from each of the 4 Tehsils in the Swabi district, KP-Pakistan. In each selected school, questionnaires were administered to 5 randomly chosen students, resulting in a total sample size of 100 students.

2.3. Instruments

The researcher used a self-explanatory questionnaire adapted from the previous published study on the attributes of effective English teachers (Arikan et al., 2008). The questionnaire was having two parts (Part A and part B). Part A of the questionnaire contained quantitative trends (closed-ended questions) items/questions distributed among three main sections such as "Personal qualities", "Professional qualities", and

“Pedagogical skills” of effective English teachers (Table 1). Whereas, Part B of the questionnaire had two open ended questions for qualitative data collection (Table 2). To refine clarity, the questionnaire was piloted with 20 students. Some of the items/questions were removed to avoid redundancy. For instance, the item “gender” was removed from the personal qualities section of the questionnaire. Similarly, some items like “native speaker” and “has no foreign experience” were removed from the professional qualities section of the questionnaire. Likewise, some items like “makes learners discover language” and “teacher as the central authority in the classroom” were removed from the pedagogical skills section of the questionnaire.

Table 1. Close ended questions for quantitative data collection (Part A of the questionnaire).

S/No.	Close Ended Questions
1	Personal Qualities Humorous, Experienced, Young, Enthusiastic, Fair, Strict, Caring, Creative, Friendly.
2	Professional Qualities Fluent in English, gives regular homework, take care of attendance, takes regular tests or quizzes, uses play way method of teaching, Has foreign Experience, Do both Formal and informal teaching of English, Adopt group activities.
3	Pedagogical Skills Use real life situations for explaining Language, Effectively managing classroom, Make the students feel relax in the classroom, Have a correct pronunciation, Effectively teaches Grammar, Talk more than Listen, Listen more than talk, Let students to correct the work of each other, Use visual materials and technology in the classroom.

Table 2. Open ended questions for qualitative data collection (Part B of the questionnaire).

S/No.	Open Ended Questions
1	What are the Qualities of an effective English teaching teacher other than described in part A?
2	What do you think about the features that an English teaching teacher should not possess?

2.4. Data Analysis

2.4.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data were collected using 5 point Likert scale. The coding used for Likert scale were: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4). The

range and interval for 5 point Likert scale was calculated as; range: $5-1 = 4$, interval: $4 \div 5 = 0.80$. This was used to set up a scale for the overall response for the data collected on 5 point Likert scale for each question. The set up scale for each question was; Strongly Disagree (1.00 to 1.79), Disagree (1.80 to 2.53), Neutral (2.60 to 3.39), Agree (3.4 to 4.19), Strongly Agree (4.2 to 5). Consequently, to scale up each question according to the set up scale, a weighted mean for each question was calculated using MS Excel 2013. The weighted mean was calculated by dividing the sum of all responses on Likert scale (multiplied with its respective coding) by the total number of responses for each question. The weighted mean was utilized instead of a simple mean to account for the skewness in the response distribution. By incorporating weights, the underlying trends and variations within the dataset were better captured, leading to more meaningful results. The overall response was regarded to each question by comparing the weighted mean with the set up scale as Strongly Disagree (1.00 to 1.79), Disagree (1.80 to 2.53), Neutral (2.60 to 3.39), Agree (3.4 to 4.19), Strongly Agree (4.2 to 5). To evaluate the reliability of the measurement scales used in the study, a pilot test was conducted on 20 students. Cronbach's α (0.82) was calculated for all the qualities of English teacher.

2.4.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

Subsequently, the qualitative data were analyzed via thematic analysis. The main themes were highlighted from the responses of the respondents and the relevant responses were grouped together to draw a framework of different perceptions of students. The mind maps were created for better visualization of the collected data. Dillinger software (<https://dillinger.io/>) was used to create coding in Markdown computer language format, for the main points/ideas extracted from the respondents. The Markdown file exported from Dillinger software was then visualized with xmind software (<https://xmind.app/>).

