Perceptions of Effective Language Teaching in Iran

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Signature: ارفع *M. Arfa*

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Dedicated to Afshin Parsi

Abstract

This thesis reports a study of a group of Iranian young learners, their parents and language teachers on their perceptions of the characteristics of effective language teachers in public schools.

The research methodology adopted was a mixed method and therefore, the first part of the study was conducted through a questionnaire survey of 190 students studying in the 8th grade of public schools in Iran. This was followed by interviews with a sample of these learners, their parents and their teachers.

The data emerging from the study demonstrates that the stakeholders involved in this study hold perceptions across a wide range of areas concerning language teacher effectiveness including teachers' language proficiency, class management and affective factors. There was some general agreement within and among the stakeholders' views; however, at times the dimensions slightly varied. On the whole, the main concerns were related to teachers' knowledge and ability to speak English and teachers' willingness to insert activities beyond the prescribed syllabus in particular activities related to speaking skill, and also additional activities that would prepare the students for their exams. Teachers' ability to build the right rapport with the students was also very much in demand. An unanticipated finding of this study was the perceived connection between teachers' appearance and in particular the way they dressed and their effectiveness. Some discrepancies relating to how these should be actually practised in the class do exist. Finally, this thesis goes on to discuss some of the implications of these findings both for English language teaching in Iran and for future research. Although the findings of this study are not conclusive and not prescriptive, they reveal the importance of exploring the views of stakeholders to make language teaching a more pleasant experience for all, which can in turn lead to a more effective teaching and learning.

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List of Abbreviations

BERA: British Educational Research Association

AASA: American Association of School Administrators

CELTA: Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FL: Foreign language
According to Richards and Schmidt (2010, p.224) a foreign language is "not used as a medium of instruction in schools, and is not a medium of communication in government, media, etc." This at times can be compared to second language **(SL).** They define SL as "any language learned after one has learnt one's native language. However, when contrasted with foreign language, the term refers narrowly to a language that plays a major role is a particular country or region" (p.520). **L2** can be considered both an FL and an SL.

IELTS: International English Language Testing System

ILD: Individual Learning Differences

KET: Key English Test

L1: First language

L2: SL and/or FL

MOE: Ministry of Education

OfSTED: Office for Standards in Education

PET: Preliminary English Test

PTA: Parent-Teacher Association

SL: Second language

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language

TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

TKT: Teacher Training Kit

YL: Young learner

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

A few years ago at a language teaching methodology class our discussion led to the characteristics of effective language teachers. My first thought was that this very much depended on the teaching methodology adopted. Later on and after having the opportunity to reflect a little more, I began wondering if the methodology was really the most important element in determining the characteristics of the most effective language teachers. Methodology seemed to answer many questions; however, at the same time it gave all classes following the same teaching methodology the same identity, regardless of who the teachers and the students were and the context in which learning was taking place. Then thinking about Iran, the context I was living and working in, several other issues such as the influence of the existing policies were also brought into perspective. The more I thought about the issue, the more I realized that there was so much to learn about it. And the more I looked for answers, the more I became aware of the insufficiency of adequate answers particularly in my country and also as far as young language learners were concerned. Now the question that engaged my mind concerned the characteristics that effective language teachers of young learners should possess in order to be considered effective. After some investigation I decided that to answer this question first the characteristics of effective language teachers should be sought. I began looking for the answer in the relevant literature and realized that even though there were some very strong studies, still there was need for much more research. Besides, some of the existing studies concerning language teacher effectiveness suggested that local context played a very important role in determining the effectiveness. I could find very few studies conducted in Iran about this subject. It was this which encouraged me to carry out this study. And given that according to the statistics provided by the Ministry of Education, during the school year 2006-2007 there were 15,422,085 students studying at schools in Iran, the importance of understanding teacher effectiveness is clearly important.

1.2 Stakeholders and their Perspectives

For many different reasons, such as more accessibility to foreign countries for many people, English being a lingua franca, and the technological advancements in

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particular, the Internet and social media, the number of people who need or like to learn English is increasing. Young learners are no exception. Sometimes, due to their circumstances such as the probability of their immigration to other countries, or their parents' demands, there is real motivation to learn English. Learning a language is part of the curriculum in most educational jurisdictions, and in non-English speaking countries this foreign language is usually English. Therefore, exploring the most effective methods to teach and learn English as a second language is important.

At the same, from the 20th century the attention of language teaching/learning has been shifted to the needs, desires and interests of the learners to make language learning a more pleasant and effective experience. As Doff (1990, p. 9) argues, "an important recent development in methodology has been the shift of emphasis from the teacher to the learner." When there is so much attention paid to the learners, young and adult, then their views and perceptions should be sought and as much as possible included in the programmes. Teachers who can play vital roles in the lives of the learners and who are in daily and direct contact with them should be informed of these views and helped to take the information into account when educating them.

What learners and teachers bring to class, which can be very much inspired by their upbringing, experience and the environment outside the class, seem to influence what happens in the class to make learning occur in the most pleasant and satisfying way. When learners are young, then it can be assumed that a large part of their beliefs is inspired and formed in their homes and by their families. Therefore, exploring the beliefs and perceptions of parents along with the teachers and students seems to be a very good place to start.

My professional observation is that in Iran a great number of those who teach English to young learners have not had sufficient training for teaching this age group and in lines with modern approaches to teaching English. Some may even know the relevant theories to language teaching; however not many can translate them into classroom practice. They are not aware of the demands, needs and interest of their young learners and do not know how to elicit that information and use it efficiently even if they gain access to that.

Overall, there is a large body of theory on how language teachers should teach. At the same time there is the reality of what happens in the classroom. Both are important, but finding a way to link them is a challenge that requires the participation of experts, and the real stakeholders. Therefore, research into characteristics that constitute an effective language teacher has been an ongoing trend. Richards (1993) believes,

> To prepare effective language teachers it is necessary to have a theory of effective language teaching, including a specification of the key variables in effective language teaching and how they are interrelated. Such a theory is arrived at through the study of the teaching process itself. This theory should form the basis for the principles of second language education, which is thus dependent upon the following sequence: (a) Describe effective language teaching processes; (b) develop a theory of the nature of effective language teaching and (c) develop principles for the preparation of language teachers. (p.4)

What Richards has proposed is very important and highlights the significance of "effectiveness". However, it is also important not to just study the teaching process but also to understand how key stakeholders perceive effectiveness. For the same reasons, then, hearing the voices of the stakeholders in their own contexts is necessary.

Instead of viewing classrooms as places where theories and teaching methodologies are practised, modern language teaching/learning has shifted to taking more account of the needs, desires and interests of learners to make language learning a more effective and at the same time enjoyable experience. Language learning is not assumed to necessarily take place in a "linear manner" (Tudor, 2001, p.132) as it was traditionally seen; and therefore, the modern classroom environment is influenced by learners, teachers and the context. As Hall (2011, p.3) puts it, language classrooms are not to be seen as "homogeneous entities"; and therefore, "the individuality of the learners" should not be overlooked. Tudor (2001) also acknowledges this and adds that teachers, too, take their identity to class regardless of what curriculum prescribes; and therefore, their beliefs are important. Considering that there is a two way relationship between belief and practice, Hall (2011), when exploring classroom interactions, argues that hearing the voices of all the stakeholders may provide better insights into L2 classrooms. These stakeholders include teachers, learners and, in the case of young learners, their parents.

Finally, Peck (1979, p. 263) summarizes this all by emphasizing the importance of respecting "the students' attitudes about what "school" should be like". She then continues:

> Studying the learners', teachers', parents' and school authorities views on an ideal language teacher at the same time can show us how convergent or possible how close these are and then the least that can be done would be briefing each group and providing the necessary information., which in the long run may lead to a better learning of the language and even more importantly in a humanitarian environment.

Taking these points into consideration, the focus of this study is to give voice to the stakeholders to establish perceptions of the characteristics of effective EFL teachers teaching in Iranian secondary schools, firstly through the eyes of the learners themselves, and then by discovering the perceptions of their language teachers and their parents. In short, this study seeks to explore the answer to the following research question:

What are stakeholders' perceptions of language teacher effectiveness in secondary schools in Iran?

1.3 Original Contribution to Knowledge

Many studies have been conducted and much has been said on teaching English to young learners; however, the systematic study of teaching to young learners in some countries, including Iran, is still in its infancy. In many contexts even the teaching of language to young learners is not receiving due attention (Faklova, 2000; Nikolov & Curtain, 2000). However, to many language teachers and researchers, teaching a second language to young learners is much more than teaching them a language. As Farago & Szesztay (2010) put it, it is educating them about the world, and motivating them to explore the world and care for it. Therefore, it should be taken very seriously and for that to happen more and more studies in this regard are needed in different parts of the world.

At the same time, Williams and Burden (1997) critique some the existing studies done on identifying the characteristics of effective teachers based on which guidelines for action are provided. They believe that these guidelines,

> have proved surprisingly unhelpful to most teachers seeking to improve their professional practice. This is partly because such factors are themselves open to a variety of interpretations (e.g. What exactly is meant by "enthusiasm"?), but also because in the real world teachers come in all shapes and sizes. With a wide range

of different personalities, beliefs and was of working. They also come from different backgrounds and belong to different cultures. We would, therefore, expect them to work in different ways that suit their own personalities and situations. (p. 47)

This shows that systematic studies that attend to delicate details are still very much required.

Another noteworthy point is that until recently teacher effectiveness and language teacher effectiveness were linked to the desired outcome, which was usually assessed through the class achievement. In these models class climate and students' feelings were not taken into account. Little by little, the aspect of rapport between teachers and students has been introduced into teaching and thus teachers' ability to establish that has been investigated. Accordingly, what the current study is trying to offer is placing emphasis on this aspect of language teacher effectiveness alongside academic attainment. The requirements for the teachers being able to relate to the students can be very context-based. Therefore, the present study attempts to illustrate different aspects of effective language teaching as viewed by a particular group of learners, teachers and parents. In other words, in this study the Iranian stakeholders' perception of effective language teachers is being investigated. Here, 'perception' represents the beliefs, ideas and notions concerning the characteristics that they believe an effective language teacher in their context should possess. This is in line with recent approaches to foreign language learning/teaching that are mainly communicative and student-centred. Accordingly, the importance of perception and knowledge of it are of significance in forming a desirable language class (Bell. 2005; Brown, 2009; William and Burden, 1997). As Kumaravadivelu (2012) also emphasises, teaching is much more than learning teaching methods; and therefore, factors such as learner perception, culture and teacher cognition should not be overlooked. I hope that by studying these multiple perspectives, and how they are constructed, I will gain a richer understanding of what stakeholders' understand as important in creating an effective language classroom, and that this, in turn, might inform the development of professional practice.

On the whole, in a country like Iran, where English is a foreign language, there is limited access to modern facilities for many, and younger students do not have the opportunity to practise what they are learning in authentic situations, the teacher is

considered the heart and soul of learning. Teachers are normally burdened with a great number of issues to think about and deal with. Hence relevant studies that take their circumstances into account can help teachers gain better insight into their job. Then they may be able to cope with their students and the situations they are working in more efficiently.

The present study is exploratory and interpretive and is not aiming at providing definitive answers. However, it is hoped that through the findings, a better theoretical understanding of the perceptions of teacher effectiveness will be gained, and in particular, an understanding of how effectiveness is conceptualised by Iranian stakeholders will be reached. This might complement, or stand in contrast to understandings offered by other studies in Western learning contexts.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of 10 chapters. The chapter that follows this introduction provides an overview of education in Iran in general and then specifically concentrates on language teaching and the roles of stakeholders in that context. Chapter three seeks to review the relevant literature to provide the foreground for the study. At the same time it demonstrates that even though research into language teacher effectiveness is not scarce, there is still the need for more studies in non-Western contexts. Finally, it shows that attempts to investigate the perspectives of learners, teachers and parents in one study are very rare. Chapter four outlines the methodology adopted for carrying out this study. Chapters five, six, seven and eight, present the data. Chapter five elaborates on the quantitative data, gathered through student questionnaires. Then the next three chapters focus on the qualitative data collected during the interviews with the teachers, students and parents and offers a detailed analysis of the perception of stakeholders concerning language teacher effectiveness. Chapter nine returns to the theoretical aspect and the relevant literature and seeks to elaborate on possible answers to the main research question based on the data collected. Finally, chapter 10 summarizes all the study, making suggestions about the possible implications and also for further research.

2. A Historical Overview of Education in Iran

2.1 Introduction

Iran is a country located in the Middle East with a population of more than 70 million, 68.4% of whom are city dwellers. The official language of Iran is Persian, also known as Farsi, which is an Indo-European language. The country is divided into 26 provinces, many of which have their own languages, dialects and accents; however, since the only language of instruction at schools is Persian, regardless of the province one lives in, everyone studies the school subjects in the official language. The two main foreign languages taught at schools are Arabic and English.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) is responsible for schools and the Ministry of Science & Higher Education is assigned to higher education and scientific research.

2.2 History of Education in Iran

Education has a long history in Iran. Ancient documents from the Achaemenids Dynasty (550 BC) show that a lot of importance was placed on people gaining knowledge. During that time, governments first established religious schools for their own affiliates where, besides religion, law, medicine and architecture were taught. Boys from the lower social classes learned horse-riding, shooting and the art of telling the truth. All boys learned military skills, swimming, hunting and farming.

Later on in the 4th or 5th century and during the reign of the Sassanid Empire, Jundaishpour (also known as Gundeshapour) University was established. According to Durrant (1950) in this university literature, philosophy, astrology and medicine were among the subjects taught. Scholars from different parts of the world were invited to teach at that university and students from various countries were also admitted to study there. Scientific material was translated from other languages to Pahlavi, the language spoken at the time in Iran. Price (2001) says that later and after the emergence of Islam in Iran the Academy survived as an institute of higher learning.

The first European style school, Darolfonoon, was established in 1850. It paved the way for many more schools with similar ways of working to be established later on.

It should be noted that the modernization continued at a faster rate during the Pahlavi Dynasty (1925-1979), when a systematic educational program with elaborate policy statements was developed by the ministry of education and implemented at public schools (elementary and secondary) and some higher education centers and institutions. (Farhady, et al 2010, p.2)

After the Islamic Revolution in 1979, some changes were made to the education system and to educational materials taught both at schools and universities and generally speaking, even though the features for modern schools and universities have been maintained, these changes have been made to make the school more appropriate for an Islamic environment.

2.3 Statistical Information Concerning Schools and Students in Iran

First of all it is worth noting that according to the site of the Centre for Iranian Statistics in 2011 the population of Iran was 75,149,669. In a report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran, Achievements of The Islamic Republic of Iran (2006), the statistical information about the number of students, teachers and schools has been provided. Table 2.1 below shows some of that information.

Students, teachers and schools	Numbers
Elementary school students (grade 1-5)	6 ,000,000
First grade students	1,200,000
Secondary school students (grades 6-8):	4,300,000
High schools and pre-university students(9-12)	4,600,000
Teachers and instructors	1,180,000
Classrooms	455,000

Table 2.1 Number of students, teachers and schools in Iran (2006)

Table 2.2 outlines some statistical information concerning the number of schools and school cycles based on the Annual Report of the MOE (2008, p.55). According to the same report in the school year 2008-2009, 29,367 English language teachers were teaching in the schools across Iran.

School cycle		Public	Private	Total
Pre-school		16,317	2633	18,950
Primary		59439	3260	62,699
Secondary		28239	2518	30,757
High school	Academic	14301	2496	16,797
	Technical/vocational	1531	503	2034
	Work/knowledge	2840	551	3391
	Pre-university	4628	2009	6637
Total		127,295	13,970	141,265

Table 2.2 Number of Public and Private Schools in Iran in 2008

2.4 Iranian Schooling System at Present

Iranian students go to school for nine months per year and for 12 years. Schools are not coeducational, thus boys and girls do not go to the same schools. Except for the primary school, boys are always taught by male teachers and girls are mostly taught by female teachers. The language of instruction, regardless of which province the schools are located in, is Persian. Classes are quite formal. According to *Article 30* of the Constitution of Iran, "The government must provide all citizens with free-education up to secondary school, and must expand free higher education to the extent required by the country for attaining self-sufficiency".

Iran's Educational Measurement Organisation (*Sazman-e Sanjensh-e Amoozesh-e Keshvar)*, has divided the country into three different regions, "privileged, semi-privileged, and deprived" (Maftoon et al., 2010, p.12). There are both public and private schools available in most if not in all parts of the country. Public schools are free, while private ones are not. The curricular structure, including the timetable, program and books of all the school subjects, is stipulated by the Ministry of Education; and therefore, throughout the country, regardless of going to public or private schools, pupils study exactly the same books and follow the same kind of syllabi. Normally, the teachers are also recruited by the same Ministry.

Parents appear to have two main reasons for choosing private education for their children. Firstly, these schools usually offer different types of activities and extra-curricular classes, such as language, sports, and remedial classes (for example, for mathematics or science) after school hours and during summer holidays. For these classes schools have more freedom in choosing their teachers, books and hours of

instruction. In addition, most of these private schools have special and complicated procedures for selecting students to make sure only the most competent students get to their schools. As for primary school, usually there is an interview with the young applicant and another interview with her/his parents. Based on the results of the interviews the applicants are shortlisted and the ones who best meet the school requirements are then selected. For other cycles, firstly the students' marks based on their report cards of the previous school years are checked. If then it is decided that they are above average, the pupils would take a written exam. Provided the result of the test is also satisfactory, the applicant will be interviewed and if that is too satisfactory, there will be an interview with her/his parents. After that the pupils are shortlisted and the best ones get the opportunity to go to the school they had applied for. Even though it is a long and sometimes frustrating process, many of the parents who can afford to, like to send their children to these schools, hoping that their children would be sitting in classes with many very smart and competitive peers who are mainly from the same socio-economic background.

Iranian schools fall into four cycles, pre-school, primary school, secondary school and high school. Pre-school is for nine months and is not compulsory. During that phase five year-old pupils are familiarized with the basics of literacy. Up to the school year 2011-2012 primary school was five years and pupils began the five years of primary school at the age of six. Even though still primary, secondary and high school take 12 years to complete, since last year there has been a change in the cycles and now primary school is six years. Primary education is compulsory for all Iranian nationals. After primary school there are three years of secondary school or junior high. High school is the final years of schooling for pupils aged 15 to 18. It is on yearly credit basis and has three main branches, academic, technical/vocational and work/knowledge. At the end of the third year of the secondary school, students can choose which path they would like to pursue. It should be noted here that from the year 2000 up to 2011 high school was four years and also that from almost 20 years ago to the first half of 2010, the last year of high school was called pre-university and students would receive their high school diploma at the end of the third year. Only if they decided to go to university were they required to take part in pre-university classes. However, from September 2010, the students should complete 12 years of study at schools in order to be eligible to obtain a high school

diploma. The academic branch has four subcategories; literature, empirical science, physics-mathematics, and Islamic knowledge and education. The technical/vocational and also work/knowledge branches are to equip pupils with the knowledge required to begin jobs right after leaving schools. Among the fields offered by these branches are different areas of art, agriculture, electronics, accounting, and computer sciences. The work/knowledge students become technicians and skilled workers. Table 2.3 summarizes the information on school cycles.

School Cycle			Number of Years		Optionality	Age	
			Until 2012	After 2012		Until 2012	After 2012
Pre-school			1	1	Discretionary	5-6	5-6
Primary School			5	6	Compulsory	7-11	7-12
Secondary School			3	3	Compulsory	12-14	13-15
High School	Technical/Vocational		4	3	Discretionary	15-18	16-18
	Work/Knowledge						
	Academic	Empirical Science					
		Physics/Mathematics					
		Literature					
		Islamic Knowledge and Education					

Table 2.3 School Cycle in Iran

All high school students regardless of the subject of their study can choose to study at university, but in order to be accepted by public universities and some private ones, they have to pass an entrance exam, which is taken once a year. Students are assessed based on tests taken in the middle and end of the terms. There is scale of 0-20 and pass mark is 10. Except for the last grades of primary, secondary and high school, when the exams are administered by the Ministry of Education within the whole country or sometimes in each province, the rest of the tests are mainly prepared and administered by teachers. At high school, the lessons are offered on credit unit basis; and therefore, the scores are weighted. As for pre-school, there are no tests and all students will go to primary school after having finished the pre-school. From the school-year 2010 the students of first and second grade of primary

school are also not assessed through marks, but instead receive a written report in the form of a portfolio indicating their rate of progress. If this plan proves successful, grades three, four and five will also be using the same plan in the following years.

One last point to mention here is that children with special needs have their own special schools, but through the integrated-inclusive education plan some of them are also being admitted to ordinary schools.

2.5 Entrance Exam to Universities (Konkoor)

One cannot talk about Iranian schools and not mention the entrance exam to universities (Konkoor), because it plays a major role in every aspect of the education and even life of the students, their families and the teachers.

The test is taken once a year in summer and anybody with a high school diploma can participate. It is administered in five main groups- empirical science, physics/mathematics, humanities, art and foreign languages. Upon success in the exam, students will be admitted either in public universities, which are mostly free, or some private universities.

Persian literature, Arabic, English and theology are tested in all majors. Then depending on the chosen major each applicant will receive the required sets of questions. The test items are all multiple-choice and there is a time limit for each section. Applicants who are planning to study foreign languages only need to take the first part of the entrance exam, that is they are only given the set of questions on Persian literature, Arabic, English and theology. If they are planning to study any language other than English, they have the option of choosing that language to substitute English.

Almost a month after having taken the test, a report card is provided for each of the applicants in which they can see their scores and ranking. At this phase those applicants with lower scores are eliminated and the rest choose their favourite field and university, of course with regard to their scores. Each university and also field of study has a ranking; therefore, the students with better scores are more likely to be

admitted to the better universities. Again almost a month after the submission of the forms, the final results will be out. Applicants to most private universities also need to take part in the same entrance exam. If accepted they pay tuition fees. It should be noted here that until 2011 most of the private universities took their own entrance exams.

2.6 Language Teaching at Schools in Iran

2.6.1 History

Modern language teaching almost began with the establishment of Darolfonoon School in 1851. At that time French was the foreign language taught in Iran; however, after the Second World War English became the dominant language taught at schools. During the years after the War, there were many job opportunities available that required the knowledge of English; and therefore, learning English was in demand. Many international schools were established and/or had their branches in Iran and taught English to young learners from primary school and sometimes from kindergarten. In addition, many private language institutes were established teaching both young and adult learners. Even local schools sometimes devoted extra-hours to the teaching of English. Many students went to Western countries, in particular the US, to continue their studies.

This all changed during the first years after the Islamic revolution in 1979, when America was considered an enemy of the country, Islam and the people. After the revolution, international and private schools were closed down and for a while during the Iran-Iraq war the borderlines were also closed. Generally speaking the demand for learning English diminished. Nevertheless, as will be seen later in this chapter, since a few years ago the need for learning English at higher standards has been felt and again language institutions are filled with applicants and many of the newly-established local private schools, have included English in their extra-curricular programs.(Figure 2.1)

Schools in Iran
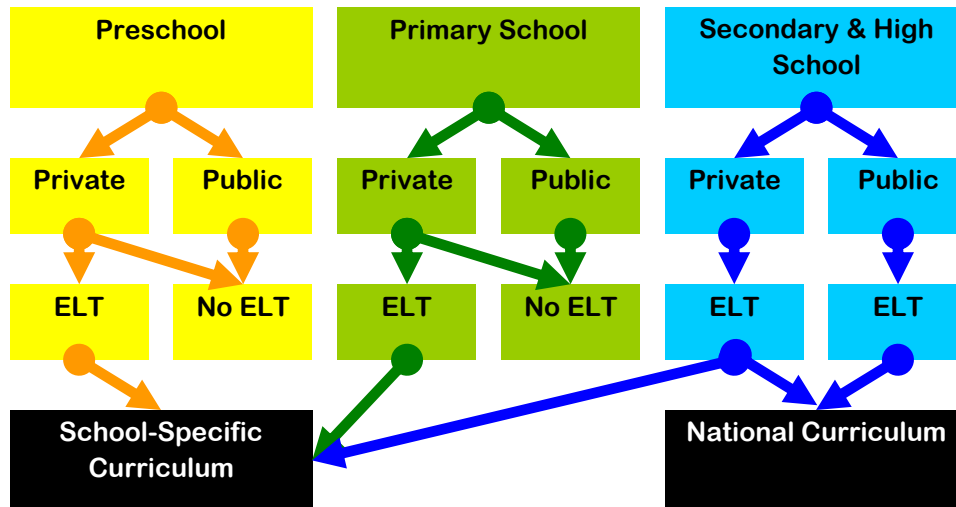
Figure 2.1 ELT in Iranian schools

In Iranian schools mainly two foreign languages are taught - Arabic and English. The instruction of both at public schools normally begins at 6th grade. In a very few schools, French and German are among the languages that students can choose to study instead of English.

It should be noted that "In Article 16 (of the Constitution), due attention has been given to the Arabic language" (Riazi, 2005, p.107). The emphasis of the Arabic syllabus at schools is on grammar. Since the script of Persian and Arabic are almost the same, reading (without comprehension) and writing that language are usually not difficult for Iranian learners, but one can hardly find a high school graduate who can speak Arabic. The syllabus does not emphasize productive language skills. This is despite the fact that in the first years after the Islamic revolution in 1979 the attempt of the government was to ban English and promote Arabic. However, later on the necessity for knowing English was felt and learning it has since been encouraged. But according to Farhady & Hedayati (2010, p.140), "Despite continuous efforts, there have not been considerable improvements in either teaching or assessing the

English language ability of the students and traditional methods and materials are still in practice."

2.6.2 Curriculum

Like other schools subjects, the curriculum developed and textbooks prepared for all over the country are the same and prepared under the supervision of the MOE. Classes of English are formal and the whole approach is mainly top-down. Language teachers, too, are recruited by or sometimes under the direct supervision of the same Ministry. The negative attitude to learning English, which existed in the first few years after the revolution, has disappeared and the need for learning it has been emphasized. According to Secretariat of the Higher Council of Education, (2006, p.43 quoted in Farhady & Hedayati, Language Assessment Policy in Iran, 2009, p. 133), the aim of teaching English at high school is "to enable students to use at least one (foreign) language to communicate with others at a survival level." (Appendix 1 has the sample pages of textbooks used in schools in Iran.)

As for assessment according to Farhady et al (2010, p.11),

> All assessment tools are of achievement type with the content matching the content of the textbooks. At the junior high school level, oral and written skills are treated as different subjects and two separate scores are reported on a scale of 20. The oral exam includes memorization of dialogs presented in the book, reading aloud of the text to assess pronunciation and intonation, and short conversations in the form of question and answer based on the grammatical and functional points taught in class. The written exam consists of sections on spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension"… The assessment system of English at the high school follows a trend similar to that of junior high school. However, with the advent of the unit credit system, some modifications were accordingly made to the assessment procedures.

On the whole discrete point testing is favoured in Iran and is still very widely used. (Appendix 2 provides a sample test.)

2.6.3 Overall Assessment of Language Teaching in Iranian Schools

All in all, even though the necessity for knowing an international foriegn language has been realized, the results of many studies suggest that the teaching of EFL in public schools has not been very successful so far. For instance, a study conducted by Dahmardeh (2009) on English textbooks used at schools shows that "these textbooks cannot meet the learners' and the teachers' needs within the Iranian educational system and it is a bit strange that they still emphasise structural methods

and ignore the communicative role of the language." Again in his thesis on English school books Dahmardeh (2010), shows examples of the language used to talk about Western countries and in particular America, and the hostility which is promoted in the these books. Riazi (2005:109) also believes, "The present approach toward language instruction (both L1 and L2) in Iran is not emancipatory and students do not become professional language-users." He later on urges "policy-and decision-makers to pay attention to language planning and language-in-education policy as soon as possible from a sociolinguistic perspective" (p.113).

2.7 Language Teaching in Private Sector

Besides the language program included in school curriculum, there are many private language institutions, most of them based in larger cities, that have programs for teaching English to young learners. The classes usually run 4-6 hours a week. They, too, have to follow the rules dictated by the Ministry of Education and other governmental organizations concerning the amount of tuition fee, the allocation of different sessions for teaching boys and girls, and so on. These institutions have more freedom in choosing the books to teach as long as the Ministry is sure that Islamic principles are observed both within the texts and the illustrations of the books. Therefore, although some of these institutes teach the latest course-books published by well-known international publishers, they have to read the books inside out and eliminate anything which may not be acceptable in an Islamic context. These institutes can choose their own teachers and in some but not all of them there are modern facilities such as language laboratories and computers available to be used as teaching aids.

2.8 Teacher Training in Iran

2.8.1 Teacher Training in General

There are certain teacher training colleges and universities offering two-year programs leading to Associate Degrees or four-year programs leading to bachelor's degrees in teaching. The entrance for both is basically through the same nation-wide entrance exam of universities. In order to teach at high school, teachers should hold at least a bachelor's degree in their chosen discipline.

It should be noted that in some under-privileged rural regions, because of the shortage of teachers, the MOE has some special plans. After finishing their secondary school, students are trained for four years to qualify for teaching primary schools in those areas. In some of these areas there are no high schools and the students who decide to obtain their high school diplomas have to go to nearby cities or villages.

2.8.2 Language Teacher Training

As mentioned earlier, to enter university and study languages, the applicants have to pass an exam with different components including Persian literature, Arabic, theology and English or a foreign language of their choice such as French and German. The foreign language section of the test has 25 multiple choice items to be completed within 20 minutes. (Appendix 3) The test basically assesses candidates' grammatical and lexical knowledge as well as their general reading comprehension. There are three fields offered at university for language applicants, translation, literature and teaching English as a foreign language. In order to teach at high school, teachers should hold at least a bachelor's degree in their chosen discipline and as for English any of these three fields is acceptable. Some universities offer postgraduate degrees at both master's and doctoral level in TEFL, as well, which is why nowadays very few universities offer TEFL at undergraduate level.

There are no university courses designed particularly for teaching English to young learners. Additionally, the main international tests and certificates offered in Iran for teacher training are TKT and CELTA taken by the representatives of Cambridge English Language Assessment, both of which having been introduced since 2008 and none being required by the Iranian Ministry of Education.

2.9 Iranian Parents

From year 1911 Article 5 of the Constitution of Iran has obliged Iranian parents to send their children to school: "It must be emphasized that all parents are compelled to urge their children to primary education by the age of seven, either at home or at school." In 1948 for the first time the MOE ratified the establishment of parent-school councils in every school. In the year 1967 the Iranian Home-School Association was first established and began its work. In the guidelines provided then it was stated that this Association was non-profit and non-governmental. It was to be organized in

every school by those who liked to cooperate and support the children and adolescents and was supposed to be free of any religious, racial, and social prejudices focusing only on education. After the revolution in 1979, this Association changed its name to Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), but basically has followed the same agenda. (Ainollahzadeh Taher Goorab Gilan, 2006)

Some of the duties of Iranian PTAs include:
1. promoting a sense of unity between school and home
2. encouraging all the parents to help in enhancing the quality of the school
3. encouraging parents, charities, and charitable people to give donations for improving the facilities of the school.
4. planning on how to properly thank the school staff and the members of the school council
5. providing help and cooperating with the Teachers' Council for holding extra-curricular classes.

One final note concerning the role of Iranian parents can be related to the schooling of girls. By law, all children are to finish 8th grade or secondary school. Some parents may choose to terminate particularly the girls' schooling at this stage.

2.10 Adolescents

When looking at the issue of adolescence in Iran three aspects should be considered: the law, the religion and the society. The law is passed in conjunction with Islamic beliefs. As mentioned earlier, Iranian pupils finish primary school at the age of 11/12 and begin the second phase of their school, known as secondary school or guidance school at the age of 12/13. From the time they enter this phase the expectations from them change to some extent within both the school and family. That is the time when they are considered adolescents in the eyes of many.

By law, by the time they reach 18, the young gain some new rights, for instance they can apply for a driving license or have the right to vote in national elections. Legal rights are sometimes gender differentiated. For example, if a girl wants to get married for the first time she has to obtain the written consent of her father or legal guardian. Some of these laws have been passed with regards to the religion of the country, which plays a very important role in the ruling system, the parliament, the Constitution and in the rites and rituals of people.

Culturally, girls are expected to behave more conservatively even in large cities. One might expect the Iranian girls to be subordinate, submissive and more conservative, which is true about some, but definitely not all. For example, in the entrance exam to universities in 2009 and 2013, more than 60% of all the entrants were girls. Girls do engage in social activities and sports, including football, taekwondo and car racing.

In the end, once again it is worth mentioning that among the Iranian people the role of the adolescents varies from region to region and even sometimes family to family. The facilities in urban and rural areas are not the same and by and large, life-style in large and small cities is not similar. Much of the research on youth in general (Varanoglulari, 2008; Lewis, 2007) has suggested the significance of the Internet and pop culture in the lives of the teenagers, which can be more applicable to many of the youth living in the capital and the larger cities of Iran. In very religious and traditional families, music, particularly pop music is not favoured; and therefore, pop culture may have limited impact on the lives of some of the young. Also the Internet, although available in most parts of the country is not accessible to some, and is not a part of the daily lives of all the people. In addition, by law entering and using some sites is forbidden and they are therefore inaccessible. Access to Facebook is, for example, not allowed in Iran at this time.

2.11 My Understanding and Interpretation

In this section, I try to illustrate my own understanding and interpretation of language teaching in Iran based on my personal experience.

2.11.1 Educational System of Iran and the Place of Language Teaching

From secondary school onwards and particularly at high school the whole system of schooling is designed in a way to enable students to pass the entrance exam to universities, which as mentioned before is held at the end of year 12 and is nationwide and very competitive. In other words, all the efforts of schools and teachers are geared towards helping students pass this exam and enter universities. This entrance exam, then, can be a very good example of wash-back effect in testing. As Spratt (2005:p.29) has pointed out based on the revision she has made on the empirical studies carried out concerning testing, the school atmosphere and "the amount of pressure the administrators put on teachers to achieve results" are among the factors that can make a difference in the way lessons are taught and can

affect degrees and kinds of this wash-back. In Iran this pressure from the administration is very high.

In addition, the role of religion and how much it should be promoted within the educational system has always been debated in Iran. Social beliefs, too, play a major role in determining how a teacher is expected to teach and even who is eligible to teach. Obviously the role of the employing organization, in the case of Iran the MOE, which is now the largest ministry in this country, in terms of the number of employees, is very critical and determining in how a class should be handled.

Generally speaking, subjects related to medicine and engineering are preferred to social studies, humanities and arts. So it is not uncommon to see high school students who are studying empirical sciences or physics/mathematics not regularly attending classes on some of the subjects related to humanities, such as history, or skipping classes such as physical education in favour of lessons such as physics, chemistry or algebra.

Language classes, though, are usually not sacrificed and are taken quite seriously. For many of the students English is not their strongest lesson; therefore, those students who have a better language proficiency are at advantage and are at least one step ahead of their classmates. However, this means that since there is not any section in the entrance exam for speaking, listening and the productive writing of the language and the items of the test are all discrete, no real emphasis is on learning the language for communication and for real life; therefore, language teaching focuses mainly on the concepts included in the entrance exam to universities. In many classes then the emphasis is on the teaching of grammar rules and doing relevant exercises in the textbook; doing reading passages and translating them into Persian; and giving the definition of the new words and requiring the students to know their meanings in their native language. This translation is not the part of the entrance exam, but is something that is used in many language classes. In some cases comprehension is assessed through the students' ability to translate passages.

Even those language teachers who appreciate the value of real communication in an FL, do not devote enough or sometimes any time to promoting communicative skills, because they believe that the success of the students in that entrance test is of prime importance. The school authorities are also mainly concerned with the achievement of their schools in the entrance exam. Then they will have a better reputation, and can ask for more budgets for their schools and/or attract better students to join the schools. This is true for both private and public schools.

2.11.2 Iranian Parents' Role in the Language Learning of Their Children

To many Iranian parents, school and especially high school, is and should be a place for learning and only learning; and even though many concerned parents ask their children how their day at school had been, what they are hoping to hear is mainly their educational progress and achievements. Therefore, those parents who really care about the education of their children are more than anything else concerned with what subject-matter their children have learned rather than what kind of a day they have had at school. So particularly at the final years of high school if a teacher spends even a small portion of the time of a class telling a joke or giving a break to the serious points of the lesson, although parents may not complain, many (not all) would not be pleased, feeling that the time would have been better spent solving one more problem or doing one more exercise. Parents of younger students have much milder views in this regard.

I believe as far as language learning of their children is concerned Iranian parents fall into the five categories mentioned below:

1. Parents who do not know an FL and are middle class members of the society (income-wise): These parents usually love their child to learn a new language. They usually respect what the teacher is doing and as long as their child gets a good mark they are grateful to the teacher.

2. Parents who do not know an FL and are well off: At least some of them think that money can solve many problems, so they ask the teacher to have some private sessions with their child so that the child would learn better and faster. Normally if the child is not making good improvement or in some cases if he or she is or happy, after a while they seek the help of other private teachers.

3. Parents who know an FL and are very demanding. They believe since they know a language then their children should be better learners. They sometimes put a lot of pressure on both the teacher and their own children.

4. Parents who speak an FL and can help: The Iranian system of education at schools demands parents to help their children (particularly at primary schools) with school activities. For example, they are asked to give their children math exercises or tell them dictation. Children, then, usually get used to depending on their parents' help. Many of the Iranian children also are used to their parents supervising their work or giving them suggestions and making corrections for them. The parents who belong to this category can be very helpful and can motivate their children to learn the foreign language. Sometimes parents in the first category can be put in this group as well, because even though they do not know the new language they are still helpful. These parents seek advice. They come to the teacher and ask how they can help. If there is any need for help then they are willing to take charge, if not they at least try to give their children encouragement and sometimes they encourage the teachers.

5. Parents who do not pay much or any attention: Teachers hardly ever see them and they do not know what is going on in the classes. It is not that they fully trust the teacher; it is just they do not spend the time to get involved in school matters. In the Iranian system of education these parents, even though not assertive, are not considered ideal.

2.12 Conclusion

On the whole education in Iran has come a long way and has experienced a lot of ups and downs. The same can be said specifically about teaching and learning of foreign languages. From mid-nineteenth century when the teaching of modern languages such as French and English opened its way into the Iranian school curriculum, the needs and the attitudes towards learning modern languages have very much varied. This has been at least partly due to social and cultural circumstances of the country. At the moment it seems that the desire and demand to learn a foreign language and in particular English is on the rise. Many studies indicate that schools have had limited success in teaching languages and language teachers are under pressure to both fulfil the requirements of the school syllabus and

also keep up with the demands of the new generation of the students. Some of these students seek to learn the language in order to effectively communicate with the outside world. Therefore; it is necessary to conduct more studies on what can be done to best fulfil the demands and needs of the younger generation; while paying attention to the context and the possibilities.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Literature Search

Much of the research into education effectiveness has supported the idea that teachers play a critical role in the performance of pupils (Creemers, 1994; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000). Researching teacher effectiveness has thus become an important part of the wider education effectiveness movement. The main purpose of this chapter is to review the literature related to language teacher effectiveness and is in four main parts. After providing an overview of the theoretical framework mainly related to language teaching and relevant to the current study, I develop a critique of the generic concept of teacher effectiveness, followed by a discussion of research into teacher effectiveness and measurement. Since many references relate to mainstream education, effective teaching and effective teachers in general comprise the first section. This is followed by a synthesis of research on teacher evaluation and finally research on the training and development of effective teachers. Part Two concentrates on research on effective language teachers. As the perception of students is an important element of my study, Part Three offers a review of research on the specific characteristics of adolescents and implications for teaching. Such analysis has tended to be rather rare in the country where the study is to be carried out; therefore, only some references to Iran and the adolescents studying in Iranian schools are included here. Finally, contemporary research tends to focus on the importance of teachers' professional relationship with the parents of the students. (Ball & Vincent, 1998; Mortimore 1988; Sockett, 1990) Therefore, a part of the study of teacher effectiveness is devoted to seeking the opinion of the parents about what values they believe an effective language teacher should possess. To support this, the final section of this literature review focuses on the role of parents in the education of their children in general and on their language learning in particular. Where applicable and available, related studies about parents have also been provided. This literature review aims to examine how existing research might better inform understanding of my research question on identifying the perception of different stakeholders of the characteristics of effective language teachers in Iran. It will also inform the research design, and may identify those areas that require further investigation.

3.1.2 Searching for Relevant Literature

As the first step to reviewing the relevant literature I searched articles and books written in the year 2000 and after. The main disciplines covered were education, applied linguistics focusing on teaching English as a foreign or second language, and educational psychology. The most important terms searched were "language learner", "secondary education", "education in Iran", "parents", "effectiveness", "effective teacher", "young learners", "adolescents" and "effective language teacher" and "language teacher effectiveness in Iran". Most of the articles were available via electronic sources and were from both peer-reviewed education and language teaching journals and specialist magazines in the same areas, such as ELTJ, TESOL Quarterly, Oxford review of Education, Annual Review of Applied Linguistics and Teaching and teacher Education. Having read them, I prepared a new list of books and articles which had been mentioned in the sources already studied, many belonging to the years before 2000. In addition to these English sources, some of which being studies carried out in Iran, I used a few websites, books and articles written in Persian with reference to the situation of education and language learning in Iran.

3.2 The Theoretical Framework

During the 20 and 21st century many new approaches, methods, and techniques have been introduced into language teaching. Studying them closely shows how deeply they have all been linked to theoretical thinking in pure and applied linguistics, educational, psychological and sociological trends, technological advancements and even politics. In linguistics, firstly, structuralism and then transformational grammar and functional linguistics and in psychology, behaviourism and then cognitivism most affected language teaching. In the era of communication and technology, the urge to communicate and promote socio-cultural understanding have also influenced language teaching and learning. More recently, modern trends have concentrated on the demands of the learners as the consumers of the language market; and therefore, concepts such as learner-centeredness and humanistic views have emerged in management and education and thus also in language teaching.

For a long time, language teaching pedagogy was considered a purely linguistic topic and not an educational matter. In traditional views of language learning, the learner was not the focus, but language was. All the research conducted concerned the language itself (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Nunan, 1988; Richards, 2001). During the 60s and 70s some research was conducted which proved "there is not always a direct correlation between linguistic predictions of difficulty and what learners actually do find difficult" (Nunan, 1988, p.15). This led to the learner-centred curriculum. Nunan (1988) believes that the main difference between this curriculum and the traditional one is that in the learner-centred curriculum everything is a "collaborative effort between teachers and learners", because learners are involved in deciding about the process and the way something is taught. As Kumaravadivelu (2003; 2012) has also admitted, it is not possible to teach learners everything in the class so during class-time those aspects that are very important and also motivate students should be concentrated on. In other words, grammar and structures are not the main concerns of the teachers anymore and in the postmethod era, rather the language teaching focuses upon communicative competence.

On the other hand, according to Richards (2001), concentrating on immediate and long term needs of both the learner and society provides the philosophical foundation of the educational programs. For instance, leaner-centeredness has its basis in constructivism: "Constructivists emphasize that learning involves active construction and testing of one's own representation of the world and accommodation of it to one's personal conceptual framework" (p.113). (The philosophical assumptions of constructivism will be further explained in section 4.2.) This has had a strong influence on language curriculum design. Clark (1987, p.49) sees it as "growth through experience". Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development proposes that by comparing what one (a child) can do without assistance with what the same person can do with the help of a person with more experience is an indicator of the cognitive potential of that person. To him, development is applying those newly learned concepts and principles to new tasks and problems (Palincsar, 1998). Constructivists believe that learners are active constructors and not passive recipients of knowledge transferred by the teacher. As Smidt (2009) points out, learners work collaboratively with the instructor. As for the language curriculum, based on learner-centeredness, this can be interpreted as including linguistic and

non-linguistic outcomes in the language class through the collaboration of teacher and learner. These "non-language outcomes", as Richards (2001, p.133) calls them, include motivation, confidence, cultural awareness, chance for employment, etc. Consequently, learner-centred pedagogy is multidisciplinary and has its roots not only in linguistics, but also in many other disciplines such as psychology and sociology.

This approach to learning has later paved the way for social reconstructivism in education, which encourages teachers to help students make changes in the society and their lives, which in turn is vital in modern language classes as well. The importance of culture and context are emphasized in understanding what happens around us. This can be seen in the learning-centred methods in language teaching which took over in the 1980s, trying to address the shortcomings of learner-centeredness. The idea in learning-centeredness, (sometimes also known as the strong version of communicative approach) is "using English to learn it", while the learner-centred method is more concerned with "learning English to use it" (Howatt, 1984, p.279). In learning-centred methods, language learning is incidental rather than intentional and both linguistic and pragmatic systems of the target language are supposed to be internalized. Based on this, the idea of teaching language through using comprehensible inputs was introduced. Krashen (1985) defines comprehensible input as *i+1*, *i* being learner's current knowledge or ability. By that he means that when acquiring a second language the learner improves his current language knowledge, when the new input that he receives is one step beyond the linguistic competence he already has. The teacher is the provider of this input and decides on the appropriate topics and tasks that are built on the student's schema and need. Besides, in the language teaching methods following learning-centeredness, the content of the syllabus is based on communicative and humanistic activities. In learning-centred methods, it is believed that the lower the affective filters, the more are the opportunities for the learners to communicate. Therefore, learning centeredness can be said to pay more attention to the needs, emotions and the circumstances of the learners compared to the preceding methods.

According to Kumaravadivelu (2006, p.137) language learning theory rests on four basic premises:

1. Language development is incidental, not intentional.
2. Language development is meaning focused, not form focused.
3. Language development is comprehension based, not production based.
4. Language development is cyclical and parallel, not sequential and additive.

These principles raise the question of whether teachers in modern language classes should follow a specific method step by step. Kumaravadivelu (2006, p.173) characterises this as the post-method era in which "The post-method condition is a sustainable state of affairs that compels us to fundamentally restructure our view of language teaching and teacher education." Brown (2002) and Harmer (2001) also support this idea by emphasising that there are many language teaching contexts with different students who have a variety of needs, learning styles and affective traits. Then Kumaravadivelu (2006) has proposed three pedagogical implications for the post-method conditions.

1. Parameter of Particularity: This parameter is concerned with the particularity of teachers, learners and contexts and insists that any post-method pedagogy must take this into consideration.
2. Parameter of Practicality: According to this parameter the teacher's reflection and intuition play a very important role.
3. Parameter of Possibility: This parameter owes its origin to the educational philosophy of Paulo Freire. It stresses the importance of acknowledging and highlighting students' and teachers' individual identity.

The concept of participatory pedagogy which has then been introduced brings together learners and teachers within a community. The socio-cultural realities cannot be ignored in language classes and they should also come along with their linguistic needs and demands.

In the post-method era, learners are considered autonomous and should be capable of monitoring their own learning strategies and demands. Teachers are also autonomous and should be both knowledgeable and reflective. But at the same time they should be working collaboratively with the students, reflecting the principles of social constructivism.

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These views of language learning as socially constructed, and language teaching needing to take accounts of the context and socio-cultural aspects of learning have informed the thinking behind and the design of this study. Language classes are conceived as communities in which teachers and learners, hand in hand; and along with other stakeholders, should work to achieve the goals they establish together. However, this is easier said than done and the limitation imposed by many factors out of their control will make their jobs more difficult and, sometimes restricted. In other words, each language class has a particular socio-cultural context, which should be thoroughly analyzed.

In Iran, in most public and some private schools, teaching on the whole is based on pre-determined curricula and syllabi and social constructivism is not yet acknowledged in the wider scope. The teacher is still considered the sole decision maker and the authority within the class and the transmission model, which is a more traditional approach to teaching, is still dominant (Farhady et al, 2010; Pishgaman & Navari, 2010). Exams are taken very seriously and the number of students who pass exams and their scores determine how competent a teacher is; and therefore, creating a constructivist environment in such situation is not easy. Of course, during the past few years the establishment of a few pre-schools with constructivistic views in mind such as ones using the Montessori Method and some private schools with more modern attitudes, may be the indication that change is demanded, welcomed and on the way. LEGO schools are among these modern establishments, which according to their manifesto support children to be creative, active and also collaborative learners and by creating the appropriate environment encourage hands-on learning through construction.

Nonetheless, as the syllabi and the course-books show, what is happening in most public schools in Iran is not at all promoting the creative and collaborative learning environment in which the learners would be actively involved. Therefore, if need has been felt, then it has to be fulfilled in all educational areas including language teaching and this has to be provided for all the students not only the more well-off.

The transition is happening though, gradually, but at times still faster than expected. This might be due to the fact that modern Iranian learners, like many other children in other parts of the world, have different demands and needs. This at times might

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make the situation a little confusing, since not all the teachers are well prepared for dealing with that and many points are still open to interpretation and might vary from one location to another inside Iran, because of the cultural, financial and social background of the people living in them.

As stated before, language teaching in public schools has not been very promising. The preface of the school English textbooks shows that the need for effective communication in English is understood at a theoretical level; however, in practice the deductive teaching and learning of grammar is still given priority. Since the syllabi are pre-determined in most cases, there is little collaboration between teachers and students in determining what to teach and learn. Most parents have studied English in the traditional ways; therefore, many cannot help in improving the existing situation. More importantly, the wash-back effect of the tests and in particular the entrance exam to universities plays a major role in the stakeholders' insisting on following the syllabi dictated by the MOE. Old-fashioned books have also made teachers in public schools hesitant about trying modern approaches to language teaching.

3.3 Teacher Effectiveness

3.3.1 Characteristics of Effective Teachers

While striving to clearly define teacher effectiveness, firstly some other concepts need to be taken into consideration. Lasely et al (2006, p.17) believe, "the work of the teacher is further shaped by the work of school and district leadership and by a school's climate, community and parental support, and other socio-cultural factors." Among these concepts, social and cultural circumstances, teacher evaluation, learning and expected outcomes, and, of course, educational and school effectiveness are eminent. To Campbell et.al (2004a, p.3) school effectiveness means "the impact of school wide factors" on "students' cognitive and affective performance". Some of the early work conducted on the concept of teacher effectiveness were the studies of Coleman (1966, quoted in Campbell, 2004a, p. 4) in the US and Douglas (1964, quoted in Campbell, 2004a, p. 5) in the UK, both focusing on school rather than the classroom. With this aspect of education in mind, most of the studies looked at schools with scepticism arguing that schooling did not "reduce social class differences in achievement"; and therefore, was not effective.

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However, later researchers tried to concentrate on educational effectiveness and most of the studies led to suggestions for making them more work-centred.

During the last decade of the 20th century, teachers' role in education was given higher status than it had been previously. Further research (Marzano 2000, quoted in Hattie, 2009) has indicated that even though the impact of the school and the community cannot be dismissed, effective teachers can compensate for weaknesses in school effectiveness, but effective schools cannot make up for the ineffectiveness of teachers.

Since noting the importance of teachers' roles in education, the term teacher effectiveness has assumed different definitions and views. As will be seen in this chapter, there are some commonalities in the views, but the range of responsibilities and how they can be put into practice vary. One model which has been proposed by Hay-Mcber Consultancy Company and adopted by the British Department of Education since the year 2000, for example, views teachers from three different perspectives: teaching skills, professional characteristics and classroom climate. The first two are related to "what a teacher brings to the job" (Hay-Mcber, 2000, p.7); while classroom climate is what allows the teacher to understand if the pupils are motivated to learn.

According to Park & Lee (2006, p.237) in 1986 based on a research carried out by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) 15 characteristics for effective teachers were identified.

> These characteristics were found among the teachers who tended to be good managers, use systematic instruction techniques, have high expectations of students and themselves, believe in their own efficacy, vary teaching strategies, handle discipline through prevention, are caring, are demographic in their approach, are task oriented, are concerned with perceptual meanings rather than with facts and events, are comfortable interacting with others, have a strong grasp of subject matter, are accessible to students outside of class, tailor teaching to student needs, are flexible and imaginative.

As can be seen, this comprehensive list also looks at the characteristics of effective teachers from different angles; the teachers' relationship with the students, teachers' subject knowledge, and teaching strategies, personal attributes of the teacher, and teachers' self concept. Maybe what makes this list more noticeable among many others proposed is that it gives the teacher a separate identity in the class. It seems

that the importance of self-efficacy is more acknowledged in the 21st century and is supported by other studies (Akbari & Moradkhani 2010; Biddle, 2005; Flores & Day, 2006; Hoy & Spero, 2005; Wheatley, 2005). Akbari & Moradkhani (2010) define self-efficacious teachers as teachers who feel effective and believe that they have the ability to improve and consolidate student achievements. Hoy and Spero (2005) definition of efficacy also complements this view. They see it as "a future-oriented judgment that has to do with perceptions of competence rather than actual level of competence" (p.344). It seems that teachers' self-efficacy is important for their effectiveness.

One important angle of education besides the teachers are obviously the students but it was principally during the 90s that respecting the learners and their feelings were also focused on in many studies related to teacher effectiveness. For example, Kyriacou (1997) believes that effective teachers respect students as learners and insists that rapport between the two makes teaching effective. Listening to the views of pupils is considered very important and should be heard and reflected upon so that they, too can help with shaping learning activities. Stevens and Crawley (1994) also mention:

> Being an effective teacher means being able to get the best out of your students, measured in terms of educational, psychological and social outcomes. To put this in simple terms, if your teaching and your interactive style contribute to improvement fronts, you are doing your job well. (p.2)

The points that Goe et al (2008) and Goe and Croft (2009) have proposed about characteristics of effective teachers summarize how teacher effectiveness is viewed in the 21st century in many parts of world. Based on an extensive and systematic review of literature relevant to teacher effectiveness, Goe et al (2008, p.8) developed a five-point definition of teacher effectiveness, identifying effective teachers as:

- having high expectations for all the students and helping students learn
- contributing to positive academic, attitudinal, and social outcomes for students
- using diverse resources to plan and structure engaging learning opportunities
- contributing to the development of classrooms and schools that value diversity and civic-mindedness.
- collaborating with other teachers, administrators, parents, and education professionals to ensure student success

Goe et al (2008) elaborate on this: "the first point directly addresses student achievement gains on standardized tests, and the other points focus on teachers' contributions that may ultimately improve student learning, albeit indirectly" (p.8). They then explain that student achievement is by no means the most important way for judging teacher effectiveness and all the above mentioned points should be considered.

Based on this, it can be concluded that being an effective teacher is more than having adequate knowledge of the subject-matter and more than the contribution teachers can make to students' achievements in tests. Wright (1988, p.76) says "the 'school of thought' or discipline in which a teacher is trained or the group among whom he cuts his teeth as a practitioner will undoubtedly influence his ideas about teacher and learner roles."

Before concluding this section and moving on to the methods of research for measuring teacher effectiveness there are some points that seem to me to be worth considering. I would like to begin the grounds of my argument by first indicating that most of the recent models of teacher effectiveness have taken place in the US, the UK and the Netherlands (Campbell et al, 2004b) and Australia. Therefore, most of these definitions have been provided by scholars who are believed to live in democratic contexts, where the teachers have more or less some freedom and opportunities to exercise this freedom in their teaching. Mostly the role of *all* stakeholders, that is, teachers, pupils, parents, school management and policy makers, in making teaching more effective has been highlighted. As also implied in the definitions provided and as later on will be discussed in measuring effectiveness, the models are not exactly the same and discrepancies do exist, suggesting that teacher effectiveness is very much context specific and multidimensional. The questions Hofstede (1986) raise, summarize all the situations to be considered:

> From what types of families are students, and teachers recruited? Are educational systems elitist or anti-elitist? … Is there a private next to a public educational sector and what are their respective statuses? Does the government prescribe the curriculum in schools (France, USSR), or are teachers free to define their own? .... Who pays for what education? The students, their parents, the state? How well are teachers paid and how is their social status? (p.304)

The question which still remains is, even though the characteristics put forth for effective language teachers are based on carefully-planned studies, how much of

that is possible in not so democratic contexts. As Mather (1937, p. 396) has said, "in a true democracy the teacher is an educator", but can this be applied to other contexts? Looking at research in Pakistan (Sarwar et al 2010) may better clarify the case. In a research carried out in March 2010 in Pakistan, 60 public secondary school teachers were invited to express their views on development of democratic values in schools. The researchers concluded that neither the society nor the teacher training programmes put any emphasis on the concept of democracy. Factors such as lack of political stability, bad governance, unemployment, etc, have been seen as responsible for this lack of interest in including the concept of democracy in schools. Therefore, when for example the American Association of School Administrators suggests that effective teachers tailor teaching to student needs and are concerned with perceptual meanings rather than with facts and events, I wonder how much of that would be possible in countries where education is basically controlled by the governments and there is little flexibility. Obviously teachers should try to be effective, but in those contexts the priorities may be different and also the implementation of some of these points may not be easy. Maybe changing the students' motivation or attitude towards their education would be the best the teachers can hope for in these contexts, which, I believe, is by no means, a small achievement. Finding the priorities and how they are being implemented, if at all, in different societies require extensive research. Wright (1998, p.151) looks at the brighter side and believes that "although you (teacher) may feel powerless in terms of 'changing the system' where you work, it is possible to show that by being in control of one's own teaching and classroom work, one is interpreting the system in a more productive and fruitful way." I believe this is an extravagant claim, but at the same time emphasizes the burden placed on the teachers in the modern world and indicates that they are viewed as independent bodies, who have responsibilities within the class and even the society. It also emphasises that perceptions are constructed within social contexts. Wise (1996, p.1 quoted in Hammadou Sullivan, 2004, p.390) also mentions a public agenda poll in 1996 in the US asking about the most important need of public schools to help students learn. "The most common answer, by a wide margin, was 'good teachers'."

