Effective Language Teachers as Persons: Exploring Pre-service and In-service Teachers' Beliefs

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Abstract

Despite the body of studies on different dimensions of effective teaching, the literature provides little evidence of research on effective teachers as persons. To narrow this gap, 50 pre-service and in-service English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers participated in this study to explore their beliefs about the attributes of effective teachers as persons. The data were collected through a mixed methods design using interviews and a Likert-scale questionnaire informed by the effective-teachers-as-persons component of the framework of effective teachers proposed by Stronge (2007). The analysis of both sources of data indicated that pre-service teachers valued personal teacher characteristics such as patience, kindness, friendliness, strictness, knowledge, enthusiasm, and fairness. In addition, they believed that an effective teacher uses reflection to improve teaching. On the other hand, in-service teachers mostly emphasized teachers' knowledge and energy, sense of humor, and friendliness. They further assumed that effective teachers as persons display positive attitudes toward teaching, create a warm classroom environment, and treat learners equally. A comparison of pre-service and in-service teachers' questionnaire responses revealed significant differences in their beliefs regarding, inter alia, creating a supportive classroom climate, using humor, taking pleasure in teaching, maintaining high-quality work, and seeking professional development. These findings suggest that in-service teachers possess different beliefs about the characteristics of effective teachers as persons due to their teaching experience, whereas pre-service teachers hold beliefs rooted in their immediate background as learners.

Keywords: belief, effective teachers, pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, teachers as persons

Introduction

The nature of effective teaching has been an overriding ambition for all stakeholders in language education over the past few decades. Tsui (2009) holds that the concept of effective teaching and, by extension, effective teachers is elusive and differs from one culture to another. To make it more complicated, effective teaching is simply defined as what effective teachers perform. Despite this blurred picture and the representation of effective teaching as a fuzzy notion (Pinto, Portelli, Rottman, Pashby, Barrett, & Mujawamariya, 2012), many researchers have pursued to develop a set of common cores to characterize effective teachers. As the concept of effective teaching is multidimensional (Farrell, 2015a), to address what constitutes the identity of effective teachers, different frameworks and models have been developed from varied perspectives and with varied underlying rationales and purposes such as effective teacher evaluation frameworks (e.g. Danielson, 2007; Stronge, 2007), teacher knowledge base (Richards, 1998; Roberts, 1998), teacher competencies/expertise (Richards, 2010), and even teacher identity (Pennington & Richards, 2016). As effective teachers are entities-in-the-making, they undergo a constant learning process in which they are constructed and reconstructed by a complex interplay of variables in the language education context such as students, curricula, school issues, peers, managers, stakeholders, and supervisors (Stronge, Tucker, & Hindman, 2004). They are also affected by their own teaching experience, reflective practice (Farrell, 2015a, Moore, 2004), cultural background, and personal history (Richards, 2014). All these variables shape and reshape their beliefs about effective teaching. As beliefs affect practices, it could be expected that the beliefs teachers bring into classrooms are partly a predictor of effectiveness of their teaching practices.

One dimension central to the identity of effective teachers is their personality or what Stronge (2007) calls teachers as persons. Whereas other dimensions of effective teachers, including classroom management, planning and preparation, and implementing instruction, have been greatly explored, few studies on the attributes and characteristics of effective teachers as persons have featured in the literature (Evans & Tribble, 2015; Park & Lee, 2006; Pickford & Brown, 2006; Vargas, 2013). The under-researched status of teachers as persons is more evident when teachers' beliefs about their effectiveness as persons are taken into account. Accordingly, there is still considerable need to discover how teachers conceive of and idealize effective teachers as persons across contexts, cultures, and content areas. Against this backdrop, this study aimed to explore pre-service and in-service English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' beliefs about effective teachers as persons in the Iranian EFL context and convergences and divergences in their beliefs.

Literature Review

Effective Teachers

The identity of effective teachers have been depicted in various terms such as "teachers with competencies/expertise" or "competent teachers" (Richards, 2010, Zhao, 2010), "effective teachers" (Danielson, 2007; Farrell, 2015a; Senior, 2010; Strong, Gargani, & Hacifazlioglu, 2011; Stronge, 2007), "good teachers" (Inan, 2014), and "professional teachers" (Oder, 2014). According to an early conceptualization by Doyle (1986), effective teachers strive to prepare before the class, install the rules at the beginning of an educational semester, clarify the goals of learning, and consistently accept the responsibility to help their learners. To explicate the

concept, Thompson (2008) posits that effective teachers possess well-built teaching skills and pleasant personalities. He also states that building rapport, choosing interesting activities and tasks, being able to teach, and coming up with appropriate answers to learners' unpredicted questions are some of the characteristics of effective teachers. Richards (2010) outlines ten dimensions of teacher knowledge and skills that make the foundation of effective teacher competence and performance in language teaching. Among others, these dimensions include language proficiency, content knowledge, teaching skills, and contextual knowledge. Reviewing studies on effective teachers (e.g. Muijs, 2006; Muijs & Reynolds, 2001), Farrell (2015a, p. 3) argues that "effective teachers possess particular characteristics and knowledge such as superior subject matter knowledge, good classroom management skills, good instructional skills and many more diverse behaviors." In his concluding statement, however, Farrell considers continuous engagement in reflective practice as one critical competency possessed by effective teachers.

Besides these conceptualizations, a number of researchers underscored attributes like presenting new information, communicating smoothly with learners, using specific patterns to talk to learners, and scaffolding learners' achievements as the way effective teachers ought to act inside the classroom (Borich, 1992; Walberg, 1986). In other studies, effective teachers were characterized as those who provide their learners with different materials and a lot of pair work and group work activities, which are performed in their classes and monitored thereafter in order for feedback to be given by teachers (Borich, 1992; Creemers, 1994; Creemers & Kyriakides, 2006). Moving beyond the listing of effective teacher attributes, a few studies addressed the possible venues, such as teacher education courses and teachers' own professional development, as critical influences in effective teaching by improving teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge (Cohen & Hill, 2001; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011).

