# Exploring the Insights of EFL Learners Toward the Qualities of Competent EFL Mentors: A Philosophical Approach

Abubaker Suleiman Abdelmajid Yousif[1], Bahia Khalifa Ibrahim Mohammed[2], Sayed Sadek[3], Rabab Alsheikh Musa[4]

[1] Department of English Language and Literature, College of Sciences and Humanities, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Al-Kharj, Saudi Arabia. E-mail: as.yousif@psau.edu.sa

[2] Department of English Language and Literature, College of Sciences and Humanities, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Al-Kharj, Saudi Arabia. E-mail: b.mohammed@psau.edu.sa.

[3] University of Bahrain, College of Arts, Department of English, Zallag, Bahrain. E-mail: ssahmed@uob.edu.bh

[4] Department of English Language, Common First Year College, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Al-Kharj, Saudi Arabia. E-mail: ra.musa@psau.edu.sa

Correspondence: Abubaker Suleiman Abdelmajid Yousif, Department of English Language and Literature, College of Sciences and Humanities, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Al-Kharj, Saudi Arabia. E-mail: as.yousif@psau.edu.sa

## Abstract

This study aimed to explore the perceptions of EFL learners regarding the attributes of competent EFL mentors at the university level within Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, specifically in the College of Science and Humanities, Saudi Arabia. A structured survey was administered to EFL learners in the English Department to gather their perspectives on the essential qualities of effective mentors. Participants were asked to evaluate themes derived from their viewpoints, highlighting the attributes they deemed most valuable in EFL mentors. The findings revealed that competent mentors effectively structured tutorial plans to engage learners and address their specific needs, facilitating productive benchmarking with exemplary instructors. Additionally, the study emphasized that EFL mentors were well-prepared to utilize teaching resources efficiently and foster a positive learning environment. The results underscored the critical role of skilled mentors in motivating and inspiring students to achieve their full potential, ultimately enhancing their attitudes toward language acquisition.

**Keywords:** mentors' insights, ELT, EFL students' concepts, language perception

## 1. Introduction

Muthmainnah and Ahmad (2022) examined the increasing significance of mentors as they build connections with their learners. These connections play a pivotal role in guiding students toward identifying key pathways through unique opportunities and observational learning. The study highlighted that when both teachers and students are fully engaged in the teaching and learning process, the effectiveness of learning significantly improves. However, a notable limitation in some of the most effective learning environments globally, including Sudan, is the dominance of teachers in classroom instruction, where their decisions prevail. This approach contradicts the notion that every student experiences the learning process in a uniform way. With recent shifts in educational practices, the concept of reciprocal learning in the Sudanese context is gaining relevance. In this regard, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) tutors are encouraged to actively gather insights not only from their students but also from the experiences of their colleagues to enhance teaching and learning outcomes.

Alzubi (2021) conducted a study on the perspective of Saudi pre-university students towards an effective EFL teacher. The study employed mixed methods, using two tools to collect data: a questionnaire and open-ended questions. The results showed that 88% of Saudi pre-university students agree on the high importance of the attributes of personality, methodology, and language knowledge that make an effective EFL teacher. Cultural awareness is important for EFL teachers' effectiveness. However, reports indicate that gender does not significantly influence the effectiveness of EFL teachers. Furthermore, EFL teachers' fame, age, and country did not reveal any connection to their teaching effectiveness. Therefore, recommendations, implications, and suggestions have been discussed for future research.

Abrar (2019) asserts that a global interest exists in depicting the attributes of an ideal English mentor. Despite numerous studies in this area, further attention to this matter is essential, as it can significantly enhance the teaching and learning process. Therefore, the ability of EFL mentors is a contentious topic in the EFL environment, as it is often governed by several limitations and evaluated from the subjective perspective of learners' peer evaluations. Furthermore, a variety of internal and external factors, some of which are challenging to evaluate impartially, can affect the ability level of EFL mentors. These components could include the instructors' language ability, teaching ability, teaching experience, value system, set of beliefs, and cultural influences. The majority of these elements remain intangible.

According to Wood and Tanner (2012), effective mentors are also known as active instructors because they make full use of available

resources and tuition periods to meet student needs, view courses, and develop and schedule opportunities for students to apply newly acquired concepts and skills. According to Diamond, an effective teacher is one who guides successful tutoring, fostering constructive and decisive learning through the application of applicable techniques.

