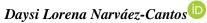# The effective English language teacher from the perspective of Ecuadorian university students

El profesor efectivo de idioma inglés desde la perspectiva de estudiantes universitarios ecuatorianos

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ABSTRACT

Studying EFL teacher effectiveness has been a constant issue in the last decade. These investigations focused on teachers' and education administrators' perceptions. Most of them were conducted in countries different from Latin America. This research aimed to create a profile of university students' perceptions concerning the qualities of an effective EFL teacher. For doing so, a quantitative approach was used involving the application of the Effective English Language Teacher (EELT) questionnaire of Roya Zamani & Ahangari (2016) to learners from a public university (N=324). The findings revealed that the participants value pedagogical knowledge as the most relevant dimension of an effective EFL university teacher above organization and communication skills, socio-affective skills, and English proficiency. According to the surveyed student population, the three main relevant features of an effective EFL university teacher are *being flexible with grading* (1.70), *having a good sense of humor* (1.65), and *avoiding direct criticism of students when they make errors* (1.61). The article concludes by outlining some recommendations.

Keywords: Effective teaching, EFL teachers, teacher characteristics, teacher competencies, teacher effectiveness.

RESUMEN

El estudio de la eficacia del docente de inglés como lengua extranjera ha sido un tema constante en la última década. Estas investigaciones se han centrado en las percepciones de los docentes y administradores de la educación. La mayoría de ellos se realizaron en países diferentes a América Latina. Esta investigación tuvo como objetivo crear un perfil de las percepciones de los estudiantes universitarios sobre las cualidades de un profesor efectivo de inglés como lengua extranjera. Para ello, se utilizó un enfoque cuantitativo que involucró la aplicación del cuestionario para profesores de inglés efectivos (EELT) de Roya Zamani & Ahangari (2016) a estudiantes de una universidad pública (N=324). Los hallazgos revelaron que los participantes valoran el conocimiento pedagógico como la dimensión más relevante de un docente universitario EFL eficaz por encima de las habilidades de organización y comunicación, las habilidades socioafectivas y el dominio del inglés. De acuerdo con la población estudiantil encuestada, las tres principales características relevantes de un docente universitario de inglés como lengua extranjera eficaz son ´ser flexible con las calificaciones´ (1.70), 'tener buen sentido del humor´ (1.65) y ´evitar las críticas directas a los estudiantes cuando cometen errores´ (1.61). El artículo concluye esbozando algunas recomendaciones.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza eficaz, docentes de inglés, características docentes, competencias docentes, eficacia docente.

1. INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of EFL language teachers has been an ongoing interest among educational researchers for many years. In this process, attention has been paid to the characteristics related to the pedagogical knowledge of the language and its personality, or only the former aspect (Archanjo *et al*., 2019). Therefore, universities, in Latin-American countries, have struggled to identify or establish

the qualities of an effective EFL teacher, including other dimensions, to have a broad spectrum of this profile.

Experts and researchers have worked on different investigations to afford valuable information to literature and the university community concerning the effective professor profile. This contribution has been primarily valuable over the last two decades; nevertheless, it has been mostly related to university professors in other academic fields and not necessarily focused on the university EFL teacher. This crowd should be considered

since it plays an imperative and transversal role in the tertiary level system.

The revision of this field started decades ago, and in those studies, the objective was to determine the personal characteristics of good English teachers. These features could be seen in the study conducted by Allen (1980). Later, Brosh (1996) introduced the idea of 'successful professors' and extra features related to his personality. In the last decade, investigations were addressed to understand undergraduate students' perceptions. For instance, Martínez (2011) conducted a study in which the features of "the best professor of a foreign language" were established. The author also wanted to establish a profile of this foreign language professor. The findings show that the physical qualities of the teacher are scarcely crucial in terms of motivational stimulation. At the same time, certain aspects of teaching skills and scientific preparation receive a positive assessment, generating a prominent level of motivation among students. Likewise, the emotional significance of the teacher's personality in terms of behaviour and attitude towards students has been demonstrated (Martínez, 2011).