While many researchers proposed a list of characteristics, others embedded them in categories and sub-categories to develop models and frameworks of effective teaching. Among these, the frameworks of effective teachers developed by Danielson (2007) and Stronge (2007) seem to be more inclusive as they represent and categorize a wide range of effective teacher characteristics. In her framework, Danielson (2007) included 22 components wrapped up in the following four domains of teaching responsibility: (a) planning and preparation, (b) classroom environment, (c) instruction, and (d) professional responsibilities. In this framework, effective teachers are termed "distinguished," which makes them distinctive from their peers. In order to elicit what is known as effective teaching, a framework was proposed by Stronge (2007) in which the qualities of effective teachers and concepts related to teacher effectiveness were organized and summed up in six main categories with over 80 attributes: (a) prerequisites of effective teaching, (b) the teacher as a person, (c) classroom management and organization, (d) planning and organizing instructions, (e) implementing instructions, and (f) monitoring learners' progress and potential. These two frameworks by Danielson and Stronge spearheaded the move from the discrete conceptualization of myriad features characterizing effective teachers to the multi-dimensional categorization of effective teachers' characteristics.

In the studies reviewed below, many of these categorized characteristics proposed by the preceding frameworks can be observed. In general, these studies on effective teachers show that they prioritize instructions, set their expectations of learners, provide learners with opportunities to learn, engage learners in activities, have a sense of humor, possess classroom

management abilities, have good field knowledge, have fewer classroom disruptions, develop better relationships with their learners, enter into nonverbal communication with learners, and manage the classroom climate (Creemers & Reezigt, 1996; Inan, 2014; Kyriakides, Campbell, & Gagatsis, 2000; Steele, 2010; Strong, Gargani, & Hacifazlioglu, 2011).

Among the earlier studies on effective teachers, Weinstein (1989) asked pre-service teachers to define effective teachers. They reported that good teachers care about their learners, understand them, and treat them in a friendly manner. In a research carried out by Witcher, Onwuegbuzie, and Minor (2001), pre-service teachers stated that effective teachers are learner-centered, enthusiastic for teaching, ethical, skilled at classroom management, knowledgeable, and able to adapt different teaching methodologies. In another study by Murphy, Delli, and Edwards (2004), 61 pre-service teachers' beliefs on characteristics of effective teachers and good teaching were explored. The findings showed that good teachers are caring, tolerant, inspiring, and well-behaved. They also concluded that teachers who speak softly, act ordinarily, and behave strictly are not assumed to be necessarily effective.

Focusing on pre-service teachers' beliefs, Kalebic (2005) investigated the highly important characteristics of effective teachers. Verbal and communicative skills, knowledge about the culture of the target language, awareness of methods and theoretical concepts of that language, ability to apply proper teaching strategies, dealing with challenging situations, assessing learners' knowledge, and responding to learners' needs and wants were the main characteristics of effective teachers revealed by the study. Also, a mixed-methods investigation was carried out by Witcher, Jiao, Onwuegbuzie, Collins, James, and Minor (2008) to explore the extent to which pre-service teachers' perceptions are in line with what makes an effective teacher. Learner-centered classrooms and classrooms in which a friendly relationship exists amongst the teacher and learners were held to be the signs of practices an effective teacher does. Moreover, the participants in Witcher et al.'s study believed that effective teachers are committed to ethics and are knowledgeable and professional in their career. Unlike Kalebic (2005) and Witcher et al. (2008), Babai Shishavan and Sadeghi (2009) investigated the characteristics of effective English teachers from the perspective of in-service EFL teachers. The participants pointed to the preferable characteristics of an effective teacher as patience and flexibility, affection, positive attitudes toward learners, intelligence, creativity, and familiarity with English and its culture.

In the 2010s, studies have continued to shed more light on what effective teachers are (e.g. Al-Mahrooqi, Denman, Al-Siyabi, & Al-Maamari, 2015; Bakx, Koopman, Kruijf, & den Brok, 2015; Koutrouba, 2012; Maddamsetti, Flennaugh, & Rosaen, 2018; Marom, 2018; Maulana, Helms-Lorenz, & Van de Grift, 2017; Morrison & Evans, 2018; Oder, 2014; Tavakoli & Baniasad-Azad, 2017; Wichaee, 2010). In a study on in-service teachers' beliefs, Wichaee (2010) elicited data from 53 full-time teachers on what singles out effective teachers. They believed that possessing a good command of English is the most important item which enables teachers to efficiently carry out their teaching practices. They also argued that being able to communicate with learners and set a suitable and clear learning goal could be considered to be two other features of effective teachers. Koutrouba (2012) examined the beliefs of Greek secondary education teachers of effective teaching through a structured questionnaire. The teachers' views on effective teaching and on the behavior and personal traits included flexibility in knowledge dissemination and sociability in communication, the display of friendliness, open-mindedness, tactfulness, supportiveness, respect, and humor. Selecting Estonian English

language teachers as her participants, Oder (2014) found that the teachers valued, inter alia, time-efficient lesson planning, maintaining good discipline in the classroom, and considering the individuality of the students. Using a mixed-methods approach with interviews, observations, and questionnaires as data collection tools, Tavakoli and Baniasad-Azad (2017) explored Iranian high school teachers' conceptions of effective teaching. As part of the data, interview findings revealed teachers' beliefs on three main dimensions of teacher effectiveness: managing a learner-focused classroom, being a professional learner, and being strict and examination-oriented.

Effective Teachers as Persons

A teacher's personality is one dimension of his identity (Pennington & Richards, 2016). In the framework proposed by Stronge (2007), this dimension is part of six dimensions which characterize effective teachers. The second dimension in this framework, which was the main focus of this study, is termed "the teacher as a person" to depict effective teachers as persons. It was delineated by Stronge that caring teachers sympathetically listen to their learners to show that they care, understand their learners' problems and tend to talk about their personal lives, and try to perceive learners' characteristics first as people and second as learners. Another important ingredient of effective teaching was proposed to be enthusiasm for teaching and learning, which leads to maintaining the positive relationship between teachers and learners and encouraging learners to achieve more. Another important facet of effective teachers is that they work together while having a positive attitude toward the teaching profession. They also volunteer to mentor new teachers, accept new ideas, invest in their education, regularly self-evaluate themselves, think about their performance, apply new approaches and methods in their lessons, and receive feedback from others to improve their performance.