2.5. Research Findings and Discussion

2.5.1. Research Findings

2.5.1.1. Quantitative data Analysis and Findings

The quantitative data collected from total of 100 students was classified to personal qualities (PQ1 to PQ9), professional qualities (PfQ1 to PfQ8), and pedagogical skills (PS1 to PS9) of the teachers involved in the English teaching. The main results were presented as below.

2.5.1.2. Perception of Students about the Personal Qualities of English teaching teachers

The results of the personal qualities (PQ1 to PQ9) of the English teaching teachers were presented in Table 3. The overall response PQ1 was strongly agree. Similarly the overall response for PQ2, PQ3, PQ4, PQ5, PQ7, PQ8, and PQ9 was agree. Whereas, the overall response for PQ6 was neutral. This showed that the students were agreed that the English teaching teacher should be experienced, young, enthusiastic, fair, strict, caring,

creative, and friendly. While the students neither fully agreed nor disagreed with the statement that the English teaching teacher should be humorous.

Table 3. The percentage of the students' responses on 5 point Likert scale, weighted mean, and overall response based on the comparison of weighted mean with the set up scale, about personal qualities of English teaching teachers.

Personal Qualities	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Total	Weighted Mean	Overall Response
PQ1: Experienced	79	18	1	2	0	100	4.74	Strongly Agree
PQ2: Young	15	33	38	13	1	100	3.48	Agree
PQ3: Enthusiastic	37	49	10	2	2	100	4.17	Agree
PQ4: Fair	26	46	18	9	1	100	3.87	Agree
PQ5: Strict	24	41	23	11	1	100	3.76	Agree
PQ6: Humorous	13	21	25	38	3	100	3.03	Neutral
PQ7: Caring	42	34	17	7	0	100	4.11	Agree
PQ8: Creative	18	41	28	12	1	100	3.63	Agree
PQ9: Friendly	20	35	20	23	2	100	3.48	Agree

Scale used: Strongly Disagree (1.00 to 1.79), Disagree (1.80 to 2.53), Neutral (2.60 to 3.39), Agree (3.4 to 4.19), Strongly Agree (4.2 to 5)

2.6. Perception of Students about the Professional Qualities of English teaching teachers

The results of the professional qualities (PfQ1 to PfQ8) of the English teaching teachers were presented in Table 4. The overall response PfQ1 was strongly agree. Similarly the overall response for PfQ2, PfQ3, PfQ4, PfQ7, and PfQ8 was agree. Whereas, the overall response for PfQ5 and PfQ6 was neutral. This showed that the students were agreed that the English teaching teacher should be fluent in English, give regular homework, take care of attendance, take regular tests or quizzes in the class, do both formal

and informal teaching of English, and adopt group activities. While the students neither fully agreed nor disagreed with the statement that the English teaching teacher should use play way method of teaching and have foreign Experience.

Table 4. The percentage of the students' responses on 5 point Likert scale, weighted mean, and overall response based on the comparison of weighted mean with the set up scale, about professional qualities of English teaching teachers.

Professional Qualities	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Total	Weighted Mean	Overall Response
PfQ1: Fluent in English	85	6	4	5	0	100	4.71	Strongly Agree
PfQ2: Gives regular homework	34	47	12	7	0	100	4.08	Agree
PfQ3: Takes regular tests or quizzes	33	42	14	6	5	100	3.92	Agree
PfQ4: Take care of attendance	26	33	31	8	2	100	3.73	Agree
PfQ5: Uses play way method of teaching	16	22	23	39	0	100	3.15	Neutral
PfQ6: Has foreign Experience	8	9	46	9	8	100	2.80	Neutral
PfQ7: Do both Formal and informal teaching of English	18	64	17	1	0	100	3.99	Agree
PfQ8: Adopt group activities	15	28	30	24	3	100	3.28	Agree

Scale used: Strongly Disagree (1.00 to 1.79), Disagree (1.80 to 2.53), Neutral (2.60 to 3.39), Agree (3.4 to 4.19), Strongly Agree (4.2 to 5)