Among the relevant authors in this line of research we can mention Roya Zamani & Ahangari (2016). They worked on the definition of this effective EFL teacher profile. The findings of their work showed that students considered an excellent English teacher someone who demonstrates the ability to develop proper relationships with students and knows pedagogical knowledge (Roya Zamani & Ahangari, 2016). Finally, Metruk (2021) contributed to the literature with an interesting study in which the author wanted to investigate the differences between male and female EFL (English as a foreign language) students' perceptions of effective language teachers. His findings showed that the male students attached greater importance to effective teachers who personalize their teaching to learners' needs, concerns, goals, and interests. In contrast, the female students considered that being well prepared for each lesson, being upbeat, and being well prepared for each class was the most important.

Numerous studies examined the professor's characteristics with the objective to define the desired educator's profile. However, there is not enough information on an EFL teacher profile in which students from a public university participate. Studying EFL constitutes a compulsory subject; like other subjects, students are obligated to pass; therefore, knowing what they see or expect in an effective EFL professor has been neglected. In this respect, investigations based on university students' perceptions are insufficient, particular in the Latin-American context. In addition, inserting other dimensions that would allow the analysis and establishment of a broader profile of an EFL teacher in a university context is essential and enriching. In this context, this study aims to create a profile of university students' perceptions concerning the qualities of an effective EFL teacher. To this end, the following research question were formulated:

1. What are the organization and communication skills/qualities of an Effective English Language Teacher (EELT) from students' point of view?

2. What are the pedagogical knowledge skills of an Effective English Language Teacher (EELT) from students' point of view?

3. What are the socio-affective skills/qualities of an Effective English Language Teacher (EELT) from students' point of view?

4. What are the English proficiency skills/qualities of an Effective English Language Teacher (EELT) from students' point of view?

5. What is the effective EFL teacher profile that Ecuadorian university students establish?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Teacher effectiveness

Several authors support some general definitions of effectiveness. Firstly, authors use different terms such as "'effective" in Witcher's (2003) investigation, "qualified" in Darling-Hammond & Youngs' (2002) study, "good" in Zhang & Watkins' (2007) study, and "excellent" in Kane's et al. (2008) study. Consequently, educational literature has no clear definition of teacher effectiveness. However, some ways of understanding the concept have been established. According to Cambridge (2021) a basic definition is that effectiveness refers to "the ability to be successful and produce the intended results." While Royal Academic Spanish, RAE (2021) states that effectiveness is "the quality of being effective in any function", in the double meaning of the word effective, that is, "quality of being real," "true," and "not chimerical", "not nominal." On the one hand, this concept can be seen as adequate for teachers who want or need to accomplish a specific purpose in the classroom in the educational context, and on the other hand, it is an attribute of someone, in our case, the teacher. It evokes a teacher who not only does his task at the university but also does it effectively. Thus, there is a difference between exercising a job and exercising it effectively. Likewise, it is more than the ability and the intention to do so since it requires some other elements that should be considered.

It is essential to highlight that University teaching has experienced a substantial change in recent years. Milienos et al. (2021) point out that higher education members have faced a "moving process," which means that professors moved from a teacher-centered to a student-centered model in which the student is the leading actor, so he plays the central role in the classwork. At the same time, higher education (HE) institutions look for the quality of teaching and learning. This practice has expanded worldwide attention in the last decade, and in which authors include the Covid-19 pandemic. In this context, the ultimate purpose that university professors and their authorities have is to guarantee this effectiveness through effective teachers. However, the monitoring of this process of all the members of the university community and, more specifically of professors, is not easy because university teaching is a difficult path.

Tadesse & Khalikd (2022) analyzed the university system's "effectiveness universe". They consider university teaching an academic activity involving extensive practice, experiences, professional skills, and discipline. The authors point out that all these necessary attributes should be applied in the university context as much as possible because they offer students an effective teaching-learning-assessment process. This process ensures the platform or starting point which creates an effective teaching environment, generates effective

teachers, and consequently it provides quality learning. However, there are many difficulties in this attempt that should be considered for tertiary education institutions at the national and international levels since different factors could alter any process or results.