Identifying effective teachers' personality traits or teachers as persons has been the focus of a small number of studies, resulting in a varied range of traits such as being permissive, dogmatic, direct, and concerned (Creemers, Kyriakides, & Antoniou, 2012). As noted by Creemers et al. (2012), the early studies of teachers' personal characteristics focused on the psychological aspects of an effective teacher, including personality features (e.g. tolerance, intolerance, frankness, and nervousness), enthusiasm for teaching, understanding, and dedication. While some researchers aimed to depict good teachers only in terms of their command of the subject area, use of appropriate teaching methods and skills, and in general content and pedagogical content knowledge, others highlighted personal characteristics including teacher charisma, compassion, sense of humor, and honesty (Zhang & Watkins, 2007). Notwithstanding this body of research on the attributes of effective teachers as persons, few studies have explored both pre-service and in-service EFL teachers' beliefs about teachers' effectiveness as persons though these beliefs are critical as teachers' classroom practices are likely to be influenced by them. To bridge this gap, this study aimed to explore pre-service and in-service teachers' beliefs about characteristics of effective teachers as persons. To fulfill the purpose of this research, the following research question was raised: What are pre-service and experienced in-service EFL teachers' beliefs about effective teachers as persons?

Method

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of Persian-speaking pre-service (n=25) and in-service (n=25) EFL teachers who were selected based on convenience sampling and years of their teaching experience. The first group included all pre-service teachers without any teaching experience who were taking their teacher training course, which was three months in duration, in order to start their profession as English language teachers. The in-service teachers had been teaching English as a foreign language more than five years in different English language institutes and hence were regarded to be experienced teachers. The pre-service teachers' age ranged from 18 to 28, and there were 18 females and 7 males. At the time of the study, 15 of them had degrees or were students in the fields related to English, 4 of them had studied sciences, and 6 of them had a school diploma. As for in-service teachers, their years of experience ranged from 5 to 25. To maximize the impact of teaching experience, pre-service teachers were compared with experienced in-service teachers in their beliefs about effective teachers as persons.

Instrumentation

This study set out to explore beliefs of EFL teachers toward the characteristics of effective teachers as persons. To elicit these beliefs, a mixed-methods design comprising interviews as the qualitative tool and a questionnaire as the quantitative tool was employed.

To explore teachers' beliefs qualitatively, semi-structured interviews with a general open-ended question on the attributes of effective teachers as persons were conducted. The interview phase was completed before the questionnaire phase to avoid providing the participants with pre-determined characteristics of teachers as persons reflected in the items of the questionnaire and to elicit more data on their beliefs about effective teachers as persons. In the interviews, the following question was asked: What are the characteristics of effective teachers if we just consider a teacher as a person?

As a quantitative data collection tool to assess the teachers' beliefs about the qualities of an effective teacher as a person, the first dimension of the Likert scale questionnaire developed by Stronge (2007) was used. The original questionnaire consisted of five main dimensions measuring effective teachers: the teacher as a person, classroom management and discipline, planning and organizing instructions, implementing instructions, and monitoring learner progress and potential. The first dimension, as the focus of this study, was "the teacher as a person," originally comprising seven components of (a) caring, (b) showing fairness and respect, (c) interactions with learners, (d) enthusiasm, (e) motivation, (f) dedication to teaching, and (g) reflective practice. In the current study, the three closely related components (d), (e), and (f) were merged into one. Thus, the modified dimension consisted of five components and 25 items.

As the participants in this study were selected from the context of Iran, some minor changes were made to the wording and content of the questionnaire to meet the context and ensure the teachers' understanding of the items. To do that, the items of the questionnaire were subjected to two experts' judgments and were loudly read to five pre-service and five in-service teachers

in order to pinpoint any probable language and content ambiguity. Moreover, the reliability analysis was carried out through Cronbach's Alpha, which was found to be the high index of .86.

Data Collection and Analysis

In both groups, first, the interview question was asked individually to avoid providing participants with any extra information about the characteristics of effective teachers in advance. Following that, a hard copy of the questionnaire was given to the participants or, in cases, a soft copy of the questionnaire was emailed to them. The participants could choose to fill it out each way they felt more comfortable. They were asked to express their agreement or disagreement about the characteristics of effective teachers on a five-point Likert scale: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree.

As the exploration of the research question involved both qualitative and quantitative data, two different types of analyses were conducted. Content analysis, informed by Stronge's (2007) framework, was used as the qualitative approach to analyzing the data from the interviews. However, the framework acted as a general guide and hence attributes not embodied in the framework were extracted as well. In the quantitative part, the participants' answers to the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and percentages of their choices of each point on the Likert scale. Furthermore, an independent-samples t-test was run to measure whether there was a significant difference between the beliefs of pre-service and in-service teachers on effective teachers as persons.

Results

The main purpose of this study was to investigate pre-service and in-service EFL teachers' beliefs on effective teachers as persons through interviews and a questionnaire. The findings from each data source are reported below.

Interview Findings

Interview data revealed beliefs about effective teachers as persons held by pre-service and in-service teachers. The analysis of the data led to extracting themes representing the crucial personality traits of effective teachers. Table 1 shows these 20 themes, their frequencies, and their percentages. In general, the findings indicate wide divergence, despite common cores, in the pre-service and in-service teachers' beliefs about many attributes of teachers as persons. In what follows, the common cores along with beliefs expressed by either group are described.