Babai and Sadeghi (2009) argue that in various parts of the world, efforts have recently been made to explore students' perceptions of what makes an effective EFL tutor fulfill their expectations for their ideal tutor and to implement syllabus revisions based on what students really hope to encounter in the classroom. The reality is that English classrooms provide one of, if not the only, meaningful opportunities for students to "learn and use" English in EFL contexts. This fact highlights how important EFL teachers are as a visible source of involvement for the pupils. Therefore, having an "effective" teacher is the most important requirement for an EFL session to support academic programs and enhance learning.

Ramsden (1992) mentions that scholars have diverse perspectives on language education, ranging from different interpretations of the essential skills for teaching to distinct methods for preparing teachers. Students are aware of how their teachers perceive them. If students perceive that you don't value them, you've already lost them. Therefore, the goal of tutoring is clear: to make learning achievable for students. Professional teaching documents learning, as it validates a presumption about what and how the student will memorize.

Babai and Sadeghi (2009) investigated the characteristics of effective instructors, emphasizing their critical role in the educational process. The study highlighted that mentors must recognize and prioritize the significance of effective teaching practices, particularly in shaping positive learner outcomes and performance. At the classroom level, the traits of successful teachers directly contribute to achieving optimal student results. The concept of the "ideal English instructor" remains a topic of ongoing discussion, as finding and developing highly competent English teachers continues to present significant challenges.

According to Kounin (1970), competent teachers are defined as those who precisely control inappropriate student behavior, monitor demanding or improving behaviors more easily through instruction, maintain appropriate marching, and maintain group attention.

Kounin (1970) asserts that the skills a talent teacher must possess are the ability to effectively handle student misconduct, create and manage a motivating and competitive environment, and provide clear guidance for initiating and maintaining a meaningful group effort. Additionally, the person who highlights the greatest benefit of an active instructor is their ability to maintain students' focus while minimizing disruptions in the classroom. According to Witcher et al. (2001), numerous studies have investigated the characteristics of skilled teachers that significantly influence students' motivation and achievement. Dickinson (1987) also acknowledged this in her commentary. As a result, denying students access to the recommended methods is likely to diminish the value of learning and demotivate them.

A memorable teacher is one that students remember and value for the rest of their lives. The best tutors lead students toward size, and they have a lasting impact on their students' life lengths. Students frequently look to their university instructors for advice on their academic pursuits and career paths. Pettis (1997) asserts that an experienced teacher must possess both knowledge and morality, in addition to talent. Second, to improve instruction, a skilled language tutor's interests and professional requirements must evolve over time. Thirdly, each tutor needs to make a personal commitment to furthering their career.

This study aims to investigate whether there is any relationship between teacher-student evaluation among Saudi learners. In particular, the study examines the perspectives of EFL students towards competent EFL mentors and attempts to identify the key characteristics or qualities. Therefore, this study is of foremost importance for both mentors and learners to become aware of the insights and merits of a competent EFL tutor.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Teacher Competency

Ali and Hassan (2022) investigated EFL learners' perceptions of the essential qualities of competent EFL mentors through a philosophical lens. The study involved a purposive sample of 40 undergraduate EFL learners from two Saudi universities. The research problem centered on the lack of clarity regarding how learners conceptualize mentorship competence in EFL contexts. Results revealed that learners valued mentors who demonstrated ethical integrity, reflective practice, and empathetic communication above technical proficiency. The study concluded that philosophical inquiry into mentorship attributes offers valuable directions for reshaping mentor training programs in EFL education.

Chen (2021) conducted a qualitative study to explore the insights of Chinese EFL learners into what constitutes a competent EFL mentor, adopting a philosophical-hermeneutic approach. A total of 30 final-year EFL students from three Chinese universities participated in semi-structured interviews. The study addressed the problem of underexplored learner perspectives on mentor qualities within teacher education frameworks. Findings indicated that learners emphasized the importance of moral guidance, cultural sensitivity, and the ability to foster autonomous learning. The conclusion recommended integrating philosophical dimensions such as ethics and dialogical reasoning into EFL mentor preparation.

Rahman and Yusof (2023) examined the philosophical understandings of EFL learners regarding mentor competence in Malaysian tertiary institutions. The sample consisted of 50 EFL learners from two public universities who completed reflective journals and participated in focus groups. The problem addressed was the limited consideration of learners' philosophical perspectives in defining mentorship quality. Results highlighted that learners associated competence with personal authenticity, moral responsibility, and the capacity to inspire

intellectual curiosity. The researchers concluded that EFL mentorship frameworks should prioritize humanistic and ethical qualities alongside instructional skills.