For example, what students in Japan and Asia consider an effective teacher could differ from what students in a South-American country think since both local and cultural factors could influence them. Therefore, students' perceptions of their learning context influence the teaching-learning practice at the university (Karagiannopoulou *et al*., 2015). At this point, the literature on teaching-learning methodology and methods abounds with techniques in which professors can follow different steps or strategies to accomplish a specific objective. To illustrate, Entwistle and Karagiannopoulou (2014) suggest first, "teach content and skills that enhance students' learning opportunities, and second, assess learning through various types of assessments" (p. 20). Examples like the previous one are abundant, so getting this "effectiveness" in the university sector is not easy since different procedures are used to collect that valuable information when research addresses teaching effectiveness or the effective university profession. This aspect is fundamental to be analyzed since there is a consensus that using university students as vital information sources could be a positive way to collect data. Researchers will need fewer resources than other types of processes (Van der Lans *et al*., 2015). Also, students are a reliable resource since some demonstrate sufficient maturity to participate in further research (Molero López-Barajas & Ruiz, 2005). In sum, university students are considered necessary human resources in teaching effectiveness since they can provide information on what professors are doing in their academic work.

Despite the valuable information from students, defining teaching effectiveness is complicated. Some authors consider that students' grades can evaluate teaching effectiveness. For this reason, the most documented criterion for measuring teaching effectiveness is the amount of student learning (Richardson *et al*., 2020). There are reliably high positive correlations between the professor's general rating (effectiveness) and the students' ratings of the amount learned in the course; as a result, "those who learn more give higher ratings to their instructors" (Mastrokoukou *et al*., 2022., p.3). Likewise, another researcher's struggle is that while there are several theories, concepts, and ideas about assessment to evaluate teaching effectiveness, no single instrument can be utilized to determine if a university professor is influential.

In short, most research efforts concluded that there is no definite concept of an effective teacher. Nevertheless, most of these results coincide that the effective teacher should pay attention to some important dimensions that imply teaching efficiency. These characteristics are related to personal qualities, teaching methodology, and communication skills. Likewise, it is seen that the teacher effectiveness concept has been an important and ongoing topic of curiosity among educational researchers and even national educational authorities for many years. This significant focus has been given to the specific traits mentioned above and behaviors that authors consider to be those characteristics that constitute effective teaching. Therefore, the word "effective" will be used for this study.

2.2. Features of EFL teachers

The query of what makes an effective EFL teacher has been a constant topic. It has been studied from different perspectives, both teachers' and students' values, making it challenging to have a single and definite profile (Sotto, 2011).

For instance, Allen (1980) over three decades has worked on establishing the following characteristics of good English teachers:

- Competent preparation leading to a degree in English language teaching

- A love of the English language

- Critical thinking

- The persistent urge to upgrade oneself

- Self-subordination

- Readiness to go the extra mile

- Cultural adaptability

- Professional citizenship

- A feeling of excitement about one's job (p. 450)

The only item regarding language teaching skills on his list is the first one. The rest of the characteristics relate to a person's personality who has decided to perform a teaching career. For instance, the characteristic of "readiness to go the extra mile" suggests that the teachers' profession needs extra time and dedication, and the educational institution does not always provide this space. Therefore, their tasks do not finish at the end of class hours and school. Another element on the list is "professional citizenship," indicating that a teacher should act as professionally as possible in and out of the educational system.

In the '90s, Pennington (1990) made an essential contribution by introducing the following noticeable features of the effective teacher, whom he calls a "successful" teacher:

- Knowledge of the theoretical foundations of language learning and teaching

- Analytical skills necessary for assessing different teaching contexts and classroom conditions

- Awareness of alternative teaching techniques and the ability to put these into practice

- Confidence and skill to alter your teaching techniques as needed

- Practical experience with different teaching techniques

- Informed knowledge of yourself and your students

- Interpersonal communication skills

- Attitudes of flexibility and openness to change (p. 429)

In this case, three characteristics are related to the personality of a teacher, the rest focus on the professional aspect. Therefore, both those lists show that the significance of personality in defining the characteristics of an effective teacher within ten years diminished significantly. The first author highlights personality-related features, while the second introduces an equilibrium between professionalism and personality-based qualities.

From the turn of the century, some other important authors determined these characteristics too. For instance, Witcher

et al. (2003) distributed these characteristics into three key categories: instructional competence, personality, and the teacher-student relationship. He explains that instructional competence is the most vastly valued of the three categories by learners; it includes the teacher's ability to create student-centered classrooms, provide sufficient content knowledge, and maintain a professional performance. The teacher's personality relates to the individual traits that the teacher conveys to the classroom, which is also crucial since it includes the warmth he/she displays, his/her levels of patience and understanding, and his/her enthusiasm and willingness to get to know their students. The last characteristic is essential, too, since it determines the importance of the teacher-student relationship. The author explains that this feature (personality) may be imperative in those societies where interactive, one-to-one relationships in the classroom are necessary, and it is sometimes above the instruction itself (Witcher, 2003).