Table 1. *Pre-service Teachers' (PT) and In-service Teachers' (IT) Beliefs about Attributes of Effective Teachers as Persons*

Attributes	Frequency PT/IT	Percentage PT/IT
Patience	16/3	64/12
Kindness	15/4	60/16
Friendliness	10/6	40/24
Strictness	6/4	24/16

Knowledge	6/10	24/40
Giving learners responsibilities	5/4	20/16
Being well-behaved and respectful	5/0	20/0
Having enthusiasm for teaching	4/0	16/0
Being loving and caring	4/4	16/16
Being a different person in classes	3/0	12/0
Fairness	3/0	12/0
Being energetic	0/10	0/40
Understanding learners' needs	0/6	0/24
Patience	16/3	64/12
Kindness	15/4	60/16
Friendliness	10/6	40/24
Strictness	6/4	24/16
Knowledge	6/10	24/40
Giving learners responsibilities	5/4	20/16
Being well-behaved and respectful	5/0	20/0
Having enthusiasm for teaching	4/0	16/0
Being loving and caring	4/4	16/16
Being a different person in classes	3/0	12/0
Fairness	3/0	12/0
Being energetic	0/10	0/40
Understanding learners' needs	0/6	0/24

(1) Attributes mutually stated by pre-service and in-service teachers

Among the 20 attributes of effective teachers, seven attributes, in varying degrees, fell in the zone of the common beliefs of both pre-service and in-service teachers: *patience*, *kindness*, *friendliness*, *strictness*, *knowledge*, *giving learners responsibilities*, and *being loving and caring*.

Patience was the most frequent attribute stated by 16 pre-service teachers (64%), whereas only 3 in-service teachers (12%) believed in it. As reflected in the two excerpts below, pre-service teacher 15 (PT15) maintained "*patience is very important.*" In the same vein, in-service teacher 13 (IT13) commented that "*patience is very important.*"

Sometimes a teacher needs to repeat things over and over, because of that, patience is very important and also a good teacher is always a friend. *[PT15]*
Good teachers are good managers and can handle all situations. They are also patient while dealing with learners. *[IT13]*

The second theme was observed to be *kindness* with a frequency of 15 (60%) in pre-service teachers' beliefs. In contrast, 4 (16%) in-service teachers thought it is important to be kind in the classroom. PT5's and IT3's statements evidence the two groups' belief in teacher kindness:

I think they should be kind and patient to repeat things to get the students to understand. They need to be creative. *[PT5]*
A good characteristic of a good teacher is that the teacher should be very kind and somehow an artist because teaching seems to be a mixture of art and kindness. Teachers shouldn't be such robots, just come to class, teach and go. *[IT3]*

Another high-frequency theme was *friendliness*, which 40% of the pre-service and 24% of in-service teachers perceived to be a requisite feature of a teacher as a person. According to their responses, effective teachers are friendly and try to create a friendly environment in their classes. This feature is brought to light in the use of "*be friends with their students*" and "*be friendly but it doesn't mean they should be too friendly*" by PT25 and IT4, respectively:

They should know what they want to teach and study that. They should have knowledge and information. They should be friends with their students and be patient. *[PT25]*
They should be friendly but it doesn't mean they should be too friendly. I think the sense of humor is a must; however, we can also have some strictness. *[IT4]*

Along with being friendly, teachers in this study believed that *strictness* should come along with friendliness to make the classroom environment more influential. In total, 24% of pre-service and 16% of in-service teachers stated their belief in this:

They need to be both friendly and strict. Both of them should be taken into account. *[PT7]*
Sometimes, strictness needs to be a part of their characteristics. *[IT12]*

Comparing pre-service and in-service teachers' interview responses showed that *knowledge* was maintained to be important by 24% and 40% of them, respectively. Pre-service teachers maintained that any type of knowledge, such as content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, plays an important role in effective teachers' classes. The comments by PT24, IT2, and IT4 echo this point:

This kind of teacher is knowledgeable about language and teaching.*[PT24]*
To some extent, knowledge is very important in terms of what the teacher knows about the subject being taught in this case English or the second language.*[IT2]*
They should be a collection of all good things. You can't summarize them in one or two characteristics but the most prominent one could be being knowledgeable about the content and the way they can convey the message.*[IT4]*

Giving learners responsibility was another attribute which both groups pointed to in their interviews (20% of pre-service and 16% of in-service teachers). This theme dealt with the need to stress learners' roles in classrooms:

I suppose effective teachers make learners responsible to help one another. *[PT18]*
Making students get involved in the process of teaching is vital. *[IT5]*

As the last commonly held attribute, both pre-service and in-service teachers equally posited that *being loving and caring* is important in being an effective teacher as a person (n=4, 16%). The phrases "care about students' lives" and "love for students" in the statements by PT19 and IT24 signify their belief in this attribute:

These teachers are able to manage the class. They are kind and patient and care about students' lives. *[PT19]*

The most important factor an effective teacher must have is passion and love for students. A good teacher must be passionate and also compassionate. *[IT24]*

(2) Attributes specifically stated by pre-service teachers

Four attributes of effective teachers as persons were specified by pre-service, not in-service, teachers in this study. They included *being well-behaved and respectful*, *having enthusiasm for teaching*, *being a different person in classes*, and *fairness*.

The first two attributes were *being well-behaved and respectful* (n=5, 20%) and *having enthusiasm for teaching* (n=4, 16%). What PT20 refers to as "respect everyone" and PT10 describes as "interested in teaching" manifest two pre-service teachers' beliefs in these two attributes, correspondingly:

I think that they are even-handed and respect everyone. *[PT20]*
A good teacher is interested in teaching. She or he is kind and patient. *[PT10]*

The last two attributes only found in pre-service teachers' interview responses, with equal weight given to each, were *being a different person in the class* and *fairness* (n=3, 12%). From pre-service teachers' viewpoints, effective teachers are those with a completely different personality in the classroom. They believed that in order to be effective and hence successful, teachers need to be different in their classes. Regarding *fairness*, it was the personality trait which was recognized as an important feature possessed by effective teachers. Excerpts below from responses given by PT2 and PT23 represent these two features.

An effective teacher should have another personality as a teacher. There should be two personalities. *[PT2]*
I think a good teacher is interested in learning, skillful, a positive person, patient, fair, and kind to all students. *[PT23]*

(3) Attributes specifically stated by in-service teachers

The interview findings showed that 9, out of the 20, attributes were only stated by the in-service teachers in this study: *energy*, *sense of humor*, *understanding learners' needs*, *holding positive attitudes toward teaching*, *communication skills*, *motivating learners*, *being a predictor*, *being an artist*, and *management skills*.

