Iranian EFL teachers’ perspectives of qualities of a good language teacher: Does educational context make a difference?

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Abstract: The purpose of this mixed methods study was to explore EFL teachers’ perspectives of qualities of a good language teacher and to examine the possible differences in their perspectives as a function of educational contexts including language institutes, junior/senior high schools, and universities. To this end, 386 Iranian EFL teachers completed a self-report questionnaire on qualities of a good language teacher. Also, to better understand EFL teachers’ perspectives, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 40 EFL teachers. Our results showed that teaching boosters and care and enthusiasm were held in high regard by EFL teachers in all the educational settings in question. Evaluation, by contrast, was the last-ranked quality of a good language teacher as perceived by EFL teachers. The results of the MANOVA suggested that language institute EFL teachers differed significantly from senior/junior high school teachers in terms of morality and booster. They were also significantly different from university, senior/junior high school teachers regarding accountability, evaluation, care and enthusiasm, and attention. However, no significant differences were observed between EFL teachers

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Perceptions of qualities of a good language teacher may be influenced by a range of factors. Educational context, an unresearched factor in respect of the qualities in question entailing three different academic contexts i.e. language institutes, high schools, and universities was the main focus of the current study.

Our results suggested that the qualities of a good language teacher as perceived by EFL teachers are context-specific. Language institute EFL teachers’ perceived qualities of a good language teacher differed markedly from those of high school teachers and university professors in a number of areas. The current study extends our understanding of what it means to be a good language teacher by examining the qualities by which EFL teachers are viewed to be different as regards the educational context.
in the educational contexts under study concerning attendance. The results of semi-structured interviews substantiated those of the questionnaire. Nonetheless, minor disparities were found in the interviews with respect to the weight and significance attached to the evaluation. The study holds clear implications for stakeholders, language teachers, and teacher educators.

Subjects: Teachers & Teacher Education; Language & Linguistics; Language Teaching & Learning; Literature

Keywords: Good EFL Teacher; perspectives; qualities; teaching context

1. Introduction
Qualities of an effective teacher have long been among the topics of innumerable studies in mainstream education. In essence, such qualities have been the defining features of teacher effectiveness (Khojastemehr & Takrimi, 2009). The concept of an ideal teacher has been touched upon from different perspectives in western contexts across disciplines (Zhang & Watkins, 2007). Notwithstanding a wealth of studies on teacher characteristics in mainstream education, a few studies have addressed the characteristics of a good EFL teacher in the field of language teaching. These studies, however, probed into qualities of good EFL teachers in the eyes of language teachers as well as learners regardless of factors influencing their perceptions. More importantly, the literature lacks a study on the qualities of a good EFL teacher from the perspectives of EFL teachers in specific educational contexts. According to Borg (2006), characteristics of good language teachers are socially constructed which are context-specific. This study seeks to address this gap in the literature by answering two central research questions:

1. What are the qualities a good EFL teacher from the perspectives of university, language institute, junior high school, and senior high school EFL teachers?
2. Are there significant differences between the perspectives of university, language institute, junior high school, and senior high school EFL teachers with regard to the qualities of a good EFL teacher?

Informed of these characteristics, EFL teachers can effectively enhance their teaching practices. According to Bell (2005), identifying the qualities of effective teaching inherent in specific contexts and settings can be instrumental in evaluating the effectiveness of language teaching. Likewise, the results of the present study redound to teacher professional development in that it may raise awareness of prospective EFL teachers of good teaching qualities. It can also bring about considerable changes in teacher recruitment programs.

1.1. Review of literature

1.1.1. Characteristics of good teachers
Brown (1978) viewed affective factors as the main qualities of an EFL teacher and suggests that a good language teacher is sympathetic towards learners, creates meaningful communication atmosphere in the classroom, and boosts learners' self-esteem. Dincer, Goksu, Takkac, and Yazıcı (2013) drew attention to characteristics including socio-affective skills, pedagogical knowledge, subject-matter knowledge, and personality traits.

Good teachers across disciplines have qualities in common. However, EFL teachers differ from teachers of other fields in a number of ways (Al-Mahrooqi, Denman, Al-Siyabi, & Al-Maamari, 2015). According to Pettis (1997), to be professionally effective, language teachers must ensure a balance of principles, knowledge, and skills. Moreover, they seek out a wide range of classroom activities and a different content focus.
Effective language teachers have been described as enjoying a great competence in the target language and a set of personal traits including sensitivity, affection, and tolerance (Vadillo, 1999). Brosh (1996) viewed the characteristics of an effective language teacher as having a mastery of the target language, being able to describe, clarify, and stimulate interest and motivation among language learners, and being fair and supportive to them. Along the same lines, Sotto (2011) was of the opinion that effective teachers assist learners to be more self-assured and reflective.

1.1.2. Studies on effective teacher characteristics in the context of language teaching
There is a plethora of studies on effective teachers’ characteristics (e.g. Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2015; Bell, 2005; Borg, 2006; SoodmandAfshar & Doosti, 2014). These studies explored a number of salient dimensions namely, the knowledge of the subject matter, class management skills, knowledge of pedagogy, and fairness.

Bell (2005) studied the qualities of effective EFL teachers in three countries including Germany, France, and Spain. Based on her results, a professional consensus emerged with respect to EFL teacher’s behaviors and attitudes.