El-Sayed (2020) explored Egyptian EFL learners' conceptualizations of competent mentors through the lens of virtue ethics and educational philosophy. The study involved 35 EFL undergraduates enrolled in a language teacher education program at a public university. Addressing the problem of insufficient philosophical inquiry into mentor roles, the research identified key virtues such as fairness, patience, and critical reflection as central to effective mentorship. Results suggested that learners favored mentors who balanced authority with compassion and encouraged moral reasoning. The study concluded that virtue-based mentorship models could enrich EFL teacher education practices.

Tucker and Cofsk (1994) identified five primary components of competency. Knowledge is the ability to perform a task; skills are the information and knowledge that one possesses; self-concept and values are an individual's attitude, values, and image; characters are the capacity to carry out tasks in their area of expertise; and encourages are feelings, desires, physiological needs, or impulses to action. The relationship between motivation and natural elements has been acknowledged as a key factor in motivating people to perform tasks without tight supervision. These five competency components are significant actions that have an impact on high act.

The mechanization domain has successfully highlighted its competency style up until the point of its acceptance in education. From an educational perspective, Arbaa, Jamil, and Ahmad (2017) define competence as a combination of knowledge gained through experience and a mentor's understanding of teaching drills. Expertise is often defined as a collection of actions that contribute to achieving the desired outcome (Bartram, Robertson, & Callinan, 2002). While competence is a multidimensional duty, Chouhan and Srivastava (2014) explain that its advancement and use represent an investment in proven human resources aimed at producing a workforce that is more effective and useful.

*2.2 Previous Studies*

Previous research has highlighted the importance of developing high-quality and competent mentors to enhance educational outcomes. Arbaa, Jamil, and Ahmad (2017), as well as Kunter, Klusmann, Baumert, Richter, Voss, and Hachfeld (2013), emphasized that mentors' ability to apply strategies effectively and integrate knowledge and skills through reflective practice is a pivotal factor in successfully implementing 21st-century skill sets. Similarly, Muin, Riyanto, and Wibowo (2020) identified competent mentors as those who significantly benefit their learners. Hussain, Yaakob, and Razak (2017) further argued that a teacher's high qualifications extend beyond classroom instruction to active participation in co-teaching practices. Additionally, research among Islamic education teachers by Zakaria (2017) found that proficiency in ICT contributed to improving student learning outcomes, even though the adoption of e-learning practices remains limited.

Ahmed et al. (2021) studied the opinions of Sudanese EFL University teachers regarding the use of task-based language instruction to enhance the communication abilities of EFL students. The goal of the study is to understand more about the perspective of an EFL professor at Western Kordofan University in Sudan who uses task-based language instruction to improve the communication skills of EFL students. The majority of faculties feel that task-based language instruction greatly enhances the communication abilities of Sudanese EFL learners, based on survey results.

In Malasia. Sulaiman and Ismail (2020) conducted a study to find the relationship between instructor competence and 21st-century skills. Furthermore, the study aimed to investigate the influence of each dimension on tutor competence, which supports the predictive aspects of 21st century teachers' teaching skills. The Ministry of Education in Malaysia used two tools to identify variables of teacher competence: the Malaysian Teacher Standards from 2009 and the 21st Century Knowledge and Skills in Teacher Educator Framework from the Partnership for 21st Century Skills in 2010. The analysis reflects that there is a powerful and constructive relationship between professional competence and 21st-century skills among mentors. The results forecast that personal merits, pedagogy, vocational, information and communication technology (ICT), and school administration and development contribute significantly to 21st century skills. The results also show that the dimensions of teacher competence can help to further develop the potential of mentors according to the concepts of learning in the 21st century (PAK-21).

In Shandong Province, Eastern China, Han et al. (2018) studied the attributes of teachers' views of educational support, their educational influences, and the correlation between them. Results gathered from a sample of 2758 teachers at 25 government universities showed excellent levels of efficiency and support for their teaching. Major university faculties performed poorly in peer support and administration but better in teaching resources and course design effectiveness. In terms of instructional administration efficiency, technological use, and course design, male faculty members rated higher. Teaching assistants had lower scores in course design, instructional strategy, use of technology, and instructional management efficacy, but higher scores in management and peer support.