3.3.2 Some Recent Models Used for Measuring Teacher Effectiveness

Models of effectiveness in both Europe, mainly Britain, and US date back to the early years of the 20th century and since teachers became more independent and could be more directly involved in planning their teaching and their own improvement. From then on the idea of looking at teaching more analytically and at the same time giving credit to practical experience became the centre of attention. Therefore, combining theory and practice have become the main trend in educational research. This has made teachers' role in education more prominent and prepared the grounds for teachers' needing to develop themselves and reflecting on their experiences. From mid-twentieth century mainly five models for researching teacher effectiveness have been proposed each having their own advantages and disadvantages (Campbell et al, 2004a):

1. **Presage-Product**: This model focuses on researching the psychological characteristics of effective teachers by mainly using psychological tests that identify the personality trends. Schofield and Start (1979) support this model, stating that before this, teachers were only judged by their presage, their qualities and characteristics, but the outcome of their work was not of high significance. Kyriakides, et al (2002) propose that involving teachers in assessing their effectiveness in the form of self-evaluation can be another approach in generating criteria for teacher effectiveness coming from within their work environment. They; therefore, believe that teachers should also be responsible for identifying their own personality trends. This is a big step forward and can help with teachers reflecting on their own work.

   One of the weak points of this model may be that students' perception and their differences have not been included; and thus teacher' competencies and personality trends are considered to be the only means for helping the students grow. In addition, it seems that the social effects of the community the teacher works in are not taken into consideration at all.

2. **Teaching Styles**: During the 1970s and based on a questionnaire distributed among teachers in the UK, Bennett (1976, quoted in Reynolds, et al., 2003) categorized teachers into a continuum ranging from traditional or teacher-directed to progressive student-centred. Hunt (2009) also mentions that in the

US the "essentialists" and the "progressives" have been the two educational movements that have gained recognition. Essentialists believe that teachers are the leaders and they should try to establish standards. In contrast, progressives support child-centred curricula and constructivist approaches. According to Reynolds et al (2003) most teachers in the UK were somewhere in the middle and used a combination of the approaches.

This model has been proposed or supported by many; therefore, some other labels have also been used for showing teaching styles. For example, Scrivener (1994, p. 7) believes that teachers are of three kinds: "the explainer, the involver and the enabler". The explainer explains the subject matter well; the involver tries to involve students actively but has control over the classroom; while the enabler shares and negotiates with the students.

Mortimore (1998) criticized the teaching style model saying that the "variance within styles was far greater than the variance between styles." He and his team then conducted another study in which they looked at both the teacher and the school and thus included other factors such as the children and their family backgrounds, as well.

3. **Process-Product**: This model which was originally influenced by behaviourism, followed positivistic methods and made judgments primarily by observing the scores of the students in the achievement tests. This is also known as value-added measure and mainly falls in the category of experimental studies and is still popular in many parts of the world. It is based on some statistical calculations to compare the works of different teachers by comparing the present achievement of a group of students with their past records. It also checks "whether certain teachers' students consistently perform above or below predicted levels on standardized achievement tests" (Goe & Croft, 2009, p.4). Unlike the two other methods mentioned so far, in this model, evaluators do not need to be present and the analysis is conducted from afar.

According to Goe et al (2008) despite its popularity there are still a lot of controversies about its validity and its ability to really identify effective

teachers. On the plus side it can be argued that it is very objective and to some extent value-free. Among the weaknesses attributed to this model is that the teacher is considered the one and only person responsible for the students' achievements. Yet another argument is that in this model test scores are considered to be valid and reliable all the time, which is obviously not always true. In addition, even if valid and reliable, tests only give us a summative idea and do not show the details or the other positive changes that may have happened in the students. The other issue is that individual differences are not considered important and what a teacher may have been able to do with a group of children in the class is not noticed, because within this model the class is looked at as a whole. Finally, it seems that causes of what has happened in the class are not paid attention to.

In order to overcome some of these problems, making observations based on specific standards has been recommended (Campbell, 2004a).

4. **Knowledge, Beliefs, Constructivism**: This model focuses on teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge, along with their personal belief concerning the students, their own self efficacy and the best teaching methods. It has been inspired by the development of constructivism and the popularity of constructivist classrooms, which take advantage of the learners' schema and based on that build new concepts by the help of the teacher and the instruction. Based on this model, teachers' beliefs and past experiences become of significance. This perspective is in line with the theoretical framework for this study.

To investigate the effect of teachers' beliefs and as a part of a long term research carried out on math teachers in the UK, Reynolds and Muijs in an ongoing research (quoted in Reynolds, et al 2003) have sought teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, their self-perceived subject knowledge and their attitude towards teaching and learning math. They have realised that teachers' behaviours directly affected their outcomes while teachers' beliefs and self-efficacy had indirect effects, "through their effect on teacher behaviours" (p.92).

This model like most other models has both supporters and critics. Even though constructivism is based on what the learners bring in and what is received from the environment (Rowe, 2006), it seems to me that the social values and the teachers' obligation or willingness to follow them are not paid enough attention to. In other words a person's beliefs and behaviour are not always in the same line, due to personal and social reasons. In addition, it seems that somehow not much faith is put into appropriate training and development.

5. **The Differentiated Model:** This model is among the latest models proposed of measuring teacher effectiveness. It has been inspired by the idea that most teachers can be more effective with some students, in some subjects and contexts than others. Campbell et al (2004a) believe that teacher effectiveness is the effect of classroom factors, "such as teaching methods, teacher expectations, classroom organisation, and use of classroom resources", on how students perform" (p.1). They argue that since contexts, situations and students differ; a teacher's effectiveness will not be the same with all students and in all situations. Therefore, they suggest a model of "differentiated teacher effectiveness" with five aspects to build concepts that recognise this differentiation. These aspects are students' background, their demands, their characteristics, context and subject matter. This model can be helpful both in researching teacher effectiveness and in evaluating the effectiveness of teachers.

Campbell et.al (2004b) are well aware of the difficulties with implementing this model. Among the problems they mention its complexity, the immeasurability of some of the values and the way policy-makers may implement it. However, they also believe that the problems are surmountable. If it can be appropriately practised it seems to be a very effective model, since it considers differences among the students, the context and the subject matter.

Overall, research into teacher effectiveness is obviously influenced by the concept of teacher effectiveness and can be viewed differently by the different stakeholders involved and may not be interpreted the same or lead to the same results in different circumstances.

3.3.3 Evaluating and Measuring Effective Teachers

So far the concept of teacher effectiveness and the models for interpreting and measuring teacher effectiveness have been discussed. In this section the elaboration is on the reasons for evaluating effective teachers and also the mechanisms that have been and are still used in different contexts for this evaluation. Basically, the answer to four questions is sought here: who does this evaluation, based on what criteria, how and why is it done.

Evaluating teachers and their effectiveness can be said to be as old as education itself, but it has taken many trends through time due to changes in the beliefs about the roles of teachers and their responsibilities. Therefore, depending on what is considered effective teaching, the interpretation and criteria for teacher evaluation may change. Teacher effectiveness is usually equal to assessing teachers' performance and their accountability. To be accountable as defined by Baily (1980, p.98) often means that somebody other than the teacher must be satisfied about the teacher's professional actions." Of course Braskamp et al (1984) mention different methods and thus different people in charge of assessing teacher effectiveness. They believe teachers themselves are among the people who can do this evaluation and act as their own critical judges by writing either informal self-reflection or formal appraisals. This will help them look back at their work more critically and evaluate it and sometimes report it to other responsible authorities. Peer observation is among the other methods they mention. Another source of evaluation is the students. Students may directly do this assessment through filling in appraisal forms. Regardless of who does this evaluation, if this assessment is to serve any purpose other than the teacher's self-development, then it has to be made available to the authorities. In educational systems run or controlled by governments, authorities are usually the policy-makers employed by the government. There is also the possibility of assigning an independent organization to do this evaluation. For example, in the UK, the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED), which has been established since 1992, is responsible for teacher and school evaluation and reporting the results publicly.

Another question to ask is based on what criteria should this evaluation be made. The criteria vary in different contexts and have changed throughout time. For

instance, Ellet and Teddlie (2003) believe that from the time that more innovative and modern ways of student assessment have been used in schools across America in the 1980s, and teachers have become in more direct contact with students compared to the other elements in education system, evaluation and accountability have hand in hand come to the forefront. This has led to licensure and accrediting of teachers through various types of degrees and certificates. In most educational systems controlled by governments, teacher training and teacher evaluation are very much linked to the policies established and the criteria they set for teacher assessment. Therefore, it can be said that the views of the stakeholders are not always considered the main priority for assessing the effectiveness of teachers. Levine (1992) believes, teacher effectiveness is usually defined "in terms of relatively prescriptive practices", which can be both good and bad depending on the context, the flexibility of this prescription and the framework it is based on. Generally speaking then, it can be said that in extreme cases and in some communities, the standards for teacher evaluation are set sometimes regardless of what research supports and teachers are judged against this preset criteria. In some other cases, the criteria are set based on relevant studies and are supported and up-dated by their findings. As for the former, reaching a compromise that will satisfy the system and at the same time contribute to training and supporting effective teachers in the second sense is very desirable, but not always a possibility.

One more important point in establishing the criteria for teacher evaluation is the discipline-specific teaching behaviours and attitudes of teachers (Bell 2005; Brosh, 1996; Schulz, 2000). This means that when evaluating teacher performance, the subject matter should also be taken into consideration. For example, lecturing may be effective in a history course but not in a beginning foreign language course. Yet, as Stemberg & Horvath (1995, cited in Bell, 2005) have mentioned, in most cases, the history teacher and foreign language teacher are evaluated based on the same criteria. Park & Lee (2006, p.236) agree that, "some characteristics of effective teachers are universal, but others are domain-specific." This takes us back to the differentiated teacher effectiveness concept and how implementing it can be helpful.

The third question concerns the means of doing the evaluation. Observation is the most popular means for doing this assessment. There are many different classroom

standardized observation instruments available that are used in some countries such as the UK, but the observation criteria might also be established by the organization in charge as well and be based on their demands and expectations. Therefore, what to observe is a very sensitive issue in teacher evaluation. Goe et al (2008) believe that teacher measurement can be approached through three different angles: input (teachers' beliefs, expectations, etc), process (interaction between teacher and student) and output (achievement). As also mentioned above, Hay-Mcber (2000) has labelled these angles as: classroom climate and teachers' teaching skills and their professional characteristics. Goe et al (2008) provide a very comprehensive list of different teacher evaluation methods along with their weak and strong points including, classroom observation, principal evaluation, teacher self-report, instructional artifact, portfolio, and student survey. (Refer to Appendix 4) Another source of evaluation they elaborately discuss is value-added measures. Students can indirectly contribute to teacher assessment, that is by their achievement and the outcome of their work in the form of test results. Most often, authorities consider the teachers whose students get better test results as more effective, like what can be seen in value-added model.

Finally, the last question concerns the reasons for teachers being evaluated. Evaluation is done in order to make decisions; subsequently, the outcome may also at times be very important. According to Robinson and Campbell (2010) teacher evaluation serves three main purposes: performativity ideology, which aims to prove accountability to the stakeholders and is mainly economic in nature; teachers' promotion; and assessing school effectiveness. But what usually happens when a teacher is diagnosed as being effective? This varies in different contexts. Mostly, the teacher may be rewarded or promoted. McCloskey et al (2007) says that in many cases the selected teacher is promoted to do administrative work or take managerial positions, which he believes is not good.

As can be seen, there are numerous points to be considered when evaluating teachers and researching about evaluation. Sockett (1980, p.15) talks about the issue of teacher autonomy and notes the fact that "a person can only be morally responsible (and thus accountable) for what is within his control." In most cases teachers have limited autonomy and also are part of an organization so the impact of

the other elements should also be noted. There is one thing evident though. "Teacher effect" as Reynolds et al (2003, p. 96) mention is very important and is recently being acknowledged by some policymakers, too. This is a big step forward. Now for example in the UK, instead of solely focusing on school level, policymakers pay attention to classroom as well and the integration of the two is happening when evaluating. This can in turn result in better plans for teacher development. Hammadou-Sullivan (2004) believes, "the era of teacher assessment is upon us, but teacher assessment, like student assessment, is a frustratingly complex task" (p.391).

3.3.4 Teacher Training and Development

Parallel to teacher evaluation comes the concept of teacher training. Good feedback can help development and good performance leads to good feedback. Obviously some characteristics concerning effective teachers are agreed upon by most of the contemporary researchers. Among these are: teachers' knowledge of the subject matter, enthusiasm/expressiveness, clarity of explanation, and rapport/interaction. Therefore, while there is little agreement regarding which specific behaviours constitute effective teaching, researchers agree at least on some dimensions that describe effective teaching in general. They are searching for more information on how to interpret these concepts and how to help teachers implement them in their classes. These again depend on the community and the social conditions. At the same time, the required framework for training effective teachers may also depend on the policies set by the responsible bodies and organizations and at times reflect the political agenda and the social values of the community. Freeman (2002, p.11) argues that, "in teacher education, context is everything" and believes that schools as socio-cultural environments should mediate and transform what and how teachers learn. He continues that in the majority of cases this is not taken into consideration when training or developing teachers.

In order to best train effective teachers different models have been proposed. One way as Rosenfeld & Rosenfeld (2004) puts forward is by teachers' exploring their own individual learning differences through self-reflection. This is also acknowledged by some other researchers including Korthagen (2004) and Gjerde& Knighting Eppard (2001) suggesting that teachers create portfolios or reflective journals of their

own experiences and their students' progress. This is formative in nature and enhances the teacher's performance. During the past few years and since teachers have been given more independence at least in some countries, the importance of the teacher's personal conceptions in teaching have been emphasised more than ever. Tsui (2003, p.65) says, "Teachers' personal conceptions of teaching play a very important part in their teaching"' and believes that this is influenced by the personal life experience of the teacher. Kurtoglu-Eken (2007) also tries to find out what is missing when all the factors for being a qualified teacher are there, but still teaching is not as successful as it should be. Based on some research she has reached the conclusion that among other factors, personal qualities of the teacher are of great importance in the success or failure of a teacher. Maybe one of the best elaborations on all of this can be seen in what is known as "onion model" proposed by Korthagen (2004). He believes that teaching, like an onion has different layers (figure 3.1). For example, "The outermost levels are those of the environment (the class, the students, the school) and behaviour" (p.80), and among the inner levels are competency and then teachers' qualities and characteristics. He goes on to say that "The distinction between qualities and competencies lies primarily in the fact that qualities come from the inside, while competencies are acquired from the outside" (p. 86).
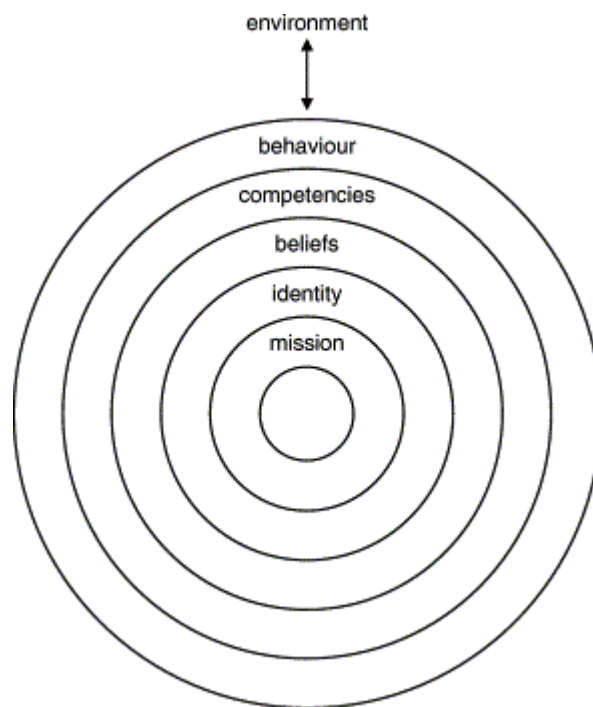
Figure 3.1 The onion: a model of levels of change (Korthagan, 2004, p. 79)

Korthagen believes that the outer levels can influence the inner ones and vice versa. Based on all of this he concludes that this model could serve as a framework for reflection and can help in the development of teachers' professional identity and mission.

To sum up, Kyriacou (1997, p.109) believes that effective teacher "should respect students as learners" and "show genuine care for each student's progress". It seems that any model for analysing teacher effectiveness and teacher training and development in the modern era should be able to accommodate these values.

3.4 Effective Language Teachers

3.4.1 Background

In the previous section, the characteristics of effective teachers were discussed and it was emphasized that all teachers should have certain characteristics besides the knowledge of the subject-matter they teach. The aim of this section is to mainly focus on effective language teachers and their distinctiveness, identifying qualities and characteristics that are particularly important for them to possess. However, firstly it is important to acknowledge that language teachers are teachers after all and many

of the characteristics of effective teachers in general are those required by foreign language teachers.

Overall, the process of identifying and training effective language teachers has evolved throughout time. Two disciplines in particular have played major roles in language teacher education: general education theories; and applied linguistics. Crandall (2000) elaborates on these disciplines and believes that for a very long time different areas of applied linguistics such as discourse analysis and language teaching and testing formed the heart of language teacher education. Later on and since the last decade of the last century, concepts from general education have become more influential in the development of language teachers; and therefore, the role of teachers and the classes they teach have become more apparent. Freeman (1996) has identified the three main models that language teacher education has followed throughout time: a behavioural model; a cognitive model and an interpretivist view. The interpretivist view, being the most recent of all, takes the roles that language teachers play more seriously and puts the emphasis on the importance of the contexts and also the reflection of teachers. Teachers are more actively involved in planning and making decisions about how to manage their classes. What takes place in a classroom is also considered more important, and concepts such as teachers' identity have become powerful in shaping views of effective language teaching. This interpretivist view is consistent with the theoretical framework for this study. Overall, language teaching is seen as much more than a series of transmission techniques.

In addition, the teaching method or approach being advocated and practised in the class is another important means in shaping the understanding of at least some aspects of effective language teaching in many classes. For many centuries, grammar-translation method was the popular method. As the name suggests, foreign languages were taught through grammar and translation. The goal was teaching literature of the new language and exercising the mind of the learners (Richards, 2001). Therefore, teachers had to be competent in grammar and translation of literary texts. In the mid 20th century, when methods such as direct method and audiolingualism, became dominant, teachers' knowledge of the content meant native-like accent and speaking proficiency. The objective of these two methods was

that the students reach native-like language proficiency, with particular emphasis given to speaking. Later on and with the introduction of communicative method, the goal of language teaching evolved again and this time focused on interaction and communication (Richards and Rodgers, 2002). With the emergence of concepts such as globalization of English and World Englishes, this communicative value of language has taken over. Based on these concepts, notions such as the required knowledge of teachers and their roles in the language classroom have changed and so has the view of teacher effectiveness. Even though she acknowledges the importance of methods in shaping the theoretical and practical basis of language teaching, Crandall (2000) believes, nowadays, there is a shift from method; therefore, teachers may explore and reflect on their experiences and beliefs in their teaching and in developing their perspectives. Obviously, this is all true in an ideal situation and is even happening in some contexts, but the reality is that still the majority of the countries rely heavily on the teaching methods that they advocate. Moving towards this direction needs very experienced and confident teachers who know what they are doing and trust their knowledge and judgement. Of course, at the same time, regardless of the method being used in the language class, it is inevitable that teachers and students bring at least to some extent their own identities and beliefs to class (Hall, 2011; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Tudor, 2001).

3.4.2 Distinctive Characteristics of Effective Language Teachers

Many different characteristics are attributed to effective language teachers (Borg, 2006; Brosh, 1996; Freeman, 1996; Lee, 2010). I try to approach this section by focusing on the specific characteristics of language teaching and teachers, while also acknowledging how effective language teachers are viewed. Among the characteristics that have been put forth are the need for teachers to know their students very well, have thorough knowledge of the target language and the target culture (Brosh, 1996), create a relaxing atmosphere and a close bond with the students (Holiday, 1996, Borg, 2003; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Senior, 2006), be familiar with modern technology, (Warschuar & Healey, 1998), and have native-like language competence if not being a native speaker. Some of them are very much related to the context and method that the language is being taught and some including the last point, are debatable arguments.

All considered, we can conclude that more modern approaches to language teaching have definitely moved away from didactic models of teaching. The nature of communication that is the core of language teaching today in many parts of the world has made it move to a holistic mode of teaching and learning. Even, as will be seen later in this section, in those countries that communicative and modern language teaching is not exactly practised, the desire and the need for it has been felt. Obviously effective language teachers take these points into consideration.

3.4.3 In What ways is Language Teaching Different from Other Subjects?

Whilst there are many commonalities between what takes place in a language class and other classes there are some characteristics that may not be unique but which nonetheless may have more eminence in a language class. In this section we look at some of them.

3.4.3.1 Rapport and Motivation

As can be seen in section 3.3.2, one characteristic that stands out for effective language teachers is the ability to establish good rapport and this is of great importance in communicative language classes. It may be argued that this is not unique to language teachers and all teachers regardless of what subject they teach should take this into consideration in the modern classes. However, as Borg's (2006, p.23) study also indicates, "In language teaching there are more communication relationships between teacher and learners and more scope for learners to work on themes which are of personal relevance." He has reached this conclusion based on an extensive study he conducted seeking the opinion of five different groups about language teachers. These groups consisted of teachers of other subjects such as maths and science, pre-service language teachers, language teachers in two different countries, and conference attendees. Borg (2006, p.5) emphasizes that "language teachers teach communication, not facts" and when communicating there is inevitably the need for the teacher to be more approachable. This provides more opportunities for the teacher to know the students and to create a kind of classroom environment in which they would feel at ease expressing their opinions, likes, dislikes and attitudes. Nonetheless, learning how to create rapport can be a challenge for the teacher. According to Senior (2008, p.5) who defines rapport as "a harmonious, sympathetic relationship or connection between people", in order to

establish rapport we need to try to understand the people involved and try to seek ways to maintain connection with them.

Kumaravadivelu (2003) also supports the importance of building rapport in the language classroom. He talks about several players, such as educational administrators, policy-makers, curriculum planners, teacher educators and text book writers involved in the process of education, but believes, "The players who have a direct bearing on shaping and reshaping the desired learning outcome are the classroom teachers" (p.7). Yet, he also believes that rapport cannot be established if the learners are not willing to engage, "Rapport is mutual and thus has to be shared and sustained by the efforts of both parties in a relationship" (p.296). Engaging the learners and helping maintain the rapport also require teacher's initiative. Brown (1994) also recommends that teachers establish rapport with their students among other things, by showing interest in individual students, inviting them to express their thoughts and feelings, then valuing those thoughts, being part of a team and taking genuine pride in the success of their students. Pica (2005) believes that a language teacher is a "resource person, coach and co-participant encouraging the students to be meaningful, comprehensible, and supportive in their work together" (p. 339).

Dörnyei (1998) does not use the word 'rapport', but he is a believer in motivation and the teachers' role in motivating the learners. This can be seen as an outcome good rapport. He and his colleagues conducted a study on 301 grade 11 Hungarian EFL learners who studied English at school in Budapest and without direct contact with any native English context. They realized that three motivating factors were involved: "integrativeness, linguistic self-confidence and the appraisal of the classroom environment" (p. 125). As for the third factor the teacher, the course and the group as a whole were being judged. He believes, "Teacher-specific motivational components concern the teacher's behaviour, personality and teaching style, and include the affinitive motive to please the teacher" (p.125). Based on all this, he concludes, "teacher skills in motivating learners should be seen as central to teaching effectiveness."

Almost at the same time Dörnyei was working on the importance of motivation in the classroom, Horwitz et al (1995) published a paper in which they acknowledged the importance of teachers' attention being paid to affective reactions of the students,

motivation being a part of it. They suggested that the more anxious the students were, the less they could learn; and on the other hand, the more motivated they were, the better they learned. On the whole, they gave the same amount of value to emotional responses and cognitive abilities of the learners. They saw language learning as being, "a more ego-involving activity than most other kinds of school learning which in reality results in a particularly intense personal bond between the teacher and the student, whether the teacher realizes that or not" (p. 576). Therefore, they put the responsibility of addressing the emotional concerns of the students on the language teacher and suggested that teachers should particularly investigate what students felt about abstract L2 acquisition principles. Many other studies have supported the importance of considering language learners' beliefs (Barkhuizen, 1998; Biddle, 2005; Horwitz et al, 1995; Mori, 1999; Park and Lee, 2006). Mori (1999), for example, conducted a research on 187 adult students learning Japanese in the US to find out whether their epistemological beliefs affected their learning. The result of his research shows that those learners who believed the target language was easy to learn, did better than the ones who thought it was difficult. Finally, Brown (2009) who did a quantitative study on 1600 English adult English language learners with different mother tongues and 49 teachers of the same institute reached the conclusion that students' ideas about different L2 teaching strategies might change over time. He, therefore, believes that teachers should understand their students' beliefs and perceptions and they should clarify the rationale behind the steps being taken in the classroom for the students. He believes taking this step can have a huge impact in building or changing students' beliefs concerning the language class and what is being practiced. According to Widdowson (1990, p.194) in order to find the most effective framework for learning, "the attitudes, interests, and predispositions of the learners themselves", should be considered.

It seems that in modern language classes building the right rapport and creating motivation are key requirements for successful teaching and are not merely options to be considered. However, the ways that can lead to the building of rapport are varied and in some ways culturally specific.

3.4.3.2 The Nature of What Is Being Taught

Another factor that differentiates language teachers from the teachers of other subjects is the foreign language itself, which is the subject matter being taught. The nature of teaching a foreign language is different from other topics. As Brosh (1996, p.125) has put it, "The means of instruction is also the subject of instruction"; moreover, social, political, psychological and practical values beyond the control of teachers affect it. Borg (2006) believes that the essence of language is different because the medium of instruction is something that the learners do not yet understand. One other point he makes is that language teachers teach communication and in order for their students to increase their knowledge of the language they need opportunities to engage in FL communication, because reading books does not necessarily help them. On the other hand, since *language* is what is being taught, creating naturalistic learning environments when and where possible can help promote learning.

This can be a challenge for the non-native language teachers as well. They, too, need to improve their language proficiency which is not always very easy because teachers, like their students, need to have opportunities to practice and use the language and studying books does not always solve all the related issues. They should know both the use and usage of the language they are teaching.

3.4.3.3 Language teaching can be political

Second/foreign language education is influenced by politics. Pennycook (1989) pinpoints issues such as bilingualism, minority education and internationalism as political issues related to language teaching. Cultural imperialism, or as Ndebele, (1987, p.4 quoted in Pennycook, 1989, p.594) explains, "moving toward standardization of international thought", has a very political nature and has stemmed from "unequal power relations between cultural and peripheral countries" (Pennycook, 1989, p.610). Teachers on a postgraduate TESOL course who had joined in a discussion with Borg (2006, p.13) on the distinctiveness of language teaching also agreed that language teaching inducts learners into ways of thinking that "reflect those of the target language."

3.4.3.4 Incorrect learner output is more acceptable

From the time communication has become the objective of language learning, making language errors has become more acceptable as long as communication can be established. (This of course depends on the language proficiency of the learners.) This is quite different from what is expected of students learning other subject matters.

3.4.4 Language Teacher Training and Development

Again many of the issues concerning training language teachers are the same as the teachers of other subjects. Evidently, a sound knowledge of the subject matter is very important. But this can be rather challenging and a never-ending task for non-native speakers. This for the most part means that non-native language teachers should try to improve their language proficiency all throughout their career. In an ideal world they should have full mastery of all the four skills, but if that cannot be achieved, then at least they are expected to know the course they are teaching inside out. In most cases cultural issues are also implicitly or explicitly a part of their teaching. Therefore, cultural awareness and sensitivity to cultural matters are also very important; however, learning about a new culture is again not straightforward. Accordingly, one of the duties of language training courses should be raising cultural awareness, reminding the teacher of the sensitivity of the issue and providing guidelines on what they should look for.

The actual practice of teaching is of course another part of teacher training courses. This depends on the methodology adopted and on the context and objectives of language teaching and learning. But the fact remains that many teachers who have had appropriate and up-to-date training, still tend to use the more traditional approaches in their classes for different reasons, such as exam pressures, a preset syllabus and large classes. In these cases, theoretically teachers may know what they should do, but in practice sometimes the situation dictates otherwise. Sometimes teachers simply refuse to try the more modern approaches due to their own previous experiences. This reminds us that teacher's beliefs and their prior experience can be either very helpful or harmful for becoming more effective (Freeman, 2001a; Richards, 2008). Tsui (2003, p.34) based on four case studies comparing experienced and novice language teachers decided that in order to move

from theory to practice teachers needed to transform their "formal knowledge" to "personal practice". This requires enthusiastic teachers who upon encouragement would consider thinking and reflecting on these points. Furthermore, very efficient training is required to trigger the enthusiasm and help teachers develop. Research has also proven that if language teachers are involved in the three main phases of curriculum activities that is "planning, implementing and evaluation", they would feel more responsible, which can also lead to their becoming more effective (Burton 2007, p.37). In order to do these they need thorough knowledge of language teaching methodology, the context and culture they are working in and also the needs and desires of their students. Wette (2009) indicates that the class is the centre of learning and for the teacher to teach effectively there should be an awareness of the students' needs. Buckton (2001) has moved even further by suggesting that language teachers can get student participation in planning and delivering of a course. This seems to be practical if the teachers have some kind of freedom in making changes in the syllabus or the course of work and can be more applicable in smaller classes. Senior's (2010) proposal, which is based on a study conducted in an institution in Australia, is that teaching and learning should be a collaborative endeavour. She believes that the overall atmosphere of the class is very important and can result in the better performance of individuals.

Finally, based on these concepts and particularly after the emergence of task-based and content-based language teaching, introducing constructivism in training and developing effective language teachers has been seriously considered. Kaufman (2004) introduces three reasons for the importance of including the concept of constructivism in language teacher training courses. Firstly, it involves the notion of learning and how both the schema of the learners and the social and cultural variables contribute to the learner's development. Second is the content of what is being taught and the introduction of content-based language teaching, which involves the teaching of subjects such as mathematics and science in the language class as a means of teaching the language. Third are the teachers themselves. They engage in interdisciplinary and cross-cultural activities, so they need to be educated in ways to be prepared for it.

How can all this be done? Once again teachers' active engagement and reflection are considered very important, such as through inviting teachers to have teaching portfolios so that they be assessed by referring to them. Kamarul-Kabilan (2007, p.684) believes that reflection can engage "structured teachers" in self-examination and thus enhance their understanding of teaching and learning in ways that are fresh, stimulating and challenging".

In summary, modern approaches to language teacher development are constantly trying to reconceptualise the notion of teacher effectiveness. Accordingly, although training, educating and developing effective language teachers have developed, understanding how to modify them for each context and apply the learning in the classes are still evolving.

3.4.5 Effective Language Teaching to Young Learners

In their compilation of information related to language teaching to young learners in 18 different countries Nikolov and Curtain (2000) show that even though in most of these countries teaching and hence learning of an FL begin at school, it is only very recently that provisions for the training of language teachers to young learners have been made. In general, there are still numerous obstacles and shortcomings in teaching an FL to young learners. One problem is the shortage of enough qualified teachers. The findings of a study by Faklova (2000) in Hungary, for example, show that teachers are not satisfied with the teaching salary; and thus, usually look for other better-paid jobs in business or private sector. Sometimes the schools have been so much in need of language teachers that teachers of other subjects with an intermediate language certificate were allowed to teach it.

Faklova (2000) reports

> In 1997, the Pedagogical Institution in Prague carried out research in order to examine the competence of foreign language teachers at Czech basic and secondary schools (Kovaricová, 1998-1999). According to the results, in the school year 1996/97 more than 76% of foreign language teachers at Czech basic schools were unqualified (p.86).

The other issue that is concentrated on in Nikolov and Curtain's (2000) book is the role of parents in language learning of their children. They mention that parents' expectations and demands can have both positive and negative effects. Sometimes their high expectations demotivate the children and at the same time put a lot of

pressure on the teachers. On the whole the articles in the book argue that the gap between parents' expectations and what actually happens is pressurizing teachers at least in some countries.

Another issue often raised when teaching languages to is how to best work with adolescents. According to Ur (1996, p.290), "For inexperienced teachers, classes of adolescents are perhaps the most daunting challenge… they can be considerably more difficult to motivate and manage, and it takes longer to build up trusting relationships." For this she believes teachers should receive appropriate training to seek insight into their demands.

All in all, reviewing the condition of teaching an FL to young learners indicates that:
1. Language teaching to young learners is becoming increasingly in demand.
2. More trained language teachers to young learners are still needed.
3. The quality of teacher training for teachers dealing with young learners stills needs to improve.
4. Parents do play an important part in the process of language learning of their children and need to be thoroughly briefed.
5. More research is needed. Some of the existing problems are shared in many countries, while others are unique to each country.

3.4.6 Research on English Language Teaching in Specific Countries
In this section, the findings of studies carried out in different countries, including Iran, concerning effective language teachers are demonstrated. Even though the contexts of the countries are very different, they all have some similarities with Iran and that is the reason they have been selected for consideration here. One important similarity is the fact that they have a large population of language learners and they all have insisted on adhering to deductive teaching of grammar and language rules more than the other components of language. They all have realized the importance of oral communication, but it seems that breaking away from the traditional practices has not been easy. All of the studies below also mention the existence of teachers with low language proficiency. This comparison also highlights that although there are commonalities among countries, few countries are exactly the same, so the context needs to be considered in research studies.

3.4.6.1 Japan

Kioke and Tanaka (1995) claim that in Japan learning English became important when modern schools were established in 1860, but in different periods the importance fluctuated. Palmer introduced his famous oral method in Japan right before the Second World War, but then English became the enemy's language and learning it was not desired. Then in the 50s and 60s audiolingualism became popular in high schools. However, there was resistance among teachers and learners for using this approach and since all the emphasis of schools was on entrance exam to universities which had no section for listening and speaking, audiolingualism did not become widespread. Subsequently, the government insisted on the teaching of all the four skills and since 1980 reforms were made. However, still some teachers do use translation and grammar as part of their language teaching. According to Biddle (2005), in Japan, language teaching was seen as mere rote learning and memorization with no room for individual analysis, but this is all changing and international communication is what is in demand at least at high schools. With approximately 15 million students the importance of every decision made and every step taken becomes more apparent. Biddle believes that with about 30 billion US dollars being spent per year for the English teaching industry, the facilities in Japan are many, but the system is not yet very effective. The evidence is that in his survey more than half of the language teachers have evaluated their English instruction negatively. This supports the view that publications, books and other facilities do not take the place of qualified teachers with a sense of self-efficacy.

3.4.6.2 Malaysia

Kamarul-Kabilan (2007) more than anything else is concerned about the low language proficiency of the language teachers in Malaysia. He believes that the absence of those qualities required for being effective has killed the creativity and interest of the would-be teachers. Nikitina and Fumitaka (2009), on the other hand, do not criticize the condition of language teaching in Malaysia and mainly foucs on the relationship between university students and language teachers and the kind of qualities which are most and least desirable for language teachers through the eyes of these students. The findings suggest that the three most desirable characteristics for effective teachers according to the students are care/empathy, patience and friendliness which are all relationship-oriented. This finding is not what was expected

when considering the culture in Malaysia and the existing notion that, in that context, the teacher is the mentor and student as Nikitina and Fumitaka (2009, p.168) put it is the "obedient disciple". They then suggest that based on these findings, Holliday's (1996) model of small cultures may be very successful in language teaching classes. This means that every class will be considered a small culture and "the teacher's intuition, experience, value system, and the knowledge of his or her students" along with the "learners' age, gender, university major, educational, ethnic and family backgrounds" play a role in the formation of the "small culture" (p.182).

3.4.6.3 Korea

Park and Lee (2006) sought the opinion of Korean high school students about the characteristics of effective language teachers through a questionnaire and then compared them with the perception of the teachers. They found some key differences: "interestingly, the teachers endorsed English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, and socio-affective skills in order of importance, whereas the students endorsed pedagogical knowledge, English proficiency, and socio-affective skills" (p. 241). They also found differences in the opinions of high and low-achieving students which has led them to believe that teachers should be very well aware of their students' achievement levels. High-achievers were more interested in the pedagogic knowledge of their teachers than their socio-affective skills. They believe that by studying the findings of such studies teachers can check the appropriateness of their beliefs regarding the teaching of a foreign language.

3.4.6.4 Iran

As in Malaysia and Korea, many of the Iranian language teachers have limited knowledge of the language; in addition, many of the language teachers have never been in a situation where they would need to use English as a means of communication. Also as mentioned before and similar to the case in post-war Japan, Iran has some kind of hostility towards some English speaking countries. Of course, even though hard feelings against the governments may still exist to some extent, there is no hostility against the language itself anymore. Except for special groups of people including the elite and the educated, the demand, need or desire to learn English or any other foreign language may not necessarily be very high but is certainly on the rise.

Iran has two other things in common with Japan, the number of school-age children and the effect of the entrance exam of university on how and what is being taught at schools. However, the number of native language teachers and the facilities available at Japanese schools are not at all comparable to schools in Iran.

In recent years, the concept of language teacher effectiveness has grown in importance in Iran and some studies have been conducted in this regard. Borzabadi-Farahani and Ahmadian (2007) concentrated on identifying the characteristics of good language teachers in private language schools in Iran. In their survey, they sought the opinion of teachers and students aged between 16 and 20 and managers on the issue of the characteristics of effective teachers. Then the researchers observed the classes of those teachers who were believed to be effective. The seven functions selected for the teachers were:

1. Management of student behaviour
2. Instructional Presentation
3. Instructional Monitoring
4. Instructional feedback
5. Facilitating instruction
6. Communicating within the educational environment
7. Performing non-instructional duties

The findings suggest that generally speaking there is agreement among the three groups on the characteristics of effective language teachers and all the groups place importance on functions six and seven more than any other function. Borzabadi-Farahani & Ahmadian (2007) do not elaborate in detail about what they exactly mean by these functions, but explain that the emphasis of the students on the last two functions shows that teachers "should have a logically developed plan for teaching inside the class that is rooted in the continuous reflection on their part outside the classroom setting" (p.37). They mention that students like language teachers to follow the rules and regulations, and at the same time plan their professional development and be reflective practitioners.

Another study that has focused on effective language teachers was undertaken by Babai-Shishsavan and Sadeghi (2009) in a small city in Iran. In their study they interviewed and surveyed high school, university and private language institute

students about their opinions on the characteristics of effective language teachers. The findings of this study suggest a difference of opinion between teachers and students. For example, students believed that teachers should use Persian more often while teaching more than the teachers did. Teachers agreed more strongly on the importance of homework and group activities. Teachers believed that adequate knowledge of the language and pedagogy were as important as personality, but the students thought that personality was more important. Also the students thought less of those teachers who spoke a lot about their own personal experiences. "Being patient and flexible, caring about the students' needs, having positive attitudes towards the learners and being smart and creative", were favoured by both teachers and learners (p. 135). The researchers state that a study of this nature had not been conducted in Iran before.

Another empirical study conducted by Babaie-Shishsavan (2010) was with English language teachers and learners engaged in teaching and learning of English in Iranian universities, high schools and private language institutes. She examined the characteristics of an effective English language teacher. This study had a gender focus and investigated whether male and female teachers and learners of English held different views on characteristics of an effective English language teacher. The study found differences between the opinion of male and female students and male and female teachers. For example, female students cared more about the pronunciation of the teacher and also focused on the interpersonal and social characteristics of the teacher. Male students and teachers favoured the teaching of English in the students' mother tongue more than females.

There are methodological problems with these last two studies, I believe. Their main problem is that students are from different age groups and study English in different contexts. The university students were studying English literature, therefore what they were exposed to and what they should have expected were not the same as high school students and those who were studying at private language schools. In addition, this sample of students in the second study was chosen from Urumia, a small city in Iran, while teachers and university instructors were selected from a variety of cities.

Eslami-Rasekh (2010). who tried to examine the perception of Iranian EAP (English for Academic Purposes) learners' of the problematic areas in EAP programs and compare it to what the instructors thought the problems were reached the conclusion that, "instructors may not always be the best judges of students' needs and challenges" (p.7).

In yet another study, Eslami and Fatahi. (2008) asked Iranian EFL teachers with one to five years of experience teaching English at different high schools in different school districts in Tehran to assess their self efficacy, English proficiency and instructional strategies. None of the teachers had travelled or studied in English speaking countries. 29 held bachelor's degrees in TEFL English Literature, or Translation, and 11 others held either a Master's degree in TEFL or were in-service teachers pursuing their Master's degrees in TEFL. The findings suggest that the higher the language proficiency, the more sense of self efficacy existed in the teachers. Akbari and Moradkhani's study (2010) also proves that like in many other contexts the more a teacher is self efficacious the more he/she encourages student engagement.

Overall, looking at the studies on language teaching in Iran indicates that the interest in identifying effective language teaching is quite recent and there are some shortcomings and gaps in many of the studies that have been carried out.

3.5 Adolescence

Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. It has both physiological and psychological aspects and is considered to be a difficult and certainly a very different phase both for the adolescents and the people dealing with them in particular parents and teachers.

As for the age when one is not considered a child and is treated as an adolescent there is no definite standard. Chronological age range as Gentry and Campbell (2002, p.1) have put it is only one way of looking at this period; "Adolescence can also be defined in numerous other ways, considering such factors as physical, social, and cognitive development as well as age." Many believe that adolescence or rather the teenage year begins at 13 and ends at 19, but this can vary from person to

person and culture to culture. According to Lewis (2007, p.5) this age range can be split into three distinct groups, each with their own characteristics:

- young teenagers, aged 12-14
- middle teenagers, aged 14-17
- late teenagers, aged 17-19

Beckett (2002) believes, "adolescents in all cultures do recognize some kind of transition" (p.112). Generally speaking, there are always new responsibilities given to the young, regardless of the environment they live in; however, the amount of freedom and the nature of these responsibilities are not the same in different societies. At this stage adolescents in many cultures try to discover their identities and find out who they are. Gentry and Campbell (2002, p.4) believe, "All of the ways adolescents develop—cognitively, physically, socially, emotionally—prepare them to experiment with new behaviours as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood"; therefore, it is not only the physical appearance of the adolescents that changes, their behaviour undergoes dramatic changes, too. "From the concrete, black-and-white thinkers they appear to be one day, rather suddenly it seems, adolescents become able to think abstractly and in shades of gray." They can set goals and plan to reach them. They can be mature in making decisions, but at the same time they like taking risks. Due to physical changes many youths are concerned with their appearance. They are concerned about their weight, skin, height, etc, which can sometimes lower their self-esteem and even depress them. Also peer pressure seems to be high at this level and they want to fit in. They are constantly experimenting new ways and would like to win the respect of their peers. This is very important, because it sometimes determines their social behaviour, which in our case can be within the class and school environment. Emotionally, they tend to enjoy their autonomy and independence from their parents in any decision they want to make.

To summarize, according to Gentry and Campbell (2002) the social development of adolescents is best considered in the contexts in which it occurs; that is, relating to peers, family, school, work, and community.

3.5.1 Teaching Adolescents

Being a teenager is difficult, being a parent of a teenagers is not easy either and teaching a teenager can sometimes be daunting; however, it seems that more research is required to help to deal with them in the classroom in finding the most effective way and to learn how best to teach them a foreign language, which is what concerns us here.

> Teenagers—the word often puts fear in the heart of the language teacher. Visions of bored students slouched in their chairs, or class clowns playing practical jokes, can sap the confidence of the most experienced teachers. In the world of ELT, there can surely be no other age group with as bad an image as teenagers. (Lewis, 2007, p.5)

But do teenagers really deserve this kind of reputation? Experienced teachers usually have good advice on how to teach this group. Puchta (2008), a course-book writer for teenagers, has said, "I think we need to aim at establishing a classroom culture of rapport and mutual trust." He believes by making the teenagers feel they are accepted as individuals, teachers can boost the self-esteem and confidence of the students, which in turn can lead to their success in learning the new language. Anderson (2008, p.1) who is also a course-book writer for teenagers agrees with Puchta and says,

> But if you have accepted the challenge of teaching teenagers, then you are the teacher of a group of young, impressionable people and will need to try to be flexible and patient with each individual. And you will need to remember that in the classroom, the group dynamic is often as important as pedagogical content and activities will carry benefits other than linguistic content.

Budden (2003) from the British Council, Spain believes that most likely teenagers have extrinsic motivation and are after good marks or pleasing their parents. Buckton's (2001) experience also shows "Is it in the exam?" is the question many teachers hear from their students when teaching new subject matters.

Lewis (2007, p10) has proposed some recommendations for effective classroom management of classes with adolescents. For example, he believes that making "students responsible for their actions", "getting them involved in setting class goals" and "taking interest in your students' lives" can be among useful strategies for improving the class atmosphere. He, too, believes that teenagers need respect from the teacher, but later he emphasizes that this does not mean that the teacher should act like a teenager, "You are still a power figure representing authority, and you need to keep that distinction clear if you want to maintain a good relationship with your

students" (p.5). Varanoglulari et al, (2008) and Lewis, (2007) talk about the value the modern youth gives to technology. For teachers to have a good relationship with the young, familiarity with some technological advancement is very useful. Even though not all the youth in all countries have access to modern technology, it seems to me that most young people have the desire and interest to take advantage or at least learn more about them and many appreciate their teachers' knowledge of them. This is, I believe, of particular importance to language teachers, and besides helping find ways of engaging the students in different ways that can be both fun and useful; they themselves can improve their knowledge. Of course their understanding of what modern technology comprises of might vary depending on the context they live in.

3.5.2 Second Language Acquisition/Foreign Language Learning

Due to ease of travelling for many and also emergence and accessibility of the Internet, and electronic social networking, the need and desire for more communication have increased. Therefore, the demand for learning and knowing languages other than the mother tongue has been felt by many more than ever. English is considered the lingua franca; and therefore, is the dominant language used for communication of different nations in the world (Crystal, 1987). The demand for learning it is very high for non-native speakers of English and a lot of young people are either already interested in learning it or are encouraged to learn the language.

The best age for acquiring a second language has been an area of controversy for a long time and a large number of studies have been conducted to find the optimum age for language learning. In 1967, Lenneberg (quoted in Crystal, 1987) introduced Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) in first language acquisition, which then was linked to acquiring a second language as well. He believed that the ability to acquire a language diminishes with age and no one could acquire their first language after the age of 12. Later on Krashen et al (1979) following a review of all empirical studies in this field reached some conclusions concerning the best age for acquiring a second/foreign language. They suggested that the younger the learners were, the better they acquired the new language; however, they also noted that older children acquired the language faster than the younger ones. Read (2003, p.6) also reports on some studies that support older learners' being faster in learning an L2.

According to those studies older learners' "cognitive maturity and better developed leaning strategies" are among the factors that contribute to their learning faster. At the same time Read (2003, p.6), who is a supporter of language teaching to younger learners, continues that if the learning condition is optimal, then learning a second language at a younger age "opens windows of the mind." By this she means that it has benefits for the individual and society. All in all, according to Munoz (2008), even though there has been extensive research done in the area of the best age for initiating the learning or acquisition of a language, there is still need for more study, particularly on "the role that intensity of exposure or instruction can play in language learning in regular programmes" (p.208).

In many countries of the world, including Iran, teaching an FL/SL begins at secondary school, so even though the best age is still debated, the reality is that many young learners begin their learning from the age of 11 or 12.

3.5.3 Research Related to Language Teaching to Teenagers in Iran

The concluding section particularly focuses on the studies conducted in Iran on the language teaching to young Iranian learners. Let's once again draw the picture of what is going on at schools in Iran when language teaching begins. When students are at primary school they usually have one teacher for most of the lessons so they can have a close bond with her/him, but when they enter the secondary school, they have different teachers for different subjects, so having the same feeling of closeness that may have existed in the primary school is next to impossible for many. Also there are many different subjects being introduced, among which is English as a foreign language. Then, the school is usually unfamiliar, the teachers are all new, many of the subjects are being introduced for the first time and the students are at a critical age. These all can make both learning and teaching more difficult. One last point to remember is that English is a foreign and not a second language and most of the learners have almost no opportunity to use the language in real life communication.

There is a very limited number of published research on language instruction at schools in Iran in particular for secondary school. In the ones that I have had access to, the bottom line was that language learning has not been successful in the schools in Iran in most cases. In a study conducted by Rahimi and Nabilou (2010), for

example, a comparison was made between the quality of language teaching in public and private schools in a small city in Iran. According to this study the teachers working in private schools were proven to be more effective than the ones working in public ones. They believe that parents and teachers see teacher-related factors as only one of the factors leading to the poor quality of language teaching in public schools. Factors such as students' low motivation, lack of enough facilities at schools, the large number of students in each class, the emphasis of textbooks on grammar, reading and vocabulary rather than communication and poor curriculum planning also have contributed to this poor quality. It should be noted that in this study only girls' schools were studied.

Another study conducted in 2009 on the language needs of Iranian school students, and whether they had been taken into consideration in preparation of the textbooks, investigated a population of about 2000 students living in different regions of Iran. The result suggested that the "existing materials do not conform to the learners' present day demands" (Allami, et al, 2009, p.139). Again in a study by Riazi & Mosalanejad (2010) on textbooks and another one by Jahangard (2007), the need for revising the textbooks used at high schools has been demonstrated empirically.

Pishgaman & Navari (2010), compare the perception of Iranian high school students with the perception of students in private language classes. Their study took place in Mashhad, which is a big city. A group of the participants in the research were 11th grade school students, while the other group consisted of students aged 18 and above private institutes. There is no mention of their gender. Based on comparing the result of the marked checklists of 27 metaphors about teachers and 18 metaphors about learners, there is a significant difference between the perceptions of the two groups of language learning. The 50 high school students have chosen metaphors like *parent*, *mother and friend to* describe their ideal teacher, and *child*, *player*, and *constructor* for learners. The students attending private schools have selected very different roles for their ideal teacher, *friend*, *comedian*, and *artist. Team member*, *child* and *partner* were the roles they chose for themselves. This can mean that the method used for teaching the language and along with the learners' experience affect their perception of the roles that effective language teachers

should have. Of course this can also be attributed to the age differences of the two groups studied, which shows the weakness of the study in choosing the population.

All in all, as the above mentioned studies and some others including Farhady & Hedayati (2009); Dahmardeh, (2009); Eslami & Fatahi (2008) point out, the need for more systematic study of language teaching in Iran still exists. Most of the research undertaken so far have illustrated that there is much need for improving the existing situation of language teaching in schools.

3.6 Parents

Parents play a key role in the education of their children (Antonopoulou, et al 2010, Crozier, 1997; Linse, 2005; Wentzel, 2002). Actually, besides giving them life and attending to their basic needs, they are their first educators and many continue assuming this role all throughout their lives in different ways. Many parents are in fact the role models for their children and the early influence they have on them can have lifelong effects. Wentzel (2002) believes that parents are the ones who teach children about themselves and the things that they are supposed to do to become accepted in their social worlds.

By acting as wisely as they can, by giving them advice, by supporting them, and later on by choosing the school they believe is the best possible option (Ball and Vincent, 1998; Crozier, 1997) and by getting involved in school-related issues, *responsible* parents do make their marks on the lives of the young ones. Therefore, their role and influence in education and schools cannot be neglected. How they raise their children, how they treat them and what they wish them to attain in the future has many implications in the schooling of their children. Cullingford (1985, p.3) believes, "Parents are the people who influence children's attitudes towards learning, so that that they have a central educational role whether they like it or not." According to Wentzel (2002) and based on a study that she conducted on middle-school students even the expectations that the students have of their teachers are very much close to their expectations from their parents. This again signifies the important role of the parents.

What are the parents' expectations from schools? What kind of choices do they make concerning the schools they wish to send their children to? How can they

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contribute to the school education of their children, or maybe how can they be act as hindrance? What do schools expect from parents? How can they behave in the most influential way to affect their kids, and even the schools? With all these questions in mind are parents to be viewed as supporters or as problems? These are the questions to be tackled in this section.

3.6.1 The Roles of Parents in the Schooling of Their Children

The role of parents in the education of their children has always been acknowledged. But not until recently has it been included in research. Dörnyei (2005) believes that except for very few studies, the effects of parental influence on shaping learner motivation have not received the required attention.

From one side, parents can be very helpful in the process of the education of their children; from the other, they can pose as threats and even sometimes enemies of the teachers and schools. Wentzel (1998), based on an empirical study, reached the conclusion that parents, teachers and peers played independent roles in teenagers' lives. She says, "The effects of having multiple sources of support on motivational and academic outcomes are primarily additive rather than compensatory" (p.207). Also Mortimore et al (1988) based on a comprehensive study on teacher effectiveness across 50 primary schools in the UK, concluded that parental informal involvement in activities such as helping in the class and reading at home, enhanced school effectiveness. Antonopoulou et al (2010) conducted a study seeking the opinion of Greek parents of secondary school children about the importance of their involvement with the education of their children. They came to the conclusion that for many different reasons such as teachers' disinterest, parents' lack of time, low socio-economic status and the adolescents' willingness to be independent, the communication between families and schools was insufficient, but at the same acknowledged as important. They reported the result of other studies that demonstrated the importance of families having close contact with school on their children's academic achievements, self-esteem, etc.

Elizabeth, et al (2007) interviewed teachers to elicit their view of the role of parents and many believed that those teachers who had the support of parents would have more power. One parent observed:

> Good communication with parents enables parents to be confident about having you as the teachers of their children … If parents know that you care about their children, they will take the initiative to talk with you. (p. 630)

In another survey done by Watzke (2007), a novice teacher was so thrilled about the parents having thanked her for her efforts with their kids that she was enthusiastically looking forward to the next school year. Goe et al (2008) in their five-point definition of effective teachers, the criteria used for evaluating teacher effectiveness used in the US, believe teachers' collaboration with parents is one of the elements that can make them more effective.

The above mentioned quotations only show one side of the coin, though. Parents and teachers are not always on good terms. For instance, "there has been a long tradition within the British education system that parents, or at least groups of parents, are to be seen primarily as problems" (Hughes et al, 1994, p.2). According to Hughes et al these problems have taken different forms throughout time in England. Parents are sometimes accused of not showing sufficient interest in the education of their children or not having a good attitude towards schools. At one point, working-class parents were considered the cause of the verbal deprivation of their children because apparently they were not using the right type of language when speaking. Flores and Day (2006) look at the problem from another angle. They believe that since teachers make some emotional investment, they need the support of the other stakeholders including the parents and at times they feel vulnerable, partly because of the unrealistic expectations of the parents.

Of course parents are seen as taking roles other than being a friend or an enemy to schools. Sometimes parents are considered partners and sometimes they are consumers. The latter is attributed to them when they are trying to choose schools for their children and that is why their demands are mostly taken seriously by the schools and teachers. Ball and Vincent (1998) have used the term *good parenting* to mean parents trying to make good choices when possible. They argue that when choosing schools for their children they mainly use their own network of people and do not base their judgement solely on what the school tells them. Crozier (1997) places a lot of importance on parental involvement, but, she does not think that parents always make the right decisions and have the right demands. She believes

that this involvement needs to carefully planned, so that parents' demands would be realistic and the needs of all students would be taken into consideration.

3.6.2 The Effect of Parents on the Performance of their Children at Schools
Parents can affect their children's education in many different ways. Many children for example have the desire to please their parents. Parents can act as a motivator for them to help them take their education more seriously; or in contrast, they can completely hamper their child's interest in schooling with the wrong kind of behaviour or attitude. In Williams and Burden's (1997) framework of motivation which is designed to show the factors that play a part in language learning, parents are categorized among external motivators.