In another study, Borg (2006) investigated the distinctive qualities of 200 practicing and prospective teachers working in a range of foreign language teaching contexts. The findings of his study revealed that language teachers were perceived to be distinctive with respect to the nature of the subject, teaching materials and methodology, relationships between teachers and learners, and issues associated with the status of native and non-native language teachers.

Shishavan and Sadeghi (2009) explored the qualities of effective language teachers from the perspectives of Iranian EFL learners and teachers. Their findings demonstrated that the command of the target language, good knowledge of pedagogy, the use of effective teaching methods, and good personality were perceived as the key characteristics of an effective EFL teacher.

Performing a study on the qualities of effective EFL teachers from the viewpoints of teachers and learners in the context of junior secondary high schools in Iran, SoodmandAfshar and Doosti (2014) concluded that teachers and students alike acknowledged identical teacher professional qualities including the knowledge of subject matter, ability to impart knowledge, interpersonal relationships, and qualities related to classroom management.

In an effort to map out similarities and differences in perceptions of teachers and students concerning an effective English teacher, Al-Mahrooqi et al. (2015) conducted a study employing a 68-item questionnaire. One important outcome of their research study was that no notable gap was found between the perceptions of teachers and students. In fact, both groups of the participants assigned great value to the high level of language proficiency, fairness, and respect. These findings may be the outcome of assigning the identical questionnaire to the teachers and learners.

Finally, in a recent study by Kulekci (2018), prospective EFL teachers’ perceptions of characteristics of effective teachers were studied. Based on the results of a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, several characteristics of an effective teacher were identified, the most important of which included: giving authentic examples, being prepared for the lesson, being clear and understandable, and using appropriate teaching aids and materials.

2. Method
2.1. Design
A mixed methods approach was employed to address the objectives of the present study. Quantitative data collected through a self-report questionnaire were analyzed by means of descriptive and inferential statistics. In addition, a series of semi-structured interviews were
conducted for further elaboration of the characteristics of good EFL teachers. Interviews, however, provide rich data by deeply exploring into individuals’ perceptions (Richards, 2009).

2.2. Instrumentation

Two different instruments were deployed in this study. The instrument for the quantitative phase of the study was a questionnaire (See Appendix A) adopted from Moafian, Ostovar, Griffiths, and Hashemi (2018). They revalidated the instrument originally constructed by Moafian and Pishghadam (2009). It consists of 45 statements measuring seven major constructs on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire was pilot-tested with 45 EFL teachers who enjoyed similar professional features to the participants of the study. The reliability of the whole questionnaire using Cronbach’s Alpha was estimated to be high enough (α = 0.90).

The questionnaire on characteristics of a successful EFL teacher consists of seven main constructs: attention (Items 25, 36, 37, 37 and, 39), morality (Items 4, 5, 7, 8, 33,42, and 43), care and enthusiasm (Items 3, 9, 12, 13, 15, 24, and 44), teaching accountability (Items 2, 10, 11, 23, 33, 35, 40, and 41), evaluation (Items 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 26), teaching boosters (Items 1, 6, 14, 21, 22, 27, 28, and 29), and class attendance (Items 30, 31, and 45).

In addition, to deeply explore qualities of effective EFL teachers, the researchers performed semi-structured interviews with 40 EFL teachers. Furthermore, the interview questions (See Appendix B) were reviewed by two experts in the field of applied linguistics for validity purposes.

2.3. Participants

A total of 386 Iranian EFL teachers (221 females and 165 males) participated in the quantitative phase of the study. They were selected based on convenience sampling. The participants were EFL teachers currently teaching English in language institutes, junior high schools, senior high schools, and universities across the country, Iran.

Moreover, 40 EFL teachers (22 males and 18 females) were selected purposefully according to the maximum variation sampling from among the participant teachers in the quantitative phase of the study who consented to take part in semi-structured interviews. According to Dornyei (2007), maximum variation sampling assists researchers to have variation within the respondents. To ensure maximum variation sampling, we selected EFL teachers with different academic and teaching experience backgrounds. The age range of the participants was 25 to 55 years. It is worth mentioning that 25 participant teachers were from the province of Bushehr, where the main researcher could easily access them. The remaining 15 were selected from other cities of Iran. They were interviewed over the phone. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of EFL teachers taking part in the interviews and the questionnaire survey.

2.4. Data collection procedures

The data for the quantitative phase was collected through a self-report questionnaire administered on the cloud-based instant messaging application called Telegram in which the link to the questionnaire was shared with a large number of EFL teachers who were members of different language teaching

| Table 1. EFL teachers’ demographics in questionnaire and interviews |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Demographics  | Categories          | Questionnaire | Interviews    |
| Gender      | Females         | 165            | 18            |
|             | Males           | 221            | 22            |
| Institutions| Language institutes | 102            | 10            |
|             | Junior high schools   | 97             | 10            |
|             | Senior high schools   | 98             | 10            |
|             | University         | 89             | 10            |
Telegram groups working in four different educational contexts (language institutes, junior/senior high schools, and universities). It took them approximately ten minutes to fill out the questionnaire. The data collection lasted over a period of two months from November 2019 to January 2020.