Another influential proponent is Brown (2009); he addresses some qualities condensed into four categories:

- Technical knowledge

- Pedagogical skills

- Interpersonal skills

- Personal qualities (p. 492)

Here, the first and second category refers to the knowledge of a second and foreign language (subject matter) and the methods and practices of teaching this foreign language, while the third category refers to the communication skills, which are essential to connect with learners. The last one describes those abilities that an adult person is expected to demonstrate in the classroom and any space in society.

Harmer (2007) also presented the characteristics that make sense to him and can be called a good language teacher:

- Recognizing students

- Listening to students

- Respecting students

- Being even-handed (p. 114)

In this list, it is essential to mention that the author does not say anything about pedagogical knowledge, so he may take the importance of these characteristics-skills for granted.

After analyzing the features of Brown (2009) and Harmer (2007), a discrepancy between the standpoints of the two EFL authors is noticeable. While the former relates to both the personality and competence of an EFL teacher, the latter focuses on personality.

The literature also shows other characteristics that current authors have proposed. On the one hand, for Sundari (2016), and effective English teacher should have English proficiency, know how to teach the language, and be able to transfer the knowledge well. Finally, he/she should be a role model for his students. On the other hand, Roya Zamani & Ahangari (2016) pointed out that an effective instructor develops correct relationships with students, keeps discipline in the classroom, and builds students' confidence throughout time. It is essential to mention that these authors have defined a somewhat similar profile and have established some characteristics of an effective EFL teacher. In other words, they are the ones who have used related dimensions (personality, language knowledge)

from which other authors have taken reference for studies in different spaces.

In this context, despite effective teachers sharing an actual number of similar qualities without even considering the subject matter, it is necessary to emphasize that "there are several vital differences in those characteristics between effective EFL teachers and other teachers" (Al-Maqtri & Thabet, 2013, p. 74). According to these authors, these features included good English mastery, sound pronunciation, and actively involving students in classroom tasks. In addition to this, all the characteristics that have been mentioned previously are also part of this compendium of features of an EFL teacher. However, additional studies in the field and their particular findings, which contribute to the literature, will also be analyzed later in the 'previous studies' section.

2.3. Previous studies

Studies concerning the features of adequate English language teachers have been carried out in various contexts. For example, Roya Zamani & Ahangari (2016) investigated students' perceptions of EFL teachers' characteristics and highlighted those features. The participants consisted of two groups. The results showed that students considered an excellent English teacher who demonstrates the ability to develop proper relationships with students obtained the highest mean, building students' confidence and maintaining discipline in the classroom (Roya Zamani & Ahangari, 2016). Likewise, Febriyanti (2018) worked on the same topic. The objective of his study was to investigate and describe the qualities or characteristics of an excellent English teacher based on the learner's perceptions. The sample consisted of 138 students who were prospective English teachers for junior and high school levels. So, it is a study with university students. The findings show that participants considered that teachers must be able to make courses exciting and be competent to deviate attention from everything else to the topic, analyze students' needs, and create/stimulate students to interact/communicate with each other.

Along the same line, two important studies have been conducted in this field in the last couple of years. On the one hand, Karim *et al.* (2020) wanted to investigate effective EFL teacher educators from the perspective of student teachers. The findings showed that student teachers have different perceptions of each attribute of effective EFL teacher educators. On the other hand, Metruk (2021) conducted recent research in this field. This study investigated the differences between male and female EFL (English as a foreign language) students' perceptions of effective language teachers. The research sample included Slovak university EFL learners majoring in English Language and Literature Teacher Training. The findings show that the differences between men's and women's perceptions are limited.

When it comes to Spanish-speaking countries different from Latin America, there are some important findings. A study was conducted by Martínez (2011) in Spain. The objectives related to the analysis of the potential of various skills and personal qualities that a foreign language teacher should have. The author also wanted to establish a profile of this foreign language professor. For this purpose, two questionnaires were applied in a mixed methods research with a sample of 122. The findings show that the physical qualities of the teacher are scarcely

crucial in terms of motivational stimulation. At the same time, certain aspects of teaching skills and scientific preparation receive a very positive assessment, supposedly generating a high level of motivation among students. Likewise, the emotional significance of the teacher's personality in terms of behavior and attitude towards students has been demonstrated.