The other influence that parents can have is through their attitude towards schools and teachers: If parents see schooling as important, and if they go in lines with the school and the teachers, then it is very likely that their children will take their studying seriously. (Ghenghesh, 2010; MacIntyre et al, 2001; Mortimore 1988; Sockett, 1990)

In addition, their choice of schools, which can primarily be choosing between a public and a private school, and then choosing one school from among them is also very determining. Parents' financial status is important, too. Based on that, they can decide whether to send their child to a private or public school. Also they can choose to plan for the child's extra-curricular activities if at all. In addition, sometimes their financial status can affect their expectations. For example, the findings of a study conducted by Alexander, et al. (1994) show that low-income families in the US have higher expectations of their children.

Research indicates that parents' educational background can also be important in how they affect their children's education. Darling-Hammond (2000) believes that having information about parent's education "might make a difference in the measurement of student background" (p.32). Halle et al. (1997), too, based on a research done in the US have come to the conclusion that educated mothers in lower income families have higher expectation from their children regarding their academic achievement.

Yet another important factor is parents' social status: It can affect their choices of school they wish they send their child to and in general their involvement with the education of their children. According to Crozier (1997), middle-class parents are the most active, but she believes that this does not mean that the working class are less concerned.

Finally, parents' reports about schools and teachers to responsible bodies: In the early nineties, in countries such as the UK, after changes were made to the policy the way was paved for something that Brown (1997, quoted in Macbeath & McCall, 2001, p.24) referred to as "the rise of the parentocracy". This means that "a child's education is increasingly dependent on th*e wealth an*d *wishes* of parents, rather than on th*e ability an*d *efforts* of pupils" (p.24).This is still true about many countries. Markley (2004) states that one of the methods used for evaluating teacher effectiveness is incorporating feedback from what he calls "nontraditional observers", such as parents (p.4). Of course he does not support this method.

3.6.3 Parental Role in Second Language Learning of Their Children

MacIntyre et al (2001) have emphasized the significant influence of parents in motivating their children to learn an L2. Ghenghesh (2010), who also supports the role of parents in their children's acquiring an L2, believes that there is a "positive correlation between "External influences of parents' and 'Effort'" (p.131). The main role ascribed to parents concerning the second or foreign language learning of their children can be giving them positive feedback and motivating them.

Looking at the role of parents from a purely financial perspective, it can be seen that in many countries of the world only affluent families can provide good opportunities for their children to learn English or any other FL. For example, according to Nunan (2003, p.602) in Malaysia, where English is considered an FL**,** "the success of the national language policy has had an adverse impact on English. Parents who can afford the tuition are arranging for private English classes for their children." The same applies to many other countries including Iran. On the one hand, they should be able to afford to pay for it, that is if the language education is not provided in the national schools or if it is of poor quality. On the other hand, they should have a

positive attitude towards the learning of that new language to be willing to invest on it and send their children to private teachers or institutions.

Borg (2003) believes that parents, along with principals' requirements, the school, society, curriculum mandates, classroom and school layout, school policies, colleagues, standardised tests and the availability of resources can shape teacher's practices. He also thinks that this is not necessarily positive and can "hinder language teachers' ability to adopt practices which reflect their beliefs" (p. 94). Wentzel (2008) confirms the important role of parents and believes that positive relationship between parents and children leads to the children adopting the goals that are valued by the parents.

3.7 Conclusion

Education-related studies indicate that educational environments, particularly, teachers, students and parents all play their roles and influence education. In an environment with limited facilities the role of teachers becomes more influential and critical. At the same time, if teachers can help create the circumstances that promote positive interaction among all the stakeholders' then it is very likely that learning could take place and be a pleasant experience. Language teaching/learning is no exception and since factors such as motivation and positive attitude towards the new language are crucial in the success of language learning, then at times language teachers' effectiveness become even more prominent. At the same time, considering that research has supported the cultural-sensitivity of teacher effectiveness (Campbell, et all, 2004a and b; Hofstede, 1986; Nikitina & Fumitaka, 2009; Xiao & Tianjin, 2006) and not enough having been studied or said about it in Iran, may be the evidence that this area is under-researched and needs to be addressed in this country. My study will go some way to filling this gap. There are obviously many similarities within classrooms, but the differences cannot be ignored. Context, teachers, students and their parents are all involved.

In short, Flores and Day (2006, p. 220) deem, "to become an effective teacher is a long and complex process." As Reynolds, et al (2003) also believe, there is still need for much more research in the area of teacher effectiveness.

4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

In our modern world learning a new language, particularly English for speakers of other languages is a necessity in most cases. In language teaching, those approaches that create the desired effects in the class and at the same time are pleasant to learners and the least stressful are sought. This includes all stakeholders and their roles within the whole system.

This study investigates what language teachers, language learners and their parents perceive of a successful language class in the context of Iran, where English is a foreign language; where the attitude towards the governments of some of the English speaking countries is not positive; where the textbooks are not to the highest and updated standard; and where there is a large population of young people. All these indicate that the role of the teacher and her effectiveness are fundamental and her responsibilities are immense. Therefore, this study hopes to investigate and understand the concept of teacher effectiveness in language teaching with the hope that the findings can be useful in shaping improved language teaching in Iran.

Many studies have found that rapport among all stakeholders including teachers, learners, school authorities, and, in the case of young learners parents, plays a key role in the success of the class (Borg, 2006; Holliday, 1996; Nikitina and Fumitaka, 2009; Scrivener, 2005; Senior, 2006; Wette, 2009). Therefore, in this study in order to identify the characteristics of effective Iranian language teachers, the views of the learners studying at public schools in Iran, their language teachers, and the parents have been sought. It is assumed that their perceptions, experiences and expectations can play a key role in determining how teachers may best function in the classes and be most effective.

The principal research question for this study is: *What are stakeholders' perceptions of language teacher effectiveness in secondary schools in Iran?*

And in order to be able to answer this question, the answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What are learners' perceptions of the characteristics of effective language teachers?

2. What are teachers' perceptions of the characteristics of effective language teachers?

3. What are parents' perceptions of the characteristics of effective language teachers?

Therefore, the first two sections of this chapter briefly touch upon the theoretical and philosophical assumptions underlying the study and providing justifications for the decisions made for the strategies applied in the course of the research. Then the main part of this chapter is devoted to discussing the research paradigm and the procedures used for conducting the current study. Finally, the ethical considerations during the course of the research are provided.

4.2 Philosophical Assumptions

Bassey (1990, p.35, quoted in Wellington, 2000, p.13) defines education as "systematic, critical and self-critical inquiry which aims to contribute to the advancement of knowledge" and my goal as a researcher is to conduct robust research which advances both theoretical and professional knowledge. All research requires data collection methods which are compatible with the aims and well-matched with the adopted philosophical assumptions. When subjects are human beings, special codes of conduct and understanding are needed which go beyond the scope of scientific or positivist approaches. In educational research, studying each individual in-depth while paying attention to the context in which the research is undertaken can produce information otherwise left unnoticed. When focusing on individuals, the data collected relies on the researcher's sensitivity (Dörnyei, 2007). Thus, the perceptions and beliefs of both the researcher and the researched become significant; and therefore, purely empirical findings which are only objective and value-free would not suffice. As Wellington (2000) mentions, in modern science the knowledge produced is rarely value-free and objective and does not strictly follow the paradigms dictated by positivism. Eisner (1993, p.54) also believes "different ways of seeing give us different worlds". With this kind of vision, the scope of the methods used in research becomes wider and offers insights into the situations being studied. From an interpretive perspective, studying versatile images of human behaviour and

the situations in which they occur is desirable (Cohen, et al, 2007) and as Lincoln and Guba (1985) have pointed out in an interpretive view of the world, ontologically there are multiple constructed realities and axiologically inquiries are value-bound. In this research, like most qualitative research, there were no hypotheses or variables defined at the outset: rather, the goal of the research was to understand the rich complexity of the participants' understandings, so that answers to the research questions could be unveiled during the process of investigation. Therefore, the philosophical position that this study adopts is that of interpretivism.

In interpretive research, the researcher tries to discover perspectives so that new insights into the existing situations can be developed (Wellington, 2000). It seeks to explain people's behaviour, intentions and how they understand and interpret the situation they are in. In other words, researchers seek "the subjective meaning" of those involved in the research (Pring, 2000, p.98). This study tries to create a comprehensive picture of the stakeholders' perceptions of language teacher effectiveness in secondary schools in Iran. I am interested in the multiple understandings of the researched - the students, their parents, and their language teachers. This perception of the world is influenced by many factors such as their own personal experiences of language learning, their cultural understanding, their values and their beliefs: as Eisner (1993 p. 52) says, "the eye, after all, is not only a part of the brain, it is a part of tradition." In this study, like all interpretive studies, the perceptions of those being researched as well as the perceptions and interpretations of the researcher count. Palincsar (1998, p. 354) has argued that it is not possible to separate "the individual from social influences"; and, moreover, he has argued that "the sociocultural contexts in which teaching and learning occur are considered critical to learning itself". In designing this study, I have sought to create opportunities to investigate both the individual and the social world they inhabit.

An interpretive philosophy is consistent with a constructivist understanding of teaching and learning: constructivism is a way of thinking that "provides a lens with which we can examine the world" (Mackinnon & Scarff-Seater, 1997, p.51) and is, I believe, a philosophy that can inform the understandings of the teacher, the learner and the educational researcher. In constructivist views of learning, it is the collaboration between the teacher and the learner that makes learning happen in the class environment. This collaboration, according to Kaufman (2004), is the dual

interaction of teacher and learner scaffolding. The teacher is the external scaffold who provides comprehensible input and the learner, through reflection and self monitoring, creates the internal scaffolding. Knowledge is constructed in the relationship between the knower and the known (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and this construction of knowledge is interactive and multiply-understood. In educational environments, reality has many layers and there are various interpretations of single events (Cohen, et al, 2007), because people construct their world based on their schemata and also the situations they are in: reality is a social construction of the mind with as many constructions and realities as there are individuals" (Pring, 2000, pp.47, 48). As Eisner (1998, p.54) says "knowledge is constructed relative to a framework" (relativity) and there is no single way to understand the world (pluralism). Furthermore, education is supposed to nurture individuals, and research in education "needs to attend to what is distinctive of being a person" (Pring, p.17), and the way individuals interpret their situation.

Adopting an interpretive stance, with a constructivist philosophy, has led me to choose qualitative methods as my dominant approach. Senior (2006, p.16) maintains that "a key aspect of qualitative research is that its objective is not to produce findings that are capable of general application, but rather to produce results that 'resonate'." By 'resonate' she means "the ability of the research findings to ring true to those who encounter them." With qualitative research, objectivity in the empirical scientific sense is not possible then, however, it is still desirable to seek objectivity because the goal of all types of inquiry is to reach acceptable conclusions. In qualitative research, objectivity depends upon "communal acceptance of the critical spirit" (Phillips, 1998, p.70). Qualitative methods, therefore, can help the researcher to better investigate the individuals in their particular contexts and produce findings which may have real resonance for the participants and their specific context.

Being a language teacher in Tehran, where this study has been carried out, in a context where quantitative research dominates, I felt there was the need for doing something more reflective, detailed, but yet tentative and interpretive. The information is obviously partial, but draws on the experience of the people in the research and gives them the opportunity to speak for themselves.

However, the research design does include the use of a questionnaire in the first phase which is quantitatively analysed. This was intended as a complementary method, which both generated a set of statistical data providing information about the characteristics of effective language teachers, and provided data which allowed me to select more effectively my sub-sample for the main qualitative study. This quantitative stage paved the way for the qualitative work.

To sum up, the philosophical assumptions of the interpretive approach, consistent with the thinking in constructivism, seems best fitted to the nature of my enquiry and my goals in undertaking the research.

4.3 Research Design

This study is exploratory and tries to describe the existing situation. Therefore, the environment was naturalistic. The overall design of the study comprised a first phase, involving a language test and questionnaire which were distributed among 8th grade students at the beginning of the school year followed by the same test being taken at the end of the same school year along with another questionnaire. This was followed by a second phase, involving interviews with a subsample of students, their parents, and their language teachers. Figure 4.1 summarizes the phases.
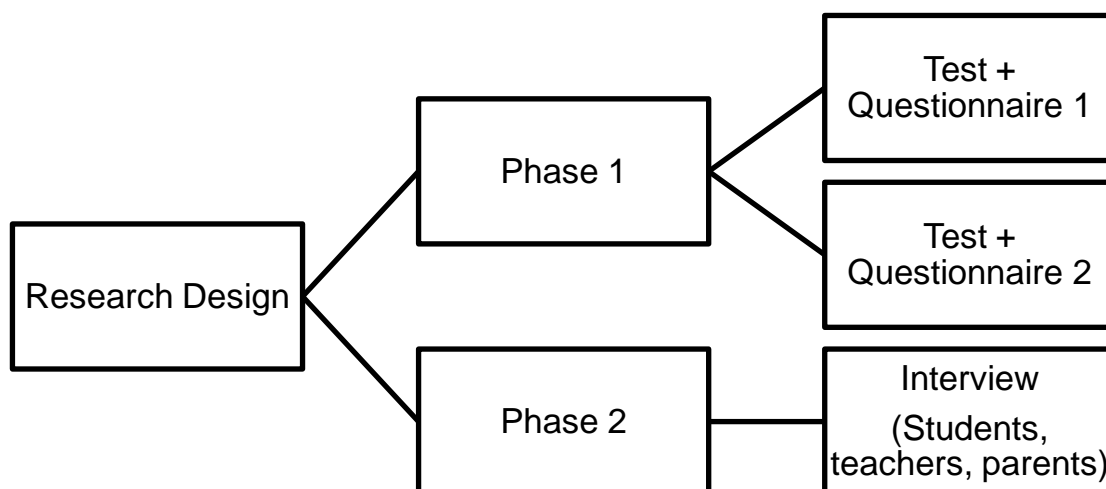
Figure 4.1 Research design

The aim of the study was to answer one main question and in order to do that three sub-questions had been raised. Table 4.1 below shows the sub-questions and how the research attempted to answer them.

Main question: What are stakeholders' perceptions of language teacher effectiveness in secondary schools in Iran?

Research Sub-Questions	Sample Type	Sample size	Instrument	Data Analysis
What are learners' perceptions of the characteristics of ideal language teachers?	8th grade students	190	Questionnaires 1 and 2 Language tests	Quantitative
		16	Semi-structured interview	Qualitative
What are teachers' perceptions of the characteristics of ideal language teachers?	Language teachers	4	Semi-structured interview	Qualitative
What are parents' perceptions of the characteristics of ideal language teachers?	Parents of 8th grade students	15	Semi-structured interview	Qualitative

Table 4.1 Research sub-questions and sample size

4.4 Sampling

Cohen (2007, pp.175, 176) says, "In an ideal world the researcher would be able to study a group in its entirety." Since this is not a possibility samples are needed to help gain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon being studied and this has to be very well-planned to serve a predetermined purpose (Dörnyei, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maykut & Guba, 1994; Wellington, 2000). Lincoln & Guba (1994, p. 201) believe that in naturalistic investigations samples should, "detail the many specifics that give the context its unique flavor" and for this a sampling plan is required.