Concerning semi-structured interviews, 40 EFL teachers were selected from among the respondents to the questionnaire of the study. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity of interviewees, we employed the codes of IT1-10, JHT1-10, SHT1-10, UT1-10 for an institute, junior high school, senior high school, and university teachers, respectively. The interviews were conducted in their mother tongue (Persian) and each interview took approximately 20–25 minutes. Noteworthy to mention is that 25 interviews were conducted in teachers’ offices and fifteen EFL teachers who were from other cities of Iran were interviewed over the phone. For ethical considerations, the participants’ consent was obtained to audio-record the interviews.

2.5. Data analysis
The statistical analyses were conducted by using SPSS Statistics 24. Concerning the first research question, descriptive statistics were run in order to identify the characteristics of effective EFL teachers teaching in language institutes, junior/senior high schools, and universities. Moreover, to answer the second research question, a One-way MANOVA was used to examine if there were significant differences between the perspectives of language institute, junior/senior high school, and university EFL teachers with regard to the qualities of a good EFL teacher.

Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews were transcribed. The data were subjected to thematic analysis to identify main patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Dornyei, 2007). For this purpose, the common patterns in the data were coded. In the next step, the emerging themes were subjected to frequency analysis and were finally tabulated.

The semi-structured interviews were coded and analyzed in Persian. The themes and exemplary quotes were translated into English by one of the researchers who was well-versed in both English and Persian. A certified English translator was then asked to check the accuracy of English translations.

2.6. Reliability of the questionnaire
Table 2 presents the internal consistency of the whole questionnaire along with the variables of the study. As the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of .70 or higher indicates a good degree of reliability (Salkind, 2007) the reliability coefficients obtained were deemed acceptable.

3. Results
3.1. The first research question
Descriptive statistics were employed to identify the qualities of a good EFL teacher from the perspectives of university, language institute, junior high school, and senior high school EFL

| Variables                  | No of Items | Cronbach’s Alpha |
|----------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| attention                  | 5           | .753             |
| morality                   | 8           | .759             |
| care and enthusiasm        | 7           | .719             |
| accountability             | 8           | .766             |
| evaluation                 | 6           | .799             |
| booster                    | 8           | .744             |
| attendance                 | 3           | .790             |
| Whole questionnaire        | 45          | .925             |
teachers. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of the seven dimensions of the questionnaire in relation to the qualities of good English teachers as perceived by EFL teachers working in language institutes.

Each of the seven dimensions received a mean score ranging from 4.25 to 4.71, thereby indicating that EFL teachers considered each variable as important. Accountability (M = 4.71) and booster (M = 4.69) received the highest means while the lowest mean was ascribed to evaluation (M = 4.25). As for the items of the questionnaire, item 21 (is careful and precise in answering learners’ questions) recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.88).

As depicted in Table 4, booster (M = 4.58) and care and enthusiasm (M = 4.50) obtained the first and second variables followed by morality (M = 4.48). Taking account of the questionnaire items, item 12 (enjoys teaching) was most widely perceived as a good quality of an English teacher. Moreover, EFL teachers in junior high schools assigned great value to item 27 (speaks clearly with correct pronunciation).

As presented in Table 5, the first three important variables as perceived by EFL teachers in senior high schools were identical to those of junior high schools. Here again, booster received a mean score of 4.58. Concerning the questionnaire items, item 21 (is careful and precise in answering learners’ questions) and item 12 (enjoys teaching) received the highest means of the 45 items in the questionnaire.

According to Table 6, EFL teachers at universities set great store by teaching boosters (M = 4.59), care and enthusiasm (4.53), and morality (M = 4.51). Taking the questionnaire items into account, university EFL teachers maintained that a good language teacher should enjoy teaching (item 12).

Table 3. Language institute EFL teachers’ perspectives of qualities of good English teachers

|                | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Mean   | Std. Deviation |
|----------------|----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| accountability | 102| 4.13    | 5.00    | 4.7145 | .24270         |
| booster        | 102| 3.75    | 5.00    | 4.6936 | .23311         |
| care and       | 102| 3.86    | 5.00    | 4.6709 | .29667         |
| enthusiasm     |    |         |         |        |                |
| morality       | 102| 3.75    | 5.00    | 4.6189 | .36745         |
| attention      | 102| 3.60    | 4.80    | 4.5961 | .28421         |
| attendance     | 102| 3.00    | 5.00    | 4.5196 | .53599         |
| evaluation     | 102| 3.00    | 5.00    | 4.2598 | .53870         |
| Valid N (listwise) | 102|         |         |        |                |

Table 4. Junior high school EFL teachers’ perspectives of qualities of good English teachers

|                | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Mean   | Std. Deviation |
|----------------|----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| booster        | 97 | 3.88    | 5.00    | 4.5863 | .27914         |
| care and       | 97 | 3.86    | 5.00    | 4.5096 | .36474         |
| enthusiasm     |    |         |         |        |                |
| morality       | 97 | 3.38    | 5.00    | 4.4884 | .42200         |
| attendance     | 97 | 3.00    | 5.00    | 4.4433 | .50626         |
| attention      | 97 | 3.80    | 4.80    | 4.4186 | .33799         |
| accountability | 97 | 3.63    | 5.00    | 4.4175 | .40701         |
| evaluation     | 97 | 2.50    | 5.00    | 4.0034 | .54219         |
| Valid N (listwise) | 97|         |         |        |                |
They also held that a good language teacher is someone who speaks the target language clearly with correct pronunciation (item 27).