Conversely, Galbán-Lozano & Ortega-Barba (2021) conducted a critical study. The purpose of this study was to characterize the excellent university professor from their perspective of their work. The sample consisted of 11 professors from a private university in Mexico who qualified as 'excellent' in their last evaluation. The authors used a semi-structured interview to apply a qualitative approach with a phenomenological perspective. One of the most important findings was that "all of the professors consider that a good university teacher needs both personal qualities and technical competencies" (p. 75). They also stated that the instruction should be a student-centered education process; the passion for teaching and the didactic strategies focused on learning are also good options.

As seen, there is not enough literature that offers information regarding the EFL teacher in a university context in Latin America. The literature mainly focuses on primary and secondary data (Lizasoain, 2021). In other words, there is scarce information regarding an effective EFL university professor in this region. It is important to mention that literature mainly focuses on the approach of the influential university professor in these Latin-American countries or the university career. These two studies offer valuable information on how university professors are perceived in the South; however, it is not enough yet to define a profile of how an effective EFL university teacher is perceived in a country in Latin America.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Design

The method of this study was quantitative. It used a descriptive design because it is the most appropriate option when there is not enough information about the research problem that is investigated (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Therefore, we collected quantifiable information to analyze the population sample statistically and to verify if any variable was influenced in any way by the researcher.

3.2. Participants

The sample of participants was made up of 324 students. They were females (65.40%), males (32.08%), and others (2.52%) who identified themselves as part of the LGBTQ+ community. The population in this study belongs to the *Universidad de Cuenca* a public higher education institution. The students belong to the University Language Institute and were enrolled in the Academic Program of Sufficiency in Foreign Language (*PASLE-in Spanish*). These students have to study English as a compulsory subject, and, at the time of the data collection, they were from levels A1, A2, and B1.

The work was carried out with students who agreed to participate in it. As they were legally adults, they did not need the authorization of an adult. It was a convenience sampling. The decision was based on the objective of this study and because the participants were accessible to the researcher (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

3.3. Instrument

It was a questionnaire called "Characteristics of an Effective English Language Teacher (EELT)" (Roya Zamani & Ahangari, 2016). This one has been updated and based on Park and Lee's concepts (2006). It had four categories of characteristics, including 1. English proficiency, 2. Pedagogical knowledge, 3. Organization and communication skills, and 4. Socio-affective skills.

3.4. Data collection procedure

The data was gathered on the Question Pro premium platform. There was a piloting stage with a group of 30 students. Later, the link to the questionnaire was shared with professors from levels A1, A2, and B1, and they spread it out with their students. In that way, the questionnaire was administered to the sample. The data collection lasted a month, from May 9, 2022, to June 9, 2022.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Due to the type of study and the way the results are shown, four tables will be presented and analyzed and related to previous literature. It will permit us to answer question by question which corresponds to one dimension. The results in each table, are listed in order of importance attributed by the participants. At the end of these four questions, the final profile of the effective EFL English teacher is established.

4.1. What are the organization and communication skills/qualities of an Effective English Language Teacher (EELT) from students' point of view?

Table 1 shows results concerning organization and communication skills. As seen, "Using the students' native language, when necessary", "Maintain good classroom atmosphere using authority, if necessary", and "Be helpful to students in and outside the classroom" were the most relevant for the participants. Among them, the highest score (1.60) was attached to the first statement. In other words, participants considered that an EFL instructor must speak Spanish, when necessary, to be regarded as effective. These findings are supported by Shishavan & Sadeghi's (2009) study, which indicated that Turkish students wanted their EFL teacher to provide explanations in the students' mother tongue to be effective. There is no similar evidence for item number 3; however, a study conducted by Roya Zamani & Ahangari (2016) showed that "the ability to maintain discipline in the classroom" was also crucial for the participants of that study, and it was placed in one the three first positions. Consequently, this information supports the findings of this study since they relate to the control of discipline in the classroom (atmosphere) and using authority, if necessary. Finally, the least important item of this dimension was 'good communication skills, which did not seem to be relevant for the sample of this study.

4.2. What are the pedagogical knowledge skills of an Effective English Language Teacher (EELT) from students' point of view?