In this study selecting the classes and based on that the students determined the sampling. In other words, the samples of parents and the teachers to interview were dependent upon the initial selection of the class and student sample. In the following sections the way they were sampled is explained in detail. Figure 4.2 summarises the information

```
┌─────────────────┐     ┌──────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐
│ 190 students    │     │          │     │                  │     │ The parents of   │
│ from 5 districts│─────│ 4 classes│─────│ 16 students from │─────│ the studetns     │
│ (questionnaire  │     │          │     │ the 4 schools    │     │ interviewed      │
│ and test)       │     │          │     │ (interview)      │     │ (interview)      │
└─────────────────┘     └──────────┘     └──────────────────┘     └──────────────────┘
                                                          \
                                                           \     ┌──────────────────┐
                                                            \    │ The language     │
                                                             \───│ teachersof the   │
                                                                 │ students         │
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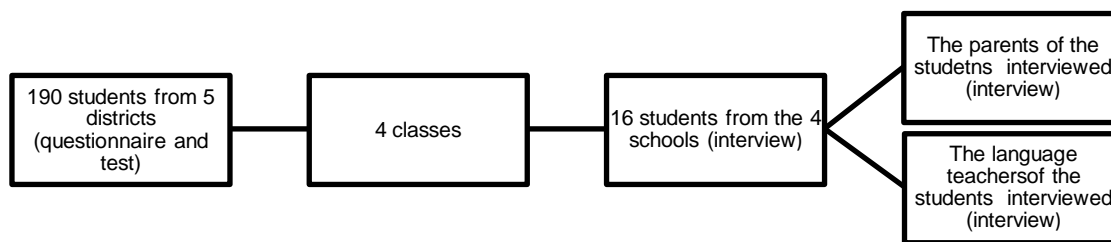
Figure 4.2 Sample

4.4.1 Classes and Students

This study took place in schools of Tehran where about 700,000 students study. Therefore, selecting a small sample as the representation of the whole population was not easy. Since teaching English begins at secondary school, primary schools were eliminated. Then the choice had to be made on how to select the sample from the rest of the students. After some investigation 8[th] grade students studying at public schools of Tehran were selected.

The reasons for choosing 8[th] grade are as follows:

- The 8[th] graders have already had two school years of English language instruction. In other words this study began when they were beginning the third year and ended when they had almost finished it. These students had some experience concerning what language learning was and what they were expected to do.

- At 8[th] grade Iranian students prepare themselves for a more advanced level of their education, high school. As already mentioned based on their experience in these three years they decide what they would like to study at high school. Therefore; they are at the stage of decision making and are considered eligible to make such a decision. It is reasonable then to believe that since they are given this responsibility, they are prepared to make other judgements.

- Since 8[th] grade is the last year of secondary school, the final exams in all subjects including English are exactly the same in the country. Therefore, it can be assumed that all teachers follow the syllabus dictated by the MOE.

Public schools and not private ones were chosen because the curriculum and teaching methodology in public schools are the same throughout the country. Drawing the sample from high school students was not considered because, at this stage of language education, learning becomes strongly assessment-driven and examination-oriented; and therefore, the wash-back effect of the entrance exam (Farhady and Hedayati, 2009) might over-influence the judgement of stakeholder concerning effective language teachers.

Hence a sample of 8th grade students were chosen and since schools in Iran are not coeducational study done had to be replicated in both girls' and boys' schools. The MOE has divided Tehran into 20 districts. In order to select a diverse sample, five classes of girls and five classes of boys from five different districts were selected, creating a total sample of 190 students (102 boys and 88 girls). The choices were made by taking into consideration the socio-economic condition of the majority of the residents of each. Upon my request, the MOE assisted in making the selection. Accordingly, ten schools were selected: one girls' and one boys' school from the richer neighbourhood, in the northern part of the city, two from the least well off, from south Tehran, and then six, again three belonging to girls and three to boys from the moderate group, which were from east, west and central Tehran.

The majority if not all of the selected students had little additional knowledge of English beyond what they had learned and were learning at secondary school. At the beginning of this research, the sample selected had studied English for two years at public Iranian schools. It should be noted that in Iran English is a foreign language and mostly foreign movies and satellite receivers are banned and not many tourists and foreigners come to Iran or are in contact with the public. Therefore, it is unlikely that the students would have access to outside sources for improving their English. In addition, in the questionnaires they were asked to clarify their sources of English language knowledge. All those with language knowledge from outside school were eliminated from the study.

All in all, the method for the selection of the representative sample was purposive and criterion referenced, because as Cohen et al (2007) have put it a set of attributes had been specified in advance and it was important to make sure that they all appeared within the sample.

As will be seen in section 4.7 besides, filling in the first questionnaire the students took a language test twice, once at the beginning of the year and before having learned the lessons and once towards the end of the school year, when they had studied the lessons that were being tested. In addition, along with the second test they were given another questionnaire to demonstrate their happiness and satisfaction with their current language teacher.

Based on a part of the information collected during the first phase, that is the difference between the scores of the two tests and the second questionnaire that dealt with the students' satisfaction as well as happiness in their current language classes, four classes, two of boys and two of girls were selected. (Figure 4.3)

| The class with the most improvement in the second test and lowest happiness level with the class | The class with the highest improvement in the second test and the highest happiness level with the class |
| The class with the least improvement in the second test and the lowest happiness level with the class | The class with the least improvment in the second test and the highest happiness level with the class |

Figure 4.3 Selection of the classes

From those four classes 16 students were selected and interviewed. The sampling was done for heterogeneity. Four of these students (two boys and two girls) had made the most improvement in their scores and in the second questionnaire had mentioned that they were happy and satisfied with their language teachers. The next four had also made significant improvement, but had said that they were unhappy and unsatisfied with their language classes. Four others had low scores in the second administration of the test, but said that they were happy in their classes and the last four had obtained low scores and were unhappy in their class. Eight of them were girls and eight were boys. (Figure 4.4) Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998, p.76)

define this as cases that are selected "such that their combination provides the maximum heterogeneity on certain attributes (e.g. ethnicity, education) that are important to the research objective of the study. Usually at least one case is selected from each level of the attribute".
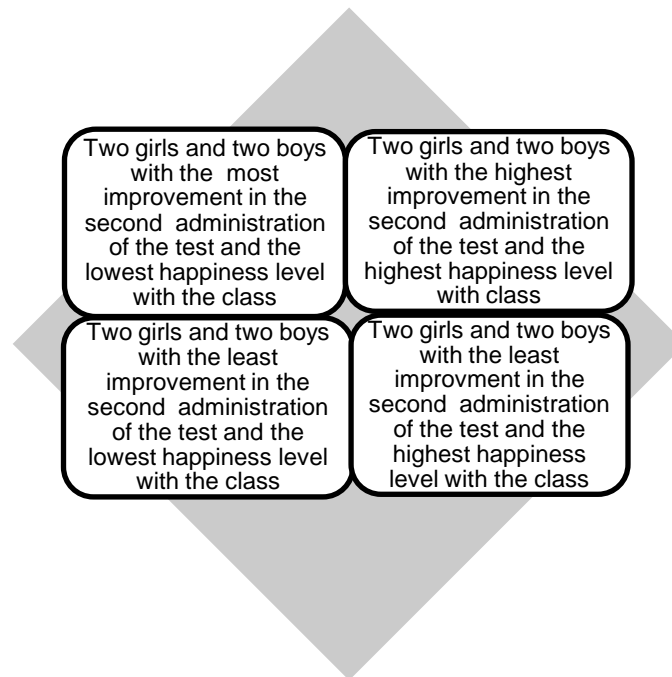
Figure 4.4 Selection of students to be interviewed

4.4.2 Teachers

Four language teachers were interviewed. They were the teachers of the four classes selected. Two were male and two were female.

4.4.3 Parents

The parents of the 16 students, who had been interviewed, were also invited for one to one interviews. 15 of them sat the interviews. This selection was also based on guided sampling.

4.5 Pilot Study

The pilot study consisted of two main phases, the first preparing the grounds for the second. Each phase in itself consisted of several stages.

Firstly, in order to help clarify some points on the Iranian system of teacher recruitment and assessment, an authority within the MOE agreed to be interviewed. (Refer to Appendix 5 for the interview). According to this authority, in order to be

allowed to carry out studies within the schools, researchers should obtain a permit from the Iranian MOE. Therefore, the next step was to obtain a permit. The research design, the tests and questions were assessed by the relevant department within the MOE and the permit for conducting the pilot study was issued by the Bureau of City of Tehran. Then the sub- office of each of the districts I had chosen to go to, verified that the research could be done and then introduced me to the schools of my choice. Finally and with the agreement of the principals of the schools, I began my pilot study in 7th and 8th grade of two boys' and two girls' schools in four different districts of Tehran. (This phase was repeated for the main study which was carried out in the school year the followed the pilot study.)

Upon going to schools, I piloted the exam I had prepared after a thorough study of the 8th grade school textbook and some sample tests that had been taken during the past few years by the MOE. After administering the test, I did the item analysis to determine those questions which would best discriminate the overall performance of the students. For that, I calculated the difference index of the results obtained from the 7th and 8th grade students and based on this item analysis made some modifications to the test. The reliability of the test was also calculated to see if the test was needed more modification. The details of how the test was analysed are presented in section 4.6.1. I then prepared the semi-final version so that it would be piloted once again before the main administration.

Parallel to that and in order to design the questionnaire the students were asked to express their opinion on what characterises ideal language teachers in the context of their schools had to possess. This was done through 100 students brainstorming their opinion, a group of six being interviewed, a group of 10 doing an essay on the subject and the literature review. This along with the information collected during the literature review led to the preparation of the first draft of the first questionnaire on identifying the characteristics of effective language teachers in the Iranian public schools. Some of the questions and also the layout of the questionnaire were inspired by the questionnaires prepared by Bell (2005), Brosh (1996), Goe (2008), and Hay/Mcber (2000). These included placing importance on rapport and interaction; clarity of explanation. Differentiating between teachers of different subjects and not assessing the works of teachers of all subjects through the same characteristics was mainly elaborated by Campbell et al (2004). Including

characteristics that were specifically important for language teachers such as language proficiency was a major part of the questionnaire and later on the interview questions.

As for the second phase, the first version of the questionnaire and the edited version of the language test were administered to a group of 50, 9th grade students at the very first week of the new school year. After doing an elaborate item analysis, the final version of the questionnaire was prepared. At this phase the reliability of the edited version of the language test was calculated and then the final version was ready.

In addition, in order to decide what the main concerns of the language teachers and parents regarding language learning and their demands were, three teachers and three parents were interviewed. Based on these interviews and the reviewed literature, the final versions of the semi-structured interview questions for both parents and teachers were prepared.

On the whole, certain key lessons were learned from the pilot study. Clarification of the wording of the questionnaire and also a clear organisation of the sections with the inclusion of thematic headings were among the outcomes. In addition, the item analysis of the test resulted in its becoming shorter and also improving its reliability. Finally, the piloting of the interview helped in raising more adequate but fewer questions to allow for more probing and also helped in forming clear questions.

Figures 4.5 and 4.6 summarize all the steps taken.
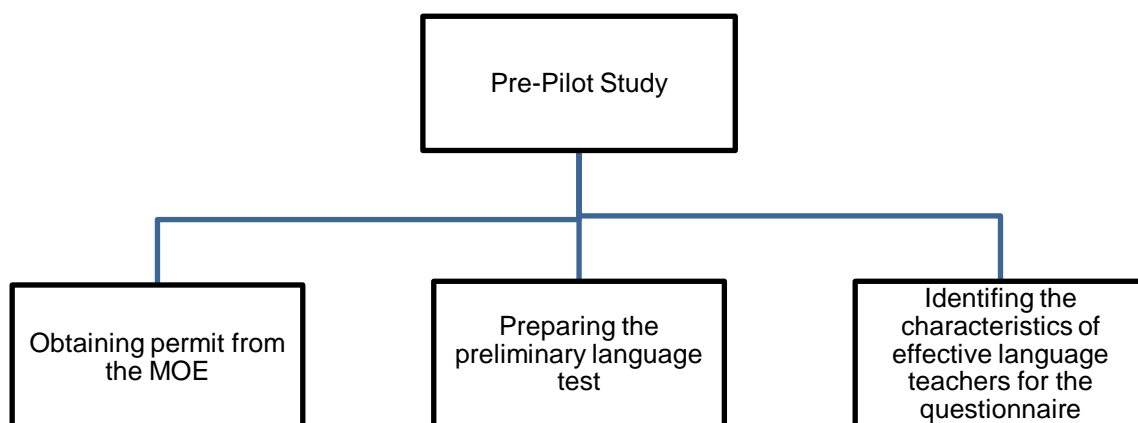
Figure 4.5 Steps taken during the pre-pilot phase
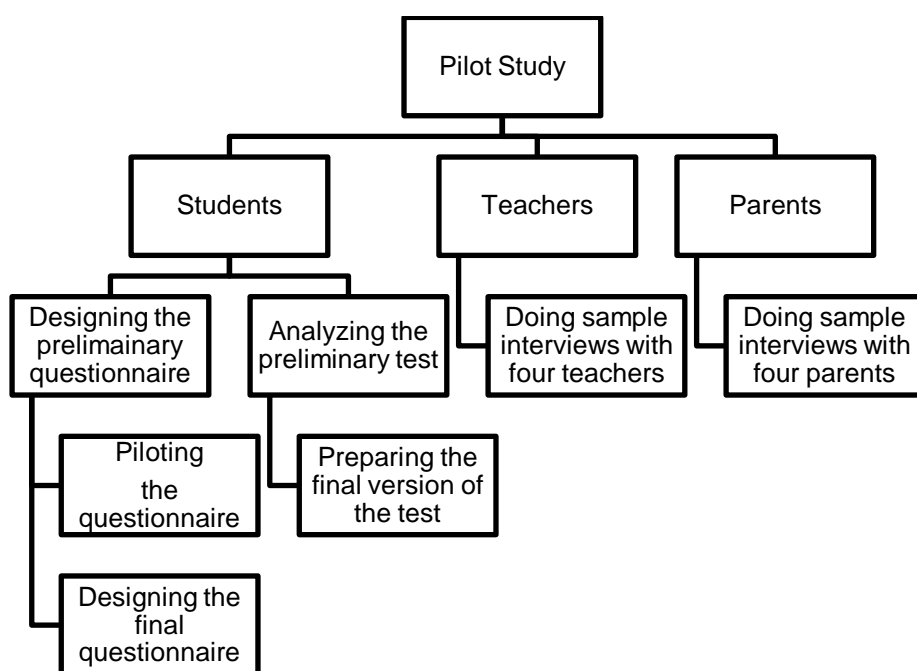
Figure 4.6 Steps taken during the pilot study

4.6 Research Instruments

In this study, language test, questionnaires and interview schedules were all used as research instruments for collecting data.

4.6.1 Language Tests

4.6.1.1 Test Administration

A language test was given to the 8th grade students at the beginning of the school year to determine the language knowledge of the students. Students had to put down their names so that later on the results of this test could be compared with their performance in the post-test. The students took the same test towards the end of the school year and six months after the first test, (in the seventh month of an eight and a half month of schooling) when 80% of their English course-book, which has been prepared by the Iranian MOE, had been covered. This was given as an achievement test to determine the improvement of the students and as Hatch and Farhady (1982, p. 20) have put it, to measure "the gains that the subjects have made".

4.6.1.2 Test Design

As Bachman and Palmer (1996) have proposed, the test was firstly designed, then it was operationalised and finally administered. During the pilot study the first test was

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initially used to determine the usefulness and appropriateness of the test and was taken to make sure that the questions were clear, the time allocated to the test was enough and on the whole the procedure was suitable. Then the tests were analysed and the necessary modifications were made. Subsequently, the final version of the test was taken as a diagnostic test aiming to determine the language knowledge of the students based on what they had studied at school.

The test items were mainly discrete points and consisted of both receptive response items such as multiple choice and productive response ones like cloze test. For both types of items the guidelines were closely followed. They were mainly based on the 8th grade language textbooks. As Baker (1989) has suggested there was only one correct answer to each question and scoring did not depend on the assessor's judgement and items did not depend on each other.

The sole purpose of administering the tests was to determine whether the students had learned the lessons taught to them; therefore, a ready-made norm-referenced tests such as IELTS, (International English Language Testing System or TOEFL (Test of English as Foreign Language), that checked their general language proficiency were not feasible. Even the language proficiency tests suitable for young learners with lower proficiency level such as KET and PET, could not be used, because the contents did not match what the students were learning at school.

The thorough study of the school books suggested that upon the completion of the 8th grade they were able to use simple present tense, regular past tense, present continuous tense, subjective, objective and possessive pronouns, adverbs of manner, question words. They had a basic repertoire of words and could read basic passages and dialogues and write basic sentences. Within the Common European Framework they could be ranked as A1 or A2 (Appendix 6). Therefore, the test was prepared based on the program's objectives. Brown (2005, p.77) believes that in preparing program-specific tests the test developer must "rely on more common sense to create a revised version of the test that measures what the students know, or can do, with regard to the program's objective."

4.6.1.3 Test Reliability

The test administered consisted of both receptive response items such as multiple choice and productive response ones like cloze test with no alternative responses provided and matching. For both types of items the guidelines proposed by Genesee & Upshur (1996) were closely followed among which were having simple stems, and plausible distractors. After the second draft of the test was composed and piloted once more the reliability was calculated.

Then the test was administered twice, once at the beginning of the school year and once at the end and besides the teachers following the syllabus and teaching the lessons, no intervention was made.

To calculate the reliability the information was analysed by the help of SPSS version 15 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), which as Julie Pallant (2007) has put it is "an enormously powerful data analysis package that can handle very complex statistical procedures."

4.6.1.4 Test Validity

In order to make sure that the test was valid, it was important to have some strong justifications and to show what exactly would be deduced from it. Stobart (2008) believes:

> Validity has evolved from being a statistical property of a test, to articulating the construct and content involved, which then led to making the use and consequences of the test *results* central. In this evolution the key transformation has been the move away from treating validity as *measurement of a fixed property* towards seeing it as an *argument about the appropriateness of the inferences drawn from the results* and the consequences of these inferences (p.3).

As Bachman (1990) has mentioned the tests should be appropriate and useful. According to Bachman (1996) in order to clarify the appropriateness of the construct definition some points should be taken into consideration. For example, the test construct should be unambiguous, relevant to the purpose and help in making the desired interpretations. Since the language test prepared for this study was based on the school course-books and the pattern of the questions was very similar to the tests being given at schools, the students were familiar with the format. Also the instructions were given in the native language of the test-takers. Pilot study also helped to make sure that no item was vague for the majority of the test-takers. Finally, in this study, the language ability of the students was not to be assessed, but

what they had learned at school in their language class based on the syllabus provided by the MOE was calculated. Therefore the tests served the purpose for the research.

4.6.2 Questionnaires

Two sets of questionnaires were designed and distributed among the students. The first questionnaire was distributed along with the first test at the beginning of the school year and the second was given with the second test almost five months later. Both questionnaires were in Persian to make sure that all the students would understand the content.

4.6.2.1. Design of Questionnaire One

The first questionnaire (Appendix 7) intended to discover the perception of the students of effective language teachers at schools with no specific teacher in mind. This was written based on the available literature and also the pre-pilot study. It was group administered in the classes. Except for four questions (answering one of which was optional) that required free responses, the rest of the questions had pre-coded responses and the student had to choose between three alternatives, *I agree, I somehow agree, I disagree*. I was also present to answer any likely questions.

There were two reasons for having included only three questions which required free responses. Firstly, during the pre-pilot it was proven that the young students were not patient enough to write detailed answers. Secondly open-ended types of answers were quite time consuming and since the students had to fill in the questionnaires and also take a language test at the same time, the time of their lessons might have been compromised. In addition, interviews with a selection of students were to follow; therefore, a group of the students would have the opportunity to elaborate more on some of the points in the questionnaire.

Originally a Likert scale with four or five point scale was intended, but again because of the students' age, it was decided that being given too many choices may confuse them. In designing the first questionnaire besides the pre-pilot study, some other sets of questionnaires were used. Three were intended for the Iranian learners (Babai Shishvani & Karimi, 2009; Eslami Rasekh, 2010; Pishgaman & Navari 2010). The rest (mainly Barkhuizen, 1998 for the South African context, Brosch, 1996,

Murdoch 1997 (quoted in Richards 2001); Park & Lee, 2006 for Korean learners; Senior, 2006; and Ur, 1996 for trainee teachers) were from the other countries. They were all studied and some of the points were taken note of. Among them was organizing the questionnaire in different sections and also selecting the points to be included. In addition, another Iranian teacher and researcher commented on it to make sure that the points were relevant and nothing had been forgotten. After the first draft of the questionnaire was prepared, it was piloted and an item analysis was done to make sure everything was clear and appropriate to the aim. Even though the questionnaires were in Persian, in writing the items the points suggested by Dörnyei (2008), and Oppenheim (1992), were taken into consideration. Among them was putting factual questions towards the end of the questionnaire so that the respondents may be less hesitant in answering them. Some of the points I considered while preparing the questionnaire were avoiding loaded and leading questions, double negatives and complicated words. A clear introduction and a thank you note were also included in the questionnaire.

Besides the introduction, the questionnaire consisted of seven sections and had an ordered series of response categories.

1. Teacher's class management and behaviour (socio-affective factors) (13 items)
2. Teacher's appearance (4 items)
3. Teacher's language proficiency (10 items)
4. Teacher's pedagogic competence (12 items)
5. Comparing language teachers with the teachers of other subjects (13+1+12 items)
6. Personal information (8 items)
7. Open-ended questions concerning the general impression of the students about language teachers (3 questions)

The choice of the content for the questionnaire was both inspired by the pilot study and drew upon the literature. Part one of the questionnaire dealt with the issue of teacher's behaviour in the class and with the students. In the studies by Brosh (1996), Dörnyei (1998) and Krashen (1985) to name a few, socio-affective skills are crucial in defining effective teacher characteristics. Besides, some of the questions

were inspired by the Iranian culture. For example, in Iran in most classes, teachers call the students by their surname. In some private schools and many language institutes, though, teachers use the first name of the students. Therefore, *item e* inquired about the preference of the students. Part two was also inspired by the pilot study concerning the appearance of the teachers. Part three was about teacher's language skills. Inquiring about language teachers' language proficiency and skills has been part of some of the questionnaires dealing with teacher effectiveness. (Bell, 2005; Brosh, 1996; Park & Lee, 2006) However, in this section *item h* which was about teaches' translation skills was relevant to the context of Iran. Section four was about the pedagogic knowledge of the teacher and his/her teaching ability. *Item j* was inspired by the fact that class management in Iran is top down and teachers are considered the authorities in most classes. Oppenheim (1992, p. 175) believes that attitudes "are abstractions-- though they are real enough to the person who holds them." This item intended to check the students' opinion about the role of language teachers. Section five was inspired by Borg's (2006) research on the distinctive characteristics of language teachers. The items were written to see if students felt that the characteristics they had mentioned about the successful language teacher were unique to this group or were meant for all teachers regardless of what they taught. Section six asked some factual questions about the students and also some questions to check their personal attitude towards the concept of language learning. Finally, there were three open-ended questions. Two of them aimed at clarifying some points about discipline in the language class and the last gave the students the opportunity to include any other point they considered important. The first two were included because they might have helped spell out what the students really felt the role of the teacher was and could help with preparing the interview questions.

4.6.2.2 Design of Questionnaire Two

The second questionnaire was distributed among the students along with the second administration of the language test almost six months after the first one. This questionnaire was mainly concerned with their satisfaction with the language class they were at the time studying in and with their happiness with their language teacher. Thus it was a short questionnaire and consisted of two questions. One inquired about the students' happiness in the classroom and the other satisfaction

with the teaching in their current language class. The questions were close-ended. The difference between happiness and satisfaction was orally and thoroughly explained in each of the classes. Satisfaction in this study meant students believing that they were learning the lesson and happiness concerned how they felt in the classes. 163 valid papers were collected at this phase.

4.6.3 Interview

In qualitative research interviewing is the most commonly used instrument for collecting data (Lichtman, 2006), and learning about a particular situation through the people being studied. Then building good rapport, which can partly be done by clarifying the purpose of the interview and also giving the interviewee, "a voice" (Wellington, 2000, p.72) is critical to a successful interview. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998, 2003) also believe that one to one interaction is very helpful in gaining information. Cohen et al (2007) sees the value of interview in enabling both the interviewer and the interviewee to express points of view and their interpretations of the situation they are discussing.

4.6.3.1 Designing and Administrating the Interviews

In the present study 4 secondary school language teachers, 16 students and 15 parents were interviewed individually. The aim of the interviews was to discover the perception of these three groups of the qualities of effective English language teachers working in public schools Iran.

Interviews were all done in Persian to make sure that there was no language barrier and they were recorded with the permission of the interviewees. At the beginning of each interview a thorough explanation of the purpose of the study was given so as to inform, interest and even motivate the subjects (Oppenheim, 1992).I, as the interviewer, had to make sure that rapport could be built and that the questions were clear, well-received, understood and productive (Flick, 2006). A series of questions were available to guide the interview and at the same time there was considerable flexibility. On the whole, confidentiality was promised. I tried to build the trust of the interviewees by showing interest and asking straightforward and jargon-free questions with no use of loaded questions. After each interview a resume of the session was immediately prepared.

It is worth mentioning that prior to the actual interviews and during the pilot study, I had a series of interviews with a sample of the stakeholders which served two purposes. The first one was giving the interviewees, who were also language teachers teaching at 8[th] grade in public schools, the opportunity to speak their minds so that while preparing for the main interview what they had said could be taken note of and inserted in the questions. In addition, it gave me the opportunity to practice my interview skills and make sure that I can build the appropriate rapport with them. Therefore, a semi-structured interview plan was selected. Deciding on the interview questions and the type of the interview was inspired by the information collected during the pilot study, the literature review and the questionnaire.

Since there was already a questionnaire involved in a part of the study, then choosing a controlled interview would not be helpful anymore. Additionally, during the pilot study the essays that the students had written and the interviews with parents and teachers had proven that it was very likely that the participants would not tackle the main concerns of the study; therefore, semi-structured interview seemed to be the best option. Additionally, the other qualitative studies conducted concerning teacher effectiveness had used semi-structured interviews. (Brosh, 1996; Kurtoglu-Eken, 2007; Saito & Ebsworth, 2004) As Best and Kahn (2006) have stated in this type of interview while the interview remains conversational, the data collection is done systematically.

4.6.3.2 Interviewing the Students

A sub-sample of 16 students was selected to be interviewed based on the scores obtained in the two tests and the second questionnaire the students had filled in. These students had made the most or the least improvement in the language tests and also had given their teachers the highest or lowest scores as far their level of happiness and satisfaction with their classes were concerned.

Since the interviewees were young, I tried to consider certain points when holding the interviews. They were informed of the topic and the significance of the interviews. They were promised confidentiality and then the most important points were asking clear questions and maintaining the interest of the students. Positive feedback, encouragement, being non-judgmental and attentively listening to them were critical.

Nodding, smiling, eye contact, paraphrasing what they said, and thanking them for their thoughtful contributions, were all helpful.

The students were then supposed to answer questions under the following topics:

A. Getting to know the student and their attitude toward schooling and language learning
B. Their opinion about what comprises an effective language teacher
C. Additional points that they liked to mention concerning their own experience learning English at school

4.6.3.3 Interviewing the Teachers

Two of the four teachers interviewed had received a very high evaluation in the students' assessments. This meant the students were very happy and satisfied with the performance of these teachers. On the other hand, the other two had not obtained good evaluation. The interview questions as stated earlier were basically semi-structured and divided into three sections:

A. Teacher's background and competencies
B. Teacher's attitudes and expectations
   a) Perceptions of the inter-personal characteristics of an effective language teacher
   b) Perceptions of effective language teaching practices
C. Concluding remarks concerning their professional identity

4.6.3.4 Interviewing the Parents

The selection procedure was the same as the procedure for choosing the sample of teachers. They were the parents of the students who had been interviewed. Since gaining access to parents for doing a face-to-face interview was not possible, they were telephone interviewed. In order to do so, the interview protocol had to be followed. Prior to the interview I had to make arrangement to agree upon a time that best suited them and also brief them on the topic and the significance of the interview and the study. Confidentiality was also promised and they were informed that their voice would be recorded. The interview was done in a friendly manner. As Burke and Miller (2001, p.2) have suggested "giving useful feedback" and "getting the participants to talk freely" paved the way for carrying out the interviews.

The questions were divided into four main sections.

   A. Parental attitudes and expectations

   B. Parent's Perceptions

      a) Professional characteristics of an effective language teacher

      b) Inter-personal characteristics of an effective language teacher

      c) Effective language teaching practices

   C. Verification of what has been said

   D. Any additional point about their perceptions of and demands from language teachers.

4.7 Data Analysis

Since this study had two sections two separate methods of data analysis had to be used. The first section had several stages: analysing the data during the pilot study in order to make the necessary modifications, analysing the data collected after the tests had been administered and the questionnaires had been filled in and finally comparing the results. Some statistical procedures were used to study these quantitative data.

The second section was devoted to analysing the data gathered during the interviews. Dörnyei (2007, p. 246) mentions four phases for the analytical process:

1. Transcribing the data
2. Pre-coding and coding
3. Growing ideas-memos, vignettes, profiles and other forms of data display
4. Interpreting the data and drawing conclusions

After the data has been collected, it has to be thoroughly analysed and then interpreted. Dörnyei (2007) emphasises that in qualitative research interpretation does not take place towards the end, but begins right after the sessions when the researcher is preparing the memos of the interviews and observations. In our analysis multiple meanings of different individuals and situations should be considered and we should not necessarily try to find a big picture representing the whole population. Therefore, all these steps were taken to analyse the quantitative data.

4.7.1 Tests

The first step after having prepared the preliminary test items from the 7th and 8th course-books was to try them with a sample of students. After doing this pilot study and analysing the items those questions that would best discriminate the overall performance of the students were identified and accordingly an improved version of the test was prepared, administered and analyzed. At this point the final version of the test was ready to be operationalized. (Appendix 9) Then the test was taken once at the beginning of the school year and once towards the end.

After the second test was taken, it was essential to measure the improvement of the students to examine how significant it was. The tests were then marked and recorded. Then in the last stage when the test had been taken for the second time, the two sets of scores were compared to see if there was any significant improvement in the scores based on which to select the individuals who had made the most improvement. Based on the findings of this section the relevant statistical procedures were used. SPSS was used to make the statistical calculations.

4.7.2 Questionnaires

An item analysis on the first draft was done and the problem items were detected and then either modified or eliminated. The second draft was then prepared and piloted. After administering the second draft and doing another item analysis, the questionnaire was given to the sample population. Any calculation related to the questionnaire was done by SPSS. Mainly, frequencies were calculated based on which tables were made.

All of the information provided in this questionnaire was compared with the last part of the same questionnaire which was about the students themselves. These were also compared and correlated with the language test results. The frequencies of the replies given by girls and boys were also calculated. Again for this part SPSS was used.

As mentioned before, the second questionnaire consisted of two questions seeking the satisfaction and happiness of the students of their current English language teacher. The comparison of the replies to the test performance was what was sought at this stage so that the sample of the students to be interviewed could be determined. (Appendix 10)

4.7.3 Interviews

As stated earlier, there were 35 semi-structured interviews all together. The interviews were recorded and written verbatim. Before and during transcribing, I included my general impression and interpretation of the interviews by considering the situation and even the body language of the interviewees and prepared a memo after each interview

After translating the interviews into English the relevant information was coded using NVivo in order to gain a better understanding of the concept of effective language teachers in Iran. This was achieved through a series of systematic steps. First, I read through all the interviews several times to familiarise myself with the data. I then used the affordances of Nvivo to undertake an initial inductive coding, seeking to attribute a meaningful code to segments of the data in the light of my research questions, but without any pre-established codes in mind. This was an iterative process of cycling and re-cycling through the data, developing new codes, merging some codes, and constantly checking that the codes remained appropriate descriptors for the data they were connected to. When this stage was complete, and when I was satisfied that the data had been consistently coded, as far as possible, I then stepped back from the micro-detail of the data and looked more globally at the codes allocated, seeking broader over-arching themes. The final stage was re-organising the initial inductive coding into these broader themes.

4.8 Trustworthiness of the Study

There have been arguments about the trustworthiness of an educational research with a qualitative study plan. It has been disputed that a qualitative study is usually too small and too ideologically driven, which is true, but does not make it unworthy. One of the aims of doing an educational research is searching for meaning and meaningful relationships. This is embedded in the individuals' interpretations of the reality and meaning within the culture and society that they live in. Therefore, the main aim of qualitative research in education is to extract these interpretations and to compare and contrast them.

In this study the attempt was made to choose the sample carefully, so that there would be diversity and at the same time similarities. In addition a variety of instruments including questionnaires and interviews were used. The educational

practice was what was concentrated on and being a language teacher myself in the context of the country and the city were the study was carried out, I believe, gave me the opportunity to make some professional judgments when necessary and these all helped to make the findings as trustworthy as they could be.

4.9 Ethical Considerations

Since this research required going into schools and obtaining information from teachers, students and parents, ethical issues had to be carefully considered. In order for me to be able to carry out this study, I went through proper procedures and obtained a permit from the Iranian MOE and also the University of Exeter (Appendix14). In addition, once inside the schools in Iran, the researcher needs to make sure that the participants are and feel safe. Before completing the questionnaires, participants who took part in this study were given clear information about the study and its purposes, and invited to consent to participate. They were advised that they had the right to withdraw at any time. Prior to each interview, students, teachers and parents, received clear information about the study and its purpose, and oral consent to interviewing was secured. During the whole process the attempt was not to put anyone in any kind of stress. For example, the language tests used as data are very similar to the kind of tests which are routinely used in Iran and the students are familiar with the format.

In addition, prior to carrying out the study, I studied the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) ethical guidelines and tried to comply with the regulations as well. Some articles were more relevant to my area of work and I tried to follow them as closely as possible. Firstly, the idea of the research was mainly to give the stakeholder and among them the learners a voice. Therefore, I briefed all the participants including the students about the reason I was seeking their participation and they gave informed consent prior to each section of the study. They were granted the right to express their views freely in any matter that thought might affect them.

As previously mentioned, for example, before doing the research, the interviewees were informed of the purpose of the study and the way data was to be used. All of participants were informed that they would be audio recorded and they all agreed to that. Finally, a promise was made to all participants that if they were interested they

would receive the summary of the research upon its completion. Since I shared the same nationality as the participants, I was well aware of the sensitive matters and tried my best not to be judgmental and did my best to treat everybody with dignity and respect. The fact that all the participants willingly answered my questions can be considered the evidence. Inviting students to comment on their teachers' effectiveness might be seen to raise ethical questions. The main questionnaire, however, used third person and the definite article (the teacher), rather than the direct 'your teacher', which was intended to encourage an abstraction of their perceptions of being taught, rather than specifically evaluating the current teacher. The questions were asked in a respectful way and did not invite criticism. The only direct invitation to comment on the current teacher and class were in the final two questions which were needed to establish the sample. The timing of this second questionnaire was at the end of the school year to minimise any direct impact on student-teacher relationships as a consequence of the question. At the same time, it is an expressed purpose of the study to elicit student perceptions and to value the student voice, and inviting students to evaluate teachers is a growing phenomenon, acknowledging that classroom evaluation is not simply teachers evaluating students, but also students evaluating teachers.

According to Article 13 of BERA, "Appropriate consent should be sought from local authorities in cultures that adopt a collective approach to consent (e.g. community or religious leaders or local government officials)". As mentioned earlier, in Iran in order to be allowed to enter schools and do research researchers should obtain a permit from the MOE. I took the plan, the tests and questions that were to be distributed in the schools to the Education Bureau of City of Tehran for assessment. After interviewing me about the study and checking the documents, they were satisfied that the research posed no threat to the students, schools and the system. Then, they introduced me to the sub-offices in different districts of Tehran. They, too, verified that the research could be done and then introduced me to the schools of my choice. The heads of the schools also checked my work and then let me do the research.

Trying to minimize the impact of the study on the workload of the participants was another important concern. For this study, the students had to take two tests and fill in two questionnaires during the school hours; therefore, prior arrangements were

made with the schools so that they could choose the time that would best suit them. In addition, prior appointments were made with the teachers and parents who were to be interviewed.

Finally, during all phases of the study no complicated terminology was used and the significance of the study was explained in a clear and straightforward fashion.

4.10 Limitations, Constraints and Delimitations

The present study was constrained by a number of limitations for some of which solutions were sought.

Gaining access to the boys' secondary and high schools is next to impossible for women researchers in Iran as there are no female teachers and no female employees working in these schools. The MOE provided me with the permit laying the condition that I should be accompanied by a male researcher that I had to introduce to them. They also mentioned that I could only attend classes if the headmaster of the school permitted it. I introduced a male researcher, who agreed to accompany me in the boys' schools.

Another issue was the possibility of teachers being intimidated and feeling threatened by the whole study. To overcome that I had to clarify exactly what I was doing and provide the reasons. In addition, testing their language proficiency was another issue. In order to put teachers' minds at ease teachers' own judgement and the comments they gave in this regard during the interviews were trusted.

As mentioned earlier some students within each class had to be excluded from the analysis. Listening to the voices of these students will shed more light on the desirable characteristics of effective language teachers and the time and resource to interview a larger number of students would have been valuable. This could be developed in future studies.

Due to the time constraints, observing classes, which would have been very helpful in the final characterization of the teachers, did not take place in this study. This means the study has restricted itself to perceptions of language teacher effectiveness, without any corresponding data illuminating what actually happened in these classrooms.

Finally, the fact that the researcher has been a language teacher herself made it rather difficult to be non-judgemental and there had to be a lot of preparations to act unprejudiced and to listen carefully during the course of interviews.

5. Quantitative Data

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the statistical analysis of the data collected in a period of almost one year as described in chapter four is provided and will be elaborated on. Undertaking the quantitative data collection served four main purposes:

1. It provided a preliminary answer to the first research sub-question, eliciting a general understanding of what Iranian students believed an effective language teacher should be.
2. It supported the process of selecting the sample of students to be interviewed.
3. It helped to inform the design of the interview schedule.
4. It provided the opportunity for me as the researcher to get into schools and make myself known to the authorities, the students and the teachers; and thus gain their trust prior to the interviews.

To summarize the procedure, after doing a pilot study in which a language test and the first questionnaire were designed, the first phase of the study was carried out. In this phase 300 male and female students from five different districts of Tehran and studying in 10 schools sat the language test and filled in the first questionnaire (Table 5.1). 190 students were then selected. These were those students whose main and possibly only exposure to the FL was in their public schools and within the school hours.

Gender of students	No of original participants	No of selected sample
Female	159	88
Male	141	102
Total	300	190

Table 5.1 Summary of questionnaire sample

Then almost seven months later, the same language test was taken to check the achievement of the same students. Along with that test the students filled in another short questionnaire, deciding on the amount of their happiness and satisfaction with their current language classes.

The comparison of the results of the first and second time the language test was taken, along with the answers provided in the second questionnaire, was the basis for selecting the classes from which students would be selected to be interviewed

during the next phase of the study. In two of the selected classes the majority of the students had been very happy and very satisfied with their teachers, while in the other two they had not. In two of these classes again the students had made a significant improvement in their tests, while in the other two they had not. From each of the four schools selected four students were chosen to be interviewed. These were the students who had made the most or the least improvement in their tests and also were either very happy and satisfied with their current language teachers or very unhappy and unsatisfied with them. Accordingly, the parents and teachers of this sample of students were invited to be interviewed. The description and analysis of the data gathered from the interviews comes in the next chapters.

5.2 Main Administration

The language test and questionnaire were distributed among male and female students in 10 different schools in five different districts of Tehran. Then in order to analyze the data, the questionnaire and the language test, data were put in SPSS sheets for analysis.

It should be noted here that in the second phase of the study the boys' school in the north was not included anymore, because the collected data had been very limited (only four) and the school authorities were not very welcoming. Altogether 138 students from the first population sat the second test and filled in the second questionnaire.

In the rest of this section the findings of the first questionnaire are reported.

This questionnaire consisted of six sections, five of which were closed responses and Likert–type. At this stage this was justifiable as it served the purpose and provided a general insight of the students' perception of what they thought were the characteristics of effective language teachers. Here we will look at each section and the responses provided in detail.

5.2.1 Contextual Information

Asking for personal and contextual information was not put at the beginning of the questionnaire, but here for ease of comparison, I have put this information at the beginning. The first part of this section besides asking the students to put their names and also mention whether they had learned English anywhere other than the

public school they were attending, required them to express the amount of their interest in learning English; their view of the encouragement offered by parents; and parents' knowledge of a foreign or second language. (Table 5.2)

Students' views	Yes		To some extent		No	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Students' interest in learning English	112	59	60	31.5	14	7.5
Parents' encouragement	149	78.5	35	18.5	4	2
Parents' knowledge of an FL/SL	67	35	59	31	58	30.5

Table 5.2 Students' views about their interest in learning English and their parents' role and knowledge

As can be seen, a little more than half of the population were clearly positive about learning English and only a small number had no interest in learning English at all. In addition, more than two thirds of the students believed that their parents strongly encouraged them to learn English. This suggests that the number of parents who showed interest in their children's English language learning, according to the students, was more than the number of the students themselves. The original reason for including this question was to explore the likely connection between the performance of the students and their parents' encouragement. Given that only four students felt their parents did not offer encouragement, the data is insufficiently robust to pursue this connection.

One question asked students to provide their end-of-year English test score from the previous year. 65 percent reported achieving between 15 and 20 out of 20: As mentioned previously, the Iranian system of education is very much product-oriented, so high results for half the students is not unexpected. 10 percent of the remaining students had obtained scores under 15 and the other 25 percent did not remember their scores. This data indicates that at the time they took the tests the student sample mostly knew the content of the language course-book that was used in 7[th] grade of public schools.

A final set of questions in this section sought to determine which language skills and sub-skills the students were most interested to learn (See Table 5.3).

Skills and sub-skills	Like		Partially like		Dislike	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Speaking	160	85.1	24	12.8	4	2.1
Reading	148	80.9	31	16.9	4	2.2
Writing	157	84.9	21	11.4	7	3.8
Listening	157	86.7	22	12.2	2	1.1
Grammar	148	80.9	29	15.8	6	3.3
Translation	139	76.0	39	21.3	5	2.7

Table 5.3 Students' Interest in language skills and sub-skills

The first point to note is that there is only a nine percent difference between the highest and the lowest scores on 'Like', and the results are all over 75% positive, suggesting that, generally speaking, the students were interested in learning all of these language skills. The skills mostly favoured are speaking and listening, which is a little surprising as these two skills are almost not practised in the Iranian public school syllabus. In contrast, the least favoured is translation, which is a strong element in the syllabus and is formally tested.

5.2.2 Student Perceptions of the Attributes of an Effective Language Teacher
Part one of the questionnaire sought students' views on the behaviour of effective language teachers. Table 5.4 shows the views concerning language teachers' personal attributes.

Students' views	Agree		Partially agree		Disagree	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Kindness	165	87.3	19	10.1	5	2.6
Friendliness	164	86.3	22	11.6	4	2.1
Seriousness	56	30.3	31	43.8	48	25.9
Liveliness	159	84.6	24	12.8	5	3.6
Good sense of humour	119	65	56	30.6	8	4.4

Table 5.4 Students' views of effective teachers' attributes

The data illustrates that students highly value the attributes of kindness, friendliness, patience and liveliness in their teachers; and to a lesser extent, they also value a

sense of humour. Seriousness, however, is rated considerably less strongly at the positive end of the scale and is the only attribute to receive a substantial score in the dislike category. This suggests that students value language teachers with positive inter-personal skills and an engaging manner. The fact that still 48 of the students favoured serious teachers was unexpected.

This section also investigated students' perceptions of the nature of the teacher-student relationship in an effective language teacher. (Table 5.5)

Students views	Agree		Partially agree		Disagree	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Using first name	127	68.6	37	20.0	21	11.4
Knowing all the students	155	82.4	28	14.9	5	2.7
Helping weaker students	139	73.9	39	20.7	10	5.3
Caring about students' personal problems	124	66.7	44	23.7	18	9.7
Spending time with the students outside the class	101	53.4	73	38.6	15	7.9

Table 5.5 Students' views about teachers' relationship with the students

As table 5 shows, teachers' knowing the students was highly valued by the students. Using students' first names and caring about their personal problems were also regarded as characteristics of an effective teachers' relationship, and in any ways these are linked to the concept of knowing students: using first names is part of the way relationships are established, and showing concern for students' problems signals an interest in them as individuals, rather than simply as students. The majority of the students also thought it was important for the teacher to spend more time on weaker students, and a little more than liked the teacher to spend time with them outside the class hours.

The reason for raising the question about the importance of teacher knowing all the students was that in Iran many public schools are over-populated, with more than 30 students in many classes. As a consequence, it does happen that some teachers do not remember a student's name or even the type of student he or she is without referring to their notes. In addition, it should be noted that, as the class climate is quite formal in Iran teachers using the first name of the students when addressing them is not very common especially after primary school and in public schools. It is

more common for the teachers to use the family name of the students usually accompanied by Mr and Miss. In some boys' schools, even the boys themselves use the family name of their friends when calling them. Students showing interest in being addressed in their first name can be an indication that a less formal climate is desirable to them. Analysis of the response to this question by gender indicates there is a clear gender difference here: almost all girls preferred to be called by their first name compared with just over half of the boys. (Table 5.6)

Gender	Agree		Partially agree		Disagree	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Female	72	81.8	10	11.4	4	4.5
Male	55	53.9	27	26.5	17	16.7

Table 5.6 Male and female students' views about teachers' using their first name

5.2.3 The Significance of Teachers' Appearance

The second part of the questionnaire was about teacher's appearance, age and the way they dressed. This series of questions were included because the pilot study had highlighted the importance of teachers' physical appearance as one factor in students' perceptions of language teacher effectiveness. (Table 5.7)

Students' views	Agree		Partially agree		Disagree	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
General appearance	115	61.5	52	27.8	20	10.7
Sense of fashion	72	33.9	64	33.7	54	28.4
Choice of wardrobe	106	57.3	53	28.6	26	14.1
Age	74	38.9	67	35.3	49	25.8

Table 5.7 Students' views about teachers' appearance

As is evident from the data, the majority of students felt that the teacher's appearance in general was important. Two further questions investigated student views of teachers' sense of fashion and choice of clothes. This indicates that only about 28 percent do not see being fashionable as vital, while having a good wardrobe is even more desirable and only 14.1percent of the students think that it is not important.

An analysis by gender reveals that there is a slight gender difference here (Table 5.8). Girls perceive aspects of appearance to be a stronger aspect of language teacher effectiveness than do boys.

Students' views	Agree		Partially agree		Disagree	
	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %
Appearance	63.6	59.5	28.4	27.2	7.9	13.1
Choice of clothes	65.9	47.1	26.1	29.4	6.8	19.6
Being fashionable	46.6	30.4	31.8	35.3	21.6	34.3
Being young	46.6	31.4	31.8	38.2	21.6	29.4

Table 5.8 Students' views about teachers' appearance and clothing based on students' gender

5.2.4 Teachers' Knowledge

In part three of the questionnaire, the importance of language teachers' knowledge was investigated, particularly the language skills and sub-skills students thought were important for the teachers to possess. Table 5.9 shows the details.

In general, they mostly believed that language teachers' knowledge of all the skills and sub-skills were of importance, putting the most weight on reading. One skill that got a marginally lower rate was speaking, despite the fact that the students had chosen speaking as the skill they liked to learn more than any of the others. Equally, the importance of the teachers' accent was rated relatively lower, and this answer was further explored during the interview to find out what the students believed good accent was. Nonetheless, the responses indicated that students perceive that teacher command of the language sub-skills to be a strong element of language teacher effectiveness, with high ratings between 73% and 96% for all of these. These students also deemed the teacher's possession of up-to-date knowledge an important factor.

Students' views	Agree		Partially agree		Disagree	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Accent	139	73.2	36	18.9	15	7.9
Speaking	146	77.7	30	16.0	12	6.4
Writing	159	86.4	21	11.4	4	2.2
Reading	175	93.1	13	6.9	0	0
Listening	160	85.1	27	14.4	1	.5
Grammar	164	88.7	21	11.2	2	1.1
Vocabulary	155	82.4	29	15.4	4	2.1
Translation	150	79.8	30	16.0	8	4.3
Knowledge of culture	100	53.2	66	35.1	21	11.2
Having up-to-date knowledge	145	76.2	35	18.5	10	5.3

Table 5.9 Students' views on teachers' language proficiency and knowledge

In contrast, students do not seem to value teachers' knowledge of the culture of the language as a strong aspect of language teacher effectiveness, with this receiving a considerably lower rating than other strands in this set of questions. It should be noted that culture is a totally neglected issue in the syllabus and since most Iranians are not in direct touch with English-speaking communities, knowledge about the culture of many other countries is not regarded as a priority.

5.2.5 Pedagogy and Class Management

Section four investigated students' perceptions of effective language teachers' classroom management and pedagogical practices. As table 5.10 illustrates, 13 topics were rated in this regard.

Most of the students rated highly the practice of explaining all the points in the lesson, the giving of a short break in the middle of the class, correcting all the mistakes and the use of TV and computers for teaching. Using English as the medium of instruction and regular administration of tests, however, were rated considerably lower.

Students' views	Agree		Partially agree		Disagree	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Using English as the medium of instruction	22	11.6	72	38.1	95	50.3
Using supplementary books	63	33.7	78	41.7	46	24.6
Using TV, Computers, etc	135	71.4	36	19	18	9.5
Giving projects	32	36	65	34.9	54	29
Giving a short break in the middle of the lesson	156	82.9	30	16.0	2	1.1
Administering tests regularly	32	17	82	43.6	74	39.4
Assigning homework	108	57.5	56	30.1	23	12.4
Explaining all the points in the lesson	169	90.9	13	7.0	3	1.6
Correcting all the mistakes	147	79	28	15.1	11	5.9
Reviewing the lesson constantly	114	60.6	64	34	10	5.3
Being the authority	66	35.3	78	41.2	44	23.5
Sharing personal experience	84	44.9	66	35.3	37	19.8
Encouraging students to talk about themselves	126	66.3	43	22.6	21	11.1

Table 5.10 Students' views on teachers' pedagogy and class management

The fact that most of the students were in favour of teachers' explaining all the points in the book and correcting all the language mistakes made by the students may be an indication that students expect the teacher to be the main source of information and might also explain why the students do not rate doing projects or investigating on their own as practices adopted by effective language teachers. The high rating for the use of television and computer compared to books may be because the course-books themselves do not have many provisions for audio and visual material or computer-assisted learning, so using them has to come mainly from the teacher. For most of the students, audio-visual aids to learning English are a new experience, and a marker of effectiveness appears teachers' ability or willingness to supplement the course materials with digital resources.

During the pilot study many of the students had mentioned that a little amount of time during the lesson for catching up their breath or relaxation was really important. Therefore, this question was inspired by what they had suggested. It was not then unexpected to see more than two thirds of them seeing this as necessary and only

two of the students totally disagreeing with it. The reason for that was further sought in the interviews.

Student responses highlight that they do not see the teacher's use of English as the main medium of instruction in the class as a strong aspect of language teacher effectiveness. This may well reflect that the students do not feel secure if the teacher uses English as the main medium of instruction, or that they find it difficult to follow the learning. In addition, it shows that while the students are willing to learn how to speak English, they have reservations about the teacher using the language to communicate with them during the class.

Both exams and homework are considered very important in the educational system of Iran. Students, teachers and schools are assessed by the marks students gain in the tests so it could be assumed that even though most students would not like to be tested, they would think that tests are effective for their learning. The students' replies suggested otherwise. As for homework, particularly many parents would check to see if the teacher has given the students homework and has checked the homework. More than half of the students agree that setting homework is a part of being an effective language teacher¸ although their response is less strong on this than some of the other pedagogical practices. Recalling that these students do not have any other encounter with the English language outside their class can show how important doing homework can be to consolidate the contents of their course-book.

Students' views of the importance of teacher authority as a marker of language teacher effectiveness were more ambivalent. In order to make sure that the students clearly understood what the word authority meant in the context of the class in each of the schools, this point was orally clarified as well. Here teacher being the authority meant being the main decision maker, thus deciding how to manage the class, what and how to teach. 23 percent of the students do not think that teacher should be the main authority in the classroom, whilst 35 percent believe teachers should be the main authority in the language classroom. It was predictable, perhaps, that some students would like the teacher to act as authority since in the education system of Iran the hierarchy is top to down and that is how mostly the school and the classes

are managed. However, only about one third of the students thought that it was a requirement for a teacher to be effective. This might be an indication that students' views are not necessarily in line with what is being practised.

The last two questions in this section concerned student perceptions of the kind of talk fostered by effective language teachers. Here the data suggests that students value opportunities to talk about their own experiences rather than listening to their teachers' personal experiences. This may be because they assume that teachers' sharing their personal experience is equal to their giving advice to the students and this is something that they do not like. A few of the students who had answered the open-ended questions provided in the questionnaire explicitly stated that they did not at all like to be advised.

To conclude the majority of the students who took part in the study, were not comfortable with the use of English as the sole means of communication in the classes. They thought homework was necessary, liked having a few minutes of rest time within each session of the class, believed that the teacher should explain everything and correct all the errors, liked the teachers to talk about their personal experiences but preferred to talk about themselves. It is evident that students' perceptions of the characteristics of effective language teachers' pedagogical practices are closely related to what they enjoy and do not enjoy – activities which make high demands on them such as tests, being taught in English, and doing homework are perceived as less strong characteristics of effectiveness. This is a reminder that students' perceptions may not be reliable indicators of actual teacher effectiveness, and that student conceptualisation of effectiveness appears to be strongly correlated with enjoyment.

5.2.6 Comparing Language Teachers to Generic Teachers
Section five of the questionnaire was designed to further explore the answers provided and to observe if the characteristics put forth were applicable to language teachers or all teachers regardless of the subject they teach. Therefore, there was one part that asked the students to tick a box where they felt a statement was true for all teachers and another part that they indicated if they felt a statement was more relevant to language teachers. On the whole, almost half of the students believed

that language teachers are different at least in some aspects from teachers of other subjects, and only 11.5 percent had the opposite view.

Table 5.11 summarizes the responses on those characteristics deemed generic to all teachers. The characteristic the students rate least strongly is the teacher being the authority. In contrast, students see high levels of patience, being up-to-date, being kind and being lively as particular characteristics of effective language teachers.

Students' views	Yes		No	
	No	%	No	%
Being young	99	52.1	91	47.9
Being elegant	143	75.3	47	24.7
Being kind	166	87.4	24	12.6
Being serious	90	47.1	100	52.6
Being humorous	165	86.4	25	13.2
Being lively	166	87.4	24	12.6
Being caring	144	75.8	48	24.2
Being patient	172	90.5	18	9.5
Being religious	129	67.9	61	32.1
Using supplementary material	129	67.9	60	31.6
Being Up-to-date	160	84.2	30	15.8
Being the authority	78	41.3	111	58.7
Being helpful outside the class	137	72.1	53	27.9
Calling students in their first names	135	71.2	55	28.8
Going beyond the course-book	120	62.8	69	36.3

Table 5.11 Students' views on characteristics of all teachers

Table 5.12 shows the characteristics the students believed were more important for language teachers to possess. Therefore, for instance, even though they thought all teachers had to be patient, 80 percent believed that language teachers had to be more patient than the other teachers in order to be considered effective. The two top characteristics that were mostly mentioned for language teachers were being more up-to-date and more patient than generic teachers. Considering that learning an FL is a new experience for the students, it can be assumed that students believe that a language teacher's patience can somehow make language learning a less difficult experience. This can be equal to teachers' having more tolerance for students' linguistic mistakes. Then the language teachers were expected to be kinder, livelier and more fun that the other teachers. These choices reemphasize the importance of a language class with a climate that is not only stress-free, but also happy.

Students' views	Number	%
Younger	119	73.9
More elegant	131	68.9
Kinder	151	79.5
More serious	71	37.4
More fun	148	77.9
Livelier	151	79.5
More Caring	120	63.8
More patient	152	80.0
More religious	97	51.1
Using more supplementary materials	124	65.3
More up-to-date	161	84.7

Table 5.12 Students' views concerning language teachers' characteristics compared to generic teachers

5.2.7 Open-ended Questions

The final section of the questionnaire asked four open questions. They served three purposes: it gave the students the opportunity to include anything they thought was important but not included in the questionnaire; it was supposed to help in planning the interview questions and finally, it was meant to encourage the students to reflect on the problematic behaviour in the class and the kind of reaction they thought would be appropriate. However, only eight students provided answers.

Even though this section of the questionnaire did not very much contribute to learning more about the students' views of effective language teachers, it did verify the importance of holding interviews in order to elicit rich data.

5.3 General Findings and Discussion

The principle objective of this part of the study was to identify the overall beliefs of students about effective language teachers. This can be very important as hearing the views of students can take the education system one step closer to a more democratic climate in which students can better engage in the class.

The key findings from this questionnaire that indicate what students believe contribute to a language teacher being considered more effective are summarized below.

To begin with, even though the majority of the students believed that their parents liked them to learn English, only a little more than half of the children claimed that they liked learning it. Therefore, it can be assumed that children do not necessarily agree with parents' opinion as it may be expected at least to some degree in the Iranian context. It seems that children form their own views.

The next significant finding was that respondents said that they liked to learn how to speak English. This is not in lines with the syllabus being used in the schools and also contradicts the fact that they prefer to be taught in Persian rather than English.

The two teachers' attributes that were considered slightly more important than the other positive attributes were teachers' kindness and friendliness. Teachers' seriousness was among the least desirable; however, even though this was not favoured by many, it was still seen as necessary to some. In most circumstances it is expected that none of the students would welcome teachers' seriousness; therefore, this was an unanticipated finding.

A noteworthy finding here was the majority of the students' considering teachers' choice of attire as very important in being considered effective. This topic was raised during the pilot study and the reason for its inclusion was the students insisting on how the teachers' choice of clothes mattered to them. Here the main demand was teachers' adding variety to their choice of clothes. This was unexpected as Iran is a Moslem country and certain codes of dressing should be observed when in public places.

Given the formality of the class context, the high number of students in each class and the very limited time available to teaching English points such as teachers' knowing all the students, teachers calling the students using their first names, and talking about topics unrelated to the lesson were also of significance according to the majority of the participating students. These demands illustrate the heavy burden put on teachers and at times suggest the changing trend in the beliefs concerning class environment. The fact that more than half of the students did not like the teacher to be the sole authority and decision maker in the classes also supports this.

Teachers' information about culture of the countries whose language is being taught was not considered of prime importance. This was somehow expected as the syllabus is totally deprived of any reference to foreign cultures.

There were two final interesting findings. The first was that most students believed that language teachers at least in some ways should be different from teachers of other subjects at schools. The second finding came from the number of the students who took part in the study and the number of the ones who were selected. This comparison showed that the number of girl participants who study English at private language schools was more than the boys who take classes outside their schools. Almost 38.5 percent of the girls attended language classes outside school, while this was only 27.5 percent of boys. Exploring the performance of girls in other subjects illustrates a quite similar pattern. At least during the past decade girls have performed better than boys in many school subjects. For instance, TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) reports from 2003 to 2011 shows that Iranian girls have outperformed Iranian boys in science and math.

Finally, it appeared that some of the points which came from the analysis of the questionnaire needed further investigation and they were tackled during the interview.

5.4 Conclusion

The findings of the questionnaire revealed that at least with this sample of students there were many commonalities in their perceptions of language teacher effectiveness, regardless of their gender. It appeared that teachers' language proficiency, class management skills, appearance and personal attributes were all important. However, at the same time looking at the findings suggests that many of the choices among these characteristics abilities and skills were very much context-driven.

Since closed-response questions pose some limitations, it was decided that conducting a qualitative study even with a small population can help overcome the restraints and shed new light on the perception of those involved. In addition, in this

section only students took part, while the qualitative section will provide opportunities for teachers and parents to express their perceptions of what comprises language teacher effectiveness. Based on the findings then two girls' schools and two boys' schools located in two districts of Tehran were selected. All in all, the macro level part of the study paved the road for the individual classroom research. The details are provided in the next three chapters.

6 What are Learners' Perceptions of the Characteristics of Effective Language Teachers?

6.1 Introduction

As described earlier, after having analyzed the quantitative data a group of students were selected to be interviewed. The data collected through the questionnaires provided a general perspective of what the students demanded and also gave me the opportunity to informally observe the general climate of the schools. The qualitative data, on the other hand, provided an in depth understanding of the issues raised and at times offered clarification of and justification for the characteristics of the students' choice. In addition, since this second section consisted of a semi-structured interview, the participants had the opportunity to raise and discuss any topic which might not have been addressed previously. (For more information refer to appendix 15)

16 students, eight girls and eight boys, were interviewed for this section of study. They were selected from, two girls' and two boys' schools. The students were all studying at 8[th] grade and were between 13 and 14 years old. None of them had had any language lessons outside school. The sampling strategy and getting the cross-section of students provided a representative group that consisted of students of both genders, levels of satisfaction and achievement. Table 6.1 outlines the details.

The achievers were the students who had gained a significantly higher score in the second language test that was administered during the course of research and towards the end of the school year compared to the first test that had been taken at the beginning of the school year. Underachievers, though, had made little improvement. In addition, all of these students had quite strong opinions about their current language teachers. They were either both happy and satisfied or unhappy and dissatisfied with their current language classes at school.

	Achievers who are happy and satisfied with their current language teacher		Achievers who are unhappy and dissatisfied with their current language teacher	
	Girls	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Boys*
District x	Fatemeh	Amir Reza	Mobina	Alireza
District y	Sogol	Mohammad	Zahra	Milad
	Underachievers who are happy and satisfied with their current language teacher		Underachievers who are unhappy and dissatisfied with their current language teacher	
	Girls	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Boys*
District x	Maryam	Ali Akbar	Marziyeh	Farjad
District y	Mohadaseh	Aidin	Zeynab	Abdollah

Table 6.1 Classification of the participating students based on their improvement, happiness and satisfaction with their current language teacher

Each of these students was interviewed individually in their schools. They expressed their opinion about how they believed effective language teachers in public schools in Iran should be like, how they should teach, know and behave. After analysing the interviews, 62 initial codes were created through open coding which were categorised into six sub-themes through axial coding. And finally, as can be seen in the table below, this inductive coding led to the creation of three over-arching themes. This chapter is devoted to analysing these themes more thoroughly to present the perception of the students of the characteristics and knowledge they believe an effective language teacher at Iranian public schools should possess and the kind of classroom practice they see as the most effective. (Refer to Appendix 12 for the interview questions.) Table 6.2 outlines the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the interviews with the students.

Themes	Sub-themes
Students' perceptions of learning English at school	Students' views about learning English, language teachers and the syllabus
Students' perception of the relationship between personal attributes of language teachers and their effectiveness	Teachers' behaviour
	Teachers' appearance
Students' perception of teacher's knowledge and those professional skills that contribute to language teachers' effectiveness	Teacher's pedagogic and language knowledge
	Choice of content
	Classroom practice

Table 6.2 Main and sub-themes for students' perceptions of effective language teachers derived from the interviews

6.2 Students' General Views about and Perceptions of Learning English at Schools

This theme is devoted to the perceptions of the students about how they view learning English at their schools in general and also their opinion of what they think language teachers should be like overall. Table 6.3 demonstrates the cluster of comments they made in this regard.

Codes	Definition	No of students	No of comments
Interest in learning English	Students' opinion about learning English	16	20
Class and syllabus	Student's opinion about the language syllabus and language class at school	9	13
Language teachers in general	Students' opinion and perception of language teachers at school and how the students think teachers should be like to be more effective	7	12
Student-teacher relationship	Students' emphasis on the importance of the right relationship between a language teacher and the students at schools	14	36
	Total		81

Table 6.3 Codes related to student's general views about learning English at schools

The first question examined the general view of the students about their experience of and desire in learning English. Out of the 16 students only three were ***interested***

in learning English. Two boys and five girls did not like learning the language at all. Among them Zeynab did not see any use for it and also was not happy with her current language teacher. The rest thought that learning English was important, but they did not consider it a favourite lesson.

> Mobina: I know it [English] is useful, but I just don't like it.

> Farjad: I think English is mostly important if one wants to go abroad. My father says that if I study hard and learn English and have a high GDP when I graduate from high school, he will send me abroad.

Milad believed his interest or disinterest in learning English solely depended on the teacher he had at the time.

> -Interviewer: Do you like learning a new language such as English?
> -Milad: Our teacher is not good.
> -Interviewer: Do you like to learn it?
> -Milad: Yes.
> -Interviewer: So you think that language is a good subject to learn at school.
> -Milad: Yes, but it depends on the teacher.

On the whole, no specific pattern could be traced in the respondents who did not like learning English. In other words, they belonged to both high and low achieving groups and some liked their current classes, while some did not.

Not many of the students commented on the ***syllabus.*** Marzieyeh and Mohammad who did, were mainly complaining about the school course-book and mentioned that it was boring and had nothing useful.

> Marziyeh: You know the lessons of the [English] course-book are really boring, but some of the teachers may teach them in a more boring way and some teach so beautifully that they encourage you to study harder.

Mohammad also criticized the book and said:

> Our book has nothing in it, so I like extra material.

Both of the above comments suggest that these students did not see the syllabus and the teacher's roles in the class as two separate elements. They believed that the current syllabus was not interesting, but their teachers could try to improve it. The first student's comment suggests that she believed that the role of the teacher was critical and that even a boring lesson could become interesting in the hands of an effective teacher. The second one also saw the solution to the problem of useless books in doing activities beyond the prescribed syllabus, which obviously the teacher had to provide.

When it came to language *classes* at school, they talked about their own language classes, what they thought about them and about their expectations. This indirectly illustrated their views of effective language teachers, which they elaborated in more detail later. In this case, some of them also shared their views about how the students should behave in their classes. Students commented on the need to: take the classes seriously and not try '*to escape*' the need for them to '*try harder*' and '*study better*' no matter what level they were; not '*teasing the teacher*'; not being '*shy asking their questions*'; and '*listening to the teacher*'. In general, these comments reflect an understanding of conventional behavioural expectations of the classroom.

Three students, Abdollah, Mohammd and Sogol, expressed expectations from their **language teachers in general**. Sogol believed that the more experienced the language teacher is, the higher her expectations would be, whilst Abdollah, thought that language teachers should be *'friendlier'* than other teachers.

> Mohammad: I think they should know a bit friendlier than the other teachers, because they are teaching a foreign language to us… I like him to be knowledgeable more than the other teachers.

Mohadesh's comments mainly related to teacher's education and experience.

> She has to have studied English at university, not any other field...She should have 3 years of experience.