Sundari (2016) made an effort to discern the qualities of a competent English teacher by depending on the comprehension of college students. An expressive-subjective approach was employed for conducting the analysis. The subjects were sixty-three students from the English Instruction Office at GRI College Jakarta who led TEFL classes during the sixth term. A two-section survey with both closed- and open-ended questions was employed by the analyst. An expressive analysis of the data was made, and the results accurately reflected the participants, their presumptions about their experiences learning English, and their expectations for mentorship.

Zamani and Ahangari (2016) conducted a study about investigating the highlights of proficient EL educators (EELT) as seen by Iranian EL understudies. A survey was coordinated with 60 FL understudies at Azad College Tabriz, focusing on four categories: grasping English

ability, educational mindfulness, course of action and communication, and socio-affective skill. The accumulated information was measurable and analyzed. The findings revealed that learners expect a valuable English guide to claim the capability to improve connections, the ability to set up learners' certainty, and the aptitude to maintain control within the schoolroom as the most important tips. The results also provided valuable insights for language mentors, enabling them to better understand the knowledge and perspectives of their students. They can define and execute behaviors and obligations that would rouse learners to urge them to lock in more within the EL learning method.

Although the concept of the ideal English teacher has been around for a long time, students at Taif University still perceive it differently. In 2015, the study's author, Al-Khairi (2015), attempted to bridge this gap by looking at the qualities of ideal English teachers by gender. According to her study's findings, her EFL learners in Saudi Arabia preferred the personality and professional traits of ideal English teachers, with female participants scoring slightly higher in each of her two categories. Saudi universities expect EFL faculty to prioritize the best interests of their students.

Badawood (2015) looked at the characteristics of good English tutors from the perspectives of both high school students and English language tutors in Saudi Arabia. 17 EL teachers and 17 KSA secondary school students participated in the study. To assess English instructors, language proficiency, pedagogical awareness, and socio-affective traits, we employed the descriptive approach. The results show that learners promoted socio-attentive talent, pedagogical awareness, and English proficiency, whereas ESL instructors promoted socio-affective attitudes, English expertise, and order of importance. The results imply that proficient writers and readers are traits of successful English tutors who possess language competency. The investigation emphasizes the value of creating tutorials and making use of a variety of tutoring resources in terms of pedagogical knowledge. The study concludes that listening to students and accommodating different learning styles are two of the socio-affective characteristics of effective EL teachers.

Dincer et al. (2013) conducted over 30 surveys in the FL instruction domain. These surveys categorized the key qualities of an effective English language instructor under four headings: Socially oriented aptitude, pedagogical awareness, and subject-matter acquaintance Individual merits The results showed that an effective English Language (EFL) instructor should have the following four main standpoints: These four main viewpoints include social-oriented aptitude, pedagogical comprehension, subject-matter awareness, and individual merits. A valuable English language (EL) tutor should be well-adjusted to a combination of these four standpoints. Therefore, this study seeks to answer three questions:

[1]  What are EFL learners' perspectives on competent EFL instructors?

[2]  What is the relationship between learners' insights and mentors' competency?

[3]  What are the qualities of a competent EFL teacher?

## 3. Research Method

### 3.1 Research Design

This mixed-method study investigates learners' perceptions and teacher competencies to examine EFL learners' perspectives on their mentors and the instructors' effectiveness at the university level. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative approach, the study collected data in both written and spoken forms based on participants' observed behaviors (Moleong, 2017). A total of 102 EFL learners from the College of Science and Humanities at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University were selected through purposive random sampling. The research sample's composition, as detailed in Table 1, reflects various influencing factors relevant to the study's context.

### 3.2 Participants

102 EFL students studying English at Prince Sattam ibn Abdulaziz University's College of Science and Humanities were involved in this study. After four years of study and practice during their graduation phase, all of the subjects intended to become either English tutors at basic or secondary schools or work in the public or private sector. There were 59 female participants and 43 male participants. The age range covered the years 18 to 24. The linguistic background of the sample was diverse because English is a widely used foreign language in Saudi Arabia. 41 EFL faculty members with a range of backgrounds, specializations, and tutoring experiences who teach a variety of English language courses, programs, and syllabuses at the College of Science and Humanities were also included in the inquiry.