Half of the in-service teachers (n=10, 40%) underlined *being energetic* as a requisite feature of effective teachers as persons. Both IT2 and IT7 recurrently used the words "*energy*," "*energetic*," and "*active*" to highlight this attribute:

First of all, the amount of energy that the person has and the way she controls this energy and the way this person projects himself as a human being, the teacher has to be able to control the energy and pays attention to some moments that the energy should be very high and in some moments it should be very low. *[IT2]*
He or she should be very energetic and positive, and really active in the class. *[IT7]*

Following *being energetic*, in order of frequency, come the three attributes of *sense of humor*, *understanding learners' needs* (n=6, 24%), *holding positive attitudes toward teaching* (n=6, 24%), and *communication skills* (n=4, 16%), which captured the attention of a smaller number of the in-service teachers. The three excerpts below from IT4, IT13, IT7, and IT10 reveal these attributes:

I think the sense of humor is a must; however, we can also have some strictness. *[IT4]*
In fact, there are a lot of qualities to be considered for effective teachers but I think the most prominent one is to understand students' needs and characteristics. *[IT13]*
He or she holds a positive attitude toward his or her career. *[IT7]*
I suppose they should communicate with their students easily, I mean they need to have a good and effective public relation. *[IT10]*

The least frequent features (n=3, 12%) representing in-service teachers' beliefs about effective teachers as persons consisted of *motivating learners*, *being a predictor*, *being a player*, and *management skills*. The key words "*motivate*" [IT1], "*chess player*" [IT2], "*predict*" [IT2], and "*managers*" [IT13] indicate these attributes:

Actually the thing is they have to motivate their students. Motivation plays a huge role in teaching as a person or human being. *[IT1]*
They are able to plan ahead like a chess player who I believe can be a good teacher. Because they are able to plan ahead, they are able to predict and anticipate problems and solutions. And the more the teacher can see into the future of class that hasn't been taught yet, of course it will be more effective for him or her. *[IT2]*
Good teachers are good managers and can handle all situations. *[IT13]*

There were further attributes which were not considered as crucial as those listed above. These attributes, which were below 10% in their recurrency, were *fairness*, *professionalism*, *being active in the classroom*, *being a guide*, *being a problem solver*, *being a constant enabler*, and *being a good listener*.

Questionnaire Findings

The questionnaire measured pre-service and in-service teachers' beliefs about five components of effective teachers as persons, i.e. (a) caring, (b) showing fairness and respect, (c) interactions with learners, (d) enthusiasm, motivation, and dedication to teaching, and (e) reflective practice. In what follows, the findings akin to each component are presented.

Table 2 illustrates teachers' beliefs about the first component of the questionnaire, i.e. *caring*, and includes descriptive statistics for mean scores, standard deviations (SDs), and percentages of responses to each point on the scale. This component is composed of the three attributes of effective teachers as persons: showing active listening to learners, showing interest in learners' lives outside the classroom, and creating a supportive and warm classroom atmosphere.

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics for the Questionnaire Component of Caring*

Components	Items	Level of Experience	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
							Percentages		
Caring	Shows active listening to learners.	PT	4.32	.55	0	0	4	60	36
		IT	4.45	.50	0	0	0	44	56
	Displays interest in and concern about the learners' lives outside the language institute.	PT	3.96	1.09	4	4	24	28	40
		IT	3.84	1.28	4	16	16	20	44
	Creates a supportive and warm classroom climate	PT	4.20	.70	0	0	16	48	36
		IT	4.72	.45	0	0	0	28	72

Note: (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree)

As shown in Table 2, 96% of the pre-service teachers agreed with showing active listening to learners (M=4.32). Over two-thirds (68%) of them emphasized effective teachers' displaying interest in learners' lives outside the institute (M=3.96), whereas only 8% disagreed. Moreover, a great majority of them (84%) believed creating a supportive and warm classroom climate to be a caring-related attribute of effective teachers (M=4.20). On the other hand, results from in-service teachers' responses showed that 100% of them agreed that an effective teacher listens to learners actively (M=4.45). A majority of them (66%) emphasized the need to display interest in and concern about the learners' lives outside the language institute in order to be a caring teacher (M=3.84); however, 20% of them did not agree with this. The last item, creating a supportive and warm classroom climate, was assumed crucial by all in-service teachers (100%; M=4.72).

The second component of the questionnaire included five items on *showing fairness and respect*. As presented in Table 3, 92% (M=4.16) of the pre-service teachers and 88% (M=4.20) of the in-service teachers believed in responding to learners' misbehaviors on an individual level and not in the presence of other learners as an attribute of effective teachers. Helping learners to respect each other was another feature of effective teachers which 72% (M=4.08) of the pre-teachers and 88% (M=4.24) of the in-service teachers agreed on. Treating learners equally (pre-service: 96%; M=4.40; in-service: 92%; M=4.56), creating situations for all learners to succeed (pre-service: 96%; M=4.44; in-service: 100%; M=4.60), and showing respect to all learners (pre-service: 92%; M=4.32; in-service: 96%; M=4.56) were the statements about effective teachers which all or almost all pre-service and in-service teachers considered as the requisite attributes of effective teachers.