As shown in Table 2, the highest scores were attached to the attributes of "Be flexible with grading" (1.70), "Avoid direct criticism of students when they make errors" (1.61), and "Let students have some control over the learning process" (1.60). The second item is in line with other studies Metruk (2020) and Demiroz & Yesilyurt (2015); they reported that their participants prefer to have a teacher who provides them with positive feedback. In this study, the participants want their professors to be cautious and empathetic in addressing students when they have an observation to make when students make errors. This situation might not be very common in public institutions, that is why students suggest doing it in a positive way. Regarding the first and third items, no similar data can be used as a reference. This discrepancy could be because participants must study English as a compulsory subject, and they have extra subjects from their majors, so asking teachers to be more flexible with grading and let them have control over their learning process could be related. At the university in which this data was collected, English

is not in the curriculum. Hence, the students must look for their own extra time to study and simultaneously accomplish the graduation requirement.

In contrast, the findings of previous studies support what is stated in item number two. For example, Wirantaka & Wahyudianawati (2021) found that their participants considered an effective EFL teacher someone who can "provide effective feedback"; in other words, someone who provides positive feedback without criticizing students in a negative way and in front of their peers. Likewise, Demiroz & Yesilyurt (2015) found that their study participants considered that effective foreign language teachers should correct learners indirectly. Finally, the item at the end of this rank was "Use various materials including video, audio, and multimedia." It could be because teachers and students have been immersed in this virtual space for the last two years. Students took it for granted; therefore, it is not a plus or an essential characteristic to be considered for an effective EFL teacher.

Table 1. Organization and communication skills (from high to low).

Item	M	SD
1 Using the students' native language when necessary	1.60	0.767
2 Maintain good classroom atmosphere using authority, if necessary	1.52	0.656
3 Be helpful to students in and outside the classroom	1.45	0.696
4 Ability to analyze students' needs	1.44	0.639
5 Ability to plan the lessons clearly and also state the objectives of the lesson clearly	1.42	0.627
6 Encourage students to use the English language all the time in class	1.41	0.621
7 Prepare the lesson well and using class time wisely	1.40	0.624
8 Ability to prepare appropriate material	1.39	0.602
9 Ability to make courses interesting and being smart to deviate attention of students from everything else to the topic	1.37	0.666
10 Provide opportunities to use English through meaningful tasks and activities	1.35	0.573
11 Stress the most important points and providing detailed explanations while reading/listening (e.g., checking new vocabularies)	1.34	0.580
12 Ability to make/ stimulate students to interact/communicate with each other	1.32	0.579
13 Ability to guide and train students towards independent learning	1.31	0.566
14 Use easy language to aid student understanding	1.31	0.567
15 Good communication skills	1.27	0.558

Note: The sample size is N=324

Table 2. Pedagogical Knowledge dimension (from high to low).

Item	M	SD
1 Be flexible with grading	1.70	0.809
2 Avoid direct criticism of students when they make errors	1.61	0.805
3 Let students have some control over the learning process	1.60	0.707
4 Encourage the students to learn English outside the classroom	1.51	0.715
5 Praise students for good ideas or for their effort	1.51	0.765
6 Focus on learning outcomes and growth, not content taught	1.46	0.752
7 Promote communicative language learning through activities & discussion	1.44	0.644
8 Develop students' language skill through working in pairs or groups	1.43	0.676
9 Provide constant feedback	1.39	0.651
10 Ability to set tasks with clear outcomes	1.39	0.597
11 Motivate students by supporting their self-efficacy	1.38	0.621
12 Assess what students have learned rationally	1.36	0.661
13 Ability to explain vocabulary and grammar and use relevant real-world examples in lessons	1.33	0.599
14 Teach subject matter in ways that are accessible to all learners and vary his/her delivery methods if necessary	1.31	0.583
15 Use various materials including video, audio, and multimedia	1.30	0.567

Note: The sample size is N=324

4.3. What are the socio-affective skills/qualities of an Effective English Language Teacher (EELT) from students' point of view?