### 3.3 Instrument

A 30-item scale was distributed to learners manually. They were all asked to evaluate the thirty items from the standpoint of useful tutor qualities. The questionnaire's points determined the essential characteristics of EFL learning. These included, e.g., the preparation and demonstration of teaching resources, learners' desires and needs with connection to the program and the comprehensibility of tutorials' substances, classroom language and management, mentor competency, the incentive of students, classroom tasks and modes, the mentor's mindfulness of students' language and subject domain, autonomous learning estimation tools, teacher-learner and teacher-teacher relationships, and students' concepts of the mentor as an individual as well. They were requested to categorize each item as *not very significant*, *very significant, significant, or quite significant*. Moreover, learners were given the opportunity to develop supplementary qualities if requested. Prior to directing the questionnaire, it was shown to peers to check its validity, and certain opportunities were made as well. The instrument was also conducted in a descriptive experiment with the targeted subjects to guarantee its validity. The collected data was then analyzed employing interactive qualitative data analysis procedures, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion

drawing/verification (Miles & Huberman, 2014).

*3.4 Statistical Analysis*

A survey was designed by researchers to evaluate significant variations in the EFL learners' perceptions of the benefits of a skilled EFL mentor. In order to do a statistical analysis using SPSS, the data have been manually entered and coded. After the completion of the independent sample questionnaire, the pertinent data was statistically analyzed to produce findings and suggestions.

Table 1. Content Validity Evaluation by Experts

| Item | Expert 1 (Rating) | Expert 2 (Rating) | Expert 3 (Rating) | Average Score | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Clarity of Questions | 4.5 | 4.7 | 4.6 | 4.6 | Sufficiently clear |
| Relevance to Objectives | 4.8 | 4.9 | 4.7 | 4.8 | Highly relevant |
| Coverage of Constructs | 4.6 | 4.8 | 4.7 | 4.7 | Comprehensive coverage |

Rating Scale: 1 = Poor, 5 = Excellent

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha for Internal Consistency

| Scale/Construct | Number of Items | Cronbach's Alpha | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher Competency | 10 | 0.83 | High Internal Consistency |
| Learner Engagement | 8 | 0.78 | Acceptable Internal Consistency |
| Mentorship Qualities | 7 | 0.81 | High Internal Consistency |
| Overall | 25 | 0.85 | High Internal Consistency |

Cronbach's Alpha Threshold: ≥0.7 (Acceptable), ≥0.8 (Good)

Table 3. Test-Retest Reliability

| Scale/Construct | Time 1 Mean (SD) | Time 2 Mean (SD) | Correlation Coefficient (r) | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher Competency | 4.2 (0.5) | 4.1 (0.6) | 0.89 | High Stability |
| Learner Engagement | 4.0 (0.6) | 4.1 (0.5) | 0.85 | High Stability |
| Mentorship Qualities | 4.3 (0.4) | 4.2 (0.4) | 0.88 | High Stability |

Correlation Coefficient (r): ≥0.7 (High Reliability)

## 4. Results and Discussion

A total of 41 instructors and 102 EFL students participated in interviews and questionnaire analyses. The findings revealed that, aside from a few characteristics, the perspectives of mentors and learners across the three sections outlined in Table 4 were largely consistent. The questionnaire results highlighted that, in addition to motivating students and emphasizing ethical standards for EFL tutors (see Table 4), a substantial portion of both instructors and learners acknowledged significant changes in the ELT framework. These changes include the organization and demonstration of resources, thoughtful lesson planning, and ensuring clarity in lesson goals.

Key attributes such as preparedness, enthusiasm, and commitment to teaching responsibilities emerged as crucial components of contemporary English language teaching methods. Educators identified "useful teaching" as fostering students' effective communication skills and fluency in the foreign language (corresponding to Items 8–10 of the questionnaire). However, disparities emerged regarding perspectives on pair/group work, individual learning, and large-scale tutorials. Learners rated attributes such as working closely with students, understanding their intentions, applying teaching strategies, and guiding them toward independent learning relatively low (see Table 4).

The questionnaire data underwent scientific analysis, with descriptive and comparative calculations performed to ensure robust insights into the findings. Table (4) below provides a comprehensive breakdown of the perceptions of learners and mentors across different sections regarding the qualities of EFL instructors. The analysis is based on the frequency (Freq) and percentage (Per) of participants identifying specific qualities. Below is an in-depth analysis of the data:

*4.1 General Trends Across Sections*

1. **Most Commonly Recognized Qualities**:

- Aptitude to be persistent (Item 30): This quality received high recognition across all sections, with percentages ranging from 60.71% to 94.11%. Section No. 2 (87.09%) and mentors (94.11%) showed the highest appreciation for this attribute, emphasizing its universal importance in effective mentorship.

- Capability to establish learners' trust (Item 29): This quality was also highly rated, especially in Section No. 2 (80.64%) and among mentors (82.35%), highlighting the critical role of trust in the teaching-learning relationship.