Table 3. *Descriptive Statistics for the Questionnaire Component of Showing Fairness and Respect*

Components	Items	Level of Experience	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
							Percentages		
Shows Fairness and Respect	Responds to learners' misbehavior on an individual level and not in the presence of other learners.	PT	4.16	.85	0	8	0	52	40
		IT	4.20	.91	0	8	8	40	44
	Helps learners to respect each other.	PT	4.08	.86	0	4	24	36	36
		IT	4.24	.72	0	0	16	48	40
	Treats learners equally.	PT	4.40	.57	0	0	4	52	44
		IT	4.56	.58	0	0	4	32	60
	Creates situations for all learners to succeed.	PT	4.44	.58	0	0	4	48	48
		IT	4.60	.50	0	0	0	40	60
	Shows respect to all learners.	PT	4.32	.62	0	0	8	52	40
		IT	4.56	.58	0	0	4	36	60

Note: (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree)

The third component dealt with *interactions with learners*, which embodied five items. As illustrated in Table 4, 100% (M=4.40) of the pre-service teachers and 96% (M=4.60) of the in-service teachers agreed that an effective teacher maintains teacher roles while being friendly. Giving learners responsibility was the attribute which comparatively a smaller, but still a great, number of the participants (pre-service: 76%; M=4.04; in-service: 88%; M=4.24) held to be needed. This downward trajectory was more vividly observed in pre-service (64%; M=3.64) and in-service (44%; M=3.48) teachers' lower agreement with the assumption that effective teachers know learners' interests both in and out of the institute. Compared with the other items in this category, valuing what learners say (pre-service: 92%; M=4.20; in-service:: 88%; M=4.24) and interacting in a fun manner and telling jokes when appropriate (pre-service: 76%; M=3.80; in-service:: 92%; M=4.36) fell dominantly in the middle range, on which most participants agreed on.

Table 4. *Descriptive Statistics for the Questionnaire Component of Interactions with Learners*

Components	Items	Level of Experience	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
							Percentages		
Interactions with learners	Maintains teacher roles while being friendly.	PT	4.40	.50	0	0	0	60	40
		IT	4.60	.57	0	0	4	32	64
	Gives learners responsibility.	PT	4.04	.73	0	0	24	48	28
		IT	4.24	.66	0	0	12	52	36
	Knows learners' interests both in and out of the institute.	PT	3.64	1.03	4	8	28	40	24
		IT	3.48	1.08	0	16	40	20	24
	Values what learners say.	PT	4.20	.57	0	0	8	64	28
		IT	4.24	.66	0	0	12	52	36
	Interacts in a fun manner and tells jokes when appropriate.	PT	3.80	.86	0	12	12	60	16
		IT	4.36	.63	0	0	8	48	44

Note: (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree)

Enthusiasm, motivation, and dedication to teaching, as the forth component of the questionnaire, included nine items (Table 5). Among the pre-service teachers, the items on the

attributes of effective teachers which received the highest agreement included showing an interest in language teaching materials (M=4.52; 96%), possessing a positive attitude about teaching (M=4.44; 96%), and spending time outside the institute to prepare (M=4.40; 96%). The degree of agreement was higher among the in-service participants as 100% of them agreed that an effective teacher takes pleasure in teaching (M=4.72), maintains high-quality work (M=4.72), possesses a positive attitude about teaching (M=4.72), and seeks professional development (M=4.64).

Table 5. *Descriptive Statistics for the Questionnaire Component of Enthusiasm, Motivation, and Dedication to Teaching*

Components	Items	Level of Experience	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
					Percentages				
Enthusiasm, Motivation, and Dedication to Teaching	Shows an interest in language teaching materials.	PT	4.52	.58	0	0	4	44	52
		IT	4.60	.57	0	0	4	32	64
	Takes pleasure in teaching.	PT	4.32	.74	0	0	16	40	44
		IT	4.72	.45	0	0	0	28	72
	Maintains high-quality work.	PT	4.40	.64	0	0	8	48	44
		IT	4.72	.45	0	0	0	28	72
	Possesses a positive attitude about teaching.	PT	4.44	.58	0	0	4	48	48
		IT	4.72	.45	0	0	0	28	72
	Spends time outside the institute to prepare.	PT	4.40	.57	0	0	4	52	44
		IT	4.48	.58	0	0	4	44	52
	Participates in activities taking place in the institute.	PT	3.96	.84	0	4	24	44	28
		IT	4.20	.81	0	0	24	32	44
	Accepts responsibility for learner achievements.	PT	4.12	.66	0	0	16	56	28
		IT	4.40	.64	0	0	8	44	48
	Seeks professional development.	PT	4.00	.81	0	0	36	32	32
		IT	4.64	.48	0	0	0	36	64
	Finds, implements, and shares new instructional strategies with other teachers.	PT	3.96	.93	0	4	36	24	36
		IT	4.08	.90	0	4	24	32	40

Note: (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree)

The last component in the questionnaire on effective teachers as persons was *reflective practice*, which included three items (Table 6). Knowing areas of personal strengths and weaknesses as the first reflection-related item received the agreement of 88% (M=4.40) of the pre-service teachers and 100% (M=4.36) of the in-service teachers. Almost all pre-service teachers (96%; M=4.64) and all in-service teachers (100%; M=4.52) believed that using reflection to improve teaching was a feature of effective teachers. As with the first two items on reflection, setting high expectations for classroom teaching was the third item on which most pre-service and in-service teachers agreed (pre-service: 88%; M=4.44; in-service: 92%; M=4.28).

Table 6. *Descriptive Statistics for the Questionnaire Component of Reflective Practice*

Components	Items	Level of Experience	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
							Percentages		
Reflective Practice	Knows areas of personal strengths and weaknesses.	PT	4.40	.70	0	0	12	36	52
		IT	4.36	.48	0	0	0	64	36
	Uses reflection to improve teaching.	PT	4.64	.56	0	0	4	28	68
		IT	4.52	.50	0	0	0	48	52
	Sets high expectations for classroom teaching.	PT	4.44	.71	0	0	12	28	60
		IT	4.28	.54	0	0	8	60	32

Note: (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree)

Following the descriptive analyses presented above, independent-samples t-tests were run on the 25 items constituting the five components of the questionnaire in order to measure the probable differences between pre-service and in-service teachers' beliefs regarding effective teachers as persons. The t-test results indicated significant differences in five items.