2.7. Perception of Students about the Pedagogical Skills of English teaching teachers

The results of the pedagogical skills (PS1 to PS9) of the English teaching teachers were presented in Table 5. The overall response PS1, PS3, PS7, and PS8 was agree. Similarly the overall response for PS2, PS4, and PS5 was strongly agree. Whereas, the overall response for PS6 was disagree while for PS9 was neutral. This showed that the students were agreed that the English teaching teacher should use real life situations for explaining Language, effectively manage the classroom, make the students feel relaxed in the classroom, have a correct pronunciation, effectively teach grammar, listen more than talk, and let students to correct the work of each other. While the students neither fully agreed nor disagreed with the statement that the English teaching teacher should use visual materials and technology in the classroom. Whereas the students dis agreed with the statement that the English teaching teacher should talk more than Listen.

Table 5. The frequencies and percent of the students' response on Likert scale about pedagogical skills of English teaching teachers.

Pedagogical Skills	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Total	Weighted Mean	Overall Response
PS1: Use real life situations for explaining Language	35	37	10	18	0	100	3.89	Agree
PS2: Effectively managing classroom	36	52	10	2	0	100	4.22	Strongly Agree
PS3: Make the students feel relax in the classroom	31	57	9	3	0	100	4.16	Agree
PS4: Have a correct pronunciation	72	22	3	3	0	100	4.63	Strongly Agree
PS5: Effectively	68	24	4	4	0	100	4.56	Strongly Agree

teaches Grammar								
PS6: Talk more than Listen	15	14	21	15	35	100	2.59	Disagree
PS7: Listen more than talk	25	44	21	6	4	100	3.8	Agree
PS8: Let students to correct the work of each other	31	55	11	1	2	100	4.12	Agree
PS9: Use visual materials and technology in the classroom	12	26	37	21	4	100	3.21	Neutral

Scale used: Strongly Disagree (1.00 to 1.79), Disagree (1.80 to 2.53), Neutral (2.60 to 3.39), Agree (3.4 to 4.19), Strongly Agree (4.2 to 5)

2.8. Qualitative data Analysis and Findings

The qualitative data collected from total of 100 students for two open ended questions was analysed by highlighting the main points of students' responses and the relevant responses were grouped together to draw a framework of different perceptions of students. In response to question 1 regarding the attributes of an effective English teaching teacher, beyond the quantitative data provided, six key qualities were identified (Figure 1). Students emphasized the importance of a teacher possessing a strong command of the English language. They expressed a desire for educators who are open to innovation and willing to incorporate modern technology into their teaching practices. Additionally, students preferred a friendly teacher over an authoritative one. They also highlighted the significance of being motivating, attentive to students' needs, and skilled in classroom management. Consequently, in response to question 2, which inquired about the attributes that an English teaching teacher should avoid, three primary concerns were raised by the students. They indicated that English teaching teachers should not exhibit anger or strictness towards their students, should refrain from discriminating between students, and should not possess insufficient knowledge of the English language (Figure 2).



Figure 1. Mind map for the qualities of an effective English teaching teacher other than described in quantitative data based on open ended question 1.



Figure 2. Mind map for the qualities that an effective English teaching teacher should not possess, based on open ended question 2.

3. Discussion

This study investigated the effective attributes of English teaching teachers as perceived by the students of higher secondary level. To summarise the most prominent findings, the effective English teaching teacher seems to be linked to a more learner-centred approach to English language teaching and learning, which implies a different role for the English teaching teacher.

The responses of students about the personal qualities of English teaching teachers, sub divided into nine sub division that are, humorous, experienced, young, enthusiastic, fair, strict, caring, creative, and friendly, were recorded separately on Likert Scale. Correspondingly, the overall mean values of the personal qualities of the English teaching teacher represent that the maximum mean value, of students and teachers was found for the statement “strongly agree” and “agree” as compared to the statements “neutral”, “disagree”, and “strongly disagree”. These results collectively revealed that the students believed that in view of the personal qualities of the English teaching teacher, the teacher should have all the stated personal qualities. These results are greatly related with the previous studies (Cremin, 2022; Malikovna et al., 2022; Nunan, 2016; Pennington & Richards, 2016).