### 3.2. The second research question

The second research question intended to determine if there were significant differences between the perspectives of university, language institute, junior high school, and senior high school EFL teachers with regard to the qualities of a good EFL teacher. In response to this question, a one-way MANOVA was conducted on the seven subcategories of the questionnaire to examine the potential difference.

Prior to running the one-way MANOVA, its assumptions were checked. In the first step, multivariate normality was examined by conducting Mahalanobis distance employing regression analysis. The value of Mahalanobis distance turned out to be 21.304 which is lower than the critical value (24.32) with seven dependent variables indicating that the multivariate normality requirement of MANOVA was met.

Multicollinearity assumption was also checked by conducting correlations to examine the strength of correlation between pairs of variables. Correlations up around .8 and .9 are reasons for concern. The correlations obtained were all below .7 satisfying the assumption of multicollinearity.

The homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices was also examined by means of Box’s M Test of Covariance Matrices. The sig. value obtained (.047) as shown in Table 7 was larger than .001 indicating that the observed covariance matrices of the dependent variables were equal across groups.
Equality of variance was checked by running Levine’s Test of Equality of Error Variances. As presented in Table 8, the Sig. values for the seven variables were non-significant indicating homogeneity of variance assumption between the groups.

The descriptive statistics of the participant teachers from different teaching contexts are presented in Table 9.

A multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to investigate if there were significant differences between the seven qualities of good language teachers regarding different teaching contexts. The results of multivariate tests as shown in Table 10 indicated that there were statistically significant differences between EFL teachers in language institutes, junior/senior high schools, universities on combined dependent variables, $F (21, 11) = 3.25$, $p = .000$; Wilks’ Lambda = .000; partial $\eta^2 = .059$ representing a moderate effect size.

In addition, the MANOVA tests of between-subjects effects performed on all dependent variables separately (Table 11) indicate that the institution (educational context) differed significantly in relation to variables including teaching boosters: $F (3,382) = 3.858$, $p = .010$ and partial $\eta^2 = .029$, care and enthusiasm: $F (3,382) = 6.456$, $p = .000$ and partial $\eta^2 = .048$, attention (3,382) = 6.213, $P = .000$ and partial $\eta^2 = .047$, accountability (3,382) = 18.782, $P = .000$, and partial $\eta^2 = .129$, evaluation (3,382) = 8.605, $P = .000$ and partial $\eta^2 = .063$, and morality (3,382) = 3.301, $P = .020$, and partial $\eta^2 = .025$. As is evident, the type of institution had a non-significant effect on attendance: $F (3,382) = .983$, $P = .408$, and partial $\eta^2 = .008$.

To locate the exact place of the difference in the case of teaching contexts, a Tukey post-hoc analysis was run, the results of which are summarized in Table 12.

The results of post-hoc Tukey HSD tests indicated that:

(1) Language institute EFL teachers differed significantly from senior/junior high school teachers in terms of morality.
EFL teachers in language institutes were significantly different from university, senior/junior high school teachers with respect to accountability, evaluation, care and enthusiasm, and attention. They also differed significantly from junior/senior high school teachers concerning booster.

There were not any significant differences between EFL teachers in the educational contexts in question regarding attendance.

3.3. Results of semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were primarily meant to explore EFL teachers' perspectives of qualities of a good language teacher in terms of the educational contexts in question in order to triangulate the quantitative results.

| Institution          | Mean   | Std. Deviation | N  |
|----------------------|--------|----------------|----|
| morality             |        |                |    |
| Language institute   | 4.6189 | .36745         | 102|
| Junior high school   | 4.4884 | .42200         | 97 |
| Senior high school   | 4.4490 | .42164         | 98 |
| University           | 4.5183 | .38874         | 89 |
| Total                | 4.5198 | .40409         | 386|
| care and enthusiasm  |        |                |    |
| Language institute   | 4.6709 | .29667         | 102|
| Junior high school   | 4.5096 | .36474         | 97 |
| Senior high school   | 4.4694 | .35942         | 98 |
| University           | 4.5313 | .36037         | 89 |
| Total                | 4.5470 | .35285         | 386|
| accountability       |        |                |    |
| Language institute   | 4.7145 | .24270         | 102|
| Junior high school   | 4.4175 | .40701         | 97 |
| Senior high school   | 4.3839 | .41253         | 98 |
| University           | 4.3806 | .40325         | 89 |
| Total                | 4.4790 | .39621         | 386|
| evaluation           |        |                |    |
| Language institute   | 4.2598 | .53870         | 102|
| Junior high school   | 4.0034 | .54219         | 97 |
| Senior high school   | 3.9031 | .52428         | 98 |
| University           | 3.9850 | .49787         | 89 |
| Total                | 4.0415 | .54217         | 386|
| attendance           |        |                |    |
| Language institute   | 4.5196 | .53599         | 102|
| Junior high school   | 4.4433 | .50626         | 97 |
| Senior high school   | 4.3946 | .52942         | 98 |
| University           | 4.4494 | .50528         | 89 |
| Total                | 4.4525 | .51992         | 386|
| booster              |        |                |    |
| Language institute   | 4.6936 | .23311         | 102|
| Junior high school   | 4.5863 | .27914         | 97 |
| Senior high school   | 4.5816 | .30677         | 98 |
| University           | 4.5969 | .25890         | 89 |
| Total                | 4.6159 | .27371         | 386|
| attention            |        |                |    |
| Language institute   | 4.5961 | .28421         | 102|
| Junior high school   | 4.4186 | .33799         | 97 |
| Senior high school   | 4.4286 | .33368         | 98 |
| University           | 4.4629 | .36256         | 89 |
| Total                | 4.4782 | .33620         | 386|
the quantitative data. Our interview results concerning the qualities of good language teachers were mostly addressed by other researchers. However, the interviews were targeted at identifying the possible differences between EFL teachers in different educational contexts in terms of