The general view of language learning which was most commonly expressed was a perception of the importance of the **student-teacher relationship** in the language class. At this phase the students mostly pointed out that the type of this relationship was very important to them. All the students made a comment which related to this, and it is well-summarised by Abdollah who maintained that '*the teacher should have a deep connection with the students, so that the student can ask him questions everywhere not only in the class*'. Later on and in the next phases of the interview they elaborated on their perceptions of the student-teacher relationship. The details of the nature of this relationship as students explained it can be seen in section 6.3.

6.3 Students' Perception of the Relationship between Language Teachers' Personal Attributes and Their Effectiveness

A substantial number of comments in the interviews related to students' perceptions of the personal attributes of effective language teachers. Of these the majority of

comments could be clustered as relating to the teachers' behaviour and their physical appearance.

6.3.1 Teachers' Behaviour

The sub-theme of **teacher behaviour** represented comments describing desirable and undesirable behaviours of the language teacher in the classroom. As table 6.4 shows, nine different attributes emerged out of the interviews concerning the desirable behaviour of an effective language teacher. Some were mentioned very frequently, while there were a few that were expressed by only a small number of students.

Codes	Definition	No of students	No of comments
Friendliness	Teachers behaving in a way that students would feel comfortable communicating with them	15	24
Kindness	Being good-tempered, and running stress-free classes	10	20
	Being patient with students' linguistic and behavioural mistakes		
	Being fair		
Seriousness	Having dry classes that would scare the students; opposed to friendliness	7	15
	discipline		
Sense of humour	Telling jokes and funny stories	10	12
	Creating an atmosphere of ease and fun		
Credibility	Winning the trust of the students by their language knowledge and/or their behaviour	10	14
Interest in teaching	Teachers showing that they enjoy teaching, sharing their knowledge and spending time with the students	5	7
Being religious	Direct practice or promotion of Islamic beliefs in the classes	3	3
		Total	95

Table 6.4 Codes related to teachers' behaviour

Also as described in the previous section teachers' relationship with the students is in the foreground. Thus the term **friendliness** stands out in the list of the desired characteristics of the language teacher. It was mentioned about 20 times; however, students had slightly different interpretations of the term and also about the level of friendliness they thought the teacher had to show in the class. Three of the boys,

Abdollah, Aidin and Alireza thought that the teacher should really act as if he was their '*friend'* so that in Aidin's words '*the students would understand the lesson'.*

However, there were a number of students who thought that teachers should set strict limits so that the students would not get too close to them and more than what these students thought was necessary. Zahra mentioned that that teacher should be careful that her friendliness would not compromise her influence.

> Farjad: Friendly in a way that the boundaries would be set. It should not be in a way that the student would be impolite.

> Zahra: Teacher should be friendly. This depends on the class and the students. If teachers are too friendly, then obviously the students take advantage. But the teacher should set boundaries. She should not try to interfere with the private affairs of the students. Then I think there will be no problem.

The idea of teachers setting limits in their friendliness was shared by six other students who agreed that friendliness was important, but depended on the class and the students. Even though the term '*friendliness'* was repeatedly used by the students which basically meant '*being nice*', '*letting the students communicate with them'* and '*relating to the students',* over-friendliness was not considered desirable by many. Zeynab for example believed that:

> She [the language teacher] should neither be too strict nor too friendly.

Sogol also thought:

> I don't think that the relation should be too deep and informal, but I don't like a dry relation.

These comments, whilst underlining a prevailing view of the importance of teacher friendliness in an effective student-teacher relationship, also underline that some students do not share a consensus on how that friendliness should be realised in practice.

Closely linked to the notion of friendliness is the idea of the kindness of the teacher. Most students believed that the teacher should be **kind** and nice, or at least not threatening and scary. The ideas developed out of the concept of **kindness** and niceness suggested that the students liked the teacher to be '*good-tempered'*, handling the class in a '*stress-free manner'* and '*making the students feel comfortable*'. To Alireza and Zeynab the teacher '*not shouting at the students*' was also a sign of kindness. Zeynab also believed if she were the teacher '*she would be kind to the students and get to know them'.* For Maryam if the teacher did not scare

off the students it was enough. While others like Marziyeh expected the teacher to use the right words or call the students by their first names.

> Marziyeh: Then I will call the students by their first name and would use "Joon" [a Persian term of endearment following the first name]

Zahra's interpretation of the teachers' kindness directly related to the test scores.

> The students should be comfortable with their teacher. They should not have stress, worrying that now she wants to ask us questions and I don't know the answer. She should not give us low marks. For example, for mid-term, she should not give the students low marks. The students should feel comfortable with her. The teacher herself should also like to spend time with the students.

Finally, Zeynab mentioned the tone of voice of the teacher as a determining factor for being considered kind.

> -Zeynab: I mean she should not shout at the students. She should have a calm tone of voice.
> -Interviewer: So what is the difference between this and having a nice behaviour?
> -Zeynab: It is her tone.

Patience was another manifestation of teachers kindness and was only brought up three times and in the form of teacher giving the students enough time to think or answer questions and also not to be shouting at the students which mainly related to the class management of the teacher. Alireza said:

> He has to wait for the students to answer the questions and not answer the questions himself.

Fairness of the teacher was mentioned only three times by the students and it could somehow be linked to their kindness. By fairness two students meant teacher being undiscriminating. Marzieyeh's interpretation was different. She said that the teacher had to accept her mistake if she made any.

As can be seen the teachers' clues to kindness were not exactly the same for all the students.

The next attribute was **_good sense of humour_** which was brought up by six students. By that some meant teachers '*cracking jokes every now and then'*, and creating laughter. Fatemeh believed if she were a teacher after teaching the lesson and if she realised that the students were tired, she would tell jokes. Mobina also believed that a good teacher should:

> ...say hi in English and crack some jokes and make everyone laugh and then ask the students to open their books and get started with her teaching.

A few of course mentioned that they did not want or expect this to be happening all the time and when teaching the teacher had to be serious. Laughter and fun, they believed, should be reserved for the beginning of the class and also for when the students got tired. This was particularly mentioned by the boy students of the school in district *y,* who apparently had a bad experience with a teacher of a subject other than English who cracked too many jokes and then lost the control of the class.

> -Ali Akbar: [Teachers] Pulling your [the students'] leg is not really good, because the students take advantage or make fun of the teacher and the teacher can't say anything. Our science teacher has a sense of humour but the students always pull his leg and take advantage.
> -Amir Reza: Some of our teachers begin joking with the students immediately when they come to class and they lose the control of the class. Of course giving a lot of activities is not good either. I would try not to joke a lot and not too teach so much that the students would get bored.

Mobina also agreed and believed that teachers should not use their sense of humour '*more than required'.*

Six of the students talked about the importance of teacher being **serious**. Some put some limits on this **seriousness** though. They believed that too much severity would put the students off. But one, for example believed that if the teacher was not serious, then the students would not study hard. The general attitude was that the teacher should be able to control the class and maintain discipline and if the students were noisy or inattentive, then the teacher had to act very seriously. Obviously none of them wanted a teacher who was too strict at all times. Mobina said:

> If she is too serious then the students would not accept her, they would tease her and they would not study. She should be neither too strict nor too funny, something in the middle. She should not be bad tempered.

Marziyeh also shared the same view:

> The teacher should be serious when asking questions so that the students would be scared and would study harder.

Marziyeh's use of the word *'scared'* can also be the reminder that even though the attitude towards the teachers' behaviour is changing still teacher's authoritarian role is acceptable. Milad, also agreed with the girls and expected the effective teacher to be serious '*at the right time'.* Alireza's comments regarding the teachers' seriousness were of quite a different nature. To him being serious was not the same as strict and

angry. He used the word *'angry'* for the teacher who did not tolerate the students' mistakes. He thought that strictness was not good, even though his experience with an *'angry'* teacher showed that his anger had stopped them from not doing their assignments.

> -Alireza: For example, we have a teacher who gets really angry even if once you don't do your homework.
> -Interviewer: So when the teachers are being strict what do they do?
> -Alireza: For example, we had a teacher. The first weeks of the term we didn't know what to do with the homework the first time and for this he called the head to our class.
> -Interviewer: What did the head do?
> -Alireza: He talked to us.
> -Interviewer: Was that good or bad?
> -Amir Reza: Bad.
> -Interviewer: Did it make you not to forget to write your homework all throughout the term?
> -Alireza: Yes.

The next important characteristic was teachers' being **credible and trustworthy**. Marziyeh was the only student, though who linked this to students confiding in the teacher and sharing their feelings. Of course she had not had a good experience.

> You know some teachers want to get close to the students and they talk about other lessons and then the students would tell them about the other teachers and their problems with them. Then the teachers would go and tell the other teachers about what they had heard from the students. The other teacher came to the class and deducted points from us so that we would never talk behind any other teacher.

Some of the other students, though, interpreted credibility in a different way. The students mainly believed that the teachers' ability to answer all of their questions would make them credible. For instance, Zeynab said:

> I won't very much trust a teacher who cannot answer many of my questions. But if she doesn't know the answer to one question it is ok.

What the students meant by the teachers' required knowledge is explained in detail on in section 6.4.

Another characteristic that five of the students directly mentioned and admired in an effective language teacher was teachers' *interest in teaching and sharing knowledge.* They believe teachers should show genuine interest and willingness to spend time with the students and be concerned about their learning. Both Zahra and Mohadeseh thought that the teacher should show her interest in teaching.

> Zahra: The teacher should show excitement while teaching and make the students interested.

> Mohadeseh: If I were the language teacher, first I would enter the class looking happy so that I would not really disappoint the students.

Ali Akbar, Aidin and Alireza's comments were mainly related to the teachers' willingness to share their knowledge with the students. Ali Akbar, for instance believed that the teacher *'should be willing to give his knowledge to the students.*

Finally, three boys, Abdollah, Amir Reza and Farjad gave hints about the importance of the teacher being **religious**. Two thought the teacher should '*begin the class in the name of God'* and '*remember God'*. Farjad thought that the teacher should have enough religious knowledge to answer any likely questions that the students had in that regard.

> -Farjad: He has to be able to answer questions that the students have from outside the book.
> -Interviewer: Like what?
> -Farjad: Religious questions and edicts.

Iran is a Moslem country and as mentioned earlier practising religion is a requirement in all aspects of the people's lives. Therefore, it was not unexpected to encounter this line of comments from some of the students.

6.3.2 Teachers' Appearance

One cluster of comments about teacher effectiveness signalled the importance of the teachers' appearance as part of their role as effective teachers. The significance of teachers' age and clothing in being more effective was raised 31 times during the interview. (Table 6.5)

Codes	Definition	No of students	No of comments
Age	The best age the students believe a language teacher should be	5	8
Clothes	Appropriate attire for language teachers according to the students	16	23
		Total	31

Table 6.5 Codes related to teachers' appearance

Five of the students had concerns about the teacher's **age**. Amir Reza said:

> He has to be of an age that could relate with the students. He should not be too old, but he should have good job experience.

Aliakbar, Zahra and Mohadeseh also liked their teacher to be young, because they thought young teachers would relate to the students better, but Mohadeseh at the same time believed that if the teacher was too young then he/she would not be able to control the class and would not be taken seriously. Their definition of youth was not exactly the same; however. Mohadaseh, for example, thought that the teacher should not be more than 30, while to Ali Akbar a teacher of 67 or 68 was old and a teacher of say 45 could relate to students.

Clothes were a major issue. Teachers paying attention to their attire was among the strongest attributes that had captured the students' attention. All the girls unanimously liked the teacher to have a good wardrobe and be good looking in general. This meant that they liked her to change her attire during the school year, wear matching clothes and nice colours. There were some who thought that being fashionable was also important. Marziyeh and Zeynab mentioned that all the girls discussed the teacher's attire. Almost all girls said that students paid more attention to the teachers and the lesson of the teachers who they believed dressed better.

> Fatemeh: Since the teacher deals with young people, it is nice if her appearance appeals to us. The children would communicate with her better.

> Mobina: When a teacher enters the class, the girls first pay attention to her appearance, so she should look good.

> Marziyeh: When our teacher is wearing something nice, everybody talks about it. The nicer the teacher looks, the more interested the students would be to study.

> Maryam: If she wears the same clothes all the time, then none of the children would learn anything.

In contrast, some of the boys insisted that the way the teacher dressed did not have any special impact on their learning. Abdollah for example said:

> It [Clothing] does not matter at all, because if a student has a deep connection with the teacher he does not have anything to do with the way he looks. It is a relation from the heart to the heart.

Some, on the other hand, thought that the teacher had to be neat and tidy and in Milad's words should "*put on acceptable clothes*", by which he explained he meant clothes appropriate to his job.

> Milad: He should not come to school with his home comfy pants. He has to be distinguished.

Farjad said that he did pay a little attention and liked it when a teacher wore suit and cologne. He said that boys too talked about the teachers' appearance and believed that a smartly dressed teacher created good spirit. Amir Reza also said

> -Amir Rreza: He [the teacher] has to be well dressed….- He has to be neat and tidy. He is the role model for the students.
> -Interviewer: So you do pay attention to the appearance of your teacher?
> -Amir Reza: We don't pay much attention, but we notice if for example he has had a haircut.

From all of these comments it can be gathered that the students believed that the teacher's appearance contributed to their being considered more effective. They mostly paid attention to that and this was particularly of importance to girls. Teachers' choice of colour and variety in selecting their attire attracted the attention of most of the students. This is of significant importance in the context of Iran, since as was mentioned earlier as well, women particularly have some limitations in choosing their wardrobe when in public places. As for the colour of clothes, even though there are no strict rules, both male and female employees, teachers included, should consider wearing clothes which are of more sober colours, such as black, brown, dark blue, gray and blue. Some schools of course encourage their teachers to put on more vibrant colours only when they are inside the school.

6.4 Students' Perception of Effective Language Teacher's Knowledge and Professional Skills

As table 6.1 at the beginning of this chapter demonstrates, during the interview some questions were asked seeking the opinion of the students about what kind and amount of knowledge they thought an effective language teacher should possess. The choice of content, including the skills and sub-skills, to teach was also discussed. Finally, the students were encouraged to share their views about how they thought effective language teachers at schools should teach and what points they should consider when teaching. Then, this led to the creation of three main sub-themes. From the deductive analysis of the responses to the interview questions for each of these sub-themes many comments emerged. In this section these findings are presented.

6.4.1 Teacher's Pedagogic and Language Knowledge

The language proficiency level and knowledge of teaching methods and pedagogy that the students believe would contribute to language teachers being more effective were the next set of questions addressed in the interview. The line of questions raised intended to check how the students felt about the importance of teachers' knowledge of the four skills and also some sub-skills such as knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and even translation. In addition, some issues relating to students' opinion on the importance of teachers' ***pedagogic knowledge*** and ***teaching methodology*** were raised. Table 6.6 summarizes the information.

As stated earlier the language teacher's main responsibility in public schools in Iran is to teach the content of the book and prepare the students for the final tests. Given that the book places almost no emphasis on speaking and listening skills, the original assumption was that these two skills would not be as much in demand as grammar, reading, vocabulary and also translation. All the of 16 students articulated their view about the importance of teacher's ***speaking knowledge***. Some students mentioned that the teachers' ability to ***speak*** English led to their gaining credibility among the students.

Code	Definition	No of students	No of comments
Speaking and accent	Language teachers' ability and knowledge to speak English fluently in an accent that students could understand	16	44
Grammar	Teacher's knowledge of grammatical rules	11	13
Writing	Language teachers' ability to write in English with no difficulty	11	14
Reading	Language teachers' ability to read in English with no difficulty	9	10
Listening	Language teachers' ability to understand English with no difficulty	3	3
Translation	Language teachers' ability to translate from English to Persian (and vice versa)	4	4
Vocabulary	Language teachers' knowledge of a wide range of English words	2	2
General knowledge	Language teachers' knowledge of subjects unrelated to language and language teaching Language teachers' knowledge of English beyond the requirements of the course-book they teach	15	24
Knowledge of the content of the book	Language teachers' thorough knowledge of all the subjects included in the course-book	6	8
Knowledge of teaching methods	Language teachers' knowledge of pedagogy and language teaching methods and practice	4	7
		Total	129

Table 6.6 Codes related to teachers' pedagogic and language knowledge according to the students

Also as again mentioned previously, there are some students in the class, not included in this study, who take language classes outside the school. At least some of these students know how to speak English to some extent. Some of them like to speak English in the class, sometimes to boast and sometimes to judge the teacher. These students ask questions or talk to the teacher in English and if the teacher is not orally competent in English and cannot answer them, then he/she would not be trusted by the students and may lose face. Therefore, it seems that the importance placed on the teachers' ability to speak English can be linked to the verbal ability of these students. That is why teachers' knowledge of speaking is favoured by most, even if it is not to be used as the means of instruction. Marziyeh clarified this point by saying that the language teacher should know how to speak English, but should not use it in the class.

> She [the teacher] has to be able speak English with the students. Last year one of my classmates said something in English to the teacher about a clock. The teacher just did not understand her and asked [in Farsi], "What are you talking about? Do you want to know the time?" we tried to translate what our friend had asked and she still did not understand.

Abdollah also mentioned that to him teacher's good language proficiency meant '*if an English man comes along, he [the teacher] should be able to speak to him'*.

All of the students had comments about **accent**. Of course some of them did not differentiate between pronunciation of words and accent. There were four who placed importance on a good **accent**. Abdollah thought that if the teacher was fluent and had a good accent, the students would get used to it. Most of the others modified their desirable **accent** with adjectives such as, simple, comprehensible to the students and not too strong. Only Fatemeh, Ali Akbar and Mohadaseh thought that **accent** did not matter at all. Generally speaking, native-like **accent** was not desirable to many. They liked their teacher to have a kind of accent that '*they would understand'*. Below some of their comments can be seen.

> Aidin: Accent is very important, because some people talk so fast that the students don't understand them.
>
> -Interviewer: What does good accent mean?
> -Milad: He [the teacher] should read fluently and read slowly for the beginners to understand...... one should be able to understand. It should be clear.
> -Interviewer: So if for example, if the teacher has a British accent is it good?
> -Milad: No.

The comments suggest that the students were mainly concerned with the comprehensibility of the accent to them and did not think that authentic English accent would be easy to understand. Therefore, they did not see teachers' authentic English accents as desirable.

As expected, **grammar** was the sub-skill which was rated very highly by the students as it was one of the major components of their course-books. By knowing **grammar** the students mainly meant teachers' knowledge of syntactic rules and their ability to do the relevant grammar exercises from their books correctly. Alireza thought that knowing grammar was the key to learning reading and speaking; therefore, the teacher had to know grammar to be able to teach it. All the 11 students who mentioned grammar believed in the importance of teacher's knowledge of grammar.

Mobina: She has to know all the grammar rules so that she can answer the students' questions.

When it came to *writing* skill, only two students of the 11 students who raised it believed that it was not necessary for the teacher to know how to write. To Marziyeh, *writing* meant teachers' handwriting as well, to another it was equal to spelling and to the rest their ability to produce an essay. It seems that what the writing skill involves is not really clear to them. Amir Reza was the only student who believed that teachers' ability to write well will make the students '*interested in writing*'.

Reading was considered an important skill and seven of the interviewees specifically mentioned it. This was well expected as reading comprehension is another major component of their course-books. Fatemeh was among those who emphasized its importance mentioning that the teacher should '*definitely know how to read'.*

Listening did not attract the attention of many. All the students just mentioned it among the other skills and none placed any emphasis on it.

Only four students pointed out *translation* and the importance of knowing how to translate and only two brought up *vocabulary*. Mobina believed that the teacher should know many words.

To Mohammad it almost sufficed if the teacher only *knew the course-book* inside out, but the others had higher expectations and thought that teachers' knowledge should be beyond the content of the course-book so that as Mohadaseh put it, *'if students ask her questions she would be able to answer'.* Abdollah also shared the same opinion:

> Of course the general knowledge of the student should be high, too. He [the teacher] should be able to say things from outside the book, so the teacher should teach the students other material as well.

The expectations of the latter group was twofold: having *general language knowledge* which was basically knowledge beyond the requirements for teaching the school course-book and also *knowledge* and skill about subjects not necessarily related to the contents of the book, like as one of the boys pointed out topics related to religion. Some students just articulated that they liked their teacher to have good

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knowledge. Even though most of the students believed that the teacher had to have knowledge beyond the scope of the book, still the majority did not really have very high expectations. Sogol suggested:

> She should teach in a way that we can learn. So firstly, she should have the knowledge enough to be able to answer the questions.

The few including Mobina, Maryam and Abdollah who did have higher expectations had comments such as teachers' needing to know '*all the English'* or being '*native like'.*

Four boys, Abdollah, Aidin, Milad and Mohammad stated teachers' **pedagogic knowledge** or in their own words the *'way'* and the '*method'* teachers used in their teaching as important.

> He has to know good methods for teaching the language.

When asked to define what they meant by *'good teaching'*, the students had some suggestions about how the teacher should teach. Abdollah, for instance, said:

> For example, they should teach the lesson well. Maybe we had the opportunity to go abroad. If we don't know the language of the country we have gone to we can speak English. Because English is the official language of the world and so it is the main language.

On the whole, teachers' knowledge, language proficiency and professional skills were very much considered important in making a language teacher more effective. In general the students' views of language teacher effectiveness were aligned to the expectations of the course-book with the exception of speaking, which is not included in the syllabus. However, even though most of the students believe that language proficiency beyond the requirement of the course is not a requirement, it seems that the more the students feel that the teacher is knowledgeable the more they trust them and this contributes to making the teacher more effective and more trustworthy.

6.4.2 Choice of Content

The interviews probed students' perceptions of the content covered in the course-book and the teacher's effectiveness in using it. Given that the course-books are the same in all schools throughout Iran, any teacher's decision to use material independent of the book would require him or her to select and prepare the material. The interview questions aimed at examining students' views about teachers' decision

to include material not necessarily included in the syllabus or to teach only the contents of the book in the most effective way. As will be seen some students were reluctant about the inclusion of activities beyond the prescribed syllabus in the material, but the majority thought that at least some of them were necessary. Table 6.7 demonstrates the details.

Code	Definition	No of students	No of comments
Material mostly emphasized in the syllabus	Students' general opinion about the material in the book and giving particular attention to *grammar, reading, translation and vocabulary* as the subjects and skills receiving more attention	15	46
Material given less or no priority in the syllabus	Students' opinion about teachers including material not concentrated on in the book and then focusing on *speaking, writing and listening* as the subjects not emphasized.	16	58
		Total	104

Table 6.7 Codes related to students' choice of content

As can be seen most of the comments addressed the material not given priority in the syllabus.

The code concerning **the material mostly emphasized in the syllabus** was mainly two-fold:

- General comments about its importance and whether it should be the main concern of the teachers
- Those skills and sub-skills given priority to in the book

As for the type of skills and sub-skills the students welcomed, which are mainly, reading, vocabulary, translation and grammar, there were some controversies. *Reading* is the skill mostly emphasized in the syllabus. However, only four students had direct comments about it and among them two felt that reading was not very important. Ali Akbar thought that '*words and grammar'* were more important than reading. It seems then that students highly value words and learning vocabulary and they think that teachers should spend time teaching new words. Aidin believed that '*when we learn the meanings, the rest* is not *difficult*'. It is worth mentioning here that learning vocabulary in Iranian schools does not necessarily involve learning to use the words being learned, but mainly being able to understand and translate them.

Even though, in their oral tests students are marked for translating the passages of their course-books; translation was not a much favoured choice of content. Ali Akbar was the only student who said that if he were the teacher, he would translate everything to clarify all the points or in his words so that '*everything would make sense*'.

Grammar was again the sub-skill which was pointed out many times. The students thought that learning the rules enabled them to learn the language and it was considered a gate to gaining language proficiency.

> Milad: If you know grammar, then you can speak.

> Zeynab: Grammar is also important, because then you will be able to use the words that you have learned.

Maryam was the only student who directly mentioned that she did not favour grammar.

> Grammar is not that important. It is difficult.

Zahra also pointed out that she thought grammar was very important, but it should not be taught '*in a boring way'*.

Considering that grammar is one of the main components of their tests can also indicate the reason for its popularity. Ali Akbar, for example believed that grammar and words were important '*because test questions come from them'*.

As expected and also can be seen from the above comment, many of the students thought the teacher's priority should be teaching the course-book and teaching towards the test, but surprisingly 10 students welcomed the idea of **learning things not included in the book** as well. Farjad, the one student who opposed using material from outside the book mentioned:

> No, nothing from out of the book, because maybe some of the children cannot handle them.

There were some other comments, too, that suggested that time was an issue and the extra activities should be included only if the teachers thought they had enough time.

> Mobina: [If I were the language teacher] For example, I would teach the book so that we won't be in trouble at the end of the year and we would be able to finish the book, but in the middle I would insert new information as well.

Material from outside the book was of two main types, material used to consolidate what had already been taught, such as giving more grammar exercises and also material which had nothing to do with the lesson of the day from their text book. This was practising conversation, reading stories, doing exercises to prepare them for high school, etc.

Those in favour of teachers' including activities beyond the prescribed syllabus thought that it would help them gain more information.

> Mobina: It is good to know some things from outside the book for more information.

> Aidin: He [the language teacher] should not only stick to the contents of the book. It is necessary that he would tell some other things and provide more explanation.

Some and mainly the girls from district x based their opinion on their positive experience with material that their teacher had brought from outside. Marziyeh was among these girls and said:

> Our teacher this year always brings us English stories and songs and short sentences, so that we learn the words and practice the ones we already know. I like it.

The one skill that stood out among all and received the most number of comments was speaking. All in all, 16 students mentioned speaking in 29 occasions. All liked to learn to speak. They believed that it was very much needed. Zahra who later on said that she thought learning to speak English was the most important skill required and liked to learn how to speak had a concern. She said:

> Maybe some students are weak and don't understand what she says. For example, I myself, don't understand the lesson if she teaches in English all the time. I may understand some words here and there.

She offered some solutions such as teachers introducing some activities beyond the prescribed syllabus and not speaking English all the time in the class. This suggests that even though this student really liked to learn how to speak, she was worried that if the teacher spoke English all the time in the class, she would not be able to follow. Some offered different reasons for the need to learn to speak English and suggested different means and methods for the better teaching of speaking. For example, Milad thought that they could learn speaking '*through grammar'*. Farjad believed that '*memorizing the dialogues of the book'* would be helpful in learning how to speak, while Zahra commented on those dialogues and said, '*they are not enough and have a really low level'*. Mobina thought:

> But I think speaking is more important and better than rules. We should first learn how to speak and then the rules.

Marziyeh was the one student who had justifications for the importance of learning to speak and thought that having this skill would have a positive impact on gaining their other language skills.

> If I know how to speak, if they give me an English question, I will be able to answer it better or we can translate the sentences faster and answer questions.

Again the students did not really address writing and listening as often as they discussed speaking. Those who discussed them mainly acknowledged the importance of teaching *'all the skills'*.

As can be seen the students' answers demonstrated that the contents of choice were very much connected to the value given to the language proficiency of the teachers. Again speaking and grammar were the priorities and were mentioned more than any other content.

6.4.3 Teaching Methodology, Pedagogy and Class Management

Pedagogy and class management received the most number of comments from students and based on the findings six relevant codes were created. The predominant comments concerned how the students believed the language class should be managed and how the lesson should be taught to make the language class more effective. The codes generated are explained in table 6.8.

Students highly valued the teachers' effort to create **an interesting climate**. A peaceful, friendly and stress-free environment, where the teacher pays attention to students' mood and makes the class agreeable and welcoming was very much desired by the students. Some said that they liked the teacher to begin the class in an interesting way. Many comments could also be linked to the students' emphasis on teacher's attempts to create rapport and the right kind of relationship between the students and teachers. Teachers' behaviour, kindness and friendliness were very much demanded. Mobina said:

> She [the teacher] should say hi in English and crack some jokes and make everyone laugh and then ask the students to open their books and get started with her teaching.

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In addition, some students liked their teachers to be able to identify students' moods and, based on that, create the right climate. They thought that teachers should discontinue teaching when the students got tired and instead should give a break.

During that break the students liked to get involved in doing something interesting or just unwinding and relaxing. Some thought the break was important because during those few minutes they could digest what had just been taught. Milad said:

> [If I were the teacher] I would look at the students. If they were tired I would give them a five-minute break.

Teachers' effort in motivating the students was also desirable and could contribute to making the class more interesting. According to Marziyeh *'reward'* played an important role in motivating the students to work harder.

Codes	Definition	No of students	No of comments
Creating an interesting climate	Teachers' effort to create a peaceful, friendly and stress-free environment where learning would be considered fun and the students feel motivated	15	44
Making the lesson understandable	Clear explanation of the lesson	16	49
	Eloquence		
Engaging in activities beyond the prescribed syllabus	Activities unrelated to the lesson of the day, but helpful in learning the language	14	28
	Activities to consolidate what has already been taught		
	Talking about subjects unrelated to the lesson; having fun activities		
Considering the students	Involving all the students in class activities to ensure everybody gains something from the class	9	21
Language of instruction	The language to be used in the class as the main means of instruction	9	14
Tests	Teachers' teaching towards the test	9	14
	Teachers' administering tests to consolidate learning		
		Total	170

Table 6.8 Codes related to teachers' classroom practice

All students talked about the importance of the teachers' ***making the lesson understandable.*** By that many explained that they meant making the lesson easier or as Aidin put it *'not more difficult to understand'*, teaching in a way that the students would comprehend. Eloquence, providing more examples, not moving on before making sure that everybody had learned the previous lesson and using both Persian and English to clarify the points were among the comments made in this regard. The others talked about strategies that could help, such as '*asking questions'* and '*reviewing a lot'* and also 'doing many exercises'. Abdollah believed that *'the teacher should make sure that 'everybody has learned'* by asking questions and if in doubt he should explain everything again. Mohammd mentioned '*homework*' and its significance in the language class. On the whole they had numerous suggestions.

> Alireza: [If I were the teacher] I would try to teach them the lesson very well by giving examples, asking them to come to the board and doing the exercises.

> Zahra: The teacher should know how to communicate with the students very well and teach them the concept of language. She herself and not the students should teach and pin the language into the students' brains.

As also mentioned in section 6.4.2 ***activities beyond the prescribed syllabus*** were important to many and took many definitions: the teachers' creativity in bringing in stimulating teaching material apart from what was in the book; spending time on doing exercises that would consolidate learning the lesson already taught from the book; teaching something unrelated to the book, but interesting and useful; doing something irrelevant to the class just in order to change the mood of the learners, all fell in this category. Here the students elaborated on the ways they wanted these activities to be included in the curriculum. The students liked story books, jokes, extra exercise, and sometimes movies and posters. Milad for example believed that through activities such as stories the teacher would be able to teach in a way that the students 'understand' rather than memorize.

> Marziyeh: [If I were the language teacher,] I would use pictures frequently; I would read many English stories and would ask the students to translate them.

> -Interviewer: How would like to learn conversation?
> -Fatemeh: Preferably in the form of a play.

Some students considered teachers beginning the class with some interesting topic unrelated to the material to be taught as a good incentive. In this respect some

students did not mind the teachers sharing memories and talking about their personal lives, while there were others who did not approve of that.

> -Interviewer: If you were the teacher would you talk about things other than the lesson in your class?
> -Mobina: Yes, but not much to bother the other students.
> -Interviewer: How would you know that what is being said is upsetting the others?
> -Mobina: If teacher talks too much about herself and her family, then the others and even the teacher gets tired.

Teacher's choice of *language of instruction* was another important concern of the students. Three liked the teacher to teach solely in English. For example Sogol believed that:

> I like the teacher to speak English in the class, because it will help me speak English if anyone asks me something in English.

Zahra and Farjad wanted Persian as the only language of instruction. They explained that they were worried that there were students in the class who '*don't understand*' the teacher.

> Zahra: I don't think that at school she needs to know how to speak English. Maybe some students are weak and don't understand what she says. For example, I myself, don't understand the lesson if she teaches in English all the time. I may understand some words here and there.

The others suggested that the teachers should use both languages, but insisted they should shift to Persian if they realised the students were not following what was being taught in English.

> Fatemeh: [If I were the teacher, I would teach in] English, but if I felt that the students were not following, I would teach in Persian.

> Abdollah: Language of instruction has to be English, accompanied by Persian.

As for *tests* two things came to the mind of the students: teaching towards the test and performing tests to consolidate learning. Five students talked about the importance of tests in learning. Abdollah supported taking tests and said:

> If the students realise that the teacher doesn't take many tests, they should insist that he would.

Sogol was the only student who directly disagreed with tests.

> Sogol: I like the teacher not to ask questions to grade the students, instead to solve their [the students'] problems.

As also indicated in section 6.4.2 more students were concerned about the importance of teachers' *teaching towards the test* believing that teachers' main priority should be the content included in the exams such as words and grammar.

> Milad: He should teach what comes in the exams... For example he should teach the lesson and then one session before the exams give us some sample questions and work on them....So that we get familiar with the ype of questions and do a good job in the test.

The importance of teachers' **considering all students** and paying attention to every student in the class was another comment made by the students. This again took two interpretations. Some students liked to do group work and also get involved in class activities.

> Abdollah: He has to seek the students' help. For example, the students should take part in class discussions.

> Farjad: Then he should put the students into groups and there should be a head for each group and he should ask everybody in the group anything: grammar, words.

Some concentrated on the teacher needing to make sure that all students had gained something of the class, with particular attention being given to the weaker ones.

> Farjad: [If I were the language teacher,] I would try harder to work with weaker students-the ones with marks lower than 15.

Only one student had the top students in mind. Mohammad said:

> He should teach the top students in a different way. He should put them in groups and work better with them, because the other students hinder the improvement of these students. The teacher should separate the ones who want to study.

6.5 Conclusion

This section sought the answer to the second research question and so reflected on what characteristics, behavioural traits, competencies and skills students believed language teachers in the Iranian public schools needed to have in order to be considered effective. Although the data collected from this part of the study is small and cannot prescribe a set of practices that would fit all, it makes it evident that students have much to say and share. In addition, it shows that they have the capacity to understand justifications if they are talked to. Therefore, it can be argued that teachers should explore their students' views and also to inform them of the steps taken. Taking such steps can be very encouraging and motivating for the students.

The data also shows that even in this small group there were disparities, but at the same time there were many points that consensus of ideas could be seen. These all suggest that social context plays a very important role in forming the opinion of the

students and even though boys and girls attend different schools, there are many aspects of teachers' behaviour and practice that they agree upon.

One of the points that the majority of the students show apparent interest in, is being taught discrete-point grammar. This is justifiable as it can be linked to the wash-back effect of the assessment practices and also as it is based on the prevalent pedagogy followed at public schools in Iran. This side of the coin shows that the previous experience of the students, even though still quite young does influence their perception of effectiveness. However, their interest in learning to speak shows the other side of the coin. Even though the skill has not been on the surface in the schools, still the demand for that does exist. In a country that direct contact with non-native speakers of Persian rarely takes place, this may be seen as unexpected. In addition, the context of schools in Iran is very competitive and one might expect that only subjects included in the tests would be the priority of the students. Therefore; the fact that students welcome engaging in activities beyond the prescribed syllabus such as doing exercise that can lead to their learning to speak suggests otherwise. Still though students not liking English to be the sole language of instruction and also not being in favour of teachers having native-like accents indicate that students are very concerned and are not sure how best the teachers can fulfil their wish and at the same time keep their grades high.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the climate of schools and classes in Iran is quite formal; however, the study shows the affective impact of teachers on students is apparent to the students This suggests that the trend has changed and is still changing and now many students do not welcome authoritarian teachers who do not show concern about establishing rapport with their students. This rapport to the students means teachers being friendly and kind, at the same time showing integrity and maintaining class discipline.

All in all, teachers' credibility is considered crucial to win the students' heart and attention. This happens by the teachers' showing that they possess adequate language knowledge and they can convey that to their learners. All the girls who took part in the interview believed that a teacher who chose her attire carefully was more

credible in the eyes of the students and thus more credible. Even though boys did not show this much of enthusiasm about this, still they believed that neat and tidy teachers were more welcome. This may be another manifestation of the impact of social context on forming people's views.

Lastly, the ideas articulated here by these 16 students are mostly in harmony with the findings derived from the quantitative data collected from the same students through the questionnaires they filled in. The details will be discussed in chapter 9.

7. What are Teachers' Perceptions of the Characteristics of Effective Language Teachers?

7.1 Introduction

During the second phase of the study and as described in the previous chapters the language teachers of the students in the research sample were also interviewed. They had between 10-30 years of language teaching job experience in public schools in Iran. Three of them, Ms Mansoori, Mr Tabibi and Mr Alizadeh had a bachelor's degree in English language teaching from Iranian universities and one, Ms Jalali was a graduate student in the same field.

Each of these teachers was interviewed individually in their schools. (The interview guideline is provided in Appendix 11) They were invited to express their opinion about how they thought effective language teachers in public schools in Iran should be, how they should teach and behave and what they should know. After analysing the interviews, 56 initial codes were created through open coding which were categorised into eight sub-themes through axial coding. These sub-themes were themselves then clustered into three main themes as shown in table 7.1. This chapter is devoted to analysing these themes more thoroughly.

Themes	Sub-themes
Teachers' perception of contextual factors	Teachers' job satisfaction
	Teachers and students expectations
	Teachers and parents
Teachers' perception of the knowledge and professional skills that contribute to their effectiveness	Teachers' pedagogic and language knowledge
	Choice of content
	Classroom practice
Teachers' perception of the relationship between their personal attributes and their effectiveness	Teachers' behaviour
	Teachers' appearance

Table 7.1 Main and sub-themes for teachers' perceptions of effective language teachers based on the interviews

7.2 Teachers' Perceptions of Contextual Factors

This theme includes responses from teachers about the school context in which they teach, including their sense of satisfaction with their job, their views of the language syllabus, and their expectations of students and parents. These comments are not directly about teaching effectiveness, but they nonetheless provide an insight into how contextual factors may limit or enhance their teaching effectiveness.

7.2.1 Teachers' Job Satisfaction

One cluster of comments from the teachers related to their job satisfaction as teachers. Here they reflected upon the schools and the language syllabus, how they viewed themselves as teachers, what they expected from themselves and also their relationship with other language teachers (Table 7.2). They provide an insight into their levels of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Code	Definition	No of teachers	No of comments
Teachers' views about language teaching at school	Teachers' views concerning the schools they work in, their classes, school authorities and their colleagues	3	19
Teachers' views of the syllabus and textbook	Teachers views about the language text-book used in public schools, its content and the syllabus	3	10
Teachers' expectation of themselves	What teachers thought of their own teaching, their ambitions as teachers and what needed to improve	4	10
Teachers' views about their own teaching	How teachers view their own efforts as teachers in the class and how satisfied they are with their own performance	4	9
		Total	48

Table 7.2 Codes related to teachers' views about their job

The teachers made some comments about **language teaching at school**, including the curriculum, school climate, their colleagues and authorities. For example, they all thought that language teaching hours which were 2-3 hours a week, were not enough. Ms Mansoori argued that for '*at least two more hours per week*' whilst Mr Tabibi maintained that '*Two hours is really not enough. Even 4 hours is not enough.*

The lesson is difficult.' These comments suggest that teachers believe that the ability to be an effective language teacher may be constrained by the time available for it on the timetable.

They also believed that the diversity of the language proficiency of the students in each class made their jobs more difficult. This diversity was caused by students' out of school experiences with some attending private language schools. The teachers felt that this created problems for them. For instance, Ms Mansoori, Ms Jalali and Mr Tabibi thought that those students who attended private language classes outside the school hours were much more competent than those who did not, and that their experiences in a different teaching context meant that students found that as Ms Mansoori said, *'language classes at school are not attractive anymore'.* The other teacher, Mr Alizadeh, also mentioned the issue of the students who took language classes and criticized the private language schools for not moving in line with the school syllabus. He drew attention to the different language teaching methodologies adopted by private language institutions and state schools, noting that '*in school it is 80% grammar, and 20% speaking, in the institutes it is 80% speaking and 20% grammar'*. In his view, this difference in teaching approach had the effect that '*students learn like parrots*'. In other words, to him deductive teaching of language rules was critical to the students' learning English and thus private language schools' emphasis on speaking without focusing on rules was unacceptable. On the whole, the emphasis on speaking in English given by the private schools in contrast to the emphasis on grammar and writing in the state schools created challenges for teachers. It seemed to be the case that teachers felt their own effectiveness could be challenged by the presence of students who attended private classes and thus had higher levels of speaking skills and expectations than their peers. Therefore, from one side, the teachers were expected to have the ability to speak English, from the other, they could not speak English in the class, because as Mr Tabibi mentioned:

> In a class with 35 students, maybe a maximum of 10 students know how to speak the language. I go to class, two people speak to me and the rest of the class get bored and little by little they begin to talk together and make noise, because they don't understand anything.

At the same time, Ms Mansoori and Mr Tabibi mentioned that they had the experience of teaching in private schools. Neither of them appreciated that experience a lot and preferred teaching in public schools. Mr Tabibi said:

> I have also worked in private schools. It [teaching conversation] is not possible even in them unless they [school authorizes] are really concerned and the students really have high averages.

However, recognising the limitations of her current situation and implying that this limited her capacity for effectiveness, Ms Mansoori admitted that she thought that the more time allocated to language teaching, the facilities in those schools, and the fewer number of students in each class in private language schools were much more convenient than public schools:

> In the private school we had fewer students and I had more control…. We had singing in another school, in a private school. We have some problems here. We don't have a stage. We have no halls; singing into a microphone is not possible. We are really limited.

Another strand of comments relating to job satisfaction concerned the role of the head and how that could enhance teachers' enjoyment of the job or otherwise. They all thought that the head of the school played quite an important role. Altogether the two female teachers had a more positive attitude towards the head of the schools they were working in, with both male teachers believing that the heads of their current schools could be more supportive and more concerned. Mr Tabibi, for instance commented that:

> Head of the school is the most important person. If he is good, the job of the teacher and the students will be easier. But if the head is not good, nothing can be done. He says that the students are very dear to me, they are my brothers, but he does not do the same in action.

One other issue articulated by Mr Alizadeh was that teachers were not appreciated by the whole system as much as they deserved.

> So why doesn't the government reward the teacher who uses up all his energy in the class? Not even a piece of paper thanking the teacher. Take teacher's week. During that week there are 8 other events, from the day of environment, to the Persian Gulf day. Why don't they plan on a very special day for the teacher and the teacher only?

These observations about the importance of the head's leadership and about how teachers are viewed and valued at a national level relate firstly to these teachers' sense of job satisfaction, but they may also imply that better national recognition and

better leadership would enhance their effectiveness. Teachers liked to be heard and they really wanted their criticisms and comments to be considered and responded to by the authorities.

Generally speaking, they did not really talk much about their relationship with other teachers. Only two had comments about their colleagues, which implied that they tried to avoid disagreements and follow the trend set by the other teachers. For example, Mr Tabibi said that he did not really approve of the supplementary book suggested by his other colleagues, but since he did not want to disagree with the choice of the other teachers he used that book.

> Mr Tabibi: The other teachers liked this one[book], so I thought When in Rome, do as the Romans do. I did not want to be a wet blanket. I worked on this book and explained the things inside.

Ms Jalali also reflected on the comment her colleagues had made:

> Ms Jalali: All of my colleagues are jealous that I have finished the book [in time], but they don't know how much of planning I did.

Teachers also offered comments about the school **textbooks and the syllabus** which suggested that their capacity for effectiveness was constrained by poor resources and an inappropriate methodology advocated in the syllabus. Three mentioned that the books were unattractive to students and in serious need of revision: Mr Tabibi noted that the text books '*have some problems*' because '*the exercises are not enough*', whilst Mr Alizadeh observed that:

> We have a lot of problems with the school books. I see that they reprint the books for years and years with the same mistakes. I have spotted about 50 mistakes. They have also put a very small space for answering long exercises.

The mistakes this teacher was referring to were mainly grammar and vocabulary related.

Mr Tabibi, based on his own experience with his daughters, believed that in schools in Tehran more conversation should be included in the syllabus and that should begin from primary school. As mentioned earlier, teaching English in Iran begins from 6th grade, focusing mainly on grammar and reading, and there is no emphasis placed on conversation. What this teacher suggests is then very different from what is actually practised.

> If we want to work on conversation, it has to be done from primary school. During the first five years they just do listening and get familiar with sounds and from 6th grade they learn how to write. I have seen this. I know how effective listening is based on personal experience. I made a mistake for my elder daughter, but for the younger one I have installed windows magic on my computer. I made language learning something fun for a child. I have put Walt Disney's work and Mickey Mouse.

Mr Alizadeh complained about the homogeneity of the educational system for all schools and students all throughout the country. He believed that some students and some schools should move at a slower pace. However, according to him the restrictive system did not permit that. On the whole, these comments about the textbooks and syllabus suggest levels of dissatisfaction with the current provision and its appropriateness for establishing a climate for effective language teaching.

All of the teachers expressed their ***views about their teaching*** which were mainly about their assessment of their performance in the classes. They all seemed to be satisfied with the steps they were taking and thought that they usually paid off. Ms Jalali, for example, introduced some of the techniques she used in her classes and concluded that since '*All the marks are average and above average*', she was satisfied with her performance. The same was true with the two male teachers who proudly discussed how the approaches and techniques they had adopted had led to the success of their students. The means they used as the evidence of their success was the good marks the students received in their exams. Mr Alizadeh, for instance, provided the statistical information about his current students:

> I have the exact details of who got the highest mark. I have the statistical information for all the students. 86% have passed in 6th and 8th grade and 81% in 7th grade. Half of them have grades above 16.

Ms Mansoori even though satisfied with her performance said that despite the fact that she was not sure how successful she had been, she still prided herself in having tried. She basically made this comment concerning the activities beyond the prescribed syllabus she was including in her classes. The next comment again made by the same teacher is an indication that if teachers decide to be innovative, the whole burden is on them. However, this teacher still gained satisfaction from being more creative than what the syllabus expects from her.

> It is still not at all what I have in my mind. Sometimes I begin doing things and then I realize that we are short of time. Then I have to go back. I still have not been able to plan on plays and stories and songs. I want them to be part of their class time. We could do the sentences, but not the others.

On the whole, the related comments imply that teachers are concerned about their own performance and their effectiveness. The teachers believed that they were working hard and this usually paid off as the students gained good grades in the exams and this was very fulfilling to them. At the same time they suggest that the leadership is not supportive enough, because the teachers take some measurements and sometimes try to be innovative; however, they have no means for assessing their success other than the students' performance in their tests. Therefore, when a teacher such as Ms Mansoori includes some activities beyond the prescribed syllabus she receives no support, and thus no feedback. At the same time according to teachers, the leadership does not even acknowledge this attempt as much as the teachers' desire. Accordingly, all of the four teachers seemed to have high and varied **expectations of themselves**. Ms Mansoori explains how for her it is critically important to establish a respectful relationship in the classroom:

> It is important for me to have respectful relations. I used to teach at another school where everything was different. I had decided that I would never insult anybody, no matter what. No matter how the children behaved, I would never shout at them or insult them. This was something that I had promised myself. Once or twice I sent a student out of the class and to the head. I thought if I insult them it would really have a bad effect. There are two sides of the coin, whether the child learns what you are teaching or not. I either know how to take her from point A to point B or not. If I can't at least I have to let her stay in point A. There should be respect. Maybe there is another person who can do what I couldn't so and help the child, with some different tactic. Some children might need to be treated with violence. I can't do that. Maybe someone else can do that, but I can't. It is better than dragging them backwards. You try to do some things.

To clarify her comments, it should be noted that in Tehran most classes are rather crowded with at least 30 students in each. Sometimes controlling the class and establishing discipline are not easy and it does happen that some teachers shout at the students or send them to the principal as punishment. However, as can be seen Ms Mansoori expected herself to fully establish mutual respect in her classes. The other teachers also expressed particular expectations of themselves. Ms Jalali articulated a view that learning is an ongoing process and that '*no matter how much we learn, both I as a teacher and they as students, there is somewhere that we have*

problems with and we need to learn more'. As she put it, *'teachers' interest in their teaching'* is paramount: *'if she is not interested, even if the book is good and there is enough time and the facilities are good, she will use neither of them'*. Mr Alizadeh believed that teachers had to know their students and *'their strengths and weaknesses'* so that they could provide motivation. Mr Tabibi had tried to be creative by applying technological tools in his classes, and for example, used PowerPoint slides, and believed that it had enhanced his teaching. Even though many of the activities that teachers used in their classes were not a part of the syllabus, they still spent time preparing them and practised them in their classes as much as they could.

These all indicate that all of the four teachers do reflect about their teaching and are concerned with their performance. At the same time it can be argued that they are aware of the problems and constraints and believe that factors out of their control such as inadequate time and inefficient course-books really limit them and stand in the way of their becoming more effective. Finally, when teachers try to be more creative in their teaching and see that they have led into students' better performance, then they get satisfaction and feel effective. On the whole, these teachers seem content with being language teachers.

7.2.2 Teachers and Students

Teachers expressed views concerning effective relations and rapport between them and their students and how it should be. They also have some perceptions of how they think students view them and also how they expect their teachers to be. In this section their thoughts in this regard are outlined. Table 7.3 shows the relevant codes.

Codes	Definitions	No. of teachers	No of comments
Teacher expectation of and views about students	How language teachers believe students are and how they believe an ideal students should be like	4	25
Teachers' relation with students	The importance of establishing the right type of relationship between the teachers and students that can contribute to teachers being more effective	4	23
Students' expectations according to teachers	How language teachers believe students view them and what they expect the language teachers to be like	3	5
		Total	53

Table 7.3 Codes related to teachers' general views about and expectations from students

Some of the ***expectations the teachers had of the students*** were applicable to all of the students in general, but some were directly linked to their students at the time of the interview.

One element of teacher expectation related to behaviour management and the conduct of the class. Here the teachers do not exactly share the same perceptions of an effectively managed classroom. As also mentioned earlier in this chapter, Ms Mansoori, for example, emphasised her expectation of mutual respect and peace. She believed that even if a student did not learn anything, she should still be viewed with respect. She was satisfied with her current students and thought that they met her expectations.

> Respectable relations are very important. I try my best to follow this rule myself, too. I get the feedback, too. This is very important. The atmosphere should be in a way that you feel peaceful. I cannot work in an atmosphere full of tension. ... In this school, thank God, we have fewer problems. The whole school is more peaceful. They understand you better.

Rather than respect, Ms Jalali's priority was establishing classroom rules. She explained that she had the habit of clarifying exactly what she expected of the students and expected them to obey the rules. Likewise, Mr Alizadeh noted the importance of rules; however, he also added that the students had then learned that when he was teaching they were not allowed to utter a single word, suggesting a rather authoritarian classroom. This teacher also expected the students to spend an hour per week on doing their language homework. Whilst these comments are

consistent in suggesting that one element of teacher effectiveness is class management, one teacher's emphasis on mutual respect, and the other teachers' emphasis on obedience to rules indicates that there may be disagreement about what constitutes teacher effectiveness in this respect. This will be further elaborated on in 7.3.3.

Further understanding of teachers' **expectations of the students** was illustrated in their descriptions of how students respond to the opportunities offered to them. For instance, Mr Tabibi believed that a few of his current students really enjoyed a particular extra-curricular listening activity he had taken to class but this happiness was not shared by all of his students. He wished they would all appreciate his efforts. Ms Jalali believed that '*the cooperation and active participation of the students in class activities'* was very helpful. What she expected from them was to study the book very carefully so that they could pass the final exam. Ms Mansoori also believed that the students did not cooperate as much as they should. She mentioned that if she could trust that the students did their assignments at home, then she would devote more time on some other activities. She wished the students would *'work more independently'*. Mr Alizadeh would always tell the students that he expected them to become' '*someone that people can count on in the future*'. And for that he wanted them to follow a '*plan*' when studying and devote enough time per week preparing for each lesson.

All of the teachers believed establishing the right kind of **relationship with the students** was very important. Ms Jalali, for example, thought that establishing friendly **relations** was very good, but the students had to know their place and if they did not, then the teacher had to be firm. This will also be elaborated on in detail in section 7.3.3.

> I believe that the relationship should be formal, but friendly. I mean it should be in a way that the students would not cross the lines and the barriers should be kept. The student should feel comfortable. I personally, sometimes tell jokes or tease the students. I try to make them happy, but if I feel that they might be taking advantage, I will be very firm. If you let them, they would like to spend all the two hours resting, but I don't let that happen.

The teachers had some comments about what they thought **students expectations of language teachers** were. Some believed that this depended on the school. For example, Ms Manoori mentioned:

> When I taught in some other districts which were less well off (in southern areas) you had to be their counsellor as well. If there is time I still would. But we don't have enough time. When I taught in another school it seemed that the children demanded it. Some of them would come to me outside the class.

Mr Tabibi commented on the school he was teaching at the moment:

> Children's expectations are different in this school. When they want to be close to you, it is only for the sake of getting high scores.

In Iran subjects relating to social sciences and humanities are not taken as seriously as math and science. Teachers who teach math and science have somehow higher status among people, because the general belief is that the lessons they teach are more difficult; and therefore, they have more knowledge. English stands in the middle and is considered more prestigious then many other subjects. As mentioned earlier, the problem is the level of the language proficiency of the students in a class varies and some students have far more knowledge of the language than the requirements of the school course and then either find the classes very boring or decide to challenge the teachers. Ms Mansoori had some comments about how she thought students viewed language teachers compared to the teachers of other subjects:

> I think sometimes the students look at language teachers in a different way. They have different expectations. I don't know how to put it. They want you to have a higher social status and maybe be more elegant. But at the same time you see that some lessons, such as science, even though more difficult, are more interesting to them. I think language class is getting boring.

All in all, even though the questions and discussions that led to the creation of this theme were not directly related to teacher effectiveness, many points could be inferred from it that related to teachers' perception of contextual factors and how they could contribute to their becoming more or less effective and ineffective. The teachers' understanding of their own performance and their reflection on their teaching led to teachers' attempts in finding ways to improve their performance and also gaining satisfaction when they succeeded. In addition, establishing rapport with the students was a major concern of all the four teachers and will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

7.2.3 Teachers and Parents

Teachers expressed their expectations of parents in their children's language learning and what part they played in the language learning of their children. They also made some comments expressing their perceptions of parental expectations of them as language teachers. (Table 7.4)

Code	Definitions	No. of teachers	No of comments
Teachers' expectation of and views about parents	What the role of parents is in the language learning of their children and how it can be improved	4	31
Parents' expectations according to teachers	What teachers believe parents consider effective language teaching	3	7
		Total	38

Table 7.4 Codes related to teachers' views about parents' role in making language learning more effective

Three of the teachers did not really seek the help of the **parents** most of the time, and they had different reasons for that. According to Mr Tabibi, even if they take some measures to help improve the behaviour of their child by seeking parents' help, many parents wouldn't attend a meeting – '*the reality is that they don't come.*' Ms Mansoori, though had a different experience with parents and believed that sometimes parents '*caused tension*' and '*couldn't do anything*'. Therefore, she preferred to '*solve the problems with the students themselves*', unless there was a critical problem. She even believed that in some cases the children were more logical than their parents. These 3 teachers all preferred to try to solve the problems with the students and the school and, as Ms Mansoori put it, '*left the parents as a last resort*'. Ms Jalali, too, believed that parents usually added to the problems rather than solved them. She said:

> I feel that they interfere. That is my general impression. The situation is in a way that the parents give themselves the right to decide for the teacher and question whatever she does.

Mr Alizadeh was the only teacher among the four who acknowledged the importance of the parents' active role, but his comments were mainly concerning the general education of the children and not language learning. He commented that fathers were less involved in the students' education in recent years and this also caused problems. He had rather unconventional ideas about the relationships in the families

and, for example, believed that a boy whose father was harsh *'would turn to his mother and the result is they would behave girlishly'*. He also believed that parents were the first teachers of the children.

> Who is the first teacher? Mother and father. They are the ones who have taught you 500 words before you even get to school. Of course there are some who do not spend enough time on their children and their children are the weak ones. They make the teacher suffer until they learn something. There are some really good ones too. They have many questions and we like them to ask. The teacher enjoys working with them.

Mr Alizadeh believed that parents should be in touch with the teacher and he said that in his records he pointed out which of the parents had come to him and how many times.

> We have many problems with the parents. The parents should try to be in harmony with the school. They should ask the children what they have done at school. And they should come to school and ask us. Then the children will not have the chance to lie, because the parent has already checked with the teacher. Then they will be able to solve the problems.

The same teacher also mentioned that parents usually did not have good planning and he thought that they should improve that in their lives and be more involved with their children's lives on a daily basis. He believed, '*parents feel sorry for the child and spoil the child*', and thus, *'the child cannot stand on his own foot later on'.* He thought that parents should trust teachers like him who had extensive experience and talk to them seeking their advice. On the other hand, both of the female teachers believed regardless of what parents could or couldn't do, parents had to be informed of their child's status in the class. Ms Mansoori believed that the family should know that the teacher was trying. Ms Jalali also said:

> I don't ask for their [the parents'] help in the class work. Sometimes for the weaker students of course yes. I would invite the parents and talk to them. Sometimes the parents themselves come to school. And I explain how their children are. For example, we have a student who is afraid of speaking in public and in front of the other kids. I told her mother about this.

From all the comments above, it could be deduced that teachers believed that parents did not play an active role in the language learning of the children and that they were not as efficient as they had to be even if they were willing to. It can also be seen that mostly teachers did not see how they could involve the parents in the process of their child's education. Except Mr Alizadeh, the rest believed that they preferred to solve the problems with the students.

Teachers also made some comments concerning what they thought **parents expectations of the language teachers** were. Parents were believed to go to the teachers or to school mostly to complain and they hardly ever went to provide useful information or to thank the teacher. All four teachers said that usually parents went to them after their child had received a bad mark that had been put into his report card.

> When they think that the mark given is unfair, they usually show up. If they feel that their child has had a poorer performance compared to the past.

In other words, most parents seemed to expect their children to get a good mark; otherwise, they would blame the teacher. At times they would go to school to complain that their child was not satisfied with a particular class, because, for example, the teacher had given too much homework. Ms Jalali believed that children had a significant influence on their parents.

> They [children] tell them [their parents] about the things they are unhappy with and then the parents react accordingly.

This is very much in contrast with what it used to be like in Iran. As Ms Mansoori said:

> Years ago they really accepted schools at home. This made life easy both at school and at home. Particularly in primary school, the parents interfere with what the teacher is doing too much. School is not respected as much as it did. The parent might say what your teacher has said is rubbish.

This may mean that teachers thought that some parents had unfair expectations and would not base their judgement on the information they would receive from the school or the teacher and would instead solely rely on what their children said.

As can be seen, the points made were basically addressing the comments made by the parents of the weaker students. Apparently, not many of the parents of the more capable students go to school or to the teacher to either criticise or admire the work of the teacher.

A question that might rise at this point is the extent that these strands of comment might be directly addressed to language teachers. In other words do Iranian parents basically go to school when they want to criticize any teacher or is this what they mainly do when language teachers are concerned? Based on the data collected no definite answer can be provided, but my speculation is that since the subject is an FL and many parents are not confident about their knowledge of the subject, it is very likely that their concerns and comments would be at least a little different.

There was also some mention of the family life as well and how it might affect students' learning. Mr Tabibi mentioned that, in the district that he worked in, the number of divorced parents was more than the other areas of Tehran. He believed that many children whose parents were divorced were not easy to handle.

> The father and mother are separated and the children are at a critical age. It is a huge crisis.

Finally, Mr Tabibi acknowledged the role of the school head in gaining the support of the parents and believed that at least in his school this was not paid enough attention to.

From what was said, it could be derived that all the teachers somehow expected that parents would be more supportive and more appreciative of the work of the teachers. In addition, they did not think that parents could be helpful in the learning process of their children because they either did not know how to or they were not concerned enough. Another argument can be that there was no guidance provided for the parents as how they might help or to get more involved. It seems that on the whole the teachers and the schools preferred not to involve them.

7.3 Teachers' Perception of the Knowledge and Professional Skills that Contribute to their Effectiveness

As indicated in table 6.1 this theme consists of what teachers discussed concerning the type and amount of language and pedagogic knowledge they thought an effective language teacher should possess; their choice of content to teach in their classes and also the type of classroom practice they thought would contribute to their being most effective as language teachers.

7.3.1 Teachers' Pedagogic and Language Knowledge

The language proficiency level and knowledge of teaching methods and pedagogy that the teachers themselves believed would contribute to making them more effective led to the creation of nine codes that can be seen in table 7.5. Six of them were related to their knowledge of language skills and sub-skills and the rest were related to the knowledge of the content of the textbooks, general knowledge and also knowledge of language teaching methodology.

As far as teachers' language proficiency was concerned, all of the teachers agreed that they should know how to **speak** English even if they did not use it in the class. Three of them mentioned that by knowing how to **speak**, the teacher could win credibility and the trust of the students and prove that they were competent enough. Ms Mansoori mentioned that she did not want to lose face in front of those students who already knew how to speak English. Obviously those who have taken classes outside their school and have a better knowledge of the language expect the teacher to be able to speak English, while the ones who have only experienced learning the language inside the school, do not really have the knowledge. At the same time if one of the children of the first group talks in English and invites the teacher to communicate in that language, then all the eyes will be on the teacher.