The results (Table 3), in this case, reveal that most Ecuadorian students expect their teachers to "Have a good sense of humor" (1.65), "Be neat and tidy in appearance" (1.58) and "Be punctual" (1.48). In this context, Khaerati (2016) found in his study that the respondents described an EFL teacher as "Pleasing," which was the highest feature. In our case, it is the first one within the socio-affective dimension. In contrast, the teacher's appearance was the least ranked in the same study, which differs from the present research results. In the same line, "Treat students fairly and equally" was ranked last in this study, which does not coincide with a study by Metruk (2020) in which the participants placed this quality as the third most important. These results could be due to the type of samples. At the same time, in this study, students are obligated to study English, so students did it voluntarily since they were studying in the Teaching English as a Foreign Language program.

4.4. What are the English proficiency skills/qualities of an Effective English Language Teacher (EELT) from students' point of view?

Table 4 shows results from the last dimension, English proficiency. The first item, "give the learners some control and decision-making over what they do," got 1.48 in its mean, and the last item, "read, write, speak, and understand spoken English well" (1.22), which contradicts previous findings. For example, the results of the studies conducted by Karim (2021) and Wirantaka & Wahyudianaw (2021) show that participants preferred their effective EFL teacher to pronounce English words correctly and master the language since the teachers are not native speakers. In this study, even though students know that their teachers are non-native as well, this does not seem relevant to them. However, due to the fact that the participants of this study are studying English as a compulsory subject, they would like to have some control and decision-making over what they do; for example, instead of attending eight hours a week, they could negotiate with their teachers to attend six since they already have enough tasks from their majors. Thus, this was the most important feature for the sample of this study.

Table 3. Socio-affective dimension (from high to low).

Item	M	SD
1 Have a good sense of humor	1.65	0.833
2 Be neat and tidy in appearance	1.58	0.769
3 Be punctual	1.48	0.692
4 Alleviate students' anxiety in class	1.46	0.714
5 Have an interest in students. For example, address individual students by name	1.38	0.674
6 Be flexible and open to criticism	1.37	0.608
7 Be approachable and friendly	1.35	0.620
8 Ability to build students' confidence	1.35	0.620
9 Listen to students' points of view and opinions and let them express themselves	1.34	0.612
10 Ability to develop proper relationships with students	1.34	0.548
11 Not lose temper and get angry	1.31	0.603
12 Be patient	1.30	0.595
13 Ability to make courses interesting and motivate students	1.29	0.537
14 Be polite and respect the personality of the students	1.26	0.505
15 Treat students fairly and equally	1.24	0.520

Note: The sample size is N=324

Table 4. English proficiency dimension (from high to low).

Item	M	SD
1 Give the learners some control and decision-making over what they do	1.48	0.651
2 Possess extensive culture -comprehension and provide cultural information about the target language's culture	1.47	0.701
3 Ability to have pair work and group work activities in the classroom	1.41	0.625
4 Have correct pronunciation	1.38	0.625
5 Ability to help the learners become autonomous learners	1.37	0.639
6 Ability to maintain discipline in the classroom	1.36	0.548
7 Emphasis error correction	1.35	0.584
8 Ability to assess students' performance with the help of suitable evaluation instruments	1.35	0.608
9 Ability to be flexible and vary techniques according to students' level and the teaching/learning situations	1.33	0.577
10 Ability to create an entertaining atmosphere to carry out the class activities	1.32	0.547
11 Ability to make the subject of the lesson interesting to learners	1.31	0.533
12 Have good knowledge of English grammar	1.30	0.544
13 Ability to use audio-visual aids when teaching	1.30	0.552
14 Know English vocabulary well	1.24	0.503
15 Read, write, speak, and understand spoken English well	1.22	0.500

Note: The sample size is N=324

4.5. *What is the effective EFL teacher profile that Ecuadorian university students establish?*

When evaluating the four dimensions together, it was observed that three of them are similar on average, around 1.35. However, the Pedagogical Knowledge dimension is significantly higher than the others, with 1.45 points. The results, in this case, reveal that the participants considered the strategies and practices of teaching, classroom organization, planning, and preparation as the most relevant feature. When analyzing in an overall way, three previous findings support our findings Demiroz & Yesilyurt (2015), Metruk (2020), and Metruk (2021). In all these cases, the way teachers present their content and teach this foreign subject was relevant and ranked the highest compared to other dimensions.

In contrast, there is evidence from other studies Wirantaka & Wahyudianawati (2021), Karim (2021), Karim *et al*. (2020), Khaerati (2016), Roya Zamani & Ahangari (2016), and Febriyanti (2018) in which the Pedagogical Knowledge was placed in second place for the participants in all studies. However, the first place was attributed to socio-affective and communication skills.