| Table 10. Multivariate Tests |
|-----------------------------|
| Effect                  | Value | F     | Hypothesis df | Error df | Sig. | Partial Eta |
| Intercept                |       |       |               |          |      |             |
| Pillai's Trace           | .997  | 19553.814 | 7.000        | 376.000  | .000 | .997        |
| Wilks' Lambda            | .003  | 19553.814 | 7.000        | 376.000  | .000 | .997        |
| Hotelling's Trace        | 364.034 | 19553.814 | 7.000        | 376.000  | .000 | .997        |
| Roy's Largest Root       | 364.034 | 19553.814 | 7.000        | 376.000  | .000 | .997        |
| Institution              |       |       |               |          |      |             |
| Pillai's Trace           | .170  | 3.253 | 21.000        | 1134.000 | .000 | .057        |
| Wilks' Lambda            | .832  | 3.397 | 21.000        | 1080.219 | .000 | .059        |
| Hotelling's Trace        | .198  | 3.539 | 21.000        | 1124.000 | .000 | .062        |
| Roy's Largest Root       | .181  | 9.770 | 7.000         | 378.000  | .000 | .153        |

a. Design: Intercept + Institution
b. Exact statistic
c. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

| Table 11. Tests of between-subjects effects |
|---------------------------------------------|
| Source                  | Dependent Variable | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
| Corrected Model         | morality           | 1.589a                   | 3  | .530        | 3.301 | .020 | .025                        |
|                         | care and enthusiasm| 2.313b                   | 3  | .771        | 6.456 | .000 | .048                        |
|                         | accountability     | 7.769c                   | 3  | 2.590       | 18.782| .000 | .129                        |
|                         | commitment         | 7.164d                   | 3  | 2.388       | 8.605 | .000 | .063                        |
|                         | attendance         | .797e                    | 3  | .266        | .983  | .401 | .008                        |
|                         | booster            | .848f                    | 3  | .283        | 3.858 | .010 | .029                        |
|                         | attention          | 2.025g                   | 3  | .675        | 6.213 | .000 | .047                        |
| Institution             | morality           | 1.589                    | 3  | .530        | 3.301 | .020 | .025                        |
|                         | care and enthusiasm| 2.313                    | 3  | .771        | 6.456 | .000 | .048                        |
|                         | accountability     | 7.769                    | 3  | 2.590       | 18.782| .000 | .129                        |
|                         | evaluation         | 7.164                    | 3  | 2.388       | 8.605 | .000 | .063                        |
|                         | attendance         | .797                     | 3  | .266        | .983  | .401 | .008                        |
|                         | booster            | .848                     | 3  | .283        | 3.858 | .010 | .029                        |
|                         | attention          | 2.025                    | 3  | .675        | 6.213 | .000 | .047                        |
| Error                   | morality           | 61.276                   | 382| .160        |       |      |                             |
|                         | care and enthusiasm| 45.620                   | 382| .119        |       |      |                             |
|                         | accountability     | 52.670                   | 382| .138        |       |      |                             |
|                         | commitment         | 106.006                  | 382| .278        |       |      |                             |
|                         | attendance         | 103.276                  | 382| .270        |       |      |                             |
|                         | booster            | 27.995                   | 382| .073        |       |      |                             |
|                         | attention          | 41.493                   | 382| .109        |       |      |                             |

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qualities of good language teachers. The data gleaned from the interviews were subjected to thematic analysis wherein the most important themes emerging from the data are addressed in the course of the following paragraphs.

The thematic analysis of semi-structured interview data extracted evidence of several themes. To be consonant with the themes in the questionnaire of the study, we formed the same themes including teaching boosters, accountability, attention, morality, care and enthusiasm, evaluation, attendance, nationality. However, new sub-themes uncovered from the interview data which were not included in the questionnaire were not taken into consideration.

Overall, EFL teachers viewed these themes as effective and desirable qualities of a good language teacher. The interview findings, corroborating those of the questionnaire shed more lights on their perspectives of qualities of good language teachers. Nonetheless, some minor discrepancies were found in their responses to the question as what constitutes qualities of an effective language teacher. Table 13 depicts the main themes together with the number of mentions by the EFL teachers.