Code	Definition	No of teachers	No of comments
Speaking and accent	Language teachers' ability and knowledge to speak English fluently in an accent that students could understand, placing emphasis on accurate pronunciation of words	3	9
Reading, Writing, Listening	Language teachers' ability to read in English with no difficulty; language teachers' ability to write in English with no difficulty; language teachers' ability to understand English with no difficulty	2	3
Grammar	Teachers' knowledge of grammatical rules	2	2
Vocabulary	Language teachers' knowledge of a wide range of English words	1	1
Content of the book	Language teachers' mastery of the content of the textbooks they teach at schools (mainly, grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension)	1	3
General knowledge	Language teachers' knowledge of areas unrelated to language and language teaching	2	6
	Language teachers' knowledge of English more than the course-book's requirements		
Knowledge of language teaching methods	Language teachers' knowledge of pedagogy and language teaching methods and practice	2	2
		Total	26

Table 7.5 Codes related to teachers' pedagogic and language knowledge

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To three of the teachers a good *accent* was important, but it mainly meant correct pronunciation of the words in the book. Ms Jalali mentioned that students did not like '*very strong accents*', meaning native-like British or American accent. Mr Tabibi insisted that teachers should know both the British and the American pronunciations of the words in the school textbook.

The other language skills of *reading, writing* and *listening* did not receive as much attention and comments as speaking. Only Ms Jalali lightly suggested that teachers should have '*all language skills*'. Mr Tabibi believed that teachers' knowledge of *listening* was very important. Not having mentioned reading as a priority was quite unexpected because the syllabus is very much reading and grammar oriented. It could be the case that knowledge of this skill was taken for granted.

Mr Tabibi and Ms Mansoori explicitly mentioned that teachers should know *grammar* very well. This was also suggested here and there by the other two teachers, as well. They all said that teaching *grammar* and the *content of the book* were essential, which indicated that teachers' knowledge of *grammar* was required. The same applied to *vocabulary,* which only received one comment.

> Ms Mansoori: Knowing the book she is teaching- at least grammar and vocabulary. The teacher should know the pronunciation, reading, grammar rules, the way to present grammar, accent.

Teachers' general knowledge of language was another emerging issue. The teachers thought that it was important, but none elaborated on the reason. Their comments somehow implied that they thought that this again would help them maintain the trust of the students and obtain more credibility. Only one of the four teachers, Mr Alizadeh, mentioned the importance of *knowing language teaching methods and pedagogy.* He believed that his knowledge of different language teaching methods and his experience and his knowledge of psychology had been vital in his teaching and success.

> The language teacher should be jack of all trades. He has to have a minimum amount of information about everything. In language I think he has to know more, that should be both teaching and information. The teacher should know both. The teacher should have information about daily affairs and be up-to- date.

He was the only teacher who spoke very highly of some of his ex-university professors and how much he owed them for becoming a language teacher. The fact

that all of the teachers had university education in the field of language teaching may be evidence that they were at least to some degree familiar with the language teaching trends; however and on the other hand, not mentioning them might suggest that they really did not believe that this knowledge was vital. For instance, Ms Jalali talked about some methods that she had previously used in one of her classes. She thought that what she had done was not inspired by her university education.

7.3.2 Choice of Content

The subjects and skills the teachers believe they should concentrate on more while teaching English received 47 comments and as can be seen in table 7.6 was under two main codes: the content of the book and syllabus and the material not covered in the book. The first one basically referred to grammar, vocabulary, reading and translation, while the latter consisted of speaking, listening, writing, and on the whole activities beyond the prescribed syllabus.

Codes	Definition	No of teachers	No. of comments
Content required by the syllabus	The material to be covered based on the syllabus such as reading passages and grammatical activities in the curse book	4	17
Language material not in the book	Activities beyond the prescribed syllabus	4	29
		Total	46

Table 7.6 Codes related to teachers' contents of choice

As mentioned earlier, the main components of the books are grammar exercises, reading comprehension and translation of the reading passages, the vocabulary coming from the reading passages and some dialogues which the students are frequently required to memorize.

Their responses to the interview questions indicate that at least a part of what these teachers like to do in class is different from what the syllabus dictates. Their priority though is to cover ***the content of the book*** and prepare the students for their final test that is administered directly by the MOE. The two female teachers clarified their position very straightforwardly.

> The main plan is doing our course-book. Most of the class time is spent on that. Usually we have some teaching from the book at every session.

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> [The priority is covering] The same things that the MOE expects: the lessons of the book. I keep telling them that their test is based on the book and the students are judged based on their marks. If I am teaching them something even a grammar point from outside the book, I tell them that this is extra information and it does not come in the test.

The two male teachers talked about the importance of *grammar* and *vocabulary* and finishing the book in time, which suggested that their main concern, too, was doing the school textbook.

> Grammar is also very important since the book is grammar-oriented. I think making grammar easier and more about usage is very important. I know that there are some other schools that teachers use a lot of formulae to teach grammar. But I think this is unnecessary information that is entering the child's mind. I always tell this to the students, too.

> One of the things I do is as soon as I see a point in the book, I practice the grammar and give them exercises.

Of course the women teachers were also pro-teaching grammar. The teachers genuinely thought that the knowledge of grammatical rules was imperative for learning a language and did not believe in teaching it only because they were part of the syllabus. Once again, reading was not mentioned by any of the teachers, which might again indicate that it was somehow taken for granted and was not being neglected.

Translation is yet another content of choice for the teachers. Ms Mansoori talked about translation activities that she had planned and Ms Jalali mentioned including it in the oral exam.

It should be noted that in the English classes teachers first translate the passages and most often, students are supposed to memorize this translation. This is mainly used to make sure that the students have comprehended the lesson and have learned the meaning of the words. In other words, no technique relating to translation is taught or practised.

As mentioned earlier, all of the four teachers did favour **activities not included in the syllabus**, but only if time was not an issue. A part of these activities that they mentioned was practising what was already in the book to consolidate the learning of

the book material. For example, they tried to cover more grammar exercises. They did include other activities not in the syllabus, but not always very systematically and not as much as they wished to.

> Mr Mansoori: Doing activities beyond the prescribed syllabus is also very important. At the beginning of the year we are more active. I bring songs and movies. Sometimes twice a term.

> Ms Jalali: The students sometimes bring slang words, poems, anything interesting. They tell the class about them and the students write them in their notebooks.

Sometimes these activities are just meant to be used to change the climate of the class to a light-hearted one.

> Mr: Alizadeh: Whenever I think the class is tired, we also do the alphabet song. "I tell them I want to practice the alphabet in musical."

The importance of teaching speaking, which is the skill neglected in the course-book, was acknowledged by three of the teachers. However, none of them mentioned it as the content that they would give priority while teaching in their classes.

> Ms Mansoori: There is not much time for us to speak in English in the class, but even saying a few words in reply to a student who has asked you something in English makes a difference.

Mr Alizadeh, the only teacher who did not directly comment on the importance of speaking, made references that he gave the instructions for some of the activities in English. The teachers all believed that they had students who would not understand a word if the class was held in English. It should be noted here that when teachers talked about oral test and the mark they gave for speaking they basically meant the dialogues that the students had to memorize and also reading the passages of the book out loud and translating them.

As far as the ***listening*** skill is concerned, again there is little practice provided. Mr Tabibi is a big supporter of listening skills, though and believes that it can affect the learning of other skills. He believes it creates a realistic environment and the students would realize that English is far beyond the content of their school books. Ms Mansoori also mentioned that she would bring *'movies or audio CDs'* to her classes and give exercises to the students based on them.

Three of the teachers were keen on practising the usage. Ms Mansoori thought that '*teachers should teach usage*' and for that she believed providing '*examples*' helped. Mr Tabibi also said that he had divided his class time into four sections, one of which was teaching usage of words. Finally, Ms Jalali said:

> I keep telling them, it doesn't matter how much you know, what matters is how you can make use of what you know.

7.3.3 Class Management

How the teachers believe the language class should be managed and how best the lesson should be taught to make the language class more effective was pointed out under six different codes that altogether received 107 comments. (Table 7.7)

Codes	Definition	No. Of teachers	No of comments
Showing concern for students' learning	Teachers' ensuring that all the students learn the lessons and trying to motivate them	4	48
	Making the lesson understandable by providing clear explanation along with enough practice and revision		
	Administering tests to consolidate learning and prepare the students for the final exam		
Doing activities beyond the prescribed syllabus	Activities unrelated to the lesson of the day	4	21
	Activities to consolidate what has already been taught		
	Having fun activities		
Creating an interesting climate	Teachers' effort to create a peaceful, friendly and stress-free environment	4	15
Planning	Teachers' time management ensuring that there is enough time to cover all the components of the course-book and possibly do some activities beyond the prescribed syllabus	4	15
	Teachers' planning how best to teach the lesson		
Paying attention to class discipline	Teachers' ensuring that the students understand how they are expected to behave, what they are expected to do and also follow the rules	3	4
Language of instruction	The language to be used in the class as the main means of instruction	3	4
		Total	107

Table 7.7 Codes related to teachers' class management

All of the teachers interviewed mentioned that they were ***concerned about the students' learning*** and wanted to make sure that everyone in the class was following the lesson. In order to do so they tried to find ways that would help the students learn better. Ms Jalali and Mr Alizadeh, for instance, had prepared very precise notes of all the performances of each of the students throughout the term to make assessment and also based on that take the necessary measures. For example Mr Alizadeh said:

> I don't think anybody has a notebook as complete as mine. I put every single mark in it. See for yourself. You can see it is codified. Then I have put the students in groups. Then there is a group head. The group consists of very weak, weak, average and strong students. I put the marks for the group and for the members. I have negatives for the behaviour, even the presence of parents and what they have said.

All of the teachers tried to cover as many exercises as possible and checked all of them. They also tried to involve the students in the class activities such as checking of the exercises or even tests.

> Mr Alizadeh: I give them time limit to do the test. Half a minute for each question. Then I give the answers and the students check themselves. I don't check them. They can see their weakness and then go study their notes. I also ask questions as well. There is variety in what I do. I give them substitution drills, sentence transformation like negation, questioning, answering with short sentences, using questions words. I give them 10 things to do with one sentence in 5 minutes. Then the students check each others' work. We keep repeating the stuff and the weak ones can go and study later. Some of the students get nervous in the class or for example stutter, so I take their oral tests outside the class. I even ask the questions orally and then ask them to write the answers on the paper.

Tests played an important role in their planning and deciding what to teach and more importantly in making sure that the students had learned the lessons they had been taught by three of these teachers. The two male teachers supported administering many tests.

> Mr Tabibi: I perform tests and then explain the points to the students. I clarify those items that I think may be part of their final.

Ms Jalali tried to involve all the students in class activities, and therefore, would give all of them some responsibility.

> Ms Jalali: Since there is a lot of difference in the proficiency level of the students, and those who know good English get bored and upset and disturb the class and cannot be controlled, I ask the students to do the teaching. So most of the time the students do the teaching. Usually, they present the lesson, sometimes making PowerPoint slides. Then I

complete what they have taught and explain the problem areas and summarize the lesson. I really would have loved you to come to my class before to see what they did.

Every now and then, the two female teachers would give some group-work in some of the classes. They thought this could contribute to the students getting more involved. They would ask students to work in groups and for instance prepare the day's lesson and teach it to other students or even to prepare a play and act it out in for the whole class. Working in groups is not a common practice in Iran, so it can considered quite innovative in the context.

On the whole, teachers mentioned that they tried to use different strategies to make the lesson understandable for all. For example, Ms Mansoori mentioned:

When I am teaching I tell them what I exactly want from them. I try to make everything simple and very clear. I even tell them how I want them to learn things and how they should answer.

There was also some mention of homework, and a lot of practice on the content of the lesson in the form of exercises and also quizzes. Mr Alizadeh gives the students some time in the class to study and then gives them exercises.

I give them 3 minutes to study what I have taught and then they practice. We do some together and then after 4^{th} or 5^{th} I ask them.

Revision of what had been taught particularly toward the end of the year was also considered very important again by all of them. Finally, Ms Mansoori tried to *'simplify grammar'*. She did not elaborate on this and explain how she would do that, but she was the one teacher who directly talked about making the lesson more understandable to the students.

Finally, they also acknowledged the importance of encouraging the students and giving them motivation now and then. Mr Alizadeh, for example, used marks as a motivating device and for positive reinforcement. He said that if a student performed weakly in a test, he would give him other opportunities and if he had a better performance later, then he would disregard that bad mark he had got and even give that student bonus marks for his improvement.

All of the four teachers highly valued a more light-hearted and ***interesting climate***; and therefore, tried to include ***activities beyond the prescribed syllabus*** that were

more of interest to the learners and were different from what they learned from their books and did not take a lot of time to cover. Ms Mansoori, for example, asked the students to find interesting English quotations from famous people and bring them to class and share them with others. The same teacher would ask some students to volunteer to perform a play or give a presentation. If time were not tight, then she would work on movies, too, but since time is an issue she cannot do this as frequently as she wishes to, if at all. Mr Alizadeh said that he would sing a song (a nursery rhyme) with the students when he thought there was a need for a change of mood. He would also urge the students to do some craft work or make puzzles, flashcards, etc. Mr Tabibi tried to draw the students' attention to what he believed was '*the real English'* by taking a textbook containing American slang along with the audio of its dialogues. And finally Ms Jalali encouraged the students to make English bulletins or posters. They all thought that these would enhance the students' language proficiency and could be used for entertainment, but only provided there was time for them. In order to create an interesting climate, Ms Jalali mentioned that she would even crack jokes or tease the students every now and then. On the whole, all of the teachers said that they paid attention to the students' mood. If they realised that they have got tired they would consider either changing the activity or doing something that was more interesting.

There are no such activities in the book and the teachers are not provided with supplementary material intended to create a more relaxed climate in which learning is also promoted. Therefore; the burden is all on the shoulder of the teachers. They have to find these activities that are not included in the syllabus and also use them in the right time. For that they need to have very good planning as well as good judgment to decide what to do or not to do to be most effective.

Thus the four teachers had to be ***planning*** carefully for their classes. They all agreed that by careful planning they were able to finish the book in time and do many exercises and prepare the students for the test.

> Ms Mansoori: The main plan is doing our course-book. Most of the class time is spent on that. Usually we have some teaching from the book at every session. We also spend some time doing some exercises. This is quite a fixed program…. Besides we have some activities beyond the prescribed syllabus, if we have the time. Usually this happens before the final tests.

A part of their planning is then linked to preparing the new lesson of the day and consolidating what has been taught. This involves planning or the right type of exercises.

> Mr Alizadeh: If a class does not understand a point, then I bring one of the students in front of the class I write subjective pronoun on a cardboard and give it to him, then I give the next am. And then has to another one, and then object and one full stop or question mark and ne becomes not. Then I ask them to move and form a question, a negative, etc and then add what and the object is omitted.

And finally there is a part linked to how the teachers wish to make better lesson plans to be able to include activities beyond the prescribed syllabus. This is where they have their concerns as time as an issue. Ms Mansoori says:

> We did not have enough time. I really like it to be part of the class work, but I have not been successful so far. This has been in my mind… It is still not at all what I have in my mind. Sometimes I begin doing things and then I realize that we are short of time. Then I have to go back. I still have not been able to plan on plays and stories and songs. I want them to be part of their class time. We could do the sentences, but not the others.

In general, they seemed to take pride in their planning. For example, Ms Jalali said that her colleagues were" jealous" of her for finishing the book before the Iranian New year, that is in almost six months, but she said '*they don't know how much of planning I did*'. Mr Alizadeh also pointed out the importance of planning for the students in some detail.

> I plan for everything. I have had good professors. I sleep for 8 hours then I have 16 hours left in the day. 6 hours is school. 10 hours is at home. 2 hours is spent on eating breakfast, lunch and dinner and rest and 2 hours for TV. So there remains 6 hours 7 days a week. Let's even pretend that Friday is a working day and they come to school which makes it 42 hours. This divided by 12 makes 3.5 hours of extra time during the week for all the lessons in the school for 6^{th} grade. For the other 2 classes [referring to 7^{th} and 8^{th} grade] it is 3 hours because they have 14 subjects. On the whole I say I hour for the language. I do the planning.

He believed that the students had to have good planning and as a teacher he tired to help them with that.

Even though the importance of planning was emphasized, Ms Jalali remembered a time when she had realised that the students were upset about something the head had mentioned to one of them, so she stopped teaching that session just to listen and talk to the students and to help them understand and better cope with the situation and the restrictions.

> Usually in a class everything comes together and you can't only concentrate on one thing. It just happens. For example you enter a class and see that a student is upset about something. This happened just last week. I went to the class and realised that a student is very sad. She began nagging and shouting that why she had been told off. I explained to her that it was the same at university and the society. They say when they tell us off they are disrespecting us. I tell them if they really don't like it, then they have to obey the rules so that they would not be told off.

This can show that even though planning does play an important role for this teacher, breaking free from it when the need emerges is also among the possibilities. It also suggests that the emotional well-being of the students is seen as vital for the learning of the subject being taught, in this case being English.

Teachers' desire to create an attractive climate and help make the lesson more understandable did not prevent them from paying attention to *class discipline* and clarifying their expectations and of course expecting the students to meet them. Mr Alizadeh said that when he was teaching he expected the students to sit still and even put their hands on the desk. He said he reminded them of the importance of being well-behaved almost every session.

> But they are so afraid of me that they don't utter a word. I have clarified to them what kind of a student I want. When I am teaching they have to have their hands on the desk and should not make any movements.

As mentioned earlier, Mr Alizadeh was really concerned about the emotional well-being of the students and tried to create motivation and even include fun activities; however, the comment above suggests that he was not troubled by the idea of students literally being afraid of him when he was teaching. This might reflect the top-down approach to teaching still quite common in class management in Iran and the fact that teacher is the main decision maker. Regarding that he was approaching retirement and was older than all the three other teachers interviewed can be a sign that his method of class management and discipline had at least some traces of the more traditional approaches.

In the same regard, Mr Tabibi said that he would try to spot the noisier students and the ones that the other students somehow looked up to and give them some responsibility to prevent them from breaking the class rules. He believed that friendly relationship with the students would most often lead to their having good discipline and taking the lesson and the class more seriously. He was not at all happy with the

class the study was done on and believed that it was among the very few classes in his career that he could not relate to.

> Mr Tabibi: ...every session, or every 2 sessions, I talk to them about their behaviour.

Ms Jalali believed that friendly but formal relationship between the teacher and the students was important.

What they said suggests that even though all the teachers favoured friendly relations, still discipline was very important. In addition, it seems that the students in the class were the determining factor to show how much of seriousness from the side of the teacher was required and also that the teachers had quite different methods for maintaining discipline, some being more serious than the others.

In addition, in order to make sure that the students understood the lesson, they believed that the *language of instruction* had to be the combination of Persian and English and none of them used English as their only or main language of instruction while teaching. Ms Jalali says:

> I try to teach the lesson in Persian, but in one of the classes the students [who were appointed to teach the lesson of the day] taught the whole session in English. Some of the students of course did not understand anything.

7.4 Teachers' Perception of the Relationship between Their Personal Attributes and Their Effectiveness

This theme includes comments made by the four teachers about the relationship they believed there was between their personal behaviour, beliefs and attributes with being effective and comprised of two sub-themes: teachers' behaviour and beliefs; teachers' appearance.

7.4.1 Teachers' Behaviour in the Classroom

The way language teachers understood their desirable and undesirable behaviour in the classroom that could lead to teachers' effectiveness or ineffectiveness was the next topic of discussion. The comments have been categorized under six codes as can be seen in table 7.8.

Drive for improvement and interest in teaching stood out among what the teachers said about their behaviour. They all liked to do a good job and be better teachers. Mr Tabibi specifically mentioned this for his language proficiency.

> I use many books. I don't say that I am constantly reading, but I refer to books every now and then. If you check the MOE site, you see that there is one section with some language tests for the teachers. I always do them, both the listening and the speaking. It happens that I don't get high scores, but I try to learn things. And whatever I learn I try to teach the students as well. Today for example in my 3rd grade classes we worked on Street Talk [A course-book for colloquial and slang American English].

Code	Definitions	No of teachers	No of comments
Drive for improvement and interest in teaching	Teachers being interested in teaching, sharing their knowledge and spending time with the students	4	19
	Teachers' desire to improve as teachers		
Creativity and innovation	Teachers' attempt to engage in activities not put in the syllabus, sometimes to create a fun climate and sometimes to promote learning	3	12
Kindness and friendliness	Teachers being good-tempered, and holding stress-free classes so that students would feel comfortable communicating with them and having more opportunities to improve	4	8
	Teachers having good sense of humour		
Willingness to gain Credibility	Winning the trust of the students by their language knowledge and their behaviour	4	6
Fairness	Being aware of the potential of each of the students and also accepting their own weaknesses	3	4
Being religious	Direct practice or promotion of Islamic beliefs in the classes	2	2
		Total	51

Table 7.8 Codes related to teachers' behaviour

The same teacher also mentioned that he wanted to be a better teacher. For that he said that at the end of every year he asked his students to write something about the strengths and weaknesses of his classes. He believes that by reading them he could reflect on his own teaching and try to improve himself as a teacher. Also the four

teachers were all keen on having higher university education; Ms Jalali was already doing a master's degree in language teaching. This teacher believed that a language teacher should try to stay up-to-date and '*look for new information all the time'*. Mr Alizadeh regarded teaching a sacred job:

> As Martyr Rajaaee [a former Iranian president who was killed in a bomb blast in his office and was very religious] has said the teacher should be either in love or mad. I have completed his sentence. I believe a teacher is a lover who madly wants to give out information and give light even from a candle. I think the nicest sentence ever has been from Hazrat-e-Ali in Nahjolbalaghe [A book written about ethical values and Islamic beliefs written by Imam Ali, the first Shiite Imam]. He says anyone who teaches me one word, makes me his slave. And also during the very first years of Islam if a non-Moslem prisoner educated 10 Moslems, he would be free.

Another very important point they made was the importance of being ***innovative*** and ***creative***. Three of the interviewees commented on how they tried to be ***creative***. If they wanted to have successful students, they believed they had to plan various activities and these all had to be based on their own creativity and planning as the syllabus was not very supportive in that aspect. Mr Tabibi, for example, had spent his whole summer holiday preparing PowerPoint slides to show in his classes.

> It is boring to stand in front of the class and write things on the board for all the teachers. I thought there should be some variety and decided to use technology. I have made the PowerPoint slide of some the lessons, for 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade [of secondary school]. Last summer I spent my time preparing them, so that I will not use the board anymore. I tried to use different colours and examples to clarify points better. I am not sure how successful I have been, but I have tried.

Mr Alizadeh had also thought of some techniques to use in his classes. He said that he was basing his work on a book written by Dianne Larsen Freeman *Techniques and Principles in Teaching English* (Oxford, 2000). It is worth mentioning that this book is a popular course-book used at university for the introduction of different teaching methods and mainly deals with classroom practice. He said that due to lack of facilities in the classes in Iran, and based on the approaches discussed in the Ms Freeman's work, he had created a new approach.

> You know there is a book called Larsen Freeman, which contains 12 modern language teaching approaches and methods. We cannot put any of the 12 in practice in Iran, because we don't have the facilities. So what I have done is gather all of them and go ahead with it and have completed it throughout the way and at every step. Maybe many people do not approve of it. But my experience has shown that it is good.

It should be noted here that Mr Alizadeh's creative approach to language teaching is not always possible to adopt as the theoretical basis of some of these methods are very different. Maybe what he meant was that he was borrowing some of the techniques from a few of them and trying to implement them in his classes.

As also was mentioned earlier the importance of *friendly relationship* with the students and *being kind* to them were mentioned by all the teachers.

> Mr Tabibi: I still befriend them. I choose different things. I try to attract each student differently and using their own style. For example we had one student who was weak and naughty and all the colleagues were fed up with him. But I had no problems with him. I realized that he was interested in movies, so I tried to reach him through his interest. But unfortunately he had to quit school altogether. His father had passes away. I tried to attract him and I was able to have effective communication with him.

> Ms Mansoori: In a good language class with a good language teacher there should be a respectable and friendly relationship between the teacher and the students.

The very important point was that even though the teachers believed in friendly relationship, at times they somehow saw that as equal to kindness. Kindness to them mostly meant giving students more opportunities to improve their class performance. For instance, Mr Alizadeh, saw kindness as being flexible with the students' marks and believed in providing them with opportunities to improve their marks.

> I like the students to feel confident that they can improve. If they do badly on a test and get zero I tell them to try harder the next time and then if they make any improvement in the next test I would add some points to them and go on with this criterion. This is called negative reinforcement. I would eliminate the bad scores and then add a lot of scores to the test and for example if in the first test the child had got 0 and then improved to 8 I would give him 12. I try to be kind.

Mr Tabibi, though did not approve of the attitude of some of his students and believed that they misinterpreted or did not appreciate his kindness.

> The student is in need of kindness. I try to be their friend. But still sometimes, I don't know what to do. Some of the children have no feelings about me wishing to be friendly.

Of course he continued that he still had faith in being friendly. Sense of humour was seen as a token of friendliness by Ms Jalali who said:

> The student should feel comfortable. I personally, sometimes tell jokes or tease the students. I try to make them happy, but if I feel that they might be taking advantage, I will be very firm.

All of the teachers liked to gain **credibility** and win the trust of their students. As already stated, some believed knowing how to fluently speak English really helped. Also the teachers sometimes spent some time talking about things that they thought were important to the students or that the students needed to know. This was their way of showing the students that they cared about them and their concerns, which could contribute to their earning more credibility. Ms Jalali talked about her experience:

> Sometimes I spend all the 2 hours talking to them [my students]. I have tried to listen and explain and persuade them that the situation sometimes dictates what one should do. The problems they have are not only for them and they are for everybody. We all live in the same situation and environment. In one of the classes we have this discussion several times, in the others more or less.

Finally as will be more elaborated on in 7.4.2, teachers' choice of attire was thought to contribute to their becoming more credible in the eyes of the students.

None of the teachers used the word **fairness**, but three implied its importance by the comments they made. For example Mr Tabibi believed that teachers should accept their mistakes:

> I as a teacher should have the knowledge and if I make a mistake I should admit it. But we teachers are a bit weak in this aspect.

Ms Mansoori, too, thought that teachers should be realistic in their expectations from the students and accept that some students are less capable. Also she believed that a teacher can expect the students to do something well only after she has presented the class with the required knowledge.

> Anybody who performs [as an extra-curricular activity] has got a mark, but this is not obligatory for all. First you have to show them something in order to ask them to do something. Not all of them can.

Finally, **being religious** was pointed out as a strong characteristic of the teacher by Mr Alizadeh, who was extremely religious himself.

> If he [referring to the teacher of Islamic education] talks about Islamic and religious stuff [in the classes] it has its own advantages. But they should come from all the teachers.

He believed that all teachers should be allowed to discuss religious matters in their classes.

To summarize, all these comments reflect that teachers mostly considered their own personal attributes and also their behaviour in the class as determining factors on how effective they could be and would be seen by the students.

7.4.2 Appearance

Three of the four teachers referred to the importance of teachers' attire and **appearance** as one element of their effectiveness as teachers. Mr Alizadeh was the only teacher who did not comment on it. Due to his beliefs and characteristics the topic was somehow avoided in the course of the interview. Table 7.9 below shows the number of comments and what they implied.

Codes	Definition	No of teachers	No of comments
Clothes and looks	Appropriate attire and looks for language teachers according to the teachers	3	8

Table 7.9 Code related to teachers' appearance

Ms Mansoori, mentioned that even if the teachers did not necessarily plan on choosing their clothes based on the students' taste of fashion, being acquainted with their favourite brands and what they considered fashionable was still very helpful. Mr Tabibi also talked about the importance of choosing the right clothes and believed that those times when he took better care of his appearance, he was more welcomed by the students.

> I think being handsome and well dressed enhances communication. If a teacher is not good looking, the students will be put off. But in contrast, when the teacher looks good, the students get attracted to him.

Ms Jalali and Mr Tabibi both believed that language teachers in particular were expected to pay more attention to the way they looked.

> Mr Tabibi: Once someone introduced me to teach at a private school. I was very busy at that time. We were doing some construction work at home and I was busy, so I looked a bit messy. I got ready and went there and told the head that I was there to become a teacher. He asked me, "Which lesson?" I said English. He told me that as far as he knew language teachers were good looking and well dressed.

> Ms Jalali: Both the students and colleagues pay attention to that [the way the teachers dress]. Sometimes my new colleagues ask me what I teach and they say that my looks show that. The language teacher should take care of her looks and be neat and tidy,

maybe not so expensive clothes, but neat and tidy. Girls from even primary school pay attention to this. I feel that the students expect the language teacher to be more elegant. But at school all the colleagues are almost the same. We have to obey the rules. There is not much space for being fashionable. We have to follow the rules set.

It should be emphasized again that in Iran Islamic codes of dressing should be observed at all times. Women should cover their hair and also wear long and loose uniforms when out of the house and usually the choice of colours should be quite conservative at work place. Men also should be dressed in what is considered more decent in the country and avoid wearing shorts, flashy colours and too tight clothes. At schools they usually do not wear jeans or very casual types of attire. Neck ties should also be avoided in most work places including schools. Considering all this, still the teachers thought that students cared about what the teachers chose to wear and were more attracted to well-dressed teachers and paid more attention to their lesson. In other words, they thought that teachers' attention to their appearance and choice of clothing could make them more effective in the eyes of the students.

7.5 Conclusion

The interview with teachers intended to answer the second research sub-question and thus sought the characteristics and attributes language teachers themselves thought would contribute to making them more effective in the context of public secondary schools in Iran. The sample was small and many times their beliefs concerning teacher effectiveness converged; however, at times they did not. Both the uniformity and diversity of beliefs can yield some on the concept of language teacher effectiveness.

The first point that all the teachers agreed upon was that they all very much relied on their own planning and capabilities; however, they still believed that factors out of their control such as poor syllabus and books and very few hours of instruction per week, somehow made their job challenging. Their plans included activities beyond the prescribed syllabus sometimes unrelated to the content of syllabus and mainly decided by the teacher; therefore, teachers did not get any feedback and/or appreciation for including them in their classes and more importantly they had no means for assessing their performance. They relied on their own intuition and also the result of the tests that the students took. However, the objectives of these tests

were not necessarily relevant to the teachers' choice of activities. Deductive teaching of rules is still practised and at times seen as vital for learning the language or rather passing the final tests by the teachers; however, when planning for at least a part of activities beyond the prescribed syllabus teachers do not solely rely on rules and strict exercises.

Since in each class some of the students take language classes out of their schools where more emphasis is placed on the communicative aspects of language, in most cases these stronger students are seen as threats rather than assets and their presence in the class is somehow seen as challenging by teachers in several ways: They require the teacher to be more competent; they get bored if they find the lesson too easy; and they intimidate the other students as they show off their ability to use English. This also requires the teacher to be more knowledgeable, more creative and on the whole more competent. This is among the factors which raises the issue of teachers' credibility. On the whole, anything that can contribute to teachers winning more credibility is welcomed. Teachers believe that their ability to speak English, their choice of clothing, and their rapport with the students are among the determining factors.

All of the four teachers considered rapport between language teachers and students very critical; however, their understanding of it somehow varied. Even though light-hearted fun activities were welcome by all, paying attention to class discipline which sometimes meant being very serious was considered equally important. The varying point was the amount of the friendship, kindness and seriousness and how to include them in their practice. For these teachers, kindness, patience and friendliness were very closely related and paying attention to students' improvement particularly in the tests was seen as of the sign for all of these. As for seriousness, which was considered the key to maintaining discipline, opinions varied. One teacher decided when he was teaching the lesson, the students had to be all ears and he would not mind the students being afraid of him then, while another teacher decided that respectable relations was the key to maintaining the integrity of the class and her relationship with the students. Altogether, the degree of firmness and friendliness to be considered effective are not equal for all of these teachers.

Three of the four teachers believed that their choice of clothing and their appearance would also win them credibility among students and could make them more effective. This is a very important point in Iran, where the Islamic codes for clothing are observed at all times in public places. The teachers believed that the students would like or even demand that teachers choose their clothing with care and pay attention to the choices that they make.

Another point raised by teachers was that they expected parents to be more supportive, respectful and appreciative of their work. This was despite the fact that, they thought that parents cannot necessarily help the weak or even misbehaving students. This area needs much more investigation as how to help teachers take advantage of parents and seek their help when necessary.

On the whole, the four teachers seemed to be eager and interested in their job and had a lot to say and share. The next concern that will be addressed in chapter 9 is how closely do these teachers beliefs align with the beliefs of their students and also their parents.

8 What are Parents' Perceptions of the Characteristics of Effective Language Teachers?

8.1 Introduction

In order to seek their perception of the characteristics of effective language teachers, 12 mothers, an older sister and two fathers were interviewed over the telephone. These were the parents of those students who had been interviewed and were of different backgrounds. A few of the mothers had only basic education. These less educated mothers were hesitant to take part in the interview, as they thought that they were not prepared and had not much to say. Eventually, they agreed to answer the questions. The parents of one of the students did not answer their telephone; and therefore, gaining access to them became impossible. The details concerning the parents who took part in the interview is outlined in table 8.1.

Each interview took about 20 minutes on average. Parents would mostly base their judgment on what they had heard from their children, but in answering some of my questions there were parents who referred to their own personal experience. In other words, based on this recollection of the time they used to be students and both their positive and negative experiences, they formed their perception of the characteristics of an effective language teacher. (Appendix 13 shows the interview questions.)

Distrcts	Parents of those achievers who are happy and satisfied with their current language teachers			
	Girls	*Outstanding characteristics*	*Boys*	*Outstanding characteristics*
District x	Fatemeh's mother	She had studied up to 5th grade and then a few years ago studied grades 6 and 7.	Amir Reza' s mother	She was very religious and very proud of her son and his upbringing.
District y	Sogol's mother	She seemed educated and supportive of her daughter.	Mohammad's sister	She was very proud of her brother's achievements at school. She had a bachelor's degree in computer science and was an employee.
	Parents of those underachievers who are happy and satisfied with their current language teachers			
	Girls	*Outstanding characteristic*	*Boys*	*Outstanding characteristic*
District x	Maryam's father	He had a university degree and had a job in the language section of a government office.	Ali Akbar's father	He had grown up in a village, had later studied at university and really liked his children to have a good life. He believed that his son did not value education and had given the school full authority to manage him.
District y	Mohadaseh's mother	She is not in touch with the school and trusts her daughter's judgement.	Aidin's mother	She seemed to have little confidence in her ability to comment on the topic. She believed her son was weak in his studies and that was the reason she would not go to the teachers.
	Parents of those achievers who are unhappy and dissatisfied with their current language teacher			
	Girls	*Outstanding characteristic*	*Boys*	*Outstanding characteristic*
District x	Mobina's mother	She was a Persian literature teacher at high school and had university education.	Alireza's mother	She sounded interested in the topic of the study. She loved to learn English. Most of her comments concerned her unhappiness with her son's current language teacher.
District y	Zahra's mother	She was an employee and believed that with a job out of the house she did not have time to devote to the schoolwork of her daughter.	Milad's mother	She sounded very concerned about her son's future. She said that she was no expert in the field, but quoted her son about the language teacher's characteristics.
	Parents of those underachievers who are unhappy and dissatisfied with their current language teacher			
	Girls	*Outstanding characteristic*	*Boys*	*Outstanding characteristic*
District x	Marziyeh's mother	She admitted that her daughter was a very weak student and put the blame on her. She seemed a very kind person with unique ideas about less experienced teachers.	Farjad's mother	She sounded interested in the current study. She was not very much in contact with her son's teachers.
District y	Zeynab's parents	Could not be accessed	Abdollah's mother	No special comments

Table 8.1 Classification of the participating parents in the interviews

The preliminary analysis of the interviews led to the creation of 51 codes, which then through axial coding were clustered into six sub-themes. Upon careful studying of these sub-themes and as can be seen in table 8.2, three over-arching themes emerged and the sub-themes went under them.

Themes	Sub-themes
Parents' perceptions of learning English at school	Parents' views about learning English at Iranian public schools, language teachers and the syllabus
Parents' perception of the relationship between personal attributes of language teachers and their effectiveness	Teachers' behaviour and personal attributes
	Teachers' appearance
Parents' perception of teacher's knowledge and those professional skills that contribute to language teachers' effectiveness	Teacher's pedagogic and language knowledge
	Choice of content
	Classroom practice

Table 8.2 Main and sub-themes for parents' perceptions of effective language teachers derived from the analysis of the interviews

In this chapter these themes have been analysed and the perception of these parents of the characteristics of effective language teachers in public schools of Iran has been presented.

8.2 Parents' Perception of Teaching and Learning English at School

As table 8.3 demonstrates, parents' perception and expectation of teaching and learning English at public schools fell into six main topics. These were thought by the parents to directly and indirectly affect the effectiveness of the teachers and in particular language teachers.

All of the parents interviewed believed in the importance of ***learning a language*** for their children and very much supported their learning English. Fatemeh's mother for example said:

> I don't know much, but their father pays a lot of attention. He got his BA a few years ago and said that he was good in all of the lessons except for language. He insists that the children should improve their English.

Amir Reza's mother also had a comment:

When the UN mentions that those who do not know a foreign language and computer are considered illiterate from the year 2000 onwards, then learning a language is among our top priorities.

Many thought that knowing English was critical for the future of their child and that was their main reason for highly valuing it. Ali Akbar's father said:

Language is important for their future. It is useful, for whatever one wants to study [at university].

Codes	Definition	No of parents	No of comments
Interest in their children's learning English	Parents' opinion about learning English as a foreign language	15	17
Language teachers and school	Parents' opinion and perception of language teachers at school and how they could be more effective	14	33
Students' behaviour in the class	Parents' perception of how students behaved in school and how they could improve to be make better use of their language classes	11	13
Parents' role	What parents believed their responsibilities were towards the school and their children and the kind of relationship they thought they should have with the teachers to make language teaching more effective	6	6
	Parents' understanding of what language teachers think their responsibilities towards their child's learning a language are		
Teacher-student rapport	Parents' perception of the importance of the right relationship between a language teacher and the students at schools that contribute to making the teachers more effective	15	28
		Total	97

Table 8.3 Codes related to parents' general views about learning English at school

As can be seen he believed that the only path for success in the future was furthering education and for that he said knowing a new language was essential. The fact that his child did not enjoy going to school and was really weak in his studies did not seem to alter the father's views. Later on he mentioned that his son was so weak that he might fail but still the father was looking for a way to make him go to high

school and then university. It is worth mentioning that having higher education is a common wish for the Iranian parents for their children. Fatemeh's mother also said:

> We are thinking of the future of the children. Their father always says that knowing a language is important for their future job, maybe they decide to work in an embassy. My own brother works in an embassy. I know how important it is to know a language.

Parents' highly valuing their children's learning English is an indication that all of them were concerned about the quality of education offered at schools and paid attention to it.

The comments parents made about **schools** implied that they were mostly aware of the limitations and shortage of facilities; and therefore, did not have very high expectations. Some thought that school alone was not enough for helping their child to learn English and those who wanted them to improve had to seek the help of a private language institute. Maryam's father, for instance, thought that it was the school's duty to teach the students English, but since they had *'no facilities' and could not do any better',* it was necessary to think of other alternatives. Farjad's mother also believed that even though *'school is the main priority'* for teaching English to the students, parents still had to register their kids in language classes. Amir Reza's mother commented that

> No! I don't think that school has the whole responsibility and I think the students should attend classes outside the school, but I blame the school and the mass media for the way they are teaching the language.

The reason she criticized the mass media is not really clear.

Only three parents thought that it was solely the duty of schools to teach their children English. A number of parents said that they could not afford paying the tuition fees and some thought that their children either did not show enough interest or did not have enough time to attend classes outside the school. Mobina's mother believed:

> Well! I say if language teaching at schools is done well it is much more useful. If the children can satisfy their educational needs through the MOE, it is much better than attending extra classes. Maybe some people cannot do that, money wise or time wise, or even their house maybe too far away.

And of course their knowing of the limitations in schools did not stop a few from commenting about the syllabus and the material used for teaching English at schools.

> Milad's mother: I don't have enough experience. The books my son studies are the school books, but he says that they are not very useful.

Some parents thought that learning a language should begin from primary school. One of the parents thought that the MOE had to invest more in language teaching. Fatemeh and Sogols' mothers both supported this.

> Fatemeh'mother: They have to take classes, too. The school is good, too, but I keep saying that children from the age of 4 or 5 should learn English, so they can begin language teaching from first grade. They can teach them easy things like what they teach in pre-school and then little by little improve it. This is really good.

> Sogol's mother: From day one and from the very first day of school in elementary school children should learn a new language. They have to learn the basics. They have to strengthen the roots of learning from that time. I think it is ideal to be dealing with the foreign language the same as the mother tongue, as if it is the mother tongue of the child.

Mobina's mother along with some other parents though put most of the responsibility on the shoulders of the *language teachers,* while there were other parents who sympathized with them and did not expect them to do miracles. In other words, some parents seemed to relate school effectiveness to teacher effectiveness and since schools were thought not to be as effective as they could be in teaching a foreign language, these teachers were not expected to be as effective as desired by some of the parents. Mohadaseh's mother just expected the teacher to create interest in learning English in the learner. Three other parents though believed that an effective teacher could make a lot of difference.

> Mohammad's sister: I think it [success in learning a language] depends on the teacher. The teacher is important. If he can transfer his knowledge then the student will learn.

To parents the *roles of the students* were mainly being polite, listening whole-heartedly and giving their undivided attention to the lesson and the teacher and doing their assignments. Some admitted that their children were not so easy to work with. Only Fatemeh's mother mentioned that in order for the students to follow the rules, the teacher had to be nice. She said:

> The students should study very hard. They should support the teacher. If the teacher is kind and nice and serious and good looking, they should do that. And when they like their teacher they would. My son [referring to her other child] for example did not like his last year's teacher, so he was not happy, but he likes his teacher this year and is happy and takes his lesson seriously.

According to her, in order for students to be good, it was vital that the teacher had the ability to attract them.

From the six parents who directly commented on **the role of parents** in the language learning of their children, five mentioned that they were informed of what went on in the schools through their own children and were not in direct contact with the teachers. They all discussed the importance of being in touch with the teachers, but confessed that they did not have enough time to go to school frequently. Milad's mother said that she went to her children's school or teacher when she was unhappy about something that had taken place at school and in order to complain. Their own role as parents in helping their children and their teachers was the least paid attention to and to parents was of the least significance. To Zahra's mother teachers' expectations of the parents seemed too high and working parents did not have the time to spend on '*education*' of their children, which she considered to be school's responsibilities.

> Zahra's mother: Many teachers leave a lot for the parents to do. It is of course good to give the students some responsibility but the parents? When both parents go to work … I have come back home 10 minutes ago. All I can do is talk to my children about their day, cook something, and just that. Of course it is really good that both man and woman work, we have learned this from foreign countries, but if this is happening outside Iran, then the schools take care of all educational issues. When they come home, parents spend time on the children's eating, clothing and entertainment. But in Iran this is not the case. Education is also the duty of the parents I should either help my children myself or ask a tutor to come and help. If I don't have the money then I should ask someone in the family to come and teach my child.

Sogol's mother believed that her own daughter took responsibility over her education and what happened in the schools and there was no need for her to interfere or seek information from school. And finally Aidin's mother explained that she never went to her son's school, because she was embarrassed that her son was not a good student and was weak in his lessons.

> I really need to be in constant touch with the teachers, but I am embarrassed because my son does not study himself and I get embarrassed. The only thing is I have to ask the teachers to come and teach him at home.

This last comment may be the evidence that even though they are very much concerned about the education of their children, at least some of the Iranian parents do not believe that they can play an active role in the education of their children or can make much difference. In addition, none of the parents said anything about how they could help promote the language learning of their children except for emphasizing the importance of learning a language to them.

Finally, all of the parents placed a lot of emphasis on the importance of the teachers' establishing the right **rapport** and *relationship with the students*. They all thought that this would really contribute to teaching becoming more effective and more fruitful. Friendly relations, peaceful climate, and kindness were mentioned many times. How they thought this could be achieved is addressed in detail in section 8.3.

8.3 Parents' Perception of the Relationship between Personal Attributes of Language Teachers and Their Effectiveness

A considerable number of comments in the interviews related to parents' perceptions of the personal attributes of effective language teachers. Just like the findings from the teachers and students' interviews the comments were clustered into two themes: teachers' behaviour, and teachers' physical appearance.

8.3.1 Teachers' Behaviour

Generally speaking the sub-theme of **teacher behaviour** indicated that parents believed that teachers' behaviour and their personal attributes could contribute to their becoming more or less effective. By that they meant desirable and undesirable behaviour of the teacher in the classroom that would either enhance or suppress more effective learning. The characteristics put forth in table 8.4 were raised during the interview.

As can be seen in table 8.4 the predominant issue discussed was teachers' *friendliness*. There was not even a single parent who thought the relationship between teachers and students should be anything other than *friendly*. Abdollah's mother, for example believed if the teacher is friendly then the students '*would be attracted*' to him and would never try to '*take advantage*'.

And Amir Reza's mother extended this to other language classes.

> I think friendly relations [are important]. In both Arabic and English classes the teacher should have friendly relations [with the students].

Fatemeh's mother also thought that friendly relations would really motivate the students. She said:

> When they [her children] have classes with those teachers who are friends with them and are kind and nice, they are enthusiastic to attend their classes. From the morning they say, "Gee! Today we have a class with so and so teacher."

There were a few though who thought that limits should be placed, so that the children would not forget to respect their teachers and their wishes. Alireza's mother said:

> As far as I know friendly relationship with the students is important. Friendly, but of course to an extent, so that the students would not take advantage. When I ask tutors to teach my child at home, I ask them to be serious. Of course they always give a break and tell jokes, but they should not cross the line.

And finally there were a few parents who welcomed teacher's friendliness based on their own personal experience. Maryam's father was one of them.

> She [My daughter's teacher] should connect with them emotionally. Then the children would learn better. I have also passed this phase. Any teacher who came to our desk and patted us on the head and laughed and asked a simple question such as our father's job, or told us that for example on that day we looked tired, the bind would become so strong.

Codes	Definition	No of parents	No of comments
Friendliness	Teachers behaving in a way that students would feel comfortable communicating with them	15	30
Kindness, patience and fairness	Teachers' being good-tempered, nice, and holding stress-free classes in which linguistic and behavioural mistakes are tolerated and all the students are treated equally	14	20
Interest in teaching	Teachers showing that they enjoy teaching, sharing their knowledge and spending time with the students	6	11
Seriousness	Discipline	5	10
	Strictness		
Sense of humour	Teachers' creating an atmosphere of fun	5	8
Credibility	Teachers' winning the trust of the students by their language knowledge and/or their behaviour	5	5
Being religious	Teachers' direct practice or promotion of Islamic beliefs in the classes	3	3
		Total	87

Table 8.4 Codes related to teachers' behaviour as parents view them

On the whole, the comments underlined parents' placing importance on teachers' friendliness as it would make the students more eager to take part in the classes and

thus contribute to the teachers' effectiveness. It seems that some parents more or less shared almost the same views as how this can be practised. Talking to the children and asking a slightly personal question, smiling at them, and being kind to them were among the suggestions made by these parents.

Emphasis on teachers' **kindness, patience and fairness** was very much in line with the above characteristic. The ideas developing out of these concepts suggest that parents were in favour of teachers' '*binding emotionally with the students*', '*not scaring them off*', '*liking the students*', '*being good tempered*', and on the whole being nice and tolerant of students' behavioural and linguistic mistakes.

> Mohammad's sister: The behaviour of the teacher [is very important]. If [I were a student] and the teacher behaved nicely, I would listen to him.

> Marziyeh's mother: When I was 7th and 8th grade I had the same teacher for English. You know at that time there was no English for 6th grade. I still remember her name. She was very bad-tempered and very scary and made me hate language classes.... Those who learned the language were affected by their good teachers. I did not learn the language, because I did not have a kind teacher.

Maryam's father suggested that the teachers '*should help the children not to be afraid*' even if '*they make some mistakes*' while trying to use the new language. This will '*open the lock on the children's mouths*'. Amir Reza's mother believed that this patience should be practiced while teaching of a new language in order to help the children learn efficiently.

> Amir Reza's mother: The third [important characteristic a teacher should have] is being patient. When a mother is teaching his child how to speak, when the child shows water, the mother says the word 10 times on and on. This is the mother tongue we are talking about. You say the word 100 times. Language teacher has to be the same as mother. In any language, English, French, German, …There is no difference. It is another language. Even when teaching adults. This is what I think.

Finally, Mobina's mother directly commented on the importance of teachers' fairness and '*treating everyone equally*'.

Some parents thought that teachers should be **interested in teaching** and should show that through their behaviour and hard work. Some of these parents thought that teachers should not limit their teaching to the contents of the book, and believed that interested teachers paid attention to different aspects of educating the students. In other words, they thought that an effective teacher might go beyond the call of

duty. For example, Amir Reza's mother who was admiring her son's current language teacher mentioned:

> I think firstly he tried to teach children ethics. I have met him only twice. But since the children tell me everything that happens in their schools, I have a feeling that he wants to direct the students to the right path from the bottom of his heart. Our children are adolescents and the teacher affects them deeply. Children look for role models and this teacher has had his affect.

Milad's mother made some comments about teachers' interest in their job, suggesting that teachers' hard work was critical.

> I believe the teacher should work hard and then expect the child to try harder. ....He should work from the bottom of his heart. If he does, that then the children will become interested.

Seriousness, too, mostly came along with friendliness. To the five parents who mentioned this characteristic, it was twofold: providing discipline and being able to control the class, which was favourable and strictness, which to all these parents had negative effects. Fatemeh's mother said that '*language learning should be entertaining, and at the same time serious'.* The other four parents, too, were concerned that the students could not be managed properly without some degree of discipline and seriousness. Mobina's mother somehow summarized this expectation:

> I believe the quality of work is really important. So in the relation of the teacher and student partly friendship and partly seriousness are important. Friendliness is important so that the students can tolerate the class. If the class is too serious the children nag, but maybe later on they notice the value. Our classes are crowded and some of the children are really naughty, so if there is not seriousness after 15 minutes the teacher can't control the class.

This once again shows the importance of the right rapport between the students and their teachers.

Teachers' *sense of humour* was considered helpful by some of the parents. They thought that the class should be entertaining, interesting and fun; otherwise the students would not pay enough attention. Some, including Abdollah's mother, thought that teachers *'should crack jokes'* every now and then, and as Ali Akbar's father put it anything that helped the class *'not be monotonous'* was good, because *'no child likes school'.* Amir Reza's mother quoted her nephew who is a language teacher in a private language institute:

> My nephew teaches at Kaanoon-e-zabaaan Institute. He tells me that he has discovered something. He says when the class is dry, nobody listens. Since the

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students are teenagers, they don't like boring, serious classes. Their attention is elsewhere. You have to joke with them. He said that he finds English jokes and tells them the jokes in the class. He tries to make the class funny. He says he does things to attract the students and bring their minds back to the class. I don't know. That is what he told me. He says the feedback is bad if you do not respect the students' wish. The same is true about adult learners I guess.

Again five parents commented on the importance of teachers' **credibility** and winning the trust of the students. According to these parents some teachers could create a sense of trustworthiness through their behaviour or in Amir Reza's mother's words '*act as role models*' and some by showing that they were really knowledgeable. Mohammad's sister, for example, believed that the teacher '*should know everything*' and his language proficiency should be above the all the students in the class. The following comment made by Fatemeh's mother also implies that there is a direct link between teachers' knowledge of speaking in English and being considered credible.

> If the teacher cannot speak [English], the children will think that she doesn't know anything.

Finally, three parents had comments about teachers' **religious beliefs**. This may not necessarily mean that the others were or were not thinking about it, but indicates that three parents in particular thought it was something critical to be mentioned in the interview. None of these parents again mentioned directly that they expected the teacher to be religious, but this was implied in their comments. In Iran women should wear scarf and fully cover their hair in public places, but sometimes in private offices and institutions the front part of their hair might not be fully covered. Fatemeh's mother talked about her much younger son's dislike for female language teachers teaching in classes outside the school, because once his teacher in the private language institute he attended had not covered her hair properly. Ali Akbar's father also said:

> They [Teachers] have to teach ethics and lessons of life to the children in a way that matches our culture.

As religious beliefs are embedded in our culture then it can be assumed that he was referring to them.

The evidence of this part of the study conjures up that parents place emphasis on the personal attributes of the teachers, believing that qualities such as friendliness,

kindness and interest in their job contribute to their becoming more effective and better teachers. There seems to be a general consensus among the interviewed parents on most of the matters related to teachers' personal attributes.

8.3.2 Teachers' Appearance

The next cluster of comments made by the parents was on the importance of the language teachers' **appearance**, which as table 8.5 demonstrates, was basically limited to the way the teachers dressed. Only Milad's mother briefly touched the idea that teachers' **age** and their youth could also contribute to his effectiveness.

Codes	Definition	No of parents	No of comments
Clothes	Appropriate attire for language teachers according to the parents	14	24
Age	The ideal age for a language teacher	1	2
		Total	26

Table 8.5 Codes concerning parents' views about language teachers' appropriate appearance

Some mothers talked about how teacher's elegance mattered.

> Fatemeh's mother: They [The students] pay a lot of attention to that [the way the teacher dresses]. They even say that at home. I have three children at home. If the teacher is not well dressed they comment about that even at home. They say, "Oh! Her clothes, what colour was that!" When they say these things then most probably it is important to them.... I tell them that you should not be thinking about these things [commenting about teachers' clothing]. But still they don't stop. Sometimes they say that what the teacher was wearing was really disgusting. To be honest, even I think if the teacher is good looking and pretty, it is good.

> Mobina's mother: [Teacher's choice of clothes is] Very important. 100%. … Children say that they understand elegant teachers better and value them more. I think the appearance of the teacher is very important.

This view was shared by parents of both girls and boys. This is what Milad's mother said:

> Milad pays a lot of attention to this [teacher's appearance]…. I think if the teacher is young, well dressed, neat and tidy and takes care of his looks, the children will become more motivated.

There were others who also agreed that the way teachers dressed did matter; however, to them this was not equal to elegance, and meant choosing clothing suitable to their status, cleanliness and tidiness. Alireza's mother, for example, said:

> I personally and based on my own beliefs think that any religious person should be very neat. They should be tidy….. You might choose to put on a pair of dark blue trousers with brown shoes. This is bad. But maybe you put on things that you have not spent a lot of money on, but they match and go with each other. Do you see what I mean? I think the way the teacher dresses affects the students and anybody else.

The two fathers also acknowledged the importance of teachers taking care of their looks. Maryam's father, however, insisted that elegance the way the students might like was desirable, but not a possibility in the Iranian schools, due to social restrictions. Ali Akbar's father also said:

> The appearance and the way the teacher dresses are important. Teachers should not dress monotonously. Mr. Gharaaati announced that the colour of clothes is important and teaches in primary schools should not wear black. They have to put on nice colours and even take their scarves off in girls' schools.

In this last quotation, quoting Mr. Gharaaati, who is a clergyman and thus a Moslem religious figure and also has a programs on TV relating to everyday life and religion, indicates that this father was very religious. As can be seen he, too, thought that teachers' appearance mattered. There were other examples of deeply religious people such as Marziyeh's mother, who felt that appropriate clothing did matter in making language teachers' being more effective.

> Appearance is God given. If you like the person, whether a teacher or not, then you think that she is beautiful. You don't really think about the looks. But about being fashionable, I think that it is important for a language teacher to be fashionable … I myself wear black veil, but nonetheless think that language teachers should wear scarf and nice uniforms.

As can be gathered from the above quotation, some parents thought that language teacher's elegance was more important than the elegance of other teachers. The same mother then continued:

> I mean she [language teacher] should wear matching clothes and high heels. But the theology teacher should wear black veil.

Zahra's mother also commented on the language teachers' fashion:

> It is subconsciously important particularly for creating the first impression. You judge people's character based on the way they look. This is particularly important for young girls and boys. They really pay attention to this. At the beginning of the school year my own daughter comes home everyday talking about how her teacher looked, "She was really elegant or "Oh! You had to see her clothes!" This shows how important it is for them. When a language teacher has got a good appearance this unconsciously attracts the students. This is more important for a language teacher. They believe that since she is the language teacher "she has to take care of her looks." So this is very important.

Sogol's mother also agreed saying that '*the language class has its own fashion*' urging that language teachers should '*choose their fashion very carefully*' and '*use colourful stuff, sportive and not too formal*'.

Almost, all of these parents regardless of being the parents of boys and girls thought that their children paid attention to the looks of their teachers and the way they dressed and also personally believed that teacher's should pay attention to their attire, as suitable clothes make them more effective.

8.4 Parents' Perception of Language Teachers' Knowledge and Those Professional Skills that Contribute to Their Effectiveness

Parents were encouraged to share their views about what they thought effective language teachers at schools should know and teach and what they should consider when teaching. All of the parents had some comments in these regards, which went under three sub-themes as shown in table 8.2. The deductive analysis of these responses led to the creation of different codes for each of these sub-themes. In this section the relevant findings are presented.

8.4.1 Teacher's Pedagogic and Language Knowledge

Language proficiency level with more emphasis being placed on some of the skills and sub-skills and also knowledge of teaching methods and pedagogy were the themes the parents believed would contribute to language teachers being more effective. In this section their arguments are addressed in more detail. Table 8.6 demonstrates the codes concerning the teachers' knowledge, which were created again based on the analysis of the interviews.

As can be seen in table 8.6 **speaking** received the most number of comments among the skills parents believed teachers were required to have. Farjad's mother along with the six other parents believed, *'The teacher should know how to speak the language very well'*. Some parents gave reasons for the importance of teachers' knowledge of speaking. Milad's mother thought that this could be a good source of motivation and boost the confidence of the leaner.

> Milad's mother: They [the students] will think that since their teacher can speak the language very fluently, they, too, can learn that as well. They would think that I am capable, too. My teacher could do it, so can I.

Fatemeh's mother believed this knowledge can be transferred to the students.

> Fatemeh's mother: Speaking is the most important. She should be really good in that so that children can learn as well.

Codes	Definitions	No of parents	No of comments
Speaking	Language teachers' ability and knowledge to speak English fluently	7	11
Sub-skills	Language teachers' knowledge of grammatical rules and vocabulary	3	6
Reading, writing and listening	Language teachers' ability to read, write and understand English with no difficulty	2	2
Culture	Knowing and using the proverbs, figures of speech	1	2
General knowledge	Language teachers' knowledge of English more than the course-book's requirements	12	16
	Language teachers' knowledge of areas unrelated to language and language teaching		
Knowledge of the material in the book	Knowledge of only the content of the book with not much need for more information	7	12
Teachers' pedagogical knowledge	Language teachers' level of education and length of experience that can contribute to them becoming more effective along with their knowledge of pedagogy and language teaching methods and practice	7	9
		Total	58

Table 8.6 Codes related to teachers' knowledge as parents interpret them

It should be highlighted that none of the parents commented on teachers' accent.

Teachers' knowledge of the two ***sub-skills*** was not as popular as was expected prior to the interviews. Only two parents directly mentioned grammar and believed that teachers knowledge of grammar and language rules were very important. The same is true about vocabulary.

> Amir Reza's mother: Secondly, being knowledgeable. He should know many words. They say that in modern language teaching vocabulary is very important, not that grammar is not. I say vocabulary with no grammar is useless. I think the teacher should work on both words and grammar. These are inseparable.

As mentioned earlier, even though speaking is the least of the skills emphasised in language classes in schools in Iran, the parents showed more eagerness in

teachers' knowledge of that compared to *reading, listening and writing*. Only three parents commented that the teacher should have knowledge of all language skills. This can of course be due to the fact that the parents take it for granted that teachers are competent in reading, writing, listening and grammar and have a wide vocabulary.

In all of the interviews made with all the participants *culture* was brought up only twice and by Mobina's parent, who believed that good language teachers know about the foreign language's culture.

> Mobina's mother: The language teacher should at least be familiar with the culture of the new language 70 or 80%. She should have both university education and know the culture of the country.

Some parents believed that language teachers should be very *knowledgeable* and should know in Sogol's mothers' words '*all aspects of language very well*'. Some clarified that by this they meant that teachers' *language proficiency* should be beyond the *knowledge of the content of the course-book* they were teaching. Mohammad, Milad and Mohadaseh's parents equated teacher's knowledge to being a competent teacher and gaining credibility.

> Milad's mother: His [the language teacher's] knowledge should be perfect. He should attract the students.
> Mohadaseh's mother: If the teacher has enough knowledge then she can teach well. The teacher should be very knowledgeable and should know everything about language.

Marziyeh's mother was the only parent who thought less experienced teachers with less knowledge should also be given an opportunity.

> Marziyeh's mother: You know not all teachers have been experts from day one. They need to gain the experience to become masters. This is asking too much to expect a teacher who is working in our community to know everything. Everybody needs a good job and some people choose to become teachers. She probably has enough knowledge of the language, but it is really not so important. She can learn while she is teaching. It is not fair to expect only experienced teachers would comer and teach and then leave out the teachers who are in their 30s or are younger, because they may not know some things. One day she would know as much as the experienced ones.

Besides Marziyeh's mother, three other parents talked about teachers' university education and job experience. But they did not share her views and thought that teachers' education and experience played a very important role in their effectiveness.

> Sogol's mother: [The teacher should have] At least a BA or an MA. She should know all aspects of language. Be well educated and knowledgeable. Particularly speaking is very important and necessary.