Similarly, the responses of students about the professional qualities of English teaching teachers, sub divided into eight sub division that are, to be fluent in English, gives regular homework, takes regular tests or quizzes, take care of attendance, uses play way method of teaching, has foreign experience, do both Formal and informal teaching of

English, and adopt group activities, were recorded separately on Likert Scale. Correspondingly, the overall mean values of the professional qualities of the English teaching teacher represent that the maximum mean value, of students and teachers was found for the statement “strongly agree” and “agree” as compared to the statements “neutral”, “disagree”, and “strongly disagree”. These results collectively revealed that the students believed that in view of the professional qualities of the English teaching teacher, the teacher should have all the stated professional qualities. These results are strongly supported by the previous literatures (Cremin, 2022; König et al., 2016; Pennington & Richards, 2016; Richards, 2017).

Likewise, the responses of students about the pedagogical skills of English teaching teachers, sub divided into nine sub division that are, use real life situations for explaining Language, effectively managing classroom, make the students feel relax in the classroom, have a correct pronunciation, effectively teaches grammar, talk more than listen, listen more than talk, let students to correct the work of each other, use visual materials and technology in the classroom, were recorded separately on Likert Scale. Correspondingly, the overall mean values of the professional qualities of the English teaching teacher represent that the maximum mean value, of students was found for the statement “strongly agree” and “agree” as compared to the statements “not sure”, “disagree”, and “strongly disagree”. These results collectively revealed that both the students and teachers believed that in view of the pedagogical skills of the English teaching teacher, the teacher should use all the stated pedagogical skills in the class except the professional skill “talk more than listen”. These results are supported by the previous studies (Baser et al., 2016; König et al., 2016; Rao, 2019; Richards, 2017; Rose et al., 2021).

According to the participants in this study, an effective English teaching teacher is no longer seen as one who plays a directive and authoritarian role in the learning process. Instead, an effective English teaching teacher is one who takes into account the individual differences, language anxieties, abilities and interests of his or her learners and designs learning environments accordingly (Dunn, 2017; Gilakjani, 2017; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017; Shuell, 2021). The ability of the English teaching teacher to engage the learners in meaningful interactions in the classroom and to involve them in group tasks based on real-life topics and authentic use of the language was also highlighted (McKay, 2018). In the view of the respondents, English teaching teachers need to move beyond the traditional focus on form in language teaching, which sees language learning as an individual activity, to adopt the communicative approach to language teaching, which recognises the social aspect of learning, and as such is dependent on meaningful interactions with peers (Hartshorne et al., 2018; Ismagulova, 2023; Subakri, 2023).

4. Conclusion

This study aimed to unlock the attributes of an effective English teaching teacher based on students' perspectives at higher secondary level. The quantitative data concluded that based on the personal qualities, the English teaching teacher should have to be experienced, young, enthusiastic, fair, strict, caring, creative, and friendly. Similarly, based on the professional qualities, the English teaching teacher should have to be fluent in English, give regular homework, take care of attendance, take regular tests or quizzes in the class, do both formal and informal teaching of English, and adopt group activities. Likewise, based on the pedagogical skills, the English teaching teacher should use real life situations for explaining Language, effectively manage the classroom, make the students feel relaxed in the classroom, have a correct pronunciation, effectively teach grammar, listen more than talk, and let students to correct the work of each other. Subsequently, the qualitative data concluded that English teaching teacher should possess a strong command over the English language, open to innovation, willing to incorporate modern technology in the class, should not exhibit anger or strictness towards their students, and should refrain from discriminating between students.

4.1. Limitations and Future Research direction

The current study addressed a topic that is unique and not fully explored. This study provided insights that are may be limited to particular schools as this data id collected solely from the females' schools. For future study, the findings could have benefited from a broader scope incorporating more schools from the same educational group across major cities worldwide. Furthermore, male students and teachers should also be included in future studies.

4.2. Acknowledgement

The author expresses gratitude to all the teaching faculty in the Department of Education, Abasyn University in Peshawar, Pakistan for providing the opportunity to conduct this research and fulfil the requirements for the Master's degree in Education. Their guidance and support were invaluable throughout the research process.

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