Once we have analyzed information in questions one and two, we can state that taking the most noticeable features among the four dimensions, noted by the participants into account, the profile of an effective EFL instructor can be established as a teacher who:

1. is flexible with grading (1.70)

2. has a good sense of humor (1.65)

3. avoids direct criticism of students when they make errors (1.61)

4. uses the students' native language when necessary (1.60)

5. is neat and tidy in appearance (1.58)

6. maintains good classroom atmosphere using authority, if necessary (1.52)

7. gives the learners some control and decision-making over what they do (1.48)

8. possess extensive culture-comprehension and provide cultural information about the target language's culture (1.47)

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to create a profile of university students' perceptions concerning the qualities of an effective EFL teacher. The effective EFL teacher profile that Ecuadorian university students established is very remarkable. There are eight relevant features that make an EFL university professor effective according to the participants of this study. These are a combination of the four dimensions (Organization and communication skills, Pedagogical Knowledge, Socio-affective skills, and English proficiency). However, it is vital to mention that the three most relevant characteristics are "be flexible with grading", "have a good sense of humor" and "avoid direct criticism of students when they make errors." These features are related to pedagogical knowledge (1 and 2) and socio-affective skills (3). In short, the participants of this study consider that the way in which an EFL

university professor teaches, and his personal qualities make him an effective instructor.

The predominant dimension of the effective EFL teacher from the perspective of Ecuadorian university students is Pedagogical Knowledge. It was the most valued dimension for the participants in this study. Clearly, students from this public university value teachers' knowledge of methodology and strategies when teaching and assessing English as a foreign language. However, it is essential to highlight that the most relevant feature was "be flexible with grading," which shows that the evaluation process during the teaching-learning process is a fundamental concern for the participants. In contrast, the least relevant dimension was English proficiency, which does not seem relevant for this study's participants.

Moreover, students ask teachers to have control and independence; they consider these should be granted to them. This autonomy to make propositions and achieve a consensus with their teachers seems vital. Students want their teachers to allow them to manage the learning process more friendly and effectively. These findings may be related to the sample type, students from the same program but from different majors who study English as a compulsory subject. All of them have other tasks to accomplish in their major classes, but they all have in common that getting an agreement with their EFL professor could help them perform better in their major and English course.

Finally, it is vital to mention that the profile of an effective EFL teacher is a combination of the four dimensions analyzed in this research. Even though we have mentioned the three most relevant features at the very beginning of this section, it is essential to say that there are some other characteristics that the participants have mentioned as well. Although they are not in the top three, they are related to the other two dimensions (English proficiency and communication skills). This means that, in the end, an effective EFL teacher has to do with, at least, two relevant features of each dimension, so eight elements in total. All in all, the grouping of the studied four dimensions makes an effective EFL teacher.

SUGGESTIONS

Since the top three features of an effective EFL university professor are related to pedagogical knowledge and socio-affective skills, public institutions should reflect on that. Sometimes, in tertiary education, and mostly, when we refer to the foreign language teaching-learning process, authorities use to emphasize the fact that a native speaker must be the instructor because it makes this person an effective EFL instructor. However, the pedagogical knowledge and socio-affective skills are not related to the fact of being native to a language. Therefore, institutions should concentrate on the fact that mastering the language (English) is relevant, and it can be seen in an international proficiency exam of the professor. However, it does not mean that the instructor can teach and be efficient in this process with university students.

Providing participation spaces for students is indispensable. Offering this time for students to contribute is essential when education demands teaching-learning approaches where the student is the center. Knowing what

they expect and what an effective EFL teacher is for them is an example of what higher education institutions should do. Of course, it demands extra research time for teachers and students to participate. Thus, providing this space in their distribution of work hours would be essential, beyond the teacher's condition (permanent or not), because it is sometimes an impediment in the public university education system.

Future research in the area should be conducted. The information expressed and analyzed here is limited to this sample. Although a generalization of these results is not possible, the data is relevant since it allows establishing a base and a starting point for future research in the area. It should focus on different samples. For instance, students who study English because they want, so this subject is not compulsory, students who will become future teachers, and of course include, other public and private institutions. Finally, the teachers' point of view is also relevant, so it could also be considered an extra line of investigation for future research.

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