> Mobina's mother: I think having good mastery is really important, both classic education I mean university education and applied. I mean the teacher should use the language as if it were her mother tongue, using the proverbs, figures of speech.

Amir Reza's mother emphasized the importance of teachers' knowing psychology:

> Amir Reza's mother: So you know it is important for the teacher to know psychology to be able to communicate with the children.... Firstly being a good psychologist in the area of adolescents.

All in all, in order for a language teacher to be effective, parents placed a lot of emphasis on teachers' language proficiency; however, the surprising point was many put their fingers on the one skill that is not considered of prime importance in the class, speaking.

8.4.2 Choice of Content

The subjects and skills the parents believed the language teachers should concentrate on more while teaching English at schools were also put forth during the interview. Table 8.7 demonstrates parents' choices, which fell into two broad categories: the material focused on in the syllabus and the material not in the syllabus. As can be seen in table 8.7 the latter received many more comments. This is important since as also mentioned in the previous chapters the course-books and syllabi for all subjects including English are prepared and determined by the MOE and there is not much room for flexibility. Particularly the final exams for all the 8[th] grade students throughout Iran are prepared, distributed and even marked by the teachers selected by the MOE; and therefore, the students own teachers are obliged to follow a strict syllabus that would help them to pass the tests. The skills and sub-skills emphasized in the syllabus are reading, grammar, vocabulary and translation. While speaking, listening, writing and on the whole usage do not receive much attention.

Among the 13 parents who gave their opinion about teachers' choosing the ***material in the syllabus***, there were three parents who directly declared that the priority should be given to that, so that students could pass their tests successfully. They

were not against activities beyond the prescribed syllabus but believed that they should be done only provided there was some extra time.

> Milad's mother: I say school books should be the priority. When the students could handle them and read them, they become interested and would read material from outside, like story books.

Code	Definition	No of students	No of comments
Material mostly emphasized in the syllabus	Parents' general opinion about the material in the book and giving particular attention to *grammar, reading, translation and vocabulary* as the subjects and skills	13	25
Material given less or no priority in the syllabus	Parents' opinion about teachers including material not concentrated on in the book and therefore focusing on *speaking, writing and listening and* using alternative teaching methods and techniques such as storytelling	14	41
		Total	66

Table 8.7 Codes related to teachers' knowledge as parents interpret them

Fatemeh's mother also believed that the teachers' decision to include activities beyond the prescribed syllabus should mainly depend on the ability of the students of the class.

> Fatemeh's mother: Choosing to teach material other than the book would really depend on the class and the teacher. If the teacher thinks that the class can handle it then she should. They should consider the average student, not the very weak or the very smart ones.

Among the subjects included in the syllabus *grammar* received controversial comments. Some parents thought it was the most important subject to be included in the classes, while there were a few who were not really supporting grammar. Some comments prioritizing the teaching of grammar were:

> Ali Akbar's father: Grammar is the main thing. If one does not know grammar, he won't learn a thing. It would parrot learning. Learning has to be from the basics. Conversation is important too, but grammar is more important.

> Farjad's mother: Of course beside that [conversation] grammar is important because if they [the students] know rules then they can converse.

Mobina's mother did not think the way grammar was taught was effective.

> Mobina's mother: I am a (Persian) literature teacher myself. Our children have problems when it comes to learning grammar, and this is despite the fact that we have included grammar in their lessons from 4^{th} grade. But even during the last year of school and for the entrance exam to university they still do not do very good in grammar. This shows that we are not doing a good job as far as grammar is concerned.

Vocabulary was not mentioned very often. Those three parents, who talked about words, though believed that learning words was quite important.

> Amir Reza's mother: I say vocabulary with no grammar is useless. I think the teacher should work on both words and grammar. These are inseparable.

> Zahra's mother: I keep telling my daughter to learn many words, even when she is preparing for her tests I tell her to spend time on spelling and vocabulary. Then she can learn grammar in a few hours.

Only one parent talked about *translation* and just mentioned that it was important. Translation is of course a major part of the lesson and is included in the oral test.

Six parents believed that **covering material not included in the syllabus**, such as practising conversation or taking stories, pictures and posters to the class could attract the students; and therefore, could prove useful. Mobina's mother was among these parents.

> Mobina's mother: Language is in one of those subjects that if there are some posters and pictures it will good. If the teacher spends time for teaching things besides what is in the books it is really good. Also there is no need to teach all the material and all the verb tenses every year. If we reduce the amount of teaching material and include things that would be more useful to the children it is better.

It should be noted that at this stage parents expressed their interest or concern over the inclusion of materials beyond the prescribed syllabus and what they thought those should be. Later on and as will be seen in 8.4.3 they clarified how they wanted them to be implemented.

Speaking or as some parents put it '*conversation*' was mentioned more than any other skill. Once again it should be emphasized that this is definitely not in harmony with the syllabus. Alireza' and Farjad's mothers like many other parents gave the priority to conversation. Almost all parents thought that learning to speak was important for their children and should be included in the syllabus. *Reading* and *writing* were discussed more than *listening*, which only received one comment.

It seems that parents were concerned that their children would pass the exams successfully, but at the same time they had higher expectations. They liked them to learn how to speak in English and some believed that this would happen if some techniques that would appeal to the learners would be included in the lessons. In other words the effectiveness of the language teachers was seen to be partly

through the content they chose to include in the syllabus and also how they would demonstrate it. Section 8.4.3 which deals with parents' views on class management will better clarify this last point.

8.4.3 Class Management

How the teachers control the class, how they attract the students and how they encourage them to study are among the points parents made numerous comments about. This theme received more comments than any other and as table 8.8 shows five codes emerged.

Code	Definitions	No of parents	No of comments
Creating an interesting climate	Teachers' effort to create a peaceful, friendly and stress-free environment where learning would be considered fun	12	40
Engaging in activities beyond the prescribed syllabus	Activities unrelated to the lesson of the day	13	24
	Activities to consolidate what has already been taught		
	Talking together and having fun activities		
Making the lesson understandable	Clear explanation of the lesson	11	22
	Eloquence		
Language of instruction	The language to be used in the class as the main means of instruction	8	11
Tests	Administering tests to consolidate learning	5	5
	Teachers' teaching towards the test		
		Total	102

Table 8.8 Codes related to teachers' classroom practice as parents see it

Considering the students' mood and motivation, encouraging the students, and involving them in class activities all can come under the umbrella of **creating an interesting environment**. Parents had many comments about this theme. They basically thought that dry, boring and very serious classes were not useful. Ali Akbar's father was in favour of a class that was not '*monotonous'.* Alireza's mother also referred to a teacher whose son really liked.

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> Alireza's mother: I even heard the teacher using the words and expressions popular with teenagers. They would laugh together. This would attract the students.

Mobina's mother had a lot to say in this regard and provided some practical suggestions:

> Mobina's mother: I think in a language class interaction between the two sides is very important, both speaking and listening, between the teacher and the students and the students among themselves. I mean if the class is handled in a way that the children enjoy it, and use even one word that they learn and see that others understand them and the other person would say something that they would understand it is great. I think that class should be full of conversation and dialogue. Then using things like pictures, such as the pictures in the book, or what the teacher might draw on the board, or the students, or pictures hanging on the wall of the class are good. Teacher taking advantage of the works of the students is also good. So that the students would have the opportunity to see and look at the words and sentences or pictures to remember them. It can be from a grammatical rule that students have problems with and might forget. I think if the class is managed like this I think it would be far from boring and the lesson becomes more interesting and would make the students happier.

These comments all suggest that parents like their children to willingly engage in learning and they think this can happen only if the teacher creates the kind of environment the students enjoy. They all believe this kind of environment promotes learning and makes it more meaningful. Maryam's father suggestion that the class should be '*happy, exciting and stress-free'* somehow summarizes this code.

As was also mentioned in section 8.4.2, language teachers ***engaging in activities beyond the prescribed syllabus*** was a priority for many of the parents that would be fun and at the same time can enhance language learning, e.g. telling jokes or practising conversation; and reading stories. A part of this can be directly linked to the previous code as these activities can create a light-hearted climate. Spending time on guiding and advising students is also considered very helpful and parents believe it should be a part of any language class. Maryam's father believes that the first duty of the teacher is '*to create hope and interest in the foreign language in the minds of the learners'*. He believes that showing the students '*how important it is to know a language for their future'* is very helpful. Zahra's mother and Ali Akbar's father also believe that it is the job of the language teacher to encourage the students and persuade them that knowing a new language is important. Amir Reza's mother admired the current language teacher of her son.

> Amir Reza's mother: [Talking about the current teacher of her son] I think firstly he tried to teach children ethics. ….I felt he wanted to direct the students to the right path from the bottom of his heart….

Farjad's mother is not against spending a part of the time of the class being spent on talking about subjects not directly related to the syllabus; however, she still thinks a limit should be set.

> Farjad's mother: [The teacher discussing topics not related to the lesson] is also good, but I prefer that they study the lesson. Maybe 5 to 10 minutes of other issues is good, so that there will be a change and the students have a break, but the lesson is the most important part.

Some parents had even suggestions on how some of the activities beyond the prescribed syllabus had better be done.

> Amir Reza's mother: By easy conversation, I mean stuff like everyday greeting and things like that.

> Milad's mother: The teacher can take a story book to class and read nicely and attract the children. He could for example say that he would read half of the story and then would ask the students to read the rest and then he would ask one sentence from each of the students. He should encourage them by telling them how good this activity is. This will help all the students to learn.

In order to *make the lesson understandable*, parents believed that teachers could use different techniques and assignments such as giving clear definitions, giving homework, doing exercises and revision and answering all the questions that students have.

> Mohammad's sister: A good teacher can transfer knowledge and put it in the minds of the student. This is an art. For example, I am good in math, but I can only solve the problems, I can't explain the process...I also think the eloquence and rhetoric that the teacher uses is very important. The teacher should be able to explain beautifully. He should know how to explain so that the other people would understand and accept the information, good explanation which is not the same as having good public relations.

Milads' mother, who was complaining about the current teacher, believed:

> The teacher does not pay attention to the students and does not explain things thoroughly. He does not give them clear definitions and clear explanations. The teacher says it is the responsibility of the child to study. I believe the teacher should work hard and then expect the child to try harder.

One point worth mentioning here is that this mother was basing her opinion on the information her son had provided her with concerning the teacher's performance and was not in direct contact with the teacher. This indicates how she trusted her son's judgement, which maybe a sign that shows parents' changing attitudes towards

teacher effectiveness and their being influenced by their children's demands and perspective. This might be a point that teachers should pay closer attention to.

There was disagreement among parents concerning what language should be used in the class as the main *language of instruction*. Some parents were worried that if the teacher used only English, their students would not be able to follow. Zahra and Marziyeh's mothers were among them.

> Zahra's mother: Many teachers think that if they only speak English in the class it is good; it is good, but only if it can make the lesson more interesting, so that the children would not get tired. The children believe that the lesson is not interesting at all and when the teacher speaks English all the time, they just stare at her for 90 minutes.

> Marziyeh's mother: If she speaks English all the time, the students get tired. Sometimes my daughter comes and says, "Today the teacher spoke English all the time and we had a hard time".

Some, on the other hand, think that if most of the class was held in English it would be much better and the students would be more motivated.

> Maryam's father: When she enters the class and from day one she had better use that second language she is teaching, even if the students don't understand. So instead of for example saying the Farsi equivalent of stand up she can show the student what she means. This is much better.

Finally a few favoured a combination of English and Persian. Amir Reza's mother was among them.

> I think to begin with if everything is in English, I don't know, I don't have the experience but I assume it won't work. But if half the conversation in the class is in English and half in Farsi and the English begins from easy conversation, I think everybody can learn better. This is my assumption. I don't have any knowledge about language learning.

Five parents insisted that *tests* and frequent questions asked by the teacher were really useful. Fatemeh's mother believed, '*The teacher should ask the students questions and conduct tests'.* Regarding that Iran's system of education is very much test-oriented and competition is very much favoured, tests were expected to be mentioned more frequently by the parents.

8.5 Conclusion

This section focused on parent's demands from the language teachers of their children and thus attempted to answer the second research question, which

concerned the parents' views on the characteristics that could contribute to making the language teachers in public schools in Iran more effective.

The most important ramification of this section is that most of the parents interviewed were not in direct and constant contact with the language teachers. In other words, parents' share in the language learning of their students was not significant. It could be seen that they did not see themselves in the position to could contribute to enhancing the language knowledge of the students. This view is contradictory to what the interviews revealed as when they were given a voice they had much to say. Therefore, among the most significant contributions of the current study, to help teachers become more effective and thus the children to learn English, might be encouraging schools to involve parents by seeking their help, listening to them and giving them information about the language learning process. In addition, as will be further discussed in the next chapter parents voiced concerns and points which were very similar to what the students had said and this illustrates the effect of family context in forming opinions and thus their satisfaction can result in their child's positive attitude towards learning and teachers and vice-versa.

All of the parents unanimously agreed that learning English was very important; however, it seemed that many did not have faith in schools in this regard. Some believed that if the students knew the importance of knowing a language, then they would try harder; therefore, the language teachers' attempt to create an interesting climate and motivation were the top priorities for these parents. They had some suggestions in this regard, which included teachers' choice of clothing and appearance, teachers' kindness and teachers' language proficiency and choice of content. Most of the parents liked their children to learn how to speak English and at the same time there were a few who were concerned about the exams and their children's performance in them and felt that the main concern should be given to that.

On the whole, even though some parents claimed that they were not sure and were not confident enough about how an effective language class should be managed, and in particular, what an effective language teacher should be like and do, most of them had much to say.

9. Discussion

9.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data, and considers them in the light of the research literature on teacher effectiveness. Accordingly, the answer to the main research question is sought by going into the depth of some of the points that are believed to make a language teacher in secondary schools in public schools in Tehran more effective. The first section of this chapter elaborates on the theoretical basis of the study. The second part then seeks to focus on the reasons that some of the characteristics relating to teacher effectiveness have stood out in the current study. This is mainly done by comparing and contrasting the perceptions of teacher effectiveness of all the participants. A holistic view of the themes which emerged in the study comprises the last section of this chapter. This also serves as the summary of the key issues.

One point worth re-emphasizing at the very beginning of this chapter is that a large number of characteristics for effective language teachers could be attributed to teachers of other subjects as well. The fact is that language teachers are also teachers and therefore, commonalities do exist. However, as Borg (2006) puts it certain characteristics are "unique to the domain of language teaching". For instance, Grossman and Shulman (1994) believe that due to the complexity of the subject, language teachers need greater autonomy in developing the curriculum and need to be able to maximize the involvement of students in a language they do not have full mastery. Therefore, as said by them commitment to learners, subject matters and social conditions, along with pedagogical understanding and knowledge are important. Borg (2006) and later on Lee (2010) also confirm that a very close and relaxed relationship between language teachers and their students is imperative, because a more relaxed environment encourages more interaction. In addition, many studies (Bell, 2005; Brosh 1996; and Mullock, 2003) have also highlighted the fact that it is not only the knowledge about the language that is considered important, but also the knowledge of the target language as is emphasized. Therefore, since there is diversity in approaches to language teaching depending on the needs of the students and also the socio-cultural and educational contexts where the they work,

language teachers should be constantly seeking to develop their subject matter and pedagogic knowledge (Park & Lee 2006).

9.2 The Theoretical Framework

As mentioned in chapter three, several major studies have taken place concerning teacher effectiveness (Campbell et al, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Goe and Croft, 2008; Goe and Little 2009; Hattie, 2008; Markely, 2004; Mcber, 2001, etc) and language teacher effectiveness (Barkhuizen, 1998; Bell, 2005; Brown 2009; Hammadou- Sullivan, 2004; Nikitina & Fumitaka, 2008; Park & Lee, 2006; etc). Williams and Burden (1997) believe that what teachers do is strongly influenced by their beliefs. Therefore; exploring perceptions is justifiable for a study conducted to identify the characteristics of effective language teachers. However, according to Barcelos and Kalaja (2003) research about beliefs in applied linguistics, language teaching also included, has begun rather late and just in the 1980. At the same time, according to Brown (2009, p.47), "relatively few studies have specifically compared and contrasted individual teachers' perceptions of effective teaching practices with those of the students". Besides, reviewing the relevant literature indicates that even fewer studies have also involved the parents at the same time. Therefore, the current research set out to address this gap by soliciting the perceptions of all the stakeholders. To be specific, the study explores the perceptions of language teacher effectiveness held by Iranian students, parents and teachers.

Now after having studied and to some degree analyzed the perceptions, we can approach the main research question and seek to answer it: "What characterizes effective language teaching in Iran?" It is undisputable that teaching is a very complex and multidimensional job, and at the same time what might be considered effective in one context and even class might totally fail in another. Therefore, no definite answer to this question can be provided. As this study is principally qualitative, it does not set out to offer a single understanding of stakeholders' perceptions of teacher effectiveness in Iran, rather it sets out to provide a rich and nuanced understanding of the multiple ways in which language teacher effectiveness is perceived.

All in all, the aim of this study was providing new insights into language teacher effectiveness in a specific context. The questionnaire data provides an initial

overview of the concept of language teacher effectiveness in secondary schools in the capital city of Iran. Drawing on the findings from the questionnaire, provided the opportunity for exploring the individual and subjective understandings of those involved. The aim is to help teachers to reach a better understanding of what is desired in the context they work in. Highlight

9.3 The Importance of Perception

Illustrating the significance of the stakeholders' perception and its place in a study of this kind may better clarify the whole purpose of the current study.

Since 1970s many studies have acknowledged the importance of perceptions and knowing about them in educational environments and language classes are no exception. (Barcelos and Kalaja, 2003; Bell, 2005; Brosh, 1996; Brown, 2009; Horwitz, 1998; Schulz, 1996) The studies suggest that perceptions are dynamic, socially constructed and paradoxical; therefore, gaining and understanding of the stakeholders' perceptions can be critical. Schulz (1996, p.349) believes that "while opinions alone do not necessarily reflect the actual cognitive processes that go on in language acquisition, perceptions *do* influence reality." Perception is not seen as scientifically irrelevant and is considered an important concept as it can affect attitude, motivation and performance. As Brown (2009) puts it, "Perceptions do influence reality." Furthermore, perceptions are changeable, as new experiences and new insights can affect them. Students' positive perception of what is happening in the class can result in better learning in most cases. (Barcelos and Kalaja, 2003; Brown, 2009) Teachers' beliefs and perceptions form their actions. The perceptions of parents, of course, are important as they can directly and indirectly affect what goes on in a classroom. They can affect their own children and even affect school authorities. Evidently, knowing about perceptions of all these stakeholders can contribute to forming a more desirable class climate; which can help in better achievement.

Despite all this emphasis on the importance of perceptions still relatively few studies have compared teachers', students' and parents' perceptions of effective teaching practice and behaviour in one study particularly in a modern and post-modern language class. Studying perceptions has demonstrated how they are constructed

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and to what extent previous experiences, cultural values and even factors and people outside the classroom can influence its formation. The current study also suggests the knowledge of the perceptions of all of stakeholders can help in providing better guidelines for all the stakeholders to learn what to do and what to expect.

9.4 Comparing Stakeholder Perceptions of Language Teacher Effectiveness

In this section, a comparison is made between the most frequently discussed characteristics of teacher effectiveness expressed by the different participating groups, teachers, parents and students. Table 9.1 selects the top eight most frequently referred to demands of each stakeholder group in order to allow comparison. These priorities are drawn from a larger set of 68 characteristics discussed by the students, 63 characteristics put forth by teachers and 57 by parents. The numbers are there to indicate relative weight, rather than to suggest any statistical import.

Studying table 9.1 shows that there are some common strands in the perceptions of teachers, students and their parents who were interviewed, but at the same time it illustrates that subtly different priorities do exist. This is not unexpected as the roles each group have at least to some extent carry their perceptions. Teachers' main job is to make learning happen and in this study this is manifested through their concern about students' learning the subject matter. Students' role in an educational environment is learning what is being taught. Here also their top priority is having teachers who teach in a way that they can understand the lesson. Parents are usually very much concerned about the emotional well-being of their children to help them develop in different aspects of their lives; therefore, their perception of effective teachers needing to create an interesting climate is very much in lines with their role.

On the whole, as the data shows students' demands are mainly related to teachers' pedagogical competence, knowledge and then the affective domain. Parents more than anything else seem concerned about affective side of language teaching. Teachers' main concern is making sure that the students have learned what has

been taught and then they comment on areas related to their class management and also interpersonal skills.

Students' most frequent comments	Frequency	Parents' most frequent comments	Frequency	Teachers' most frequent comments	Frequency
Making the lesson understandable	49	Creating an interesting climate	40	Showing concern about students' learning	48
Knowing how to speak English	44	Teaching the material not in the book	41	Relationship with students	23
Creating an interesting climate	44	Friendliness	30	Including activities beyond the prescribed syllabus	21
Knowing how to speak English	44	Relationship with students	28	Showing interest in teaching	20
Relationship with students	37	Taking care of their appearance	24	Involving the students	16
Taking care of their appearance	31	Including activities beyond the prescribed syllabus	24	Creating an interesting climate	15
Teaching speaking	29	Teachers' knowledge of Speaking	23	Planning	15
Including activities beyond the prescribed syllabus	28	Making the lesson understandable	22	Taking care of their appearance	8

Table 9.1 The most frequent comments about the characteristics and requirement of effective language teachers

To sum up, looking closely at the above data illustrates that two major areas concerning the qualities for effective language teaching, are mostly sought in Iran: Teacher's inter-personal attributes, and teaching practices. The attempt to answer the following questions then may better highlight the perceptions of language teacher effectiveness.

- What inter-personal attributes characterize effective language teaching?
- What teaching practices characterize effective language teaching?

In addition, an important point that was discussed during the course of the interviews was the perceptions relating to parents' role in the language learning of their children. It is not included in the table above as it does not directly link to characteristics of effective language teachers; but since the outcome of this

relationship can have a direct impact, this perception is also addressed in this chapter.

9.5 The Significance of Interpersonal Attributes in Language Teacher Effectiveness

The data analysis indicates that a strong theme arising from the interviews was the significance of interpersonal relationships in the stakeholders' conceptualisations of teacher effectiveness. The importance of establishing the right kind of relationship was directly mentioned by almost all of the stakeholders. Table 9.1 illustrates that the code 'relationship with teachers' is in the top eight characteristics of effectiveness of students, parents and teachers. Equally, a teacher's ability to create an interesting classroom climate, something which depends on constructive interactions and relationships with students and his or her friendliness were also prominent. In the interviews, participants frequently used words and phrases such as friendliness, kindness, seriousness, discipline, and sense of humour, when talking about teacher effectiveness.

The importance of establishing the right kind of teacher-student relationship has always been a priority in language teaching (Harmer, 2007; Nguyen, 2007, Richards and Rogers, 2002; Scrivener, 2005). In some language teaching methods such a grammar-translation method this relationship has been very formal and top-down. In more modern approaches; however, this relationship is viewed very differently and the main demand is creating a relaxed atmosphere and a friendlier relationship. Senior (2008, p.5) refers to this relationship as rapport and defines it as "a harmonious, sympathetic relationship or connection between people" and believes that it is frequently "the relationship between people with unequal levels of power, with the person in power offering something of themselves to others." She believes this is what takes place in a class, "where teachers can choose to remain distant and aloof or seek to establish a bond with their class group." Many other studies have also acknowledged the importance of establishing a rapport. Brosh (1996, p.126) for example, believes that in a language classroom communication is "an intellectually, psychologically, sociologically, physiologically, and linguistically complex process"; and therefore, he puts emphasis on the quality of the interaction between the teachers and students to determine the teachers' role in the academic growth of the

learner. Horwitz et al (1999, p.576) based on the extensive revision of the existing literature on the affective reactions in the language classroom reached the conclusion that since language learning "seems to be a more ego-involving activity than most other kinds of school learning", the personal bond between teacher and students become very intense. Among the more recent studies Aydin et al's study (2009) conducted in Turkey which sought language teachers' perception of affective domain of language teaching suggests that Turkish teachers regardless of the context they work in and their job experience all value affective domains. However, not all could address them in their teachings due to some environmental circumstances. Wichadee's (2010) study indicates that language teachers' having a pleasant personality is among the three top priorities for Thai students. By that they mean a teacher who is fair, friendly and not bad tempered.

Thus, both in the literature and in the data arising from this study, the importance of establishing a rapport in the classroom, founded on good relationships, is evident. However, despite general agreement on the importance of this rapport, in the current study, different stakeholders had slightly different interpretations of rapport and how it should be manifested.

In general, as illustrated in section 6.3.1, students valued friendly language teachers, but at the same time they tended to dislike teachers who would constantly joke, or talk about themselves. They thought that these teachers would not be able to control the class and students would not respect them. They expected the teachers to carefully choose when to act seriously and when to be a little humorous. Even though more than half of the students had mentioned that they did not like the teacher to act as the sole authority in the class, they still recognised the need for the teacher to maintain class discipline. The students who took part in Park & Lee's study (2006) in South Korea, also believed that teachers should maintain "good classroom discipline using authority if necessary (p.243). Widdowson (1990, p.188) differentiates between the terms "authoritative" and "authoritarian" and believes that being an authoritative teacher is based on "professional qualification" and is important for monitoring and guiding the progress of the students, whereas 'authoritarian' teachers as Underhill (1989) puts it exercise their power over the learners without paying attention to their needs. Students in this study appear to

value authoritative teaching, which can combine the necessary degree of monitoring with good humour and friendliness. This ability to combine friendliness with professional authority chimes with Senior's (2006) conclusions on effective teaching. She sees class-centred teaching as the most effective and believes that in this type of class, "While understanding the importance of retaining their authority as teachers and maintaining acceptable norms of behaviour, they [teachers] also know the importance of relaxing and going with the flow when they sense it's appropriate to do so."

Teachers also mentioned friendly relationships (Refer to 7.4.1), but their interpretation of it was mainly focused on mutual respect and not necessarily a close relationship. At the same time, the teachers held rather different, and at times, conflicting views of an appropriate classroom relationship. One of the four teachers, for instance, believed that it is acceptable that a teacher who is very concerned about his students' development should reprimand them and saw students being afraid of him while he was teaching as a sign of their respect. This was in contrast with one of the female teacher's views, who believed in the well-being of students (Refer to p.164) even if they did not learn what she was trying to teach them. She had decided to respect the students regardless of their weakness in learning. But all of the teachers seemed to agree that giving students more opportunities to enhance their behaviour and, more importantly, their test scores would be a manifestation of their kindness. They all considered this very important.

As section 8.3.1 also shows parents' interpretation of an effective rapport was yet again subtly different. To many of the parents, teachers' building rapport meant their ability to create an environment that would motivate students and encourage them to learn English, or to learn the content of their language course-book. Parents, then, seemed to value the teacher's ability to establish relationships and rapport which were motivational. One mother recalled her own experience as a language learner and how her teacher's friendliness had an impact on the willingness of the students to learn (albeit less successful in this mother's case!)

> From the very first day, she talked to us so nicely and this was very exciting to us all. The relation was friendly and we all loved her. She spent the first month or even 40 days just communicating with us and building a friendly relation, then gradually began speaking English in the class and did not use much Farsi. This made us pay

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attention to details and she would be able to teach. ….She made the importance of the lesson clear to us, some of us took her advice and continued and some couldn't. I couldn't.

Some parents believed the teachers' duty was to inform the students of the importance of knowing the language by, for example, providing examples of the people who were successful because of knowing English. (Refer to p.198) Dörnyei (1998, p.279) identifies "teacher-specific motivational components" which he believes are "teachers' personality, teaching style, feedback and teacher's relationship with the students." He then links this to affiliative drive, which is the students' desire to please the teacher they admire by doing well. Among the characteristics that he believes the teachers should possess to become good motivators is modelling student interest in L2 learning by showing them that the experience of language learning enriches their lives. This can be done by teachers' sharing their personal interest in L2 and L2 learning with the students, and taking the students' learning process and achievement very seriously. Dörnyei's thinking seems to be close to what parents believed about the value of interpersonal relationship of the teacher.

Likewise, Goe et al (2008) in the US conducted a research synthesis to develop a comprehensive definition for teacher effectiveness at schools to help with better means for evaluating teachers. They introduced a five-point definition. One of these points was teachers' "contributing to positive academic, attitudinal, and social outcomes for students" (Goe, 2008, p.8). Iranian parents did expect the teachers to encourage the students to study and pass the exams, so they seemed to have a concern for academic outcomes. However, they thought this could be done principally through creating an interesting environment and by establishing friendly relationships with the students. The majority seemed to have less interest in social outcomes as an indicator of effectiveness, in contrast to Goe's study. A small minority of parents, nonetheless, did see positive social outcomes in access to better jobs and better future perspectives as a consequence of proficiency in English. One of the fathers, for example, believed that the main duty of a teacher was to "create hope and interest in the learning of the foreign language" in the students, because in the modern world learning a second language is a necessity. (Refer to p.212)

As the above discussion illustrates the stakeholders in this study acknowledged the importance of the rapport between language teachers and students; however, the outcome that emerges from the good rapport in this context is not the same as in communicative and post-modern language classes. Kumaravadivelu (2006, p.66) has detailed elaborations on the kind of interactions that should take place in a communicative class, one of which is "interaction as an ideational activity" that encourages the participants to establish social relationship and "have interpersonal encounters" for which the creation of rapport in the class is required. In communicative classes this rapport leads to the learners being encouraged to use the FL as a means of communication and interaction. Friendliness of the group is also essential in this process and to encourage the learners to use the FL to share their personal experiences. However, since the FL is not the means of communication in almost any of the public schools, then friendliness and rapport do not lead to using English for communication in these classes. Indeed, some Iranian students mentioned that they were not comfortable having a lot of unplanned interaction with their teachers in the class. Then the friendly classroom climate may lead to students obtaining better scores in the examinations which are narrow, rule-bound tests but do not improve their communicative language ability. Thus, even though an atmosphere conducive to learning is welcome in Iran, the interpretation of friendliness seems to be the feeling of security and comfort in the class, but this does not lead to learners using the L2.

Another issue raised by many of the participants concerning effective interaction in the class was having interesting classes. Teachers, themselves, saw a positive association between their enjoying teaching and sharing their knowledge with the ability to create an interesting environment. They thought this would contribute to creating better rapport and thus enhancing language learning. This again had two aspects. The teachers' eagerness to create such climate was one of them. One of the teachers compared teachers to candles. He believed just like the candle that gives light, teachers distribute information. (Refer to p. 184)

Their ability to demonstrate that they were interested was the other aspect. Teachers' had several ways for showing this interest. Firstly, they believed showing concern for students' learning was one important sign. (Refer to p.163) Besides, as

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section 8.4.3 illustrates having a friendly relationship with the students, to teachers had a few manifestations, such as involving the students in class activities and trying to make the lesson understandable. As can be seen these were not directly related to the establishment of rapport; however, the teachers thought that if the students learned the lesson then the climate would be interesting. Then according to the teachers clarifying what is exactly expected of the students and simplifying the information would contribute in creating a better class atmosphere.

Teachers also thought that the teachers' adequate and up-to-date knowledge was another sign that suggested that they were interested in their job. They thought that teachers should be seeking new information. (Refer to p.184)

Paying attention to students' moods was also seen essential in establishing an interesting climate in the class. Ms Jalali, for example, clearly stated that students' mood cannot be overlooked. According to her if the students are upset about something they cannot learn. (Refer to p.180)

Involving the students in the class activities and delegating some responsibility to them was yet another way for the teachers to create an interesting environment. One of the teachers, Ms Mansoori, would invite the students to come and teach and believed that they really enjoyed it.

It should be noted that this delegation of responsibility to the students had apparently been welcomed by Ms Mansoori's students, but the same delegation had become a sign of teacher's disinterest in her job in Ms Jalali's class. This again shows that the perceptions of the students and teachers do not always match. (Refer to p.178)

Finally, teachers believed that careful planning and the inclusion of activities other than the ones already in their books, were important means for creating an interesting climate. (Refer to pp.177-180) Of course as will be further discussed in section 9.4 they thought that the latter was not always possible.

The above mentioned points suggest that when thinking about interesting class climate, teachers in addition to being concerned about rapport, were considering

some other factors that were basically geared towards class management and in particular the students' learning the lesson.

To all of the students having interesting classes was a major demand as well. (Refer to pp.149-150).In contrast to the teachers, they saw this mainly emerging from good class climate. They thought that teachers should pay much attention to the students' mood. This to them was teachers giving a short break in the middle of the class; cracking jokes when they realized the students were tired and on the whole doing some fun activities during class time. Additionally, some thought that teachers should show interest in their teaching. According to them teachers smiling and looking and acting happy were the evidence for that.

On the whole the students thought the teachers could show their interest mainly by, paying attention to students' mood and demands; smiling more frequently and not showing boredom and carefully choosing their words when reprimanding someone and not being verbally aggressive. Teven and Hanson's (2004) findings also verify the last point. They found that teachers who attacked students or ridiculed them, were perceived as less caring.

After all, to a minority of the students, teachers showing concern over students' learning and having high knowledge were the signs that suggested they were interest in their job.

Parents also seemed to be in complete agreement with their children. Parents thought that if the classes were monotonous, their children would not like to attend them; and therefore, attracting the students was seen as the responsibility of the teacher. (Refer to p.211)

A major point emerging from the current study is that even though all the four teachers in the current study viewed their teaching as at least partly effective and seemed to show genuine interest in their job, not all the students agreed with them. On the one hand, the fact that these teachers agreed to be interviewed for the current study and during the interview showed enthusiasm about their job can be the sign of their interest in their job. They sometimes directly and through what they said,

and sometimes indirectly by showing how they planned the lessons and what they did in their classes demonstrated their interest in language teaching. One of the teachers, for example, had mentioned that even if the facilities of the schools were adequate, when the teacher was not interested in her job, he/she would not succeed.

Another indication of their interest in their jobs may be their interest in pursuing their own education, even with their quite extensive relevant job experience. On the other hand, a part of the study illustrated that not all students thought their current teachers had genuine interest in teaching them. The current data demonstrated that two of the four teachers had been successful in showing that to the majority of their students, while the other two had not. In one of the classes almost none of the students who took part in the study were happy or satisfied with their language teacher. (Appendix 15) Based on the findings of other studies that have illustrated the association between teacher-liking and subject liking (Furlong et al., 2000), my initial expectation was that the students of this particular teacher would not perform well in the test. However, the result of the second test the students took during the current study showed that these students had made the most improvement compared to all the other participating classes. Upon further investigation to unfold the reason for this, I realized that the same students had a very high opinion about their previous language teacher. According to them she had left the school due to a disagreement she had with the headmistress; therefore, there was an initial resistance for any teacher who would substitute her. Besides, this new teacher had adopted some teaching practices that the students were unfamiliar with and did not welcome. The students saw the activities as a sign of the teacher being unconcerned and uninterested in her job, and this was another reason for students' disliking their teacher. Williams and Burden (1997) also believe that if students' perceptions of what the teacher does do not fully match the teachers' intentions, serious consequences including students' dislike to continue their language learning can be expected. Nunan, (1988, p.95) too, emphasises that teachers "should provide maximum amount of information to learners" to help them better learn. Apparently this teacher had failed to provide this information. On the whole, the results of this part of the study suggest potentially contradictory stances between teachers' and students' perceptions about what comprises an interesting language class and what actually takes place.

Overall, building the right rapport and having the willingness and ability to run an interesting classroom were emphasized and teachers who were interested in their teaching were thought to make that happen.

A final point worth mentioning before concluding this section concerns the relationship between enthusiasm for the target language and culture' and being a more effective language teacher. Some studies including Bell (2005), Brown (2009) and Saito and Ebsworth's (2004) have supported this, even though the populations they have studied were very different. Bell's consisted of post-secondary teachers of foreign languages in the US, while Brown sought the perception of both teachers and university students. Saito and Ebsworth's (2004) study concentrated on Japanese students learning English. On the other hand, some other studies point towards a different direction. Brosh (1996, p. 32), for example, reports that based on his finding 87.9 percent of students and 95.6 percent of the teachers he studied perceived "cultural knowledge of the target language as irrelevant and unimportant for effective language teaching". The same is also applicable to Iran. The Iranian stakeholders seem to like the teachers to enjoy teaching itself and conveying their knowledge to the students and this to them does not necessarily translate into liking the language and culture. Cultural issues are very sensitive areas and due to socio-political circumstances are in most cases avoided in Iran. Knowledge about culture is then not seen as a requirement for language teachers in public schools. Also the Iranian stakeholders did not see teachers' appreciation of the target language and knowledge about culture as a requirement for being considered more effective.

9.6 Appearance

An unanticipated finding of the study is the connection between language teachers' appearance and their effectiveness**.** (Refer to sections 5.2.3; 6.3.2; 7.4.2; 8.3.2)The evidence from this study suggests that good appearance might lead to the teachers being more favoured and thus resulting in their effectiveness. This view is shared among most of the participants, some emphasizing it more than the others. When referring to appearance, the stakeholders were mainly referring to the teachers' choice of clothes and in particular their wearing neat and tidy clothes with nice and matching colours. Most of the girl participants believed that having female teachers who added variety to their choice of attire was something they liked, checked and

talked about among themselves. Based on the information collected from the questionnaires about 60 percent of the boys who had filled in the questionnaire had also considered their teachers' choice of attire important for making them more effective. However, during the interview some of the boys did not acknowledge it as much. This is while the majority of the parents of both boys and girls besides believing that teachers' being well-dressed played a positive role in their becoming more effective, thought this was demanded by their children. It should be noted once again that the teachers of the boys are all male. The reasons for the boys hesitation is not very clear, but it is likely that these selected boys did not feel comfortable discussing it. It can also be assumed that parents were basing their judgement on their own interpretation. Of course all the information derived from the study suggests that the former seems to be more likely. Finally, the two female teachers and one of the male teachers also acknowledged the importance of taking care of their looks and clothes as according to them this was welcomed by their students. Due to certain characteristics and beliefs that the other male teacher had, I decided not to seek his opinion in this regard. Generally, the majority of the stakeholders showed enthusiasm about the importance of language teachers' choice of attire, at times parents and children emphasising it more than the teachers.

Furthermore, a few of the interviewees including two of the teachers thought that elegance and sense of fashion were more important for language teachers as compared to the teachers of other subjects. This was also pointed out in the questionnaire when the majority of the students had said that they thought that language teachers had to be at least in some aspects different from other teachers.

Finally, further scrutiny may reveal that what the stakeholders view of being well-dressed, does not translate equally for all, but it is something that the teachers both male and female are expected to be well aware of and pay attention to.

A point worth mentioning here is that very few other studies on teacher effectiveness have acknowledged the importance of teachers' choice of clothing and appearance. Politzer and Weiss's (1971; quoted in Brosh, 1996) indication of the importance of teachers' physical appearance is among the few references made in this regard. Among some characteristics they put forth the importance of a teacher's physical

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appearance: dress, hair style, height, weight, age, general health, and neatness. Brosh's (1996) interpretation of the characteristics they have introduced concerning effective language teachers, appearance being only one of them, was that "they contribute to creating a constructive class atmosphere and obtaining students' cooperation" (p.126). Iranian students seem to completely agree with this point. It should be once again emphasised that Iran is a Moslem country and people are expected to dress very conservatively and observe the Islamic laws when choosing their clothing for public places. Even though the participants were well aware of the fact and as some made it clear they did not expect the teachers to disobey or disregard the laws, still teachers' paying attention to their appearance was very much desired. This much attention being paid to teachers' appearance may seem surprising. Analysing the reasons for this is beyond the scope of this study; however, just in order to very generally clarify the point, I have included my own understanding here.

The social circumstances in particular in larger cities in Iran put a lot of emphasis on the choice of attire and looks. In most cases this is to focus on the importance of conservation and decency. Looking at the history of Iran during the past century shows some ups and downs in this regard. About 100 years ago, women who all covered their hair and observed the Islamic codes of dressing were banned from having hijab. They were not allowed to wear black veils or cover their hair as it had been customary in public places. Many had no choice, but to accept the new circumstances and some of course welcomed it. Two years after the Islamic revolution in 1979 the women and to some extent men were once again encouraged to observe the Islamic codes of dressing. However, it seems that all this attention being paid to the way people should and should not dress has somehow made people and in particular the younger generation very alert and attentive to appearance and taking care of it as they feel is appropriate. Even though everybody tries to follow the rules in public places, Iranian women and recently men at least in larger cities pay a lot of attention to how they look and dress. And they give high value to other peoples' appearance and in particular their choice of clothes.

All in all, it seems that teachers gain more credit for taking care of their looks, they are paid more attention to and also they create better impression that can lead to

students becoming more motivated. This leads to students taking them more seriously and admiring them more. Many of the interviewees believe that the students study the lessons the better-dressed teachers teach more whole heartedly and learn them better. In other words they see this as this teacher being more effective.

9.7 Stakeholder Perceptions of Effective Teaching Practices in Language Classes

Effective teaching practices can take different forms. Class management, which is covering both pedagogical and behavioural aspects; and also choice of the content to teach fall, in this category. The stakeholders in this study, too, indicated their concern about these issues and in particular concentrated on the inclusion of activities beyond the prescribed syllabus and teaching methods that may contribute to better teaching of the lesson. This is despite the fact that the syllabus and the pedagogy are pre-determined by the Iranian MOE, which leaves little freedom for teachers to deviate from them. Even though all the stakeholders were aware of the limitations, they still had much to contribute to this topic. This section is devoted to elaborating on what they expected and the possible reasons for these demands.

The education system being very product-oriented, the priority in Iran's schools is always geared towards teaching the content of the book and thus preparing the students for the exams. Since there are some restraints imposed by, for example, time limit and exams, many teachers do not have the opportunity to practice anything other than what is provided in the course-books. However, most of the teachers, students and parents in this study welcome the insertion of activities beyond the prescribed syllabus, which according to them serves two purposes. (Refer to sections 6.4.2; 7.3.2; 8.4.2)The first is to directly consolidate the content of language course-book and usually consists of discrete grammar and vocabulary exercises. The second is to include points that are not part of the syllabus. These also have two functions: Firstly, they act as motivators and mainly consist of activities that involve some fun. Their second function is to add to the general knowledge and language proficiency of the students. These are all supposed to mainly take place during the language class time.

All of the four teachers mentioned that they were willing to invest in both types of activities; however, they were all also very much aware of the time limit and believed that covering the content of the book and teaching towards the final test were their priorities. Therefore, none of them thought that they would be able to finish the lesson by not following the contents as closely as possible. (Refer to p.179)

Students also welcomed both types of activities. (Refer to pp. 146-150) For the majority, the priority was the activities that would reinforce the learning of the lessons they would be tested on, then they thought having fun activities to create a better climate and also to promote learning were important. Going through what they said in this regard shows that choosing between test-related material and activities which would be entertaining but not included in the syllabus was some kind of dilemma for most. On the one hand, they thought that the teachers should give them enough exercises to help them pass the tests. On the other hand, they liked teachers to try to build rapport with them and create a nice climate, which they thought would partly be through the insertion of some activities that were meant to be entertaining.

Parents likewise believed that passing exams was imperative; nevertheless, most of them insisted that they liked their children to learn how to speak, a skill which is almost neglected in the current syllabus. (Refer to p. 210) They, too, liked the students to have a good time in the language classes believing that then they would have positive attitude to language learning, which in turn could enhance their learning. To many having a good time meant the insertion of stories, plays, posters, and on the whole entertaining and at the same time language-related activities in the lesson plan. Many thought that these activities would promote motivation for learning the L2.

Clearly, in such circumstances deciding what to include requires very careful planning from the side of the teacher. Teachers need to teach the content of the course-book; and thus prepare the students for the final exam and at the same time they have to decide on other types of activities to include in the classes if any at all. There is usually no feedback provided from any outside source. What takes place in the class then mainly depends on the devotion, knowledge and the creativity of the teacher. The school management is also important and should not oppose the

teachers' attempts in this regard. The students of the class, too, play a very important role. They should show interest. Besides, as the language proficiency of the students in the same class is usually not the same, choosing the right type of activity can at times be very challenging. Some students take part in language classes out of their school and among them some have begun learning English from an early age. Therefore, students in school language classes fall into three groups: the students whose only exposure to the new language is in their school classes; and therefore, their knowledge is basically limited to the content of the syllabus; the students who are very competent in all the language skills including speaking; and finally a third group who attend language classes outside school but are not as proficient as the second group. Obviously, the course-books are designed for the very first group; therefore, they can be rather challenging for them, while being uninteresting for those with better language proficiency. Accordingly, teachers' assigning new activities is also not easy, because finding activities that would accommodate and interest all groups seems to be an ordeal. Another major problem in some of the classes is that the language proficiency of the better students of the class sometimes far exceeds the knowledge of the teacher, who may only be equipped to teach the contents of the syllabus. This can be frustrating for the teacher and even for the students of the class and again can at the same time make choosing activities beyond the prescribed syllabus very difficult.

Including activities other than the ones provided directly in the syllabi and using different resources have been debated in many modern language teaching methods. In communicative, post-modern and post-method language classes teachers at least in theory are encouraged to use as many sources and activities as required to make language learning happen as smoothly as possible. Dörnyei (1994, p.281) believes that choosing the right types of authentic and supplementary materials increases "the attractiveness of the course content." Some teaching methods such as task-based language teaching, require that the teachers design or use activities that "involve real-life language use" (Willis & Willis, 2007, p.2) and for that they need to resort to many different resources. Many commercial language learning course-books, too, provide different types of supplementary materials, such as audio-visual aids, worksheets, activities and even provide guidelines and suggestions for teachers to take advantage of in their language classes. The course-books used in

public schools in Iran do not follow communicative approach and do not provide any supplementary materials. And due to time limit, logistic problems, wash-back effect of the tests, differences in the language proficiency of the students and sometimes limited knowledge of the teachers, it is not easy to include them in the syllabus. This means that the teachers are to make all the decisions. Despite all of these, since the inclusion of activities beyond the prescribed syllabus is demanded by many of the stakeholders, its significance cannot be overlooked. Generally speaking, it seems that in modern times the choice of teaching material to be used in a language classroom is quite complicated and challenging even in the classes that still avoid communicative approach. This may be at least partly due to the changing needs and demands of the new generation of students. (Brown 2002; Richards, 2001)

Teaching the students how to verbally use English is not emphasised in the language syllabus in Iranian public schools. To the Iranian stakeholders, who were interviewed, learning how to speaking English was considered very challenging. During the course of the interviews speaking was mentioned in two different areas: The importance of teachers' knowledge of speaking and also the importance of including it in the language class syllabi. (Refer to sections 5.2.4; 6.4.1; 6.4.2; 7.3.1; 8.4.1; 8.4.2) One main reason for emphasis on speaking may be that some of the stronger students who know better English would sometimes speak the language in the class. At times they may use their knowledge to challenge their teacher and sometimes to show off. The teacher then should be able to have the required oral competence to communicate with them. This once again can be a manifestation of the difficulty in the language teachers' jobs at public schools in larger Iranian cities such as Tehran, where many people have access to private language schools. Many teachers are well-equipped for teaching the content of the course-book, but they do not necessarily have the knowledge to communicate in English. In addition, these students using the L2 can intimidate the other students. Teachers then have a critical role in managing the situation.

Based on the data gathered, all of the parents and also some of the students thought that learning how to speak English was very important. Teachers, too, realized the need for that but had their own reservations. They knew that their ability to speak English would add to their credibility and also would put their minds at ease, since

they would not be challenged by the competent students; and therefore, would feel more efficacious. However when it came to teaching the students how to speak English, the interviewed Iranian language teachers were very much concerned about their limitations in teaching and even though mostly expressed their desire, did not choose speaking in English it as one of their priorities. As mentioned before, this was mainly due to the difference among the language proficiency of the students. Some students knew how to speak English fluently, while others had no knowledge of speaking at all. At the same time teachers mostly agreed that the ability to speak the language would add to the credibility of the teachers in the eyes of the students. (P.171)

The importance of teachers' knowledge of the subject matter, in this case English has also been supported in many other studies, as well. Bell (2005), Brosh (1996) Park and Lee (2006) and Wichadee's (2010) studies are just to name a few. Park and Lee, (2006) who conducted their study on language teacher effectiveness on university students and teachers in South Korea, realized that the main priority for the teachers, themselves, was having high English proficiency. As for the content of choice, some studies such as Brown's (2009) have spotted some differences between what the students wish to learn and what the teachers teach them.

Another area of controversy in the same regard was how speaking should be taught. In other words, even if the teacher was willing and thought it was possible to include speaking in the syllabi, the method was not agreed upon by many of the stakeholders including the teachers themselves. Many of the students and parents did not think that the sole language of instruction in the class should be English; and therefore, the majority favoured the teachers using both Persian and English while teaching. Many thought that using only English as the medium of instruction might get in the way of the learners' understanding the lesson and would; therefore, be intimidating to them. While a minority disagreed and believed that if the teachers spoke English in the class all the time, then little by little the learners would also learn. Teachers believed in using both languages, three mentioning that they used Persian most of the time when teaching the contents of the book to make sure that all of the students understood what was being taught. Many of the respondents including two of the teachers felt that the way to learn the language was through

exposing the students to grammatical rules. One of the teachers, for instance, insisted that without knowing the grammar rules, learning how to speak a new language would only be in the form of rote-learning, which he did not favour.

Accent was yet another speaking-related issue. (Refer to pp.119; 142; 171) Students mostly seemed hesitant about having teachers with native-like accent. They seemed to be worried that a strong native-like accent would hinder their understanding; and therefore, they believed that a teacher whose accent they could understand was more desirable. Parents, on the other hand, had no comments at all about accent and teachers' pronunciation. This might be an indication that they had never seriously considered it. Teachers' interpretation of accent was uttering words clearly with one of them placing importance on knowing both the British and American pronunciation of the words in the course-books.

On the whole, the fact that speaking was the skill elaborated on and demanded by the participants was to some extent unexpected, since in Iran the main contact with language outside the class environment, if any, comes from movies, the Internet and books and articles. The opportunity to orally use the language is very limited. Then my speculation based on my personal experience is that being able to speak the language is a manifestation of the knowledge of English to the Iranians and also adds to the eminence of the speaker. Also it might be that a person who has the ability to speak the foreign language is believed to have the ability to read, write and understand it as well. Since none of the respondents mentioned anything against the learning and knowing of these other skills, this can be a very likely assumption. Yet one more speculation could be that the Iranians are hoping to have more communication with other nations and feel that this can happen in the near future; and therefore, believe that they need to improve their oral competence in this foreign language. This was not directly mentioned of course, but derived from the context it also seems to be likely.

Finally, some skills and sub-skills including translation of the passages in the book, which is a part of the lesson and exam, were not put forth as much as speaking by most of the interviewees. This might suggest that even though the Iranian education system has so far been product-oriented, many of the stakeholders appreciate the

insertion of activities that they think would be more useful in real life even if not included in the exams. This once again reveals that teachers should have very good planning to be able to teach towards the tests and at the same time cover contents not directly related to the course, which can both promote learning and raise the spirit and interest of the students. One more point that can be emphasised here is that language teachers need the opportunity to act more autonomously, so that they will have the freedom to exercise what they consider can contribute to their students learning. The last point that can be inferred from this is the parents' dilemma between wishing their children would learn all the language skills and thus communicate with it and at the same time wanting them to pass the immediate language tests.

Students' insistence to be taught English in Persian (pp.120; 151-152) can somehow be related to another point they emphasized during the interviews. They demanded to be taught in a way that they could easily understand and thus learn the lesson. Many believed that teachers using Persian and refraining from speaking English as the medium of instruction was one way for helping them understand the lesson better. They also clarified that they liked all the points in the book to be taught with due focus on grammar, all the exercises to be checked, all their questions to be addressed, and the likely questions of the tests to be practised some insisting on these all being done mainly by the teacher. As also mentioned above students felt that teachers who provided activities beyond the prescribed syllabus gave them more opportunities for learning and sometimes provided more clarity and therefore, were more effective. Brosh's study (1996, 133), too, detected the teachers' "ability to organize, explain, and clarify" was among the desired characteristics of effective language teachers. Similarly, Goe et al (2008, p.8) mention teachers' "having high expectation for all the students and helping them learn" among the major characteristics. Having high expectations in the context of Iran can mainly be attributed to the exam scores and expecting the students to have mastery over the curriculum in a way that would help them to pass the final exam. It seems though that this is gradually changing.

To summarize, choosing and inserting activities beyond the prescribed syllabus that would both alleviate the learning of the book content and also the language

proficiency of the students is very much demanded. The most highly desired skill has been speaking. Therefore, teachers' knowledge of speaking English can not only add to their trustworthiness, but also help them plan activities that would teach learners how to speak the language. Overall, it seems that teachers' knowledge of the subject can lead to better planning, being more trusted and gaining more sense of self efficacy and thus becoming more effective.

9.8 The Absence of Communication between Teachers and Parents

The last major point that could be deduced from the interviews with the parents and teachers concerns the absence of efficient communication between parents and language teachers. This has resulted in the minimum involvement of parents in the language learning of their children and has partly resulted in not being taken very seriously by the language teachers and schools. This is while research has supported the positive role of parents in the education of their children. Spolsky's (1969) study, for instance, illustrates that attitude of the learners towards the FL plays a major role in their achievement and believes that parents are a significant source for triggering this attitude. Greenwood & Heckman (1991) also confirm the positive roles parents may play in the education of their children's education in general. They mention students' higher academic achievement, school attendance and positive attitudes among the contributions of parent involvement. However, they are aware that some parents might feel powerless in affecting schools or just decide to leave educational matters to the experts. This is seems to be the case of the Iranian parents who were interviewed. (Refer to section 8.2)

On the whole, interviews with parents showed that they had things to say about language learning and teaching and language teacher effectiveness. One point that they unanimously agreed on was the importance of their children's learning English. (Refer to p. 193) This means that they have the potential to motivate their children to learn the language. Many basically articulated what they thought their children would enjoy or seek and they seemed to agree with their points of view. Therefore, listening to them might open doors to finding out the demands of the children as well.

Of course some of the parents blamed themselves for not having enough time to get in touch with the teachers, some blamed schools for either not arranging sessions for

teachers to meet with the parents or for expecting too much from the parents and thus being insensitive to their work load at home and at work. Altogether parents did not see how they could help with the language learning of their children at school. Many thought that the one thing they could do was sending their children to private language institutions after school hours. Some could not afford it and a few believed that it would be very time consuming for their children; and had therefore, decided against it. It should be noted that even though all of the parents acknowledged the importance of the inclusion of different types of activities in the language classes, most of them did not think that learning English could actually take place in the schools, even though they very much liked it to. They were aware of the limitations and expected the children to pass the exams with possibly good marks. At the same time, many acutely expected the teachers to spend time in their classes highlighting the importance of knowing English and to create motivation.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) believe that one of the reasons parents might choose to contribute to the education of their children is the schools' willingness to get them involved. The interviews with the four teachers suggest that language teachers did not believe that parents' involvement could help and make drastic changes in the learning of the students. Therefore, none seriously sought their help. Some even thought that involving the parents would worsen the situation, because as Ms Jalai mentioned 'they interfere'. 'Informing the parents, if at all, was limited to notifying them of the weak points of their children both language and discipline wise. Another point made by both teachers and parents was that parents primarily went to school with the intention to complain about something _ usually the low mark of their children. Teachers thought that parents never went to school to thank them. It can be argued that this situation may not be only limited to language classes and maybe the teachers of other subjects also share the same experience. It is likely that this is a shared experience, but the nature of the subject and the fact that most parents are aware of the importance and many have had a difficult time learning the language may have added to the severity of the situation.

Finally, parents' showing this amount of concern for the emotional well-being of their children in the classes and also paying attention to their demands is somehow seen as a new trend. Even one of the teachers commented that parents these days paid

much more attention to what their children said about their classes compared to the parents of previous generations. This may indicate that parents are taking their children's demands and wishes more seriously. And this can be another reason for the teachers needing to listen to them and to explain to them what is going on in the classes.

9.9 Conclusion

The main aim of education has always been helping people learn and develop, but nowadays in addition to this, learners emotional well-being is also very much focused on. Learners should be given the opportunity to grow and the interest in pursuing knowledge should be cultivated in them. Therefore, adopting appropriate teaching methods does not suffice. We live in an era when teacher-effectiveness is critical for creating a healthy and productive learning environment. As Hall (2011, p.4) says "what goes on in a classroom is inevitably more than the logical and tidy application of theories and principles; it is localized, situation-specific and therefore diverse." The findings of the current study have once again proven that language teaching is a diverse experience and teachers' roles and responsibilities are at times immense. Learners should be able to trust their teachers. This trust is different from the trust that comes from the teacher's fairness. This trust seems to bring respect for the teachers as the students and thus the parents would believe that the teachers are competent enough in their jobs and also are aware of the learners' demands and needs. Teachers too seemed to need to trust themselves and feel efficacious. In order to achieve these, in this study the stakeholders were encouraged to express their views and perceptions.

This study is based on the assumption that reality is socially constructed; and therefore, needs to be constantly explored. Each individual is believed to have their own understanding of their surrounding and what happens and should happen. Therefore, here individuals were not forsaken for universalities. Reality does not always come in one form, and the aim of this study was to try to unveil the demands of the individual students, their parents and their teachers through understanding their experiences and their perceptions. Besides the researched, the researcher's understanding of the world they are exploring is critical for penetrating into the underlying assumptions. For that, establishing the connection and a mutual

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understanding between the two sides at least when possible were more than anything sought while carrying out this study.

The bottom line of this discussion is that all of the stakeholders have voices and should be heard and taken seriously. They all should take part in making decisions for the class and supporting each other. This study shows that when learners are happy and satisfied their parents are usually satisfied and this results in teachers' happiness and satisfaction. But how can the students be happy? It seems that teachers are responsible for making that happen. Teachers need to clarify the steps they are taking and do not take the attitude of "teacher knows best" (Nunan, 1998, p.95). In addition, in order to be more effective the teachers can try to consider students demands and desires, such as paying more attention to their appearance by particularly paying more attention to what they choose to put on; being friendly or at least not being aggressive and also giving a short break in the middle of the class so that the students could clear their heads possibly reflect on what has been taught during that session. Mutual respect, interesting environment, friendliness and at the same time some discipline are all considered imperative. Finally, according to Kyriacou, (1997, p.109), "Teachers should set up 'learning experiences' in which the views and opinions of pupils can be heard, developed and elaborated" and as Brown (2009, p.55) puts it "if students feel that their teachers understand their perspectives and, likewise, if teachers feel that students understand their expectations, an increase in motivation and satisfaction, may result for both groups." Since pupils at schools are still young involving the parents and putting them in the picture is also helpful. After all, as Tudor (2001, p. 104) says "the classroom is a social as well as pedagogical reality."

Chapter 10 Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

Teachers and students together create classroom realities. They bring with them their own individual and social values and act accordingly. When young learners are involved, then the views of their parents become of significance as well. Then seeking the views of teachers, students and parents about how they conceptualize teaching and how they think teachers can be most effective become very important for improving the educational achievements. In a language class; in addition to the daily practice of teaching and learning, factors such as cultural values, needs and expectations, and even the desired outcome vary from context to context and sometimes from individual to individual. This can indicate how important it can be to seek the views of those involved.

The present study has aimed at exploring the perceptions of the stakeholders concerning effective language teaching in the context of public schools in the capital city of Iran. Seeking the views of the stakeholders about their beliefs and perceptions of the characteristics of effective language teachers is a relatively recent trend and most of the studies around it have taken place in western countries. Therefore, exploring and understanding better the perceptions of the stakeholders in a non-western context can provide guidance for both policy makers and teachers wishing to stimulate their performance. In addition, through studies of this kind the significance of the perceptions of stakeholders is brought to light, as they shape and are shaped by the reality of what takes place in any educational environment. The 'insider' understanding they offer, and the multiple lenses they bring to bear on classroom practice are fundamental to understanding teacher effectiveness. Finally, the process and outcome of the studies of this kind can influence language teaching locally and at times internationally.