3.4. Teaching boosters
The interview data generally demonstrated that EFL teachers give high priority to the professional and teaching qualities of language teachers. The most frequently mentioned issues were being professional and knowledgeable, having good classroom management skills, and promoting motivation. The overwhelming majority of EFL teachers in different educational contexts under study were of the opinion that qualities associated with teaching boosters were the most significant characteristics of a good language teacher. The most frequent themes related to boosters were the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary and the ability to speak English well with the correct pronunciation. The other qualities concerning boosters included: having the knowledge of linguistics, knowing target culture, having the knowledge of teaching methods, having self-confidence, and being able to transfer their knowledge appropriately. The following interview excerpts exemplify teaching boosters:

An effective teacher needs a comprehensive knowledge of the English language namely, grammar, lexicon, and culture. (SHT 5)

A good English teacher is someone who is good at classroom management. He/she uses a wide range of techniques which keep language learners focused, and on task. (IT 2)

A good EFL teacher is someone who is prepared not only to teach language learners but also to ensure that they have food for thought at the end of the class. (UT 1)

One of the most significant EFL teachers’ trait is confidence. If the teacher is well prepared, they can boost their confidence in teaching. (JHT 6)

3.5. Accountability
The second theme on which EFL teachers provided a wide range of characteristic was accountability. This quality is closely associated with boosters. The EFL teachers highlighted the importance of having up-to-date pedagogical knowledge, providing supplementary materials, and being creative in teaching. However, EFL teachers at universities seemed to be less willing to count some qualities related to accountability as important for effective language teachers. For example, they did not focus on addressing students’ learning problems. Likewise, they did not welcome managing class time to cover materials based on the course objectives. The following two quotes typify EFL teachers’ perceptions of accountability:

A quality of a good EFL teacher is to be resourceful, and creative. In addition, an effective teacher provides a variety of authentic supplementary materials to make teaching and learning more enjoyable. (SHT 6)
Table 12. The results of Tukey HSD post hoc on different qualities of good language teachers across different teaching contexts

| Dependent Variable | (I) Institution | (J) Institution | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------|------|------------------------|
|                    |                |                | Lower Bound           | Lower Bound|
| morality           | Language institute | senior high school | .1699*                | .05665     | .015 | .0237 .3161          |
|                    |                | junior high school | .1532*                | .05772     | .041 | .0043 .3022          |
| care and enthusiasm| Language institute | senior high school | .1613*                | .04901     | .006 | .0348 .2878          |
|                    |                | junior high school | .2015*                | .04888     | .000 | .0753 .3276          |
|                    |                | university      | .1396*                | .05013     | .029 | .0102 .2689          |
| accountability      | Language institute | junior high school | .2969*                | .05266     | .000 | .1611 .4328          |
|                    |                | senior high school | .3305*                | .05252     | .000 | .1950 .4661          |
|                    |                | university      | .3338*                | .05386     | .000 | .1949 .4728          |
| evaluation          | Language institute | junior high school | .2564*                | .07471     | .004 | .0636 .4491          |
|                    |                | senior high school | .3567*                | .07451     | .000 | .1645 .5490          |
|                    |                | university      | .2748*                | .07641     | .002 | .0776 .4720          |
| booster             | Language institute | junior high school | .1073*                | .03839     | .028 | .0082 .2064          |
|                    |                | senior high school | .1120*                | .03829     | .019 | .0132 .2108          |
| attention           | Language institute | junior high school | .1775*                | .04674     | .001 | .0569 .2981          |
|                    |                | senior high school | .1675*                | .04662     | .002 | .0472 .2878          |
|                    |                | university      | .1332*                | .04781     | .029 | .0098 .2565          |
Good EFL teachers have a sound and up-to-date knowledge of teaching methods and a profound understanding of how students learn different language skills. They try hard to identify and resolve students’ learning problems. (UT 4)

3.6. Attention
Concerning attention, EFL teachers showed a variety of variations. Although they believed that good teachers should pay attention to all students, EFL teachers at universities and high schools were less favorably disposed towards involving students in the learning process and establishing opportunities for class participation and discussion. Generally, EFL teachers in language institutes believed that one of the qualities of a good language teacher is to pose questions to probe language learners’ thinking and to get them to expand on their opinions. They also stated that a good EFL teacher facilitates rich class discussion and provides a friendly classroom atmosphere that is open to questioning. The following interview excerpts clarify their perspectives of attention:

Good language teachers should treat learners equally dealing with the same situation. They need to get students involved in classroom activities. Effective EFL teachers afford opportunities for students to work collaboratively to create questions. (IT10)

An effective teacher initiates and sustains discussion-based teaching as it creates opportunities for students to ask questions and to practice different language skills. (UT 10)

3.7. Morality
Besides academic qualities, there are some personality traits which EFL teachers considered vital in becoming a good language teacher. EFL teachers at language institutes and high schools frequently reported that good language teachers should avoid exerting authority in the classroom. Along the same lines, EFL teachers at language institutes held that a good teacher delivers materials, creates an engaging atmosphere for student learning, and wield authority in ways which stimulate student involvement in classroom activities. EFL teachers at universities, in contrast, believed that a good language teacher should usually steer the class in a strict manner. Two of their accounts are as follows:

A good language teacher needs to show great patience and profound understanding when dealing with language learners. (IT 6, JHT 4)

A great EFL teacher is always respectful to students. This teacher values students’ opinions and provides a friendly learning environment for all learners. Students feel safe to voice their ideas and concerns. (SHT 1)
3.8. Care and enthusiasm
A vast majority of EFL teachers in language institutes stated that being friendly and motivating, having a good sense of humor, being energetic, and instilling self-confidence in learners are integral to being a good language teacher. Nevertheless, these qualities were less attended to by high school and university EFL teachers. For example, when asked about qualities of a good language teacher, one typical comment by an EFL teacher (IT 9) in language institute was, “good teachers should create a friendly environment conducive to effective teaching and learning”. Another response to the same question by another EFL teacher in language institute (IT 3) was, “effective language teachers should be motivated, confident, and enthusiastic about the subject matter they teach”.

