THE FEATURES OF EFFECTIVE ENGLISH TEACHERS AS VIEWED BY ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SAUDI ARABIA

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ABSTRACT: *This paper aimed to study the features of effective English teachers as viewed by English language teachers and high school students in Saudi Arabia. The study consists of 17 English language teachers and 17 secondary school students, all from Saudi Arabia. The study depended on the descriptive approach to evaluate English teachers language proficiency, pedagogical knowledge and socio-affective features. The results asserts that the teachers advocated socio-affective skills, English proficiency, and pedagogical knowledge in order of importance, whereas the students advocated English proficiency, socio-affective skills, and pedagogical knowledge. The results show that the features of effective English teachers within the language proficiency are reading, writing and comprehension proficiency. For pedagogical knowledge, the research indicates the significant of preparing the lesson and using various teaching aids. Finally, the socio-affective features of English language effective teachers are "listening to the students" and "to be fair with all students".*

KEYWORDS: English Teachers, Language, Student, High School, Saudi Arabia

INTRODUCTION

Many researchers have conducted their own studies as a trial to identify *the features of effective teachers* both inside (Bernhardt & Hammadou, 1987; Lafayette, 1993; Mollica & Nuessel, 1996; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Schulz, 2000; Vélez-Rendón, 2002) and outside (Demmon-Berger, 1986; Lowman, 1996; Witcher et al., 2001; Koutsoulis, 2003) the field of foreign language education. These features primerly depends on a number of components including subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and socio-affective skills.

Some features of effective teachers are universal, but others are field-specific. Bearing in mind the distinctiveness of foreign language education in terms of subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and socio-affective skills, the features of effective foreign language teachers need to be inspected in depth and this is the purpose of this brief study.

The Significance of study

Investigating the features of EFLT as viewed by teachers and students is beneficial to teachers and students as well as researchers. For teachers, they can check the appropriateness of theirs and their colleagues' beliefs regarding foreign language teaching and learning based on current research. In addition, teachers can understand what their students expect from them and develop their pedagogical techniques through reflection on teaching, which will in turn enhance the complex process of teaching and learning. For students, they can understand their teachers' beliefs and change their erroneous beliefs about foreign language teaching and learning. This

study seeks to promote the research into effective teacher features in Saudi Arabia and it is hoped that it will encourage researchers to explore new research avenues.

The Purpose and the questions of the study

The purposes of this study were to outline the features of effective English teachers (EET) in terms of subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and socio-affective skills, to compare the features of EET viewed by many teachers and students, and to stimulate further discussion of the topic both in and outside of Saudi Arabia. For these purposes, the following research questions were addressed to guide this study:

1. What are the features of EET as viewed by English teachers and students in Saudi Arabia?

2. Are the features of EET as viewed by the English teachers different from those viewed by the students?

Procedure

Participants

The participants constitute two different groups. The first group consisted of 17 teachers teaching English in Saudi Arabia. The second group consists of 17 high school students learning English in Saudi Arabia.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to the research goals and the hypothesis, the appropriate methodology for this study is using descriptive research method.

Research Instrument

An electronic questionnaire consists of three categories: English Proficiency, Pedagogical knowledge, and Socio-Affective Skills.

Research Instrument's Validity and Reliability

To check the instrument's validity, five arbitrators judged the questionnaire to determine the final form which consist of twenty-four questions that are equally divided into three main categories. On the other hand, to investigate the reliability, the researchers applied the questionnaire on five English language teachers and five students and retested them again. Then, the researchers used Person's Correlation Test as shown in Table 1.1:

Table 1.1 Instrument's Validity and Reliability

Validity	Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha Value)
0.84	0.78

Data Collection and Analysis

Free-online electronic questionnaire building website is used to collect the data through asking the participants to fill it in. SPSS Program is used to analyze the collected data. Table 1.2 indicates the samples:

Table 1.2 The Study's Samples

Group	Number
English Language Teachers	17
Secondary School Students	17

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher effectiveness has been an ongoing topic of interest among educational researchers for many years, with considerable focus given to the specific traits and behaviors that are believed to constitute effective teaching.

Archer (2004) conducted a study on characteristics of an effective teacher of reading in an elementary school setting. The purpose of her study is to determine the characteristics of an effective teacher of reading in an elementary classroom setting. The study was conducted in a public and a private sector school in a capital city in the southern United States. Two principals, two second grade teachers, and two fourth grade teachers were participants in this study. A qualitative research focus provided the methodological basis for this study. All six participants were interviewed, and a tape recorder was used to record each teacher's verbal language communicative patterns. Results indicated that although different strategies and approaches were used among the principals and teachers, the same elements and philosophies were required to effectively teach reading in an elementary school classroom, whether it be a public or private sector school.