The first part of this final chapter provides a brief summary of the present study and then moves on to its pedagogical implications. Then a range of recommendations for teachers and policy makers follow and there is a short section providing suggestions for further research. The final remarks section is somehow the epilogue to my three year journey conducting the current study and how it has influenced me both as a researcher and as a language teacher.

10.2 Summary of the Study

The present study has explored the perception of students, teachers and parents of what comprises effective language teaching. In order to conduct the study, the main part of which took about nine months to complete, firstly the ideas of 300 male and female secondary school students from 10 schools studying in the 8th grade in public schools in Tehran were gathered. This was done through a questionnaire at the very beginning of the school year. Eventually, 190 students were selected. The sample consisted of those students who had not taken language lessons out of their schools. The main aim of this first questionnaire was to get a general view of what students thought about the characteristics of effective language teachers.

The same students were given a language test from the school course-book they were about to study along with the questionnaire. They then took the same language test and filled in another questionnaire almost towards the end of the school year. The second questionnaire had only two questions aiming to seek the opinion of the students about their present language teacher. Based on the findings of the second questionnaire and the amount of improvement the students had made from the first to the second administration of the test, four schools were selected. These were the schools whose students had made the most and the least improvements and the majority of the students assessed their current language teacher either as outstanding or very weak. Again based on the same procedure eight girls and eight boys from these four schools were selected and interviewed. Then the parents of the same students and their language teachers were also interviewed. The interviews aimed at examining and gaining a deep understanding of their perceptions of the characteristics of effective language teachers in public schools in Tehran. Finally, the interviews were studied, analyzed and compared and contrasted and consequently a set of perceived desirable characteristics for effective language teachers emerged.

The data show that stakeholders hold beliefs across a wide range of areas concerning language teacher effectiveness. One of the major issues raised is that the type of relationship between the teacher and students do matter and on the whole a positive classroom climate is very much demanded. For that the teacher needs to be perceived as kind, friendly, but at the same time capable of maintaining discipline and even knowledgeable. Effective language teachers gain credibility through their knowledge, in particular their knowledge of speaking English. In

addition, the students' learning how to speak English was a major demand of many of the stakeholders. Since oral communication in English is not a part of the curriculum, this means that teachers should go beyond the prescribed syllabus and try to include activities that would help the students learn to speak in addition to other competencies. All stakeholders wanted the students to successfully pass the tests which were based on the course-book and an effective teacher would help the students to make this happen by again providing more practice than what was provided in their books. Language teachers taking care of their appearance was another issue that the majority of the stakeholders agreed upon. It was generally agreed that language teachers who chose their clothes more tastefully were regarded as more effective. On the whole, teachers who hold stress-free classes, take care of their looks and attempt to make the lessons easier to understand and also at times go beyond the prescribed curriculum are considered very effective by most of the stakeholders. However, some discrepancies relating to how these should be actually practised in the class do exist.

Overall, a study of this nature in which the students, their parents and their teachers were given a voice in the same study in the area of language teaching has been rare. While opinions on their own may not reflect the actual processes involved in learning, they "do influence reality" (Brown, 2009, p.48). And although the findings of this study are by no means conclusive and definitely not prescriptive, they reveal the importance of exploring the views of stakeholders to make language teaching at least a more pleasant experience for all, which can in turn lead to a more effective teaching and learning.

Comparing the findings of this study with the relevant literature once again established that there are many similarities among countries and contexts as far as the perceptions of language teacher effectiveness are concerned. At the same time it showed that there were a number of culturally sensitive areas. Some of them such as the importance of teachers' choice of clothing have been rarely discussed in other relevant studies.

10.3 Implications

The findings besides their significance in clarifying the perception of language teacher effectiveness have had other more general outcomes. They have

demonstrated that the students, even though still young and with limited language experience and opportunities to voice their opinion in the context of school, have much to say in this regard. They need to be taken seriously and heard more often and can even be invited to contribute in their learning more actively. In addition, they seem to be capable of understanding the rationale behind certain pedagogical procedures; therefore teachers' trying to clarify to them what they are doing in the classes and why they are doing them seems to be of great importance.

The same can be said about the parents. Most of the parents who took part in this study had some experience, both positive and negative with language learning; and therefore, had some perceptions based on their own experience and also what their children did and said about their experience with learning a new language. There were also a number of parents with very limited education. Even these parents, when given the opportunity to express their thoughts, did have some things to offer. Interviewing the parents was really helpful in the sense that again in addition to providing useful information about teacher effectiveness, indicated that they can play active roles in helping the teachers become more effective and assisting their children to learn better. Parents can be constructive, but most of them do not really know how they can help or even that they can help at all. Given good instructions and feedback, at least some might assist in the process of language teaching and learning.

Finally, the interview with the four teachers demonstrated that they were also eager to be heard. They all sounded very interested in their job and were enthusiastic to see their students succeed, but they all thought that their hands were tied. They thought that they were not appreciated for their efforts and they were very much aware of the shortcomings. They needed to be heard and they needed to be given more opportunities. It seems that the type of education and training they have received have not been enough for the demands of the new generation of the students. They all appear to know about the more modern approaches and methods to language learning and many are willing to practice them; however, according to them the course-books and tests that the students should pass, do not leave many opportunities for going beyond the prescribed syllabus.

10.3.1 Implications for Policy-makers

By and large, one of the main objectives of the current study has been addressing policy-makers and hoping to persuade them to consider the findings and encourage studies of the kind. In particular, revising the curriculum and attempting to provide teacher training that is in lines with the demands and at the same the existing facilities are desired. To be precise, revising the course-books in a way that more opportunities for communication in English would be encouraged and practised, revising the exams and increasing the hours of instruction are among the points. At the same time providing opportunities and training for language teachers to particularly improve their L2 speaking proficiency and more adequate training so that teachers can make use of the existing facilities, even though sometimes very limited are among the other implications. Teachers should also be encouraged and trained to interact with parents more effectively, and also at times to share with the students the reasons behind some of the steps they are taking while giving the students the opportunity to express their demands. Therefore, the findings can have implications in the way teacher training is done. Inevitably most teachers would seek to learn modern approaches and methods to language teaching. Due to different types of limitations, it is obligatory for trainers to provide the kind of training that would enable the teachers to teach most effectively with regards to these limitations, but at the same time having the needs and demands of the students in mind. Finally, it seems very helpful that teachers would feel appreciated by the authorities and this seems to have a positive impact on their performance and effectiveness.

10.3.2 Implications for Language Teachers

Policy change can happen only in the long-run and with many more studies being conducted to verify the findings. Therefore, even though it is hoped that a policy reform would eventually emerge from studies of this kind, a more immediate effect can also surface. This study can utilize information directly for the language teachers to help them reflect on their own teaching while considering the points raised here. They can think of how they or their students would answer the questions or react to the findings here. This can make them reconceptualise at least some aspects of their teaching or consolidate their belief in what they are doing or how they are doing it at present. They can also try to implement these findings in their teaching and interacting with their students and then explore the results. Finally, they can replicate

parts of the same study and carry it out in their own classes and take advantage of their findings. This is not limited to the Iranian teachers and all language teachers regardless of the context they work in can consider the issues raised and reflect on.

10.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The present study has tried to collect and analyze the opinion of a sample that could be a very small representative of the population under study. This selection was done through mixed method research and the core of the study was qualitative in nature. Conducting mixed method research is not a new method of research, but in Iran where the study took place, this was a rare instance. In Iran usually quantitative study is conducted and favoured. Thus, it is hoped that the readers of this study might also consider implementing qualitative and mixed method research more often and not solely rely on empirical evidence that is provided by quantitative data collection and analysis. It is also recommended that the following would be taken into consideration for further research. Firstly, the sample studied here consisted of students aged between 13 and 14. Since in the education system of Iran, they are considered secondary school students with only three years of exposure to the new language, it is recommended that the same study be replicated and carried out for students who are in high school and have more experience with learning English and possibly different demands. Since they are closer to taking the entrance exam to university, it is likely that their perceptions of effectiveness would at least to some extent differ from the secondary school students. Therefore, hearing their perception is also of significance.

Secondly, in this study only students whose language learning experience was limited to what they were taught at public schools were included. However, as was mentioned earlier, in most of the schools some students in each class take part in language classes outside school in order to improve their language proficiency. Considering their points of view and their perceptions of effective language teachers at public schools could contribute to the further clarification of the characteristics of effective language teachers. In addition, the comparison of the ideas of the two groups of students may shed light on other points that might prove useful for teachers.

It is also probable that the students and teachers of private schools would have different perceptions of effective language teachers. Hearing their and their parents' views will be helpful for the teachers who work in those schools.

A very useful step for comparing what the stakeholders believed with the realities of the class is observing classes. Observation can simply function as evidence. In addition, it happens that what one says or even thinks he does, does not necessarily manifest the reality of what happens. Therefore, another suggestion is observing different language teachers in action.

Carrying out the same research in different neighbourhoods of Tehran and even other cities of the country may also help the teachers of those regions better understand how language teacher effectiveness is viewed. In addition, carrying out the same research in other countries and comparing the results with this study and similar ones can also illustrate to what extent the perceptions of stakeholders concerning language teacher effectiveness might be influenced by context. One particular outcome besides identifying the perceptions can be looking at the philosophy behind the perceptions and examining the difference between western and non-western contexts if any.

Finally, another next major step can be exploring the amount of students' success in the classes that students are both happy and satisfied with their language teachers and the rationale behind what the teachers do is clarified to them.

10.5 Final Remarks

During this study a part of my job as the researcher was retelling the stories of those being studied. For that I needed to listen and learn them very well. Each classroom and each individual had their version of almost the same story. I know that even though I have tried very hard to be faithful to those who took part, when retelling their stories like any storyteller my views and understandings are also echoed. And I think this happens in any study and that is what makes every study unique. This has been a process of learning for me, too.

I have been both a language teacher and a researcher in the context that this study was conducted. I saw a gap between the policies, the practice of language teaching and the demands as far as language teaching in public schools in Iran was

concerned. In order to go a step ahead in providing better language education at public schools, this gap should be bridged. For that to happen, one step was to seek the perceptions and the expectations of the immediate stakeholders. The stakeholders called upon in this study are usually not invited to express their views even though education revolves around them. This was not based on a process-product study that the teachers' views would be directly linked to students' performance. It just aimed at discovering how teachers, students and their parents saw and interpreted what was happening and what they favoured in a language teacher. Even those students who had performed very weakly in their tests were invited to talk about their perceptions of effective language teachers. This study is mainly the story of these people.

The current study more than ever made me aware of the position of language teaching in general and also in Iran. Interviewing the stakeholders and trying to go into the depth of the findings has made me more reflective of my own position and where I stand both as language teacher and a researcher and what my story is and how I like it to be. It has given me insights into the next steps I would like to take as a researcher trying and hoping to improve the existing conditions. I now know that my next step would be trying to observe more teachers while teaching and interacting with the students so that I can go beyond perceptions and actually see the stakeholders in action. This is something that I wish I could have done when conducting the current study, but due to time limit I could not.

In conclusion, evidently ELT practices are influenced by conceptions of language teaching and learning; but they also reflect the values and the priorities of the context they are used. According to Hall (2011, p.218), ELT professionals are not 'free agents', but they are guided by norms, policies and even resources. At the same time in many cases teachers are guided by their own experience and their own senses; therefore even though theories do help, methodologies can prove useful and policies need to be practised, teachers trust their own instinct and what they consider as plausible in their classes. Helping them reflect and grow can make a lot of difference. Sometimes teachers need to re-evaluate what they consider plausible and one way for that to happen is through listening to other stakeholders. The present study more than anything else has tried to make the voices from the classroom heard. Education ideally should result in the development of the people

involved and that includes the teachers as well the students and this can have a direct impact on the society.

(86525 words)

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Sample pages of the Iranian 8th grade course-book

LESSON TWO

⊙ **Dialogue**

Our English Teacher
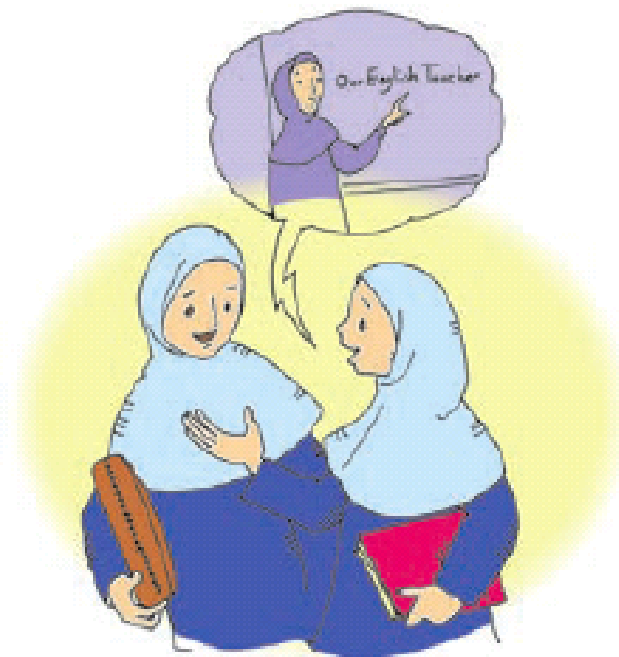
Nahid: Do you know our new teacher?
Zahra: No, I don't. Who's she?
Nahid: Mrs Tehrani. She teaches us English.
Zahra: Is she a good teacher?
Nahid: Yes, she is. All the students like her very much.
Zahra: Does she speak Persian in the classroom?
Nahid: No, she usually speaks English.

⊙ **Understanding**

Put True or False after each statement.

1. Mrs Tehrani is an English teacher. ....
2. She usually speaks English in the classroom. ....
3. Nahid doesn't know Mrs Tehrani. ....
4. Mrs Tehrani teaches Zahra. ....
5. The students like her very much. ....

16 Lesson Two

A)

1. I need a pen.	Give me a pen, please.
2. We need a book.	Give us a book, please.
3. He wants a ruler.	Give him a ruler, please.
4. They need a ball.	Give them a ball, please.
5. Mina wants a cup.	Give her a cup, please.

B)

1. I usually go to school at 7.
2. The teacher always speaks English in the classroom.
3. We sometimes play football at school.
4. I often do my homework in the evening.
5. I never go to bed late.
6. In the morning, we are usually at school.
7. My father is always home* on Fridays.

◉ Oral Drills

Close your books*. Listen to the speaker and substitute the words in the pattern sentences.

A.

Do you know me?

1. him	4. us
2. her	5. me
3. them	

B.

Give me the book.

1. her / a ruler	4. us / the newspapers
2. him / a spoon	5. him / two plates
3. them / a ball	

＊also at home
＊also close your book,

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C.

> Reza always gets up late in the morning.

1. often
2. sometimes
3. never
4. usually
5. always

D.

> I sometimes see him at school.

1. always / them
2. never / her
3. usually / him
4. often / it
5. often / you

E. *Give complete answers.*

Model:

> Do you see Mary at school?
> Yes, I see her at school.

1. Do you come to school with Nahid?
   Yes, -----------------------------------
2. Do you ride your bicycle to school?
   Yes, -----------------------------------.
3. Do you always wash your hands in the morning?
   Yes, -----------------------------------.
4. Do you often help your mother at home?
   Yes, -----------------------------------.
5. Do you sometimes see your English teacher in the street?
   Yes, -----------------------------------.

Write It Down

A. *Rewrite the sentences. Follow the example.*

Example:

> I teach Reza English.
> I teach him English.

1. I help my mother at home.
   ----
2. We visit our grandfather every Friday.
   ----
3. I clean my shoes every day.
   ----
4. He never helps Mina and me.
   ----
5. Mina always helps her sister.

B. *Answer these questions.*

Example:

> Does Mina help her friends?
> Yes, she helps them.
> ------------------------------

1. Do the boys know that man?
   Yes, ------------------------------
2. Does the teacher ask you many questions?
   Yes, ------------------------------
3. Does Hassan want that watch?
   Yes, ------------------------------
4. Does Ali see the bus?
   Yes, ------------------------------
5. Do the teachers help your brother?
   Yes, ------------------------------

C. *Ask questions. Follow the example.*

Example:

> A: Do they usually watch TV in the evening?
> ------------------------------
> B: Yes, they usually watch TV in the evening.

1. A: ------------------------------?
   B: Yes, he usually speaks English in the classroom.
2. A: ------------------------------?
   B: Yes, they are always at school in the morning.
3. A: ------------------------------?
   B: Yes, he often plays football on Fridays.
4. A: ------------------------------?
   B: Yes, she sometimes gets up late.
5. A: ------------------------------?
   B: Yes, we often eat at a restaurant.

D. *Fill in the blanks in this letter. Use my, your, our.*

Dear Reza,

Thanks for ——— letter and nice picture. Is that ——— house?

Here's a picture of ——— house. It has a nice garden and is famous for its flowers. In the picture you see ——— neighbors. They are very kind. Come and see us please.

——— friend
Ahmad

A. *Answer the questions. Follow the model. Use* him, her, them, ...

Model:

> Do you help <u>your mother</u> at home?
>
> Yes, I help her at home.
> -----------------------------

1. Does Mr Karimi teach <u>the students</u> English?
   No, --
2. Do they help <u>their mother</u> every afternoon?
   Yes, ----------------------------------
3. Do you visit <u>your grandfather</u> every Friday?
   Yes, ----------------------------------
4. Does your friend see <u>Ali</u> in the street every day?
   No, -------------------------------------

B. *Look at the pictures and answer the questions. Follow the model.*

Model:

> What is Mrs Karimi showing <u>the students</u>?
> She is showing them a picture.
> -------------------------------------
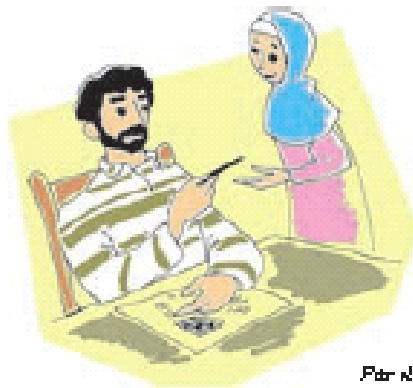
Parvin's father
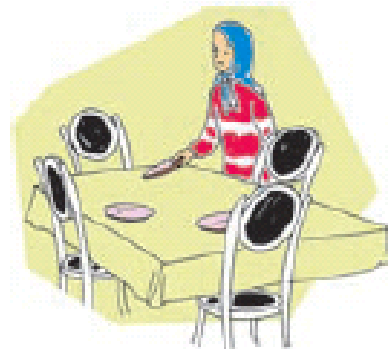
1. Who is giving Parvin a pen?
   ----

2. Where is your sister putting the plates?
   ----

3. Who is looking at the picture?

----

4. What is Mansoor giving his sister?

----

5. Where is the man talking to the children?

Read Aloud

/ ɪ /	/ aɪ /
happy	by
ready	my
baby	why
country	sky

Reading

My father has a lot of books. He reads different books. He usually reads after dinner. He says books are our good friends. They teach us a lot of things.

He buys several books every month. He buys some books for me and my sister, too. My sister is about 4. She likes books with pictures in them. She learns many things from them.

I like my books very much. They are my good friends and teachers. I usually read them after I do my homework.

Now answer these questions in complete sentences.

1. When does my father read?
2. Does he read a lot of books?
3. What do we learn from books?
4. Do you read books, too?
5. When do you read them?

New Words And Expressions

a lot of	month	answer
always	much	ask
dear	never	buy
different	neighbour	help
famous	nice	give
flower	often	learn
from	question	put
grandfather	restaurant	ride
her	several	say
him	some	show
kind	sometimes	visit
me	us	want
	usually	with (sth)
	you	

Basic Structure (1)

Subject Pronouns

I
You
He
She
It
We
You
They

Object Pronouns

me
you
him
her
it
us
you
them

Comment: The pronouns me, you, him, etc. are used as objects after verbs like help, give, show, see, etc.
I see him.

Basic Structure (2)

He is — always / often / never — late.

He — always / often / never — comes late.
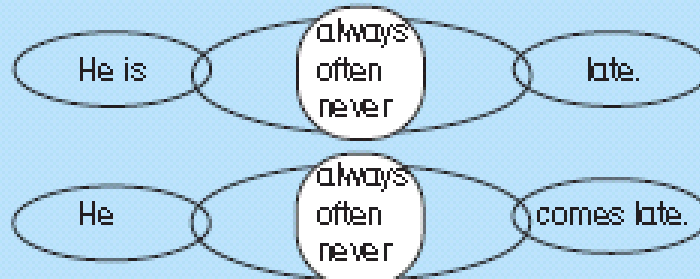
Comments: Use always, often, etc. after the verb be (am, is, are, was, were).
Use always, often, etc. before the main verbs (come, go, see, watch, etc).

Appendix 2 8th Grade Final Exam 2011

نام خانوادگی :
نام :
کلاس :
صفحه ۱ از ۲
تاریخ : ۱۳۹۱/۶/۱۴ ساعت ۹ صبح
مدت ۹۰ دقیقه
بسمه تعالی
امتحان سوم راهنمایی شهر تهران
شهریور ۱۳۹۱
زبان انگلیسی

vocabulary — واژگان

الف) در هر گروه از کلمه‌های زیر، کلمه‌ی ناهماهنگ را مشخص کنید.

1. say- get- stay- holy ( )

2. dirty- paper- clean- good ( )

ب) با استفاده از کلمه‌های زیر، جای خالی جمله‌ها را کامل کنید. (یک کلمه اضافی است)

| river-wild-Monday- guests-aunt |

3. We have many _____ tonight.

4. We went to Tabriz last _____

5. My _____ is a teacher.

6. Lions are _____ .

پ) جمله‌های ناقص زیر را با توجه به تصاویر داده شده کامل کنید.

7. She is reading a n _____

8. These are f _____ .

ت) جمله‌های ناقص زیر را با استفاده از معلومات خود کامل کنید.

9. He's not tall. He's s___ ___ ___ .

10. We watched a football m___ ___ ___ ___ yesterday .

ث) مناسب‌ترین پاسخ داخل پرانتز را انتخاب کنید.

11. Ali is a good _____ , (water- runner- paper)

12. His class _____ at 8. (begins- arrives- helps)

Pronunciation — تلفظ

ج) از لحاظ تلفظ کلمه ناهماهنگ را مشخص کنید.

13. talk**ed**- help**ed**- watch**ed**- listen**ed** ( )

Conversation — مکالمه

چ) با استفاده از کلمه‌های سمت راست، مکالمه‌ی زیر را کامل کنید. (یک کلمه اضافی است)

A: Will you go _____ tomorrow?
B: Yes, I will.
A: Will Mina go _____ you?
B: No, she has a _____ .
A: Is it _____ ?
B: Yes, it is.

| test |
| easy |
| shopping |
| with |
| then |

بسمه تعالی

امتحان سوم راهنمایی شهر تهران

شهریور ۱۳۹۱

زبان انگلیسی

تولید ملی ، حمایت از کار و سرمایه ایرانی

ج) عبارات ستون A را با عبارات ستون B جور کنید. (عبارات ستون B اضافی است.)

A

14. Mrs. Irani works in a _____ .

15. How does she go to work? _____ .

16. What does she look like? _____ .

17. She does her _____ well.

B

a. she's tall

b. by bus

c. homework

d. hospital

Structure

انتخاب بهتر را

غ) پاسخ درست داخل پرانتز را انتخاب کنید.

18. Where was he _____ yesterday? (walk- walking- walked)

19. Will you get up late tomorrow? No, we _____ . (don't- won't- aren't)

20. How does she speak English? Very _____ . (well- slow- quick)

21. Reza needs _____ money. (some- many- three)

22. My mother made tea an hour _____ . (time- about- ago)

23. Please give _____ the pen. (my- I- me)

د) با معلومات دستوری خود جمله‌های زیر را کامل کنید. (هر خط نشانی یک حرف است)

24. This is Ahmad __ wallet .

25. Can he call at 7? Yes, he __ __ __ .

26. Where __ __ __ the students play football yesterday?

27. Tigers eat a lot of __ __ __ __ .

ه) با توجه به تصاویر داده شده، به سوال‌های زیر پاسخ کامل دهید.

28. What was Mina doing ?

_____ , 28.

29. How did they go to Tabriz ?

_____

و) با مرتب کردن کلمه‌های داده شده، جمله بسازید.

30. to- will- he- by- go- school- bus- . _____

31. her- stayed- house- she- in- grandfather's- . _____

ز) با توجه به مثال رابطه‌ی صحیح را بنویسید.

	fork	forks		should	shouldn't
32.	_____	men	33.	may	_____

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نام خانوادگی :

بسمه تعالی

صفحه ۳ از ۴

امتحان سوم راهنمایی شهر تهران

نام :

شهریور ۱۳۹۱

تاریخ : ۱۳۹۱/۶/۱۴   ساعت ۹ صبح

زبان انگلیسی

کلاس :

تولید ملی ، حمایت از کار و سرمایه ایرانی

مدت ۹۰ دقیقه

Reading

نمره سوالات

۳

ز) با استفاده از جمله‌های زیر، برای هر تصویر، جمله‌ی مناسب انتخاب کنید. (یک جمله اضافی است.)

a) I sometimes cook lunch .   b) He can ride the bicycle .

c) She may leave the room .   d) They were playing ping-pong.

34. _____   35. _____   36. _____

■ متن زیر را با دقت بخوانید.

My brother, Hamid is in grade four. He is about 10. Last week, I bought some books

for him. He learns many things from them. They have different pictures about wild animals.

He likes his books very much.

۳

س) با توجه به متن فوق، برای جمله‌ی درست (True) و برای جمله‌ی غلط (False) بنویسید.

37. His books are about wild animals .   (   )

38. Hamid doesn't like his books .   (   )

39. He learns many things from books .   (   )

۳

ش) با توجه به متن فوق به سؤال‌های زیر پاسخ کامل دهید.

40. How old is Hamid ?

41. Is he in grade 3 ?

42. What did I buy last week ?

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نام خانوادگی :

نام :

کلاس :

بسمه تعالی

امتحان سوم راهنمایی شهر تهران
شهریور ۱۳۹۱

زبان انگلیسی

تولید ملی ـ حمایت از کار و سرمایه ایرانی

صفحه ۴ از ۴

تاریخ : ۱۳۹۱/۶/۱۴   ساعت ۹ صبح

مدت : ۹۰ دقیقه

Spelling

املا

س) املای کامل کلمه‌های ناقص را بنویسید. (هر خط تیره نشانه‌ی یک حرف است)

43. I enjoyed the cart__ons yesterday .

44. He had a headac__e .

45. They us__ally see him at school .

46. She wakes up before sunri__e .

47. We bought oni__ns and potatoes .

48. You spend a lot of time in the he__vy traffic .

ش) املای کامل کلمه‌های ناقص را با توجه به تصاویر داده شده بنویسید. (یک خط تیره نشانه‌ی یک حرف است)

49. wh__ __ l

50. c __ __ el

51. r __ __ __ n

Good luck

نمره‌ی کتبی (برگه)	با حروف :	نام و نام خانوادگی مصحح :
	با عدد :	امضا

Appendix 3 English Language Test Questions for the Entrance Exam to Universities 2009

PART A: Grammar and Vocabulary

Directions: Choose the word or phrase (1), (2), (3), or (4) that best completes each sentence. Then mark the correct choice on your answer sheet.

76- It would cost a lot to rebuild the houses —— in the earthquake that happened a week ago.
1) destroyed   2) were destroyed   3) which destroyed   4) they were destroyed

77- Fortunately, the storm was not strong enough —— any serious damage to the town.
1) to cause   2) it didn't cause   3) that didn't cause   4) to be caused

78- A: Mary fell asleep in the class this morning.
B: She —— up too late last night.
1) must stay   2) should stay   3) should have stayed   4) must have stayed

79- He is a very good man, always working hard to help those many poor people living in the —— of the city.
1) outlines   2) slums   3) convents   4) sufferings

80- I need to —— a day off to rest a little bit at home.
1) let   2) put   3) take   4) give

81- Anna left Germany in the —— of seeing her family again before they would go away.
1) gesture   2) concern   3) confidence   4) expectation

82- It was no surprise that she wasn't able to —— me at first; after all, we hadn't met each other for a long time.
1) observe   2) imagine   3) recognize   4) speculate

83- A: How many scientists took part in the conference?
B: —— 50 ones.
1) Mostly   2) Nearly   3) Primarily   4) Immediately

84- The teacher didn't answer the student's question, as she thought it was —— the topic.
1) aware of   2) irrelevant to   3) specific to   4) interchangeable with

85- After the accident it was a long time before he returned to his —— mental state.
1) former   2) useless   3) similar   4) personal

PART B: Cloze Test

Directions: Read the following passage and decide which choice (1), (2), (3), or (4) best fits each space. Then mark the correct choice on your answer sheet.

Health can be thought of as the condition of being fit and well. The World Health Organization (WHO), the UN agency that is (86) ____ with health care throughout the world, gives a more precise (87) ____ . It says that health is the state of (88) ____ physical, mental, and social well being, and not merely the absence of disease and weakness. In a poor country, however, health might mean simply getting enough food to stay alive and avoiding the (89) ____ serious diseases such as typhoid and cholera. As countries grow richer they (90) ____ the WHO's more positive standard of good health, because their people can afford better food and medical care.

86- 1) accepted   2) stretched   3) consisted   4) concerned
87- 1) instance   2) sample   3) definition   4) prediction
88- 1) complete   2) straight   3) positive   4) probable
89- 1) firmly   2) really   3) directly   4) actively
90- 1) devote   2) operate   3) survive   4) achieve

PART C: Reading Comprehension

Directions: Read the following two passages and answer the questions by choosing the best choice (1), (2), (3), or (4). Then mark the correct choice on your answer sheet.

PASSAGE 1:

Choose a place you want to go to in a way that the whole family will enjoy. Children lose interest much faster than adults, so when choosing, keep your young ones in mind and make sure there are activities that will keep them busy and interested.

Going on a long road trip with your kids can be quite stressful if you're not prepared to deal with the short attention span of kids. Take coloring books, toys, video games, CD's that have audio for children, food and water to last the journey and other things you would consider a necessity for your family.

Make sure your family is protected, use seatbelts and child secure seats for children in the back seat; they have been proven to keep kids safe if you run into some trouble on the road. If you plan on going camping remember to carry a first aid kit with the essentials.

If you are heading to a place that has been recommended by a friend or from other travel source and not sure of the how to get there, keep a map of geographic area in hand, it could also be an answer to the most common question from your kid— 'Are we there yet?'

When on a long trip, it is safer to carry sandwiches, fruits, bottles of water enough for the entire family. Remember to carry a garbage bag so that you don't have to litter the road; it will also reduce the stops you have to make on the journey, reserving the stops to use the restroom and to stretch your legs.

91- What is the best title for the passage?
1) "Where to Go on a Trip"
2) "Road Trip Ideas for Family"
3) "Protection during a Long Travel"
4) "Advantage of Travel for Children"

92- According to the passage, if you see your kids painting a picture in the car during a trip instead of looking at the natural views you –——.
1) may get very stressful
2) should not get surprised
3) have to stop the car so that they can relax
4) must try to get them involved in other activities

93- You are advised to take a first aid kit with you –——.
1) if you are going camping
2) because children may get sick easily
3) because roads are not completely safe
4) to help those who may be injured in car accidents

94- According to the passage, the question, "Are we there yet?" is one that –——.
1) people ask when they lose their way
2) shows the great interest of children in traveling
3) children ask very often on the way to a place
4) shows children cannot concentrate on one thing for a long time

95- According to the last paragraph, on a long trip, you –——.
1) are not as safe as you are on a short trip
2) can't do anything special to reduce the number of stops
3) may not find many restaurants on the way
4) are not to throw away unwanted things on the road

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PASSAGE 2:

Several general changes occur in the human body as it ages: hearing and vision becomes weak, muscle strength becomes less, soft tissues such as skin and blood vessels become less flexible, and there is a general decrease in body power.

Most of the body's organs perform less efficiently with advancing age. For example, the average amount of blood pumped by the heart drops from about 6.9 liters (7.3 quarts) per minute at age 20 to only 3.5 liters (3.7 quarts) pumped per minute at age 85. For this same age range, the average amount of blood flowing through the kidneys drops from about 0.6 liters (0.6 quarts) per minute to 0.3 liters (0.3 quarts). Not all people experience decreased organ function to the same degree—some individuals have healthier hearts and kidneys at age 85 than _others_ do at age 50.

The immune system also changes with age. A healthy immune system protects the body against bacteria, viruses, and other harmful agents by producing disease-fighting proteins known as antibodies. A healthy immune system also prevents the growth of abnormal cells, which can become cancerous. With advancing age, the ability of the immune system to perform these protective functions is decreased—the rate of antibody production may decrease by as much as 80 percent between age 20 and age 85. This less-effective immune system explains why an attack of influenza, which may make a young adult sick for a few days, can be deadly for an old person. Thus, it is as good for an older person to be vaccinated against the flu and pneumonia as it is for young people to be vaccinated against childhood diseases.

96- **What does the passage mainly discuss?**
   1) The way to slow down this process of aging
   2) What organs in the human body are more affected by old age
   3) The relationship between age and some changes in the human body
   4) What makes the human body less able to protect itself against disease

97- **What is discussed as an example in paragraph 2 is true for ———.**
   1) the majority of people
   2) everyone that becomes old
   3) people between 50 to 85 years of age
   4) people who are not lucky enough to remain healthy despite old age

98- **Which one of the following is true about paragraph 3?**
   1) It provides further evidence to support the main point of the passage.
   2) It mentions a reason to explain the problems referred to in paragraph 2.
   3) it somehow modifies the general idea of the passage by including new facts.
   4) It brings in new facts, raising doubts about the main point supported by the first two paragraphs.

99- **The word "others" in paragraph 2 refers to ———.**
   1) organs   2) kidneys
   3) individuals   4) both hearts and kidneys

100- **The last sentence of the passage, "Thus, it is as — diseases," includes all of the following EXCEPT ———.**
   1) a comparison   2) some advice   3) disease   4) a change

Appendix 4 A Summary of Evaluation of Teaching Methods (Goe, 2008, pp, 16-19)

Table 1. Brief Summaries of Teacher Evaluation Methods

Measure	Description	Research	Strengths	Cautions
Classroom Observation	Used to measure observable classroom processes, including specific teacher practices, holistic aspects of instruction, and interactions between teachers and students. Can measure broad, overarching aspects of teaching or subject-specific or context-specific aspects of practice.	Some highly researched protocols have been found to link to student achievement, though associations are sometimes modest. Research and validity findings are highly dependent on the instrument used, sampling procedures, and training of raters. There is a lack of research on observation protocols as used in context for teacher evaluation.	• Provides rich information about classroom behaviors and activities. • Is generally considered a fair and direct measure by stakeholders. • Depending on the protocol, can be used in various subjects, grades, and contexts. • Can provide information useful for both formative and summative purposes.	• Careful attention must be paid to choosing or creating a valid and reliable protocol and training and calibrating raters. • Classroom observation is expensive due to cost of observers' time; intensive training and calibrating of observers adds to expense but is necessary for validity. • This method assesses observable classroom behaviors but is not as useful for assessing beliefs, feelings, intentions, or out-of-classroom activities.
Principal Evaluation	Is generally based on classroom observation, may be structured or unstructured; uses and procedures vary widely by district. Is generally used for summative purposes, most commonly for tenure or dismissal decisions for beginning teachers.	Studies comparing subjective principal ratings to student achievement find mixed results. Little evidence exists on validity of evaluations as they occur in schools, but evidence exists that training for principals is limited and rare, which would impair validity of their evaluations.	• Can represent a useful perspective based on principals' knowledge of school and context. • Is generally feasible and can be one useful component in a system used to make summative judgments and provide formative feedback.	• Evaluation instruments used without proper training or regard for their intended purpose will impair validity. • Principals may not be qualified to evaluate teachers on measures highly specialized for certain subjects or contexts.

Measure	Description	Research	Strengths	Cautions
Instructional Artifact	Structured protocols used to analyze classroom artifacts in order to determine the quality of instruction in a classroom. May include lesson plans, teacher assignments, assessments, scoring rubrics, and student work.	Pilot research has linked artifact ratings to observed measures of practice, quality of student work, and student achievement gains. More work is needed to establish scoring reliability and determine the ideal amount of work to sample. Lack of research exists on use of structured artifact analysis in practice.	• Can be a useful measure of instructional quality if a validated protocol is used, if raters are well-trained for reliability, and if assignments show sufficient variation in quality. • Is practical and feasible because artifacts have already been created for the classroom.	• More validity and reliability research is needed. • Training knowledgeable scorers can be costly but is necessary to ensure validity. • This method may be a promising middle ground in terms of feasibility and validity between full observation and less direct measures such as self-report.
Portfolio	Used to document a large range of teaching behaviors and responsibilities. Has been used widely in teacher education programs and in states for assessing the performance of teacher candidates and beginning teachers.	Research on validity and reliability is ongoing, and concerns have been raised about consistency/stability in scoring. There is a lack of research linking portfolios to student achievement. Some studies have linked NBPTS certification (which includes a portfolio) to student achievement, but other studies have found no relationship.	• Is comprehensive and can measure aspects of teaching that are not readily observable in the classroom. • Can be used with teachers of all fields. • Provides a high level of credibility among stakeholders. • Is a good tool for teacher reflection and improvement.	• This method is time-consuming on the part of teachers and scorers; scorers should have content knowledge of the portfolios. • The stability of scores may not be high enough to use for high-stakes assessment. • Portfolios are difficult to standardize (compare across teachers or schools). • Portfolios represent teachers' exemplary work but may not reflect everyday classroom activities.

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Measure	Description	Research	Strengths	Cautions
Teacher Self-Report Measure	Teacher reports of what they are doing in classrooms. May be assessed through surveys, instructional logs, and interviews. Can vary widely in focus and level of detail.	Studies on the validity of teacher self-report measures present mixed results. Highly detailed measures of practice may be better able to capture actual teaching practices but may be harder to establish reliability or may result in very narrowly focused measures.	• Can measure unobservable factors that may affect teaching, such as knowledge, intentions, expectations, and beliefs. • Provides the unique perspective of the teacher. • Is very feasible and cost-efficient; can collect large amounts of information at once.	• Reliability and validity of self-report is not fully established and depends on instrument used. • Using or creating a well-developed and validated instrument will decrease cost-efficiency but will increase accuracy of findings. • This method should not be used as a sole or primary measure in teacher evaluation.
Student Survey	Used to gather student opinions or judgments about teaching practice as part of teacher evaluation and to provide information about teaching as it is perceived by students.	Several studies have shown that student ratings of teachers can be useful in providing information about teaching; may be as valid as judgments made by college students and other groups; and, in some cases, may correlate with measures of student achievement. Validity is dependent on the instrument used and its administration and is generally recommended for formative use only.	• Provides perspective of students who have the most experience with teachers. • Can provide formative information to help teachers improve practice in a way that will connect with students. • Makes use of students, who may be as capable as adult raters at providing accurate ratings.	• Student ratings have not been validated for use in summative assessment and should not be used as a sole or primary measure of teacher evaluation. • Students cannot provide information on aspects of teaching such as a teacher's content knowledge, curriculum fulfillment, and professional activities.

Measure	Description	Research	Strengths	Cautions
Value-Added Model	Used to determine teachers' contributions to students' test score gains. May also be used as a research tool (e.g., determining the distribution of "effective" teachers by student or school characteristics).	Little is known about the validity of value-added scores for identifying effective *teaching*, though research using value-added models does suggest that teachers differ markedly in their contributions to students' test score gains. However, correlating value-added scores with teacher qualifications, characteristics, or practices has yielded mixed results and few significant findings. Thus, it is obvious that teachers vary in effectiveness, but the reasons for this are not known.	• Provides a way to evaluate teachers' contribution to student learning, which most measures do not. • Requires no classroom visits because linked student/teacher data can be analyzed at a distance. • Entails little burden at the classroom or school level because most data is already collected for NCLB purposes. • May be useful for identifying outstanding teachers whose classrooms can serve as "learning labs" as well as struggling teachers in need of support.	• Models are not able to sort out teacher effects from classroom effects. • Vertical test alignment is assumed (i.e., tests essentially measure the same thing from grade to grade). • Value-added scores are not useful for formative purposes because teachers learn nothing about how their practices contributed to (or impeded) student learning. • Value-added measures are controversial because they measure *only* teachers' contributions to student achievement gains on standardized tests.

Appendix 5 Interview with an Authority within the MOE

After having studied books and articles on the education system of Iran, there were still some unanswered questions; therefore, in order to clarify some of the points and seek the answer to the questions, I made an appointment with an authority in the MOE. Here is the translation of interview.

Q.1. How should I get the permit for going to schools and doing my research in secondary schools in Tehran?

-You have to submit a letter from the university you are studying in. In the letter your university introduces you along with the required information to the Ministry and hand it to the relevant office in the MOE Then the permit will be given to you. It will take a while so you have to plan and apply well in advance. The point is we usually accept applications from the researchers and students studying in the Iranian universities.

Of course if the school principals agree, you will not necessarily need a permit. You have to talk to them directly and seek their permit. This can be a more quickly way for carrying out your research in the schools, but it is unofficial and most principals would not agree to that.

Q2. Can I get the permit to carry out my research in boys' school as well as girls'?

-Yes, it is possible, but you have to introduce a male colleague as well who would accompany you to the schools.

Q3. My next question is about teachers. How are language teachers selected? Is there any difference between the procedure for choosing language teachers and other teachers at public schools?

-During the past few years teachers have been selected based on their university degree. In other words and as an example, English language teachers should have a university degree in the relevant field, so if a person has studied history he/she can only apply for teaching history. Of course they have to be interviewed as well. The interview is not to assess their knowledge of the subject, but to check their characteristics and moral and religious beliefs.

There is no difference between the way language teachers and the other teachers are selected.

In the past we did have teachers who taught subjects outside their specialized fields, many of them are retired now and if not have had to pass some on the job trainings during their course of work.

4. How is a (language) teacher's work assessed?
-The same as every other teacher. At the end of every school year, the head of the school is required to fill in a detailed form to assess the performance of each of the teachers who have worked in that school during that school year and then submit it to the MOE.

The form assesses every aspect of the teacher's performance, from his/her attendance to moral attitude, religious behaviour, satisfaction of the students, the rate of acceptance in the final exams, ...

5. *What happens if the assessment shows that a teacher has had ether an outstanding or a very poor performance? Is any action taken?*
-If based on the report it is proven that a teacher has done a brilliant job over a course of 3 years, there will be a substantial increase in his/her salary. His/her ranking will go up one step, which is as if he/she has gained a higher university degree. For example, if a teacher has a bachelor's degree and has done an excellent job for 3 years, he/she will be rewarded as a teacher with a master's degree and the salary and benefits will be calculated accordingly.

If a teacher does a poor job and the report suggests that he/she has failed to meet the criteria established by the MOE and the school, three things might happen. The teacher might be required to take on the job training classes, so that he/she will improve his/her skills. Sometimes the school he/she works in requests a termination of his/her employment in that particular school and then the MOE would be responsible for finding the teacher a new school, sometimes against the teacher's will. At this phase usually the teacher has no choice and has to accept the new offer. Sometimes the teacher has to both take the training and change the school he/she works in. The MOE normally does not dismiss any teacher.

Appendix 6 Common European Framework p.24

Table 1. *Common Reference Levels: global scale*

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

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Common European Framework of reference for languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. (2001). Strasbourg: Cambridge University Press.

Appendix 7 The English Translation of Questionnaire 1

What Are the Characteristics of an Effective Language Teacher?

Dear Student,
Please fill in this questionnaire, which will give you as a student of secondary school in Tehran the opportunity to express your opinion about the characteristics of an effective language teacher. Your name and the information you put in this questionnaire is considered confidential and no one, including the principal and the teacher, except the researcher will have access to them. After the research is finished the interested teachers and principals will be informed of the summary of the findings.

If you are interested in finding out about the results of the research which will take about one year from now, please mark the following box. A summary under you name will be sent to the school you are studying in at the moment. Then they will contact you to go and collect it.

Please answer all the following questions:

Part 1. Language Teachers' Behaviour

What is your Opinion about the behaviour of the teacher in the class?

	I completely agree	I partially agree.	I don't agree at all.
a. The teacher should be kind to the students.			
b. The teacher should be friendly.			
c. The teacher should be serious.			
d. The teacher should have good sense of humour.			
e. The teacher should call the students using their first name..			
f. The teacher should be lively and enthusiastic			
g. The teacher should know the students.			
h. The teacher should listen to the students' opening up their hearts.			
i. The teacher should spend more time on the weaker students.			
j. The teacher should be patient.			
k. The teacher should spend time on the students even outside the class.			

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Part 2. Language Teacher's Appearance

What is your opinion about the appearance of a successful language teacher?

	I completely agree	I partially agree.	I don't agree at all.
a. The way the teacher looks is important to me..			
b. The teacher should be fashionable.			
c. The teacher should have various outfits.			
d. The teacher should be young.			

Part 3. Language Teacher's Knowledge

How do you think the teacher's knowledge should be?

	I completely agree	I partially agree.	I don't agree at all.
a. The teacher should have a very good accent.			
b. The teacher should be able to speak English fluently.			
c. The teacher should be able to write in English very well.			
d. The teacher should able to read and understand books in English.			
e. The teacher should be able to comprehend oral material very well.			
f. The teacher should know English grammar very well.			
g. The teacher should know the definition of many words.			
h. The teacher should be able to translate to and from English to Persian.			
i. The teacher should know about the culture of the English speaking countries.			
j. The teacher should be up-to-date.			

Part 4. Language Teachers' Class Management

How should the teacher manage the class?

	I completely agree	I partially agree.	I don't agree at all.
a. The teacher should speak English all the time in the class.			
b. The teacher should use books other than the textbook.			
c. The teacher should use supplementary material such as TV and computer.			
d. The teacher should take many tests.			
e. The teacher should be lively and enthusiastic.			
f. The teacher should correct all the assignments.			
g. The teacher should call the students in their first name.			
h. The teacher should assign different projects.			
i. The teacher should give some rest time during each session of the class.			
j. The teacher should explain everything in the book in detail.			
k. The teacher should correct all the mistakes a student makes.			
l. The teacher should spend part of the class time talking about his/her experiences.			
m. The teacher should devote a part of the class time to subjects other than the lesson.			

Part 5 Language Teacher and Teachers of Other Subjects

Please mark the sentences below that you believe apply to <u>all</u> teachers.

The teacher should:

a. be young.	
b. be elegant.	
c. be kind.	
d. be serious.	
e. have good sense of humour.	
f. be lively.	
g. listen to the students.	
h. be patient.	
i. be religious.	
j. use supplementary material such as TV and computer in the class	
k. be up-to-date.	
l. be the authority.	
m. help students outside the class.	
n. call the students in their first name.	
o. teach beyond the content of the textbooks.	

Do you think that a language teacher should be different from other teachers in some ways?

          a. Yes☐   b. To some extent☐   c. No☐

If your answer to the above question is yes or almost please fill in the following table. Of course if you thought none of the following is what you think, do not mark anything.

The teacher should

a. be younger.	
b. be more elegant.	
c. be kinder.	
d. be more serious	
e. have more sense of humour.	
f. be more lively	
g. spend more time listening to the students.	
h. be more patient.	
i. be more religious..	
j. use supplementary material such as TV and computer in the class more often.	
k. be more up-to-date.	

If your answer was yes, but you have any other suggestions please put them here.

Part 6. Personal Information

1. Name and Family Name: _____
2. School: _____
3. Do you study/have you studied English out of school hours?
       a. Yes☐   b. No☐   c. No, but I know English better than the school level. (e.g. I lived abroad, I have an English speaking parent, …)
4. Do you like to learn English?
       b. Yes☐   b. To some extent☐   c. No☐
5. Do you parents encourage you to learn a foreign language?
       a. Yes☐   b. To some extent☐   c. No☐
6. Do you parents speak a language other than Persian?
       a. Yes☐   b. To some extent☐   c. No☐
7. What was your English test score in the final last year?
   a. 0-9☐   b. 10-14☐   c. 15-17☐   d. 18-20☐   e. I don't remember. ☐

8. Which of the following is of importance to you regarding learning a language? Please fill in the table below.

	I completely agree	I partially agree.	I don't agree at all.
a. I like to speak English			
b. I like to read in English.			
c. I like to write in English.			
d. I like to listen and understand in English.			
e. I like to know grammar.			
f. I like to translate from and to English.			
g. I just like to pass the school tests.			

Part 7

1. **If you did not do your assignment more than once, what do you think the teacher should do?**
   _____

2. **If for any reason you challenged the discipline of the class, what should the teacher do?**
   _____

3. **If there is anything else you would like to add, please mention it here.**
   _____

Thank you very much for filling in this questionnaire. I wish you all the best.

Appendix 8 Questionnaire 1 in Persian

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به نام خدا

از نظر شما یک دبیر موفق زبان انگلیسی بایستی حائز چه ویژگیهایی باشد؟

دانش آموز عزیز، لطفاً پرسشنامه زیر را تکمیل کنید. تکمیل این پرسشنامه به دانش آموزان مقطع راهنمایی تحصیلی ساکن شهر تهران این فرصت را می دهد تا نظر خود را درباره دبیر موفق زبان انگلیسی ابراز نمایند. بدیهیست که نام و مشخصات شما نزد پژوهشگر محفوظ است و هیچ شخص دیگری اعم از مدیر، ناظم یا دبیرانتان به پرسشنامه ها دسترسی نخواهند داشت.

در صورت علاقه به اطلاع یافتن ازنتایج این تحقیق که حدود یکسال به طول می انجامد کادر زیر را علامت بزنید. خلاصه تحقیق به مدرسه محل تحصیل کنونی شما ارسال می شود و از طریق مدرسه در جریان نتیجه کار قرار خواهید گرفت. ☐

لطفا به کلیه پرسشها با دقت پاسخ دهید.

بخش اول: نظر شما درباره نحوه رفتار معلم زبان خوب زبان چیست؟

اصلا موافق نیستم	تا حدی موافقم	کاملا موافقم	
			الف. با بچه ها مهربان باشد.
			ب. رفتار دوستانه داشته باشد.
			پ. جدی باشد.
			ت. شوخ طبع باشد.
			ث. دانش آموزان را با نام کوچکشان صدا کند.
			ج. سر زنده باشد.
			چ. دانش آموزان را بشناسد.
			ح. به درد دل دانش آموزان گوش کند.
			خ. برای دانش آموزان ضعیف وقت بیشتری صرف کند.
			د. صبور باشد.
			ز. در بیرون کلاس هم به دانش آموزان کمک کند.

بخش دوم نظر شما درباره مشخصات ظاهری معلم زبان خوب چیست؟

اصلا موافق نیستم	تا حدی موافقم	کاملا موافقم	
			الف. مشخصات ظاهری معلم مهم است.
			پ. معلم زبان بایستی لباسهای مطابق مد روز بپوشد.
			پ. معلم زبان بایستی لباسهای متنوع بپوشد.
			ت. سن معلم زبان باید کم باشد.

</div>

بخش سوم: به نظر شما مشخصات علمی یک معلم زبان خوب چه باید باشد؟

اصلا موافق نیستم	تا حدی موافقم	کاملا موافقم	
			الف. هنگام صحبت کردن به زبان خارجی باید لهجه خوبی داشته باشد.
			ب. بتواند کاملا به زبان خارجی صحبت کند.
			پ. بتواند به زبان خارجی بنویسد.
			ت. تسلط خوبی بر خواندن مطالب به زبان خارجی داشته باشد.
			ث. مهارت شنیداریش خوب باشد.
			ج. به دستور زبان خارجی کاملا مسلط باشد.
			چ. کلمات زیادی بلد باشد.
			ح. بتواند از و به زبان خارجی ترجمه کند.
			خ. از فرهنگ کشورهایی که زبان خارجی مورد نظر در آنها تدریس می شود اطلاع داشته باشد.
			د. اطلاعات علمی به روز داشته باشد.

بخش چهارم: به نظر شما هنگام تدریس معلم زبان چگونه باید کلاس را اداره کند؟

اصلا موافق نیستم	تا حدی موافقم	کاملا موافقم	
			الف. باید کل کلاس به زبان خارجی حرف بزند.
			ب. از کتابهای کمک درسی استفاده کند.
			پ. از وسایل کمک آموزشی مانند تلویزیون و کامپیوتر استفاده کند.
			ت. مرتبا امتحان بگیرد.
			ث. کلیه تکالیف را تصحیح کند.
			ج. کار تحقیقی به دانش آموزان بدهد.
			چ. به دانش آموزان فرصت استراحت بدهد.
			ح. مطالب کتاب را با دقت توضیح بدهد.
			خ. مرتبا درسهای گذشته را مرور کند.
			د. در کلاس تصمیم گیرنده اصلی باشد.
			ذ. کلیه اشتباهات زبانی دانش آموزان را تصحیح کند.
			ر. کمی از کلاس را به تعریف از تجربیات خود اختصاص دهد.
			ز. کمی از وقت کلاس را به صحبت درباره مطالب غیر درسی و گوش کردن به حرفهای دانش آموزان اختصاص دهد.

بخش پنجم: به نظر شما آیا رفتار و ظاهر معلم زبان بایستی با سایر معلمین تفاوت داشته باشد؟

از میان جملات الف الی ز در جدول زیرکدامیک از مشخصات را برای معلمین **کلیه** دروس ضروری می دانید؟ لطفا انتخابهای خود را با علامت x مشخص کنید.

۱. کلیه دبیران بایستی ترجیحا

	الف. کم سن باشند.
	ب. شیک پوش باشند
	پ. مهربان باشند.
	ت. جدی باشند.
	ث. شوخ طبع باشند.
	ج سر زنده باشند.
	چ. به درد دل دانش آموزان گوش دهد.
	ح. صبور باشند.
	خ. مؤمن باشند
	د. از وسایل کمک آموزشی مانند تلویزیون استفاده کنند.
	ذ. اطلاعاتشان به روز باشد.
	ر. در کلاس تصمیم گیرنده اصلی باشند
	ز. در بیرون کلاس هم به دانش آموزان کمک کنند.
	ژ. هنگام صدا کردن دانش آموزان از نام کوچک آنها استفاده کنند.
	س. تنها به تدریس مطالب کتاب اکتفا نکنند

۲. آیا به نظر شما لازم است در کل معلم زبان انگلیسی با سایر معلمین تفاوتهایی داشته باشد؟

بلی ☐   تا حدودی☐   خیر ☐

اگر جوابتان بلی یا تا حدودی است جدول زیر را بخوانید و انتخابهای خود را با علامت x مشخص کنید. اگر نظر دیگری هم دارید در قسمت 2-2 بنویسید. (اگر با هیچیک از گزینه ها موافق نبودید هیچ علامتی نزنید و به قسمت 2-2 در پایین صفحه رجوع کنید.)

۳. بهتر است دبیر زبان از سایر معلمین

	الف. جوان تر باشد.
	ب. شیک پوش تر باشد.
	پ. مهربانتر باشد.
	ت. جدی تر باشد.
	ث. . شوخ طبعی بیشتری داشته باشد.
	ج. سرزنده تر باشد.
	چ. به درد دل دانش آموزان گوش بدهد.
	ح. صبورتر باشد.
	د. مؤمنتر باشد.
	ذ. از وسایل کمک آموزشی مانند کامپیوتر و تلویزیون بیشتر استفاده کند
	ر. .اطلاعاتش به روزتر باشد.

۳.۱ در صورتی که جوابتان بلی بوده اما با هیچیک از گزینه های جدول بالا موافق نیستید یا نظرات دیگری هم دارید لطفا آنها رادر اینجا بنویسید.

_____

بخش ششم: مشخصات فردی

۱. نام و نام خانوادگی: ــ

۲. نام مدرسه: ــ

۳. آیا خارج از کلاسهای زبان انگیسی مدرسه در کلاس زبان دیگری نیز شرکت می کنید یا کرده اید؟

الف. بلی☐   ب. خیر☐   پ. خیر اما به دلیل دیگری همچون اقامت در خارج از ایران انگیسی بالاتر از سطح مدرسه بلدم. ☐

۴. آیا به یادگیری زبان انگیسی علاقه دارید؟ الف. بلی☐ ب. تا حدودی☐ پ. خیر☐

۵. آیا والدینتان شما را به یادگیری زبان خارجی تشویق می کنند؟

الف بلی☐   ب. تا حدودی☐ پ. خیر☐

۶. آیا والدینتان به زبان دیگری غیر از فارسی تسط دارند؟ الف. بلی☐   ب. تا حدودی☐ پ. خیر☐

۷. در امتحان زبان در نیمسال دوم سال دوم راهنمایی چه نمره ای گرفته اید؟

الف. ۹-۰☐   ب. ۱۴-۱۲☐   پ. ۱۷- ۱۵☐   ۲۰-۱۸ .☐   ج. به خاطر ندارم.☐

۸. مایلید چه مهارتهای زبانی داشته باشید؟ لطفا جدول زیر را پر کنید.

اصلا موافق نیستم	تا حدی موافقم	کاملا موافقم	
			الف. بتوانم به زبان خارجی صحبت کنم.
			ب. بتوانم متون مختلف زبان خارجی را بخوانم.
			پ. بتوانم به زبان خارجی مطلب بنویسم.
			ت. مهارت شنیداریم به زبان خارجی خوب باشد.
			ث. به دستور زبان خارجی تسلط داشته باشم.
			ج. بتوانم از و به این زبان ترجمه کنم.
			چ. تنها مطالب کتابهای درسی را یاد بگیرم تا در این درس قبول شوم.

بخش هفتم: سئوالات تشریحی

۱. اگر بیش از یک بار تکالیفتان را انجام ندادید، انتظار دارید معلم زبان چه برخوردی با شما بکند؟

ــ

۲. گر به هر دلیلی نظم کلاس را بر هم زدید انتظار دارید معلم زبان با شما چه برخوردی بکند؟

-ــ

-

۳. اگر نکته دیگری به نظرتان می رسد لطفا ذکر کنید.

ــ

از دقت شما در تکمیل این پرسشنامه بسیار متشکرم. امیدوارم در همه مراحل زندگی موفق باشید.
☺☺

Appendix 9 The Final Version of the Test Administered in This Study

<div dir="rtl">

به نام خدا

نام: نام مدرسه: کلاس:

آیا خارج از کلاسهای زبان انگلیسی مدرسه در کلاس زبان دیگری نیز شرکت می کنید یا کرده اید؟

خیر☐ بلی☐ خیر اما به دلیل دیگری همچون اقامت در خارج از ایران انگیسی بالاتر از سطح مدرسه بلدم. ☐

در صورتی که پاسخ بلی را انتخاب کرده اید، لطفا مشخص کنید که چه مدت است که در خارج از مدرسه زبان انگلیسی یاد می گیرید.

☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺

مدت امتحان: ٤٥ دقیقه

الف. جملات زیر را با استفاده از کلمات سئوالی تکمیل کنید. توجه داشته باشید که در هر جای خالی <u>تنها یک کلمه</u> قرار دهید.

</div>

1. A: _____ do you wake up in the morning?

   B: I wake up at 7:00 o'clock.

2. A: _____ has a red pen?

   B: I have a red pen.

3. A: _____ didn't you buy that computer?

   B: Because I didn't have any money.

4 A: _____does he speak English?

   B: He speaks English very well.

<div dir="rtl">

ب. گزینه صحیح را انتخاب کنید.

</div>

1. Mona and Sara _____ like apples. (don't, doesn't, haven't)

2. _____ I leave the class? (May, Am, Will)

3. Tomorrow Nora _____ with her friend. (will study, studied, study)

4. _____ there any shops near your home? (Is, Are, Do)

5. We _____ at the library last Tuesday. (are, were, will be)

<div dir="rtl">

پ. جملات زیر را با کلمه صحیح تکمیل کنید. توجه داشته باشید که برای هر جای خالی تنها بایستی <u>یک کلمه</u> قرار دهید.

</div>

1. My father has blue eyes. _____ hair is black.

2 _____is half past seven. I have to go.

3. My mother and I are going _____ my uncle's house now.

4. I have a very kind uncle. I saw _____ last week.

5. He _____ not ride a bicycle. His brother will teach him tomorrow.

6. How _____ money do you have?

<div dir="rtl">

ت. ازمیان گزینه ها زیر کلمه ای را که تلفظ متفاوتی دارد را مشخص کنید.

</div>

1. rea<u>ds</u>   b. open<u>s</u>   c. speak<u>s</u>   d. live<u>s</u>

2. work<u>ed</u>   b. help<u>ed</u>   c. listen<u>ed</u>   d. watch<u>ed</u>

<div dir="rtl">

ث با استفاده از کلمات زیر جملات داده شده را تکمیل نمایید. (توجه داشته باشید هر گزینه را تنها یکبار انتخاب نمایید. تعداد گزینه ها از جملات بیشتر است.)

</div>

listened, usually, there, clean, library, let's, slowly, quickly, heavy, , sick, now, saw, take, went, made, never

1. My room is always very _____.

2. _____ play ping pong.

3. Tina _____ a very nice film last night.

4. I _____ do not study on Fridays. I do my homework on Thursdays.

5. There was very _____ traffic. I got to work very late.

6. Shall we _____ a taxi?

7. I can't understand you. Can you please speak _____?

8. My mother _____ has tea, because she doesn't like it.

<div dir="rtl">

ج. جملات در هم ریخته زیر را مرتب کنید.

</div>

1. the boys, their homework, doing, now, are, ?

_____

2. cars, are, in the, many, there, street, .

_____

3. father, carelessly, very, drives, my, .

_____

I. It is a nice day. Mother says, "Let's go to a park." My brother and I help her. I bring a basket. My mother and my brother like green apples, so we put 2 green apples in the basket. My father likes oranges and I like red apple. We put some oranges and a red apple in the basket, too. My brother takes some bread. Mother makes cheese sandwiches. I put water in the basket. We take our ball, too. Father says, "Let's take a bus." Mother says, "It is a nice day. Let's walk." My brother and I also like to walk, so we walk to the park. We get to the park at 1:00 o'clock. Then we sit down and eat our food and fruit there. Then we play ball. We have fun. We get back home at a quarter to 4.

1.1 How many apples are in the basket?

a. 1   b. 2   c. 3

1.2. How does the family go to the park?

a. They take a bus   b. They go in a car.   c. They walk.

1.3. What does the family do in the park?

a. They eat.   b. They eat and play.   c. They have fun.

1.4. What time does the family get home?

a. 4:15   b. 3:45   c. 1:00

II. Tom likes oranges very much. Yesterday he ate 10 oranges, so in the morning he had a stomachache. Mother said, "You had too many oranges yesterday. I will take you to the doctor."

Tom and his mother went to the doctor. They left home at 9:00 and got to the doctor at 9:30, but there were other people waiting to see the doctor. The doctor saw Tom at 10:00 o'clock. "What's the matter, Tom?" asked the doctor. "I have a stomach ache. I ate too many oranges last night." The doctor smiled and gave Tom some medicine. The doctor said, "Oranges are good, but do not eat too many of them." His stomachache got better soon.

2.1. Why did Tom go to the doctor?

   a. Because he ate oranges.

   b. Because his mother took him.

   c. Because he had a stomachache.

2.2 At what time did the doctor see Tom?

a. At 9:30.   b. At 10:00   c. At 9:00.

2.3. Did Tom go to the doctor with his mother?

a. Yes, he did.   b. No he didn't.   c. We don't know.

2.4. Choose the correct sentence.

   a. The doctor said that Tom should not eat oranges again.

   b. The doctor said that Tom may eat oranges again.

   c. The doctor said that oranges were not good for Tom.

1. I was h—ngry so I had a big lunch.

2. I love studying p—ysics.

3. She had a very diffi—ult life.

4. May I use your ph—ne?

Thank you!

☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺

Appendix 10 Questionnaire 2

Name:

School:

Please tick the box of your choice about your current language class at school.

1. Are you happy with your current English class?

   b. Yes☐   b. To some extent☐   c. No☐

2. Are you satisfied with your current language class?

   a. Yes☐   b. To some extent☐   c. No☐

Appendix 11 Interview Questions with the Teachers

First of all let me thank you for your cooperation. The reason for doing this interview is trying to answer some questions raised in a research. In this research which is being carried out in different districts of Tehran in both boys and girls schools, we are trying to find out what the characteristics of effective and successful language teachers in the context of public schools are. To this end so far the opinion of the learners and a group of parents has already been sought and at this phase the opinion of the teachers is what we are looking for. With your permission I will record your voice. Obviously no one, but I will have access to the information you are providing.

School:

Teacher's Name:

District:

Date:

Introductory Questions

1. Can you tell me about your educational background? How did you learn English?
2. Why did you decide to become a language teacher?
3. How long have you been teaching English?
4. Can you explain to me how and what you do and teach in a typical language class?

Content questions

Questions regarding the teacher's opinion and values, experience and behaviour

Introduction: Teacher's attitudes and expectations

5. Describe to me what you would see as a really good language teacher?
6. From that description, can you identify what you think are the characteristics of an effective language teacher?
7. If you want to select 3 most important qualities for an effective language teacher in Iran what do you think they would be?

2b. Teachers' perceptions of the inter-personal characteristics of an effective language teacher

8. What kind of relationship do you think the teacher should develop with the student?

9. Do you think the way the teacher looks counts? How?

2c. Teacher's perceptions of effective language teaching practices

10. Could you tell me how you think a really good lesson by an effective language teacher, what would look like, what would the teacher and students being doing?

Part 3

11. Do you think that language teachers are different from teachers of other subjects? And how do you evaluate this?
12. What are your expectations from the students? What do you expect them to learn from your classes?
13. What are your expectations from the parents?
14. What do you think the parents expectations are from you?

Part 4

15. Would like to share a very good, bad or special memory from a student or a group of students?
16. Would you like to share a memory concerning the parents?

I would like to once again thank you for your time and contribution to this research. If you are interested I can send you the summary of the research upon its completion. I will also leave my telephone number and email address in case you would think of something or would like to add anything that you think may contribute to this research.

Appendix 12 Interview Questions with the Students

Name of the student:

Name of the school:

The reasons for having selected this student:

First of all let me thank you for accepting to be interviewed. Whatever you say in this session is confidential and no one except me will have access to it. I will be recording the session if you do not mind. I ask the same questions from boys and girls in different schools in Tehran and I will do the same with parents and teachers and then compare the opinions.

Part one

Getting to know the students

1. Do you like going to school?
2. What is your favorite lesson at school?
3. What kind of a student do you think you are?
4. Do you like learning a new language such as English?
5. Do you think your parents like you to learn a new language?

Part Two
Student's perception of the professional characteristics of an effective language teacher

6. Describe to me what you would see as a really good language teacher at school?
7. If you would like to pick 3 most important characteristics what would they be?

Student's perception of the inter-personal characteristics of an effective language teacher

8. What kind of relationship do you like your teacher to have with you?
9. Do you think the way the teacher looks counts? Why? How?

Student's perception of effective language teacher practices

10. What do you think makes a good language lesson? What do you think should be taught?

Concluding Remarks

During our interview you talked about what you thought about good language teachers and how they should be like. We talked about their language teaching practice and the relations with the students Is there is anything you would like to add here?

I would like to thank you for your time. Your contribution is really helpful and important for my study.

Appendix 13 Interview Questions with the Parents

Parent's Name:

School:

The Reason this Parent has been Selected:

Date:

I would like to thank you for the time you have given me for the interview. The aim of this research is to find out the characteristics of an effective language teacher in the Iranian public schools. The opinion of the students, teachers and a group of parents is being sought. Whatever we discuss here will be confidential. With your permission I will record your voice.

Part 1

Introduction: Parental attitudes and expectations

1. Do you think it is important for your child to know an FL like English?
2. When choosing a school for your child what factors did you consider?
3. Do you think it is the duty of the school to teach an FL to your child?
4. What do you think should be taught as far as language teaching is concerned?
5. Could you tell me about the languages you speak? Do you speak any language other than your native tongue? (How did you learn it?)

Part 2

2a. Parents' perceptions of the professional characteristics of an effective language teacher

6. Describe to me what you would see as a really good language teacher for your child?
7. From that description, can you identify what you think are the characteristics of an effective language teacher?

2b. Parents' perceptions of the inter-personal characteristics of an effective language teacher

8. What kind of relationship do you think the teacher should develop with your child?
9. Do you think the way the teacher looks counts? How?

2c. Parents' perceptions of effective language teaching practices

10. If you were watching a really good lesson by an effective language teacher, what would it look like, what would the teacher and students being doing?

Concluding Remarks

During our interview you talked about what you thought about good language teachers and how they should be like. We talked about their language teaching practice and the interpersonal relations with the students Is there is anything you would like to add here?

I would like to thank you for your time. Your contribution is really helpful and important for my research.

Appendix 14 Certificate of Ethical Research Approval

UNIVERSITY OF
EXETER

Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

DISSERTATION/THESIS

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/guidelines/ and view the School's statement on the GSE student access on-line documents.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND

Your name: Mandana Arfa Kaboodvand

Your student no: 580042367

Return address for this certificate: NC107

Degree/Programme of Study: PhD

Project Supervisor(s): Debra Myhill

Your email address:

Tel: -

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my dissertation / thesis (delete whichever is inappropriate) to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed:..date: 9/8/2011

NB For Masters dissertations, which are marked blind, this first page must not be included in your work. It can be kept for your records.

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated April 2011

Certificate of ethical research approval

Your student no: 580042367

Title of your project: Desirable Characteristics for Teachers of English as a Foreign Language to Iranian secondary school students

Brief description of your research project:
Investigating, analyzing and studying the perceptions of the Iranian students, teachers, and parents of the effective language teacher and applying the findings in real life situations

In this research the attempt is to introduce a framework for detecting the characteristics of effective language teachers to secondary school students. In order to do that the opinion of secondary school learners of English as a foreign language, the teachers of English as an FL to the secondary school students, the parents and the school authorities are to be sought.

The students will have pre and post-tests based on their school textbooks, and 2 sets of questionnaires. The teachers and parents are to be interviewed. The themes of the interviews are their interpretation of the characteristics of effective language teachers in Iran. The last phase requires observing some language classes.

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):
1. Girls and boys aged 13-14 (studying at 8th grade in Tehran/Iran)
2. Language teachers
3. Parents

Give details (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) regarding the ethical issues of:
   a) **informed consent:** Where children in schools are involved this includes both headteachers and parents). Copy(ies) of your consent form(s) you will be using must accompany this document. a blank consent form can be downloaded from the GSE student access on-line documents:

I have obtained a permit to do my research in the schools from the MOE in Iran, Tehran office.

Before completing the questionnaires, students will be given clear information about the study and its purposes, and invited to consent to participate. This consent will be in writing and will be part of the questionnaire document. They will be advised that they have the right to withdraw at any time.
Prior to each interview with teachers and parents, clear information about the study and its purposes will be provided, and oral consent to interviewing will be secured.

Likewise, with the classroom observations, although teachers' have already given informal agreement, they will be given full information about the purposes of the information and the confidentiality of the data, and invited to give formal consent.

   b) **anonymity and confidentiality**

Participants' anonymity and confidentiality will be preserved absolutely. This is particularly important in the context of Iran as participants may be reluctant to share information if the fear they may be identifiable. This will necessitate particularly care in reporting the findings.

Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

I believe no harm will be done to anyone and will try my best to be concrete enough in explaining what the purpose of the whole work is, so that I would not put anyone under any kind of stress. The language tests used as data are the kind of tests which are routinely used in Iran.

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):

The final data set will include questionnaire responses, written classroom observations, interview transcripts and video and audio data. All the data will be stored securely, either in electronic form or in paper, stored in my own accommodation. The raw data will not be shared with anyone other than my supervisors and it will be destroyed at the end of my PhD research.

Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's Research Support Office for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

---

This project has been approved for the period: Sept 2011   until: Dec 2013

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): ...DJ(Higson)................................... date: 0.9...05.11...........

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occur a further form is completed.

GSE unique approval reference:............ 2/1.8.1.11.1 80..........

Signed:...date:.. 10/0 4/ 2011
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

This form is available from   http://education.exeter.ac.uk/students/

Appendix 15 Additional Points Concerning the Schools and the Performance of the Students

Some general information concerning the districts and the schools that the qualitative section of the study was conducted in is presented here. In addition, two tables illustrating the test scores of the students of these four schools and their levels of happiness and satisfaction comprise the last section. These were the bases for selecting the sample of the students to be interviewed.

Districts

West

This district is quite a large district, mostly less traditional compared to the other districts in Tehran and a rather controversial one. Many of the he locals of this district ave mainly immigrated to that area and do not necessarily have their roots in there. This district also has attracted immigrants from neighbouring countries, who do not always have good economic condition. However, there are many newly built houses and roads and it is a district that is becoming more and more popular.

One of the teachers I interviewed believed that the rate of divorce in this district is high and this affects the behaviour and performance of the students.

Centre

This district is known for its traditionalism. The main residents of the area are said to be those who have their roots there. They are either well-off or economically disadvantaged; many have strong religious beliefs and are quite family-oriented. Many important organizations both public and private are located in this area. It is a very populated area and also attracts many visitors from other districts.

Schools

School One

This girls' school was in the centre. The students seemed to be more traditional. They behaved very nicely and on the whole were happy with their school. The head

of the school seemed to be very much concerned about the well-being of the students.

Most of the students loved their language teacher and appreciated her efforts. They welcomed the activities that the teacher designed. Their teacher was very cooperative and was eager to improve the performance of her class.

School Two

This girls' school is located in the west and is quite a large one. The principal and the vices were very friendly, kind and very cooperative. The school had a large playground and the classrooms were convenient. The students were lively, polite and energetic. They were very friendly.

The students of the class who took part in the study had made very good improvement in the second English test. However, they were very unhappy and unsatisfied with their current language class. Their language teacher had just started her job in that school. The students kept on comparing her with the teacher they used to have and loved. This had resulted in some kind of tension.

School 3

This boys' school was located in the centre. Generally, the students of this school seemed to be very religious, well-behaved and confident.

At the very beginning of the school year the students had had some disagreements with their current language teacher, but eventually, they had come to like him and his teaching method. However, on average they had not made very good improvement in the two tests that they took during this study.

School 4

The boys of this school were the least disciplined among all the other schools I attended; however, when it came to the research they cooperated very well and particularly showed enthusiasm for the interview. Their language teacher thought that this class had been among the most difficult classes he had ever taught and was not satisfied with what went on in the class. The students seemed not to enjoy their language class very much either.

Table A below provides the information about the test scores of the students in the four schools. Table B demonstrates their happiness and satisfaction with their language classes at their schools.

School		N	Min Score	Max Score	Mean	Std Deviation
School 1	Test 1	15	4.00	30.00	17.80	9.00
	Test 2	12	10.00	37.00	24.91	10.93
School 2	Test 1	15	2.00	20.00	12.33	5.58
	Test 2	12	9.00	38.00	28.91	9.47
School 3	Test 1	23	6.00	30.00	14.73	5.90
	Test 2	20	5.00	37.00	20.10	10.53
School 4	Test 1	25	1.00	25.00	9.52	6.63
	Test 2	22	5.00	39.00	14.63	8.59

Table A Students scores in the first and second language test

School	Happiness			Satisfaction		
	Happy	Partially happy	Unhappy	Satisfied	Partially satisfied	Unsatisfied
School 1	10	2	0	10	2	0
School 2	0	2	10	1	1	10
School 3	7	9	7	9	8	6
School 4	4	5	13	7	2	13

Table B students' happiness and satisfaction with their language teacher