A significant difference was found between the two groups' beliefs on creating a supportive and warm classroom climate (t=3.08, df=48, p=.004). This item fell within the first component of effective teachers as persons entitled *caring*. The magnitude of the difference in the means was .52, and eta squared was large (.14). The t-test result for interacting in a fun manner and telling jokes, as part of the *interactions with learners* component, indicated a significant difference (t=2.60, df=48, p=.01), with the magnitude of the difference in the means to be .56 and moderate eta squared of .12. The third and fourth areas of significant differences, based on the t-test results, were in two items from the component of *enthusiasm, motivation, and dedication to teaching*: taking pleasure in teaching (t=2.27, df=48, p=.02) and maintaining high-quality work (t=2.02, df=48, p=.04). The magnitudes of the differences in the means were .40 and .32, and eta squared were at the moderate level of .09 and .07, respectively. The last item significantly differentiating between pre-service and in-service teachers' beliefs was seeking professional development, an item belonging to the *reflection* component (t=3.61, df=48, p=.002). The magnitude of the difference in the means was .64, and eta squared was very large (.21).

Discussion

This study set out to probe the characteristics of effective teachers as persons from the vantage points of pre-service and in-service teachers. Content analysis was implemented to analyze the responses to the interview question, and descriptive and inferential statistics were conducted to analyze the questionnaire data. The two data sources revealed the two groups' common beliefs and varying degrees of weight they attached to the attributes of effective teachers as persons.

As the interview findings showed, out of the 20 themes or attributes extracted from the interviews, only seven were among the common beliefs held by the two groups. They included *patience*, *kindness*, *friendliness*, *strictness*, *knowledge*, *giving learners responsibilities*, and *being loving and caring*. These are common features which all teachers, irrespective of their teaching experience, may point out. These shared beliefs may be the result of both pre-service and in-service teachers' past experience as learners, educational background, and the values expected of effective teachers across cultures. This is in line with

Richards' (2010) observation that a teacher's view of good teaching reflects his or her cultural background and personal history. Among these attributes, *giving learners responsibility* and *being loving and caring* are also the constituents of Stronge's (2007) framework whereas the other five features, i.e. *patience*, *kindness*, *friendliness*, *strictness*, and *knowledge*, are not part of this framework. This indicates that the framework is not sufficiently inclusive to embody these attributes although they have been stressed not only in the current study but in other research findings (e.g. Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, & James, 2002; Murphy et al., 2004). For instance, Minor et al. (2002) found knowledge to be a feature of effective teachers. In Murphy et al.'s (2004) study, being caring and tolerant were reported to characterize effective teachers. In addition, Babai Shishavan and Sadeghi (2009) noted that patience is an important factor in effective teaching since there is sometimes a need for multiple times of explanation.

Besides common beliefs, the interview findings showed attributes highlighted only by either pre-service or in-service teachers. Those specific to pre-service teachers' thinking were *being well-behaved and respectful*, *having enthusiasm for teaching*, *being a different person in classes*, and *fairness*. As these were not mentioned by experienced in-service teachers may show that experienced teachers consider these to be fundamental to the identity of every teacher rather than only the effective ones. By contrast, pre-service teachers have a more immediate access to their histories as learners and non-situated cognition about effective teacher so as to think that these are fundamental to effective teachers at the expense of the other attributes. These attributes have also been reported in a few other studies on teachers' perceptions. Witcher et al. (2001) found that their student-teacher participants believed that effective teachers are to be enthusiastic for teaching. Well-behaved manners were among the features of effective teachers noticed in Murphy et al.'s (2004) study. Besides being found in these studies, three of the above attributes, except for *being a different person in classes*, are among the second (*showing fairness and respect*) and the fourth (*enthusiasm, motivation, and dedication to Teaching*) components of Stronge's (2007) framework. This further indicates the partial validity of the framework and substantiates the claim that our interview findings triangulated the data from the questionnaire, which was adapted from Stronge's framework.

From the 20 attributes extracted from the interviews, a large number (n=9; 45%) were those specified only by the in-service teachers: b*eing energetic, sense of humor, understanding learners' needs, holding positive attitudes toward teaching, communication skills, motivating learners, being a predictor, being an artist*, and *management skills*. Noticing and valuing this set of complicated and higher-order professional attributes is likely to be largely the result of years of teaching experience. A large amount of continued feedback from colleagues, supervisors, learners, and parents in conjunction with learners' and supervisors' evaluation and many years of teacher experience tells experienced in-service teachers that using humor, motivating learners, understanding learner needs, and being a predictor count for effective teaching. The literature documents myriad studies emphasizing the significance of humor in the second language classroom (Bell, 2012; Bell & Pomerantz, 2016; Petraki & Nguyen, 2016; Pomerantz & Bell, 2011). The findings of Petraki and Nguyen (2016) revealed that teachers acknowledged various several benefits of humor in EFL classrooms. Dörnyei (2001) regards humor as a motivational teaching strategy. Moreover, understanding learner needs is key to the development of language curriculum and central to mainstream trends in language education such as communicative language teaching and TBLT (Munby, 1978; Van Avermaet & Gysen, 2006); therefore, effective teachers consider needs analysis as the first step in the process of

syllabus design. Motivating learners was another attribute stressed by the in-service teachers. Learner motivation and raising its rate by teachers have been a recurrent theme in second language acquisition studies (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Cheung, 2018; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009; Elliott, Hufton, Willis, & Illushin, 2005; Oakes, 2013; Park & Lee, 2006). For instance, Park and Lee (2006) reported that effective teachers motivate learners to increase the quality of teaching-learning. Finally, owing to years of teaching experience, only experienced in-service, rather than pre-service teachers, are more cognizant of the essentiality of being a predictor as an effective teacher to plan one's teaching and to reflect for action in order to predict the probable problems. Also, an experienced teacher is well aware that effective teachers are artists who can manage the teaching game which entails ad hoc decision-making in face of classroom events based on sound pedagogical reasoning. This echoes Richards' (2010) statement that L2 teachers need to be equipped with the skill of anticipating any problems and making proper decisions in L2 teaching. Effective decision making, in turn, requires pedagogical reasons. Effective teachers are able to base their decision on more appropriate pedagogical reasoning (Mason, 2002; Richards, 2010). The high professionalism underlying these attributes is within the experiential access and cognition of experienced in-service teachers. Despite their ties to effective teaching, some of these attributes like sense of humor, being energetic, and being a predictor are not clearly embedded in Stronge's (2007) framework.