Rockoff (2011) conducted a study on how to recognize an Effective Teacher. He administered an in-depth survey to new math teachers in New York City and collected information on a number of nontraditional predictors of effectiveness, including teaching-specific content knowledge, cognitive ability, personality traits, feelings of self-efficacy, and scores on a commercially available teacher selection instrument. He found that only a few of these predictors have statistically significant relationships with student and teacher outcomes.

Another study was conducted by Henry (2014). The purpose of the work was to investigate teacher preparation policies and their effects on student achievement. In his paper he assesses how policy choices affect student achievement, specifically comparing traditionally prepared with alternative-entry teachers; in-state traditionally prepared with out-of-state traditionally prepared teachers; teachers beginning with undergraduate degrees with those beginning with graduate degrees; and teachers prepared at in-state public universities with those prepared at in-state private universities. Using school fixed effects to analyze data from North Carolina, he finds that: Teach For America corps members are more effective than traditionally prepared teachers; other alternative-entry teachers are less effective than traditionally prepared instructors in high school mathematics and science courses; and out-of-state traditionally prepared teachers are less effective than in-state traditionally prepared teachers, especially in elementary subjects where they constitute nearly 40 percent of the workforce.

Liu & Gao (2013) conducted a study to explore personality traits of effective teachers represented in the narratives of American and Chinese preservice teachers. They collected Narrative data from 80 American and 75 Chinese teacher candidates. Coding and content analysis of the data generated twelve salient personality traits of effective teachers in America and China, including adaptability, enthusiasm, fairness, high expectations, good humor, patience, responsibility, agreeableness, caring, friendliness, honesty, and respectfulness. This study focused on the lived experiences of preservice teachers. The study result revealed that American preservice teachers attached greater importance to teachers' adaptability, sense of humor, and responsibility while the Chinese attached greater importance to teachers' patience, agreeableness, caring, and friendliness. Cross-culturally, females show greater concern than males about teacher expectations, while within each culture, American females are more concerned than males about teacher honesty, and Chinese females are more concerned than males about teacher adaptability and respectfulness.

Çelik (2013) conducted his research on the qualities of successful teachers in Turkey indicates that students consider teacher effectiveness as the ability to ensure an environment in which positive student-teacher interaction can take place. About 998 undergraduate students at a state university in Turkey were asked to complete a survey concerning the qualities they believed are characteristic of a successful English language teacher. The results provide a detailed profile of university English as foreign language (EFL) students' perceptions with respect to pedagogy-specific knowledge, personality traits, professional skills and classroom behavior.
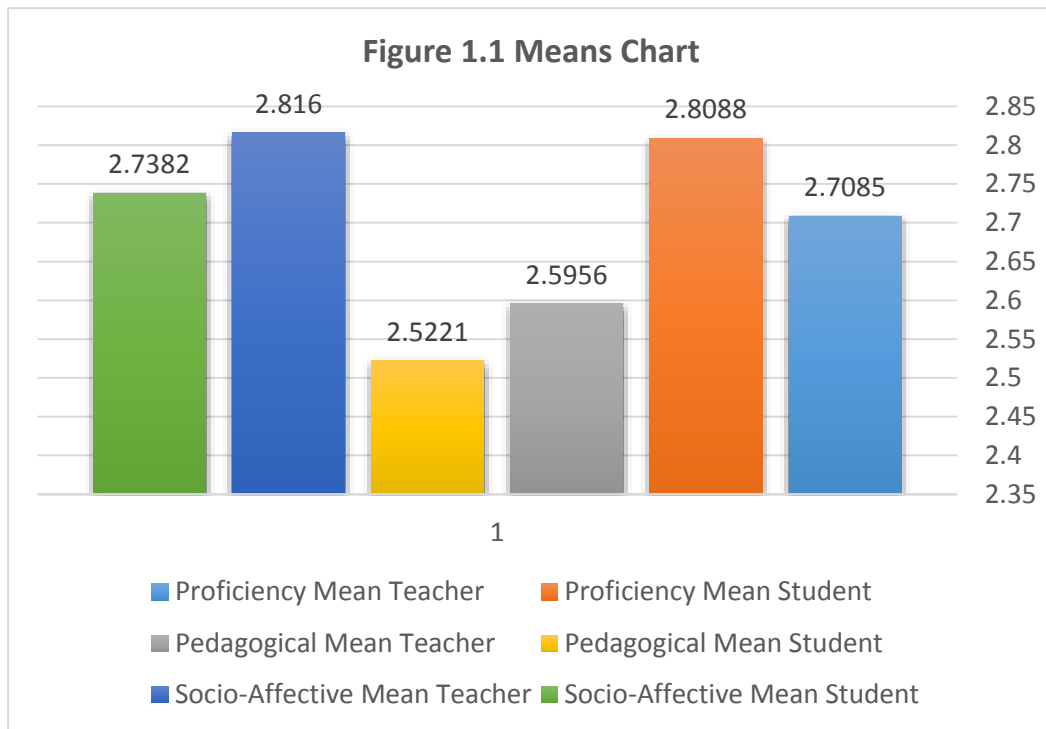
Taking the most prominent qualities noted by the participants into account, the profile of an effective foreign language teacher can be established as one who:

1. exhibits fairness in decision-making.
2. is successful in reducing students' anxiety.
3. demonstrates enthusiasm.
4. teaches pronunciation well.
5. teaches speaking skills adequately.
6. has a sound knowledge of vocabulary.
7. teaches reading skills adequately.
8. has a sound knowledge of grammar.
9. is adept at providing explanations in Turkish (mother tongue).
10. is good at classroom management.
11. teaches writing skills adequately.

FINDINGS

The researchers use SPSS to analyze the data according to the means and frequencies. The findings of this study were described with the focus on group comparisons of effective teacher characteristics contributing to students' learning between and within the three categories: English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, and socio-affective skills. It is worth mentioning that any conclusions made in these findings should be interpreted with caution because the data were collected at one point in time in Saudi Arabia.

Between Categories

Figure 1.1 Means Chart

For the analyses between categories, the mean scores for the three categories were computed to find the relative importance of the categories, as seen in Table 1.3. Interestingly, the teachers advocated socio-affective skills, English proficiency, and pedagogical knowledge in order of importance, whereas the students advocated English proficiency, socio-affective skills, and pedagogical knowledge. The result further shows that the endorsement level between the teachers and the students was significantly different from each other.

Table 1.3 Group Statistics

	Occupation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Order
Proficiency Mean	Teacher	17	2.7085	.27394	4
	Student	17	2.8088	.22586	2
Pedagogical Mean	Teacher	17	2.5956	.38913	5
	Student	17	2.5221	.45765	6
Socio-Affective Mean	Teacher	17	2.8160	.22504	1
	Student	17	2.7382	.32174	3

Figure 1.1 shows that the pedagogical knowledge is less significant according to the two groups (teachers and students). This stupefied the researchers because pedagogy knowledge is an essential aspect of teaching.

The finding that teachers and students held different beliefs about effective teaching is supported by previous studies (Park & Lee, 2006). The teachers' higher endorsement of socio-affective traits over English proficiency might be due to the shifting beliefs among Saudi society that good socio-affective traits is an essential step toward English proficiency that made it possible to conduct their lessons in real life situation without inhibitions.

Within Category: English Proficiency

The mean scores for the items in English proficiency were computed to investigate the relative importance of the items perceived by each group, as seen in Table 1.4. In the comparison between the teachers and the students, both groups responded to reading, writing and comprehension proficiency most highly out of the eight items. The largest difference between the two groups was found in English vocabulary, speaking and cross-culture proficiency where the teachers advocated having high vocabulary supplement and the students advocated ability of reading. However, the students and teachers' endorsement of pronunciation proficiency was surprising because it is one of the highest emphasized areas of proficiency in teaching foreign languages. The reason for this perception might be due to the students' English learning experiences and ill-founded beliefs about language learning (Park & Lee, 2006).

Table 1.4 Means and Deviations of English Proficiency

	Occupation	Mean	Std. Deviation
understand spoken English well.	Teacher	2.9412	.24254
	Student	2.7647	.56230
know English culture well.	Teacher	2.4118	.71229
	Student	2.7059	.68599
read English well.	Teacher	2.8824	.48507
	Student	3.0000	.00000
have a high level of proficiency with English vocabulary.	Teacher	2.4912	.67644
	Student	2.9412	.24254
write English well.	Teacher	2.8235	.39295
	Student	2.8824	.48507
pronounce English well.	Teacher	2.5882	.61835
	Student	2.5294	.79982
speak English well.	Teacher	2.6471	.78591
	Student	2.9412	.24254
Be fully conversant with English grammar.	Teacher	2.8824	.33211
	Student	2.7059	.46967

Within Category: Pedagogical Knowledge

The pedagogical knowledge's scores were analyzed to spotlight the significance outputs of the data perceived for each group, as seen in Table 1.5. The table shows the two groups responses to preparing the lesson and various teaching aids as the highest scores. The results shows that the participants do not give significance to using the target language as a media of teaching nor using a variety of teaching methodologies.