3.9. Evaluation
Unlike the questionnaire results in which qualities related to evaluation were ranked last between EFL teachers across educational contexts, the interview findings recorded a high level of evaluation between EFL teachers working in language institutes, junior/senior high schools. University teachers, however, did not accord high priority on evaluation-related issues. When asked about this theme, university teachers reported that classroom assessment issues matter little. To illustrate, a university EFL teacher (UT 8) pointed out, “I usually administer a mid-term exam as well as an end of the term exam. I am pressed for time to perform ongoing classroom assessment.”

3.10. Attendance
In terms of attendance, junior/senior high school teachers gave more weight to punctuality and the presence of students in the classroom than those in language institutes and universities. The following interview excerpts were taken from two EFL teachers from junior high school and university, respectively. The following two quotes can better clarify the point:

We are usually asked to be punctual. School administrators often check on us. As teachers, we also make students be in class on time. We also need to monitor the presence of students in the classroom. (JHT 10)

Sometimes it is necessary to monitor students’ presence in the classroom. Although I must attend the class on time, it is not a big deal. I mean, we are not usually monitored on this. (UT 9)

4. Discussion
The current study sought to explore the qualities of an effective EFL teacher as perceived by EFL teachers in language institutes, junior/senior high schools, and universities and to examine the possible differences between EFL teachers working in the educational contexts in question in terms of their perspectives of qualities of good language teachers. The results of the descriptive statistics of the first research question exploring EFL teachers’ perceptions of qualities of good language teachers revealed that teaching boosters and care and enthusiasm recorded the highest mean scores. Similar results were observed in Barnes and Lock (2013) study in which professional and pedagogical skills were perceived as important qualities for language teachers by students. Similarly, Pettis (1997) stated that effective English teachers should be extremely knowledgeable. Also, good knowledge of language subsumed under teaching boosters in our study perfectly matched the findings of Park and Lee (2006), Brosh (1996), and Kalebic (2005) in which most of the teachers perceived the knowledge of language to be an important quality in characterizing a good EFL teacher. Concerning enthusiasm, our findings are in accord with those of Wood (1998) and Metcalfe and Game (2006) who found that effective language teachers should be enthusiastic about teaching. Likewise, as argued by Korthagen (2004), and Brosh (1996), enthusiasm was found to be a quality of utmost importance for an effective English language teacher.

Moreover, evaluation received the lowest mean from the seven categories between EFL teachers in the educational contexts. The lowest priority for evaluation may indicate a highly performance-driven nature of language teaching system in Iran requiring oral skills rather than vocabulary and grammar-based examinations.
The results of descriptive statistics also showed that item 21 (is well-prepared for the class) and item 12 (enjoys teaching) were the highest-ranked qualities of good EFL teachers. It seems that these characteristics do not vary with the educational context. Item 12 (enjoys teaching) is suggestive of teacher enthusiasm. As mentioned earlier, enthusiasm has been viewed as an important quality of an effective language teacher. Likewise, preparation for class is integral to effective teaching. In this regard, Zhang (2009) maintained that preparedness is an effective quality for being a good language teacher.

The second research question investigated if there were significant differences between EFL teachers working in language institutes, junior/senior high schools, and universities with regard to their perceptions of qualities of a good EFL teacher. The results of the MANOVA suggested that language institute EFL teachers were significantly different from senior/junior high school teachers in terms of morality. One line of explanation for the significant difference between EFL teachers in language institutes and those in junior/senior high schools might be that language institutes are private institutions where qualities associated with morality are of paramount importance in attracting and retaining more language learners. Generally, not only do EFL teachers in private language institutes maintain a better rapport with their students, but they also treat them in a more flexible manner. Affective attributes are usually more attended to by EFL teachers in private language institutes. As put forth by Pennings et al. (2014), students’ motivation and their progress are directly affected by the student-teacher interpersonal relationship.

Also, EFL teachers in language institutes differed significantly from university, senior/junior high school teachers regarding accountability, evaluation, care and enthusiasm, and attention. Likewise, they were significantly different from junior/senior high school teachers with respect to the booster. This could be due to inappropriate teaching policies in the Iranian educational system in high schools, and the lack of sufficient in-service/pre-service teacher training programs. Additionally, supervisors in private language institutes usually urge their language teachers to be more accountable, attentive, and caring. It seems that EFL teachers serve different purposes in various educational contexts including high schools, universities, and language institutes. As such, their perceptions of the qualities of an effective language teacher differ considerably. However, on a statistical level, no significant differences were observed between EFL teachers in these teaching contexts concerning attendance. One explanation might be that features related to attendance including punctuality and student presence in the classroom are the basic requirement for teachers in all educational settings. The weight attached to any of these features does not vary across the institutions.

The results of semi-structured interviews substantiated those of the questionnaire. However, minor disparities were found with respect to the weight and significance attached to the qualities of a good EFL teacher. Evaluation as a case in point was the least-ranked quality of an effective EFL teacher, whereas it received considerable attention by EFL teachers in the interviews. This minor difference can be attributed to the biased responses EFL teacher provided during interviews to imply that they were effective teachers.