The second source of data in this study was the questionnaire adapted from Stronge's (2007) multi-dimensional framework in which one dimension is teachers as persons. The dimension, as adapted in this study, consists of five components, each made up of a number of items or attributes: *Caring, Showing fairness and respect, Interactions with learners, Enthusiasm, motivation, and dedication to teaching*, and *Reflective practice*. Most pre-service teachers (96%) expressed their agreement with seven attributes topping the list. Among them, a few were given weight in the interviews as well such as fairness, friendliness, and enthusiasm for teaching. Although all these features received the agreement of the in-service teachers by a large extent, these teachers gave more importance and unanimous agreement (96-100%) to taking pleasure in teaching, seeking professional development, knowing areas of personal strengths and weaknesses, and using reflection to improve teaching. This comparatively increased awareness evolving in experienced in-service teachers' during their professional career signifies that teaching experience is implicated in teachers' beliefs. It is reasonable to expect experienced teachers to be so much concerned about taking pleasure in teaching as they might have experienced exhaustion from long teaching hours and the instances of burnout among their peers or themselves. Studies show that teachers, after a period of teaching, are in danger of burnout, which undermines their effectiveness or, inversely, low-effectiveness causes burnout (Cephe, 2010; Oakes, Lane, Jenkins, & Booker, 2013). Cephe (2010) argues that teachers should be protected against burnout in order to be effective in teaching, which entails the development of strategies to cope with burnout (e.g. Oakes et al., 2013; Szigethy, 2014). As to seeking professional development, this attribute is the more manifest concern of in-service, rather than pre-service, teachers, who are constantly engaged in more effective language teaching due to their own pursuit of continued professional development and/or pressure exercised by supervisors and learners. The last two attributes, namely knowing areas of personal strengths and weaknesses and using reflection to improve teaching, indicate a critical aspect of effective teachers. As Farrell (2008, 2012, 2015a, 2015b) has accentuated over the years and in his recent reflections on his years of studies on reflective teaching (Pang, 2017),

reflection is tied with teachers' continued professional development and the vital need for effective teaching.

Finally, the results of both descriptive and inferential statistics run on the items of the questionnaire revealed many areas of differences in the importance pre-service and in-service teachers attached to attributes constituting effectives teachers as persons, with five of them being statistically significant. Many studies have shed light on pre-service or in-service teachers' beliefs about effective teachers, as described in the literature review presented early in this text. However, the differences between pre-service and in-service teachers' beliefs about effective teachers in general and teachers as persons in particular have remained rather unnoticed. Among rare studies focused on these differences, Murphy et al. (2004) compared beliefs of pre-service and in-service teachers about good teachers and good teaching. They found that pre-service and in-service teachers ranked four characteristics the same (being patient, boring, polite, and ordinary) while there were differences in their ranking of the others. Murphy et al. suggest a developmental trend in teachers' beliefs about effective teachers. This accords with the current study in which the experienced in-service teachers were inclined toward more complicated attributes which mark professionalism and effectiveness in language teaching.

Conclusions and Implications

This study illustrated the beliefs of pre-service and in-service teachers about effective teachers as persons. The findings show that pre-service and experienced in-service teachers bring a number of similar personality traits into focus. However, there are some differences in the weight they attach to being caring, having interactions with learners, sense of humor, possessing enthusiasm, motivation, and dedication to teaching, with in-service teachers underscoring these features more than pre-service teachers. From what the pre-service teachers believe, it can be concluded that they have narrow conceptions about the characteristics of effective teachers as they largely focus on a limited number of attributes at the expense of other essential qualities of teachers as persons. This narrow conceptualization is rooted in the small cognitive repertoires, limited mainly to their pre-service education and past experience as learners. This hinders a deep awareness of many aspects of effective teachers as persons, which are comparatively less manifest than other aspects of effective teachers such as classroom management and planning as preparation. By contrast, experienced in-service teachers' beliefs are rooted in a rich body of resources, including those available to pre-service teachers, in conjunction with years of teaching experience, continued reflection during many teaching years, peer communication, learner feedback, and feedback from supervisors' debriefing sessions. To conclude, beliefs about effective teachers as persons are greatly complicated by teaching experience.

The findings from this study imply the need to be aware of pre-service and in-service teachers' beliefs about the characteristics of effective teachers as persons to enhance, through pre-service and in-service teacher education courses, their cognition about what shapes the identity of effective teachers as persons and how this is realized in teachers' teaching practice. The findings have also implications for teachers' planning for learners' increased language learning. As research shows, the centrality of teachers' beliefs about their effectiveness exerts a decisive influence on learners' learning. In view of this, language teachers should build a right picture of effective teachers as persons to facilitate learners' learning by being cognizant of the five

components of effective teachers as persons: *Caring, Showing fairness and respect, Interactions with learners, Enthusiasm, motivation, and dedication to teaching*, and *Reflective practice*. The possession of these features aids teachers in creating a teaching and learning classroom atmosphere in which learners are engaged more effectively. Finally, the great importance attached to teacher reflection as a salient feature of effective teachers as persons is in line with the rich literature on teachers' reflective practice. Teacher reflection should be encouraged by teacher educators and teacher education programs as reflection has the twin functions of helping teachers be more effective teachers as persons and being a venue for raising teachers' awareness of their identity as persons.

This study has its own limitations, which should be considered in the interpretation of the findings and in future research. First, the gender of the participants was not considered as a possible source of variation in the teachers' beliefs about effective teachers as persons. Moreover, the participants' fields of study did not count in this research. Accordingly, further studies could be conducted to examine the impact of teachers' gender and background education on their beliefs. In this study, the number of participants was limited to 25 teachers in each group as it was quite difficult to find more pre-service EFL teachers available for this research purpose. Future studies might be conducted with more teachers to make the findings more generalizable. Finally, this study capitalized on the findings from interviews and a questionnaire to explore teachers' beliefs. In future studies, richer data can be gathered about teachers' beliefs about effective teachers as persons if teachers' dairies and narratives are used for data collection.

Acknowledgments

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