Table 1.5 Means and Deviations of Pedagogical Knowledge

	Occupation	Mean	Std. Deviation
prepare the lesson well.	Teacher	2.6471	.70189
	Student	2.7647	.56230
teach how to learn English outside the classroom (ex. watching the EBS programs)	Teacher	2.5882	.79521
	Student	2.2941	.91956
use various materials including video, audio, and multimedia.	Teacher	2.7647	.56230
	Student	2.8235	.52859
teach English tailored to students' English proficiency levels.	Teacher	2.6471	.60634
	Student	2.2941	.91956
maintain good classroom atmosphere using authority, if necessary.	Teacher	2.5294	.79982
	Student	2.7059	.68599
teach English in English.	Teacher	2.5294	.79982
	Student	2.2941	.91956
assess what students have learned rationally.	Teacher	2.5294	.79982
	Student	2.7059	.68599
teach English incorporating student's various learning styles (ex. introversive and extroversive learning styles).	Teacher	2.5294	.79982
	Student	2.2941	.91956

Within Category: Socio-affective Skills

Table 1.6, below, shows. The table shows the similarities and the differences opinions among the participants' category (teachers and students) in the case of personal traits of effective teachers. Both groups score listening to the students and fairness higher than other socio-affective skills. In contrast, they score kindness (be friendly) as the lowest trait of effective English language teachers.

Table 1.6 Means and Deviations of Socio-affective Skills

	Occupation	Mean	Std. Deviation
be helpful to students in and outside the classroom.	Teacher	2.7647	.56230
	Student	2.7647	.66421
alleviate students' anxiety in English class.	Teacher	2.8235	.39295
	Student	2.7059	.68599
listen to student's opinions.	Teacher	2.8388	.47342
	Student	2.8235	.39295
help students' self-confidence in learning English well.	Teacher	2.8959	.42929
	Student	2.7059	.58787
be friendly to students.	Teacher	2.7059	.58787
	Student	2.6700	.64908
have a good sense of humor.	Teacher	2.7647	.56230
	Student	2.7059	.68599
not discriminate between students and treat them fairly.	Teacher	2.8388	.47342
	Student	2.8235	.39295
arouse students' motivation for learning English.	Teacher	2.8959	.42929
	Student	2.7059	.58787

To answer the second question of this study which hypothesize there is no significant differences between the two groups (teachers and students) in their opinions toward the characteristics of effective English language teacher, the researchers used Independent-samples T test of means and standard deviations.

Table 1.7 Independent-samples T test of means and standard deviations

	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean	Std. Deviation	T
Proficiency Mean		0.252	2.76	0.25	1.66
Pedagogical Mean	32	0.617	2.56	0.42	0.505
Socio-Affective Mean		0.420	2.78	0.28	0.818

Table 1.6 shows that the significates of all categories are higher than (0.025), so that, we accept the null hypotheses which says that there are no significant differences between the two groups in their views toward the characteristics of effective English language teachers.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study investigated the characteristics of effective English teachers as perceived by English language teachers and secondary students through a self-report questionnaire composed of three categories of effective teaching: English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, and socio-affective skills. In general. The results presents that the teachers advocated socio-affective skills, English proficiency, and pedagogical knowledge in order of importance, while the students advocated English proficiency, socio-affective skills, and pedagogical knowledge. The results show that the features of effective English teachers within the language proficiency are reading, writing and comprehension proficiency. In respect of pedagogical knowledge, the research points to the importance of preparing the lesson and using a variety of teaching aids. The results declared other issues such as, The teachers' higher endorsement of socio-affective traits over English proficiency might be due to the shifting beliefs among Saudi society that good socio-affective traits is an essential step toward English proficiency that made it possible to conduct their lessons in real life situation without inhibitions. In the comparison between the teachers and the students, both groups responded to reading, writing and comprehension proficiency most highly out of the eight items. The most considerable difference between the two groups was found in English vocabulary, speaking and cross-culture proficiency where the teachers advocated having high vocabulary supplement and the students' advocated ability of reading. Related to pedagogical knowledge's the results exposed that the participants do not give significance to using the target language as a media of teaching nor using a variety of teaching methodologies. The two groups score listening to the students and fairness higher than other socio-affective skills. In the other hand, they score kindness as the lowest trait of effective English language teachers. The study indicates that there are no significant differences between teachers and students in their views to the characteristics of effective English language teachers.

The quantitative findings of this study should be replicated by other participants across academic levels and investigated further throughout in-depth qualitative analysis. Second, the essential reasons for different perceptions regarding effective English teachers held by different groups should be investigated. Third, the relationship between students' perceptions concerning effective English teachers and their accomplishment needs additional exploration.

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