5. Conclusion and implications
This study probed into the qualities of effective English language teachers as perceived by EFL teachers in four different educational contexts including language institutes, junior/senior high schools, and universities. It also investigated the potential differences between EFL teachers’ perspectives of qualities of an effective language teacher across these educational contexts.

The results of the study demonstrated that EFL teachers in the educational settings under study set great store by teaching boosters, and care and enthusiasm. EFL teachers should strive to pay more attention to other dimensions of a good language teacher. Along the same lines, teacher preparedness and teacher enthusiasm as two sub-categories of teaching boosters and enthusiasm respectively were the most salient qualities of good EFL teachers. Here again, EFL teachers are
suggested to make their teaching as enjoyable as possible to enhance student learning. Teachers are also required to be adequately prepared for the class.

Also, language institute EFL teachers showed to be significantly different from senior/junior high school teachers in terms of morality. The indication is that EFL teachers in high schools should be encouraged to pay heed to features associated with morality. In this regard, they need to develop a good rapport with their students and to be more flexible and respectful to students.

Also, EFL teachers in language institutes were significantly different from university, senior/junior high school teachers regarding accountability, evaluation, care and enthusiasm, and attention. Likewise, they differed significantly from junior/senior high school teachers with respect to the booster. As a result, EFL teachers in senior/junior high schools, and universities are suggested to capitalize on these qualities. They are also suggested to reflect upon their professional as well as personality features to optimize their teaching practice.

The results of the current study carry important implications. It can heighten language teachers’ awareness concerning the qualities of an effective language teacher. Consequently, this may assist them in finding ways of being a more effective language teacher. The study also holds implications for, pre/in-service teacher training program to broaden prospective language teachers’ knowledge concerning teaching practices and qualities of effective language teachers. The finding of the study may conduce to the policymakers and teacher educators in the Ministry of Education to familiarize prospective EFL teachers with the qualities of a good language teacher. It also affords an opportunity for language teachers in high schools to extend their knowledge through reflection on the results of the current study.

In light of the results of this study concerning personality-related issues, teacher educators and language teachers should draw on advances in educational psychology. Furthermore, the results of the study can provide insight into teacher recruitment programs in different educational contexts assisting researchers in creating tools that can efficiently select eligible language teachers.

Informed of the limitations of a self-report questionnaire as well as semi-structured interviews, future researchers are suggested to conduct classroom observation to explore how language teachers interact with their learners in the classroom in order to shed more insights into qualities of good language teachers and to identify the potential areas of discrepancy.

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## Characteristics of Successful EFL Teachers Questionnaire

| Items                                                                 | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| 1. Has a good knowledge of the subject matter.                       |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 2. Has up to date information.                                       |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 3. Is friendly towards learners.                                      |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 4. Respects learners as individuals.                                 |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 5. Understands learners well.                                         |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 6. Has the ability to manage the classroom well.                     |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 7. Is good-tempered.                                                 |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 8. Is patient.                                                       |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 9. Has a sense of humor.                                             |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 10. Is aware of new teaching methods and strategies.                 |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 11. Uses extra instructional materials such as tapes, movies, etc.   |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 12. Enjoys teaching.                                                 |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 13. Is interested in the subject matter he/she is teaching.         |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 14. Has self-confidence.                                             |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 15. Has the ability to stimulate learners in learning.               |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 16. Knows his/her learners well (talents, abilities, weaknesses).    |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 17. Uses good learners to help weaker ones.                          |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 18. Gives a sufficient number of assignments.                        |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 19. Holds an adequate number of tests.                              |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 20. Is prompt in returning test results.                             |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 21. Is well-prepared for the class.                                 |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 22. Is careful and precise in answering learners’ questions.         |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 23. Emphasizes important materials and points.                       |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 24. Is a dynamic and energetic person.                               |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 25. Pays attention to all students.                                 |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 26. Encourages learners in different ways (encouraging diversity).    |                   |          |                |       |                |

(Continued)
| Items                                                                 | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| 27. Speaks clearly with the correct pronunciation.                   |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 28. Has a clean and tidy appearance.                                 |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 29. Presents materials at the learners' level of comprehension.       |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 30. Enters the classroom on time.                                    |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 31. Leaves the classroom on time.                                    |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 32. Respects all ideas.                                              |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 33. Has the subject matter well-organized according to the number of sessions and hours. |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 34. Is impartial in grading.                                         |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 35. Has creativity in teaching.                                      |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 36. Involves all students in learning.                               |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 37. Creates equal opportunities for learners' participation in the classroom. |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 38. Creates opportunities for discussion and asking questions.        |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 39. Avoids discriminating against learners.                          |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 40. Attends to the learners' problems in learning.                   |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 41. Divides class time appropriately for the different language skills according to the purposes of the course. |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 42. Avoids making fun of the learners                                |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 43. Avoids being too strict.                                         |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 44. Creates self-confidence in learners.                             |                   |          |                |       |                |
| 45. Emphasizes the presence of students in the classroom.            |                   |          |                |       |                |
Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. What do you think are the qualities of a good language teacher?

2. What is your description of a good language teacher?

3. Which of the following characteristics make an English language teacher the best: knowledge of the language, knowledge of pedagogy or his/her personality and the way he/she treats the students? Why?

4. Do you think you are a good English language teacher? Why? Why not?