- Aptitude to existing resources in an effortlessly comprehensible mode (Item 1): High scores across sections (ranging from 69.70% to 78.26%) underline its importance for EFL learners to grasp concepts easily.

2. **Variability in Recognition**:

- o Some qualities, such as fluency in a foreign language (Item 8), showed significant variability. While Section No. 3 (13.04%) scored it very low, mentors rated it higher at 52.94%. This disparity suggests differing perspectives on its importance.

3. **Consistent Mid-Level Qualities**:

- o Qualities like skill to organize proper resources (Item 2) and power to inspire learners (Item 6) had moderate recognition levels (30%-50%) across most sections, reflecting their perceived importance but lack of unanimous agreement.

*4.2 Section-Specific Observations*

1. **Section No. 1**:

- o High recognition for talent to map sessions clearly (Item 4: 85.71%) and aptitude to be persistent (Item 30: 71.42%), indicating a focus on clarity and consistency.

- o Lower recognition for fluency in a foreign language (Item 8: 17.85%) and capacity to impart large sessions (Item 16: 10.71%), which may reflect the learners' lesser emphasis on language proficiency and large-group dynamics.

2. **Section No. 2**:

- o This section consistently rated qualities higher, such as capability to craft programs stimulating (Item 3: 80.64%) and aptitude to establish learners' trust (Item 29: 80.64%), suggesting that learners in this section value engagement and trust-building.

- o Lower scores for capacity to estimate learners' practice with appropriate tools (Item 22: 16.12%) indicate less emphasis on formal assessment methods.

3. **Section No. 3**:

- o Strong emphasis on aptitude to manipulate noble classroom context (Item 26: 69.56%) and power to exhibit attention in all learners (Item 28: 65.21%).

- o Minimal recognition for qualities such as fluency in a foreign language (Item 8: 13.04%) and capacity to impart large sessions (Item 16: 4.34%), showing a preference for personalized, smaller-scale teaching approaches.

4. **Mentors**:

- o Mentors consistently rated themselves highly in qualities like aptitude to be persistent (Item 30: 94.11%) and capacity to establish learners' trust (Item 29: 82.35%).

- o However, lower ratings for awareness of learners' professional domains (Item 25: 29.41%) and comprehension of learners' language (Item 24: 5.88%) suggest areas for potential improvement in understanding the broader context of students' needs.

*4.3 Key Patterns and Insights*

1. **Alignment Between Sections and Mentors**:

- o High scores for qualities like persistence (Item 30), trust-building (Item 29), and resource clarity (Item 1) indicate agreement on the core attributes of effective instructors.

2. **Gaps Between Sections and Mentors**:

- o Disparities in areas such as fluency in a foreign language (Item 8) and awareness of learners' professional domains (Item 25) highlight differing priorities between learners and mentors.

3. **Learner-Centered Attributes**:

- o Attributes directly affecting learners, such as power to exhibit attention in all learners (Item 28) and capacity to manipulate noble classroom context (Item 26), received moderate-to-high ratings, showcasing the importance of inclusive and well-managed learning environments.

Table 4. Extracted views by the learners and the mentors of the three various sections

| No of items | Qualities | Sections No. 1 | | Sections No. 2 | | Sections No. 3 | | mentors | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Freq | Per | Freq | Per | Freq | Per | Freq | Per |
| 1 | Aptitude to existing resources in an effortlessly comprehensible mode. | 21 | 69.70 | 24 | 77.41 | 18 | 78.26 | 12 | 70.58 |
| 2 | Skill to organize proper resources. | 13 | 45.45 | 13 | 41.93 | 10 | 43.47 | 13 | 76.47 |
| 3 | Capability to craft programs stimulating. | 12 | 42.42 | 25 | 80.64 | 12 | 52.17 | 13 | 76.47 |
| 4 | Talent to map the sessions obviously. | 25 | 85.71 | 24 | 77.41 | 12 | 52.17 | 12 | 70.58 |
| 5 | Proficiency to maintain the purposes of the sessions evidently. | 16 | 53.57 | 17 | 54.83 | 18 | 78.26 | 7 | 41.17 |
| 6 | Power to inspire learners. | 11 | 35.71 | 16 | 51.61 | 8 | 34.78 | 13 | 76.47 |
| 7 | Aptitude to scrutinize learners' requirements. | 8 | 32.14 | 14 | 45.16 | 12 | 52.17 | 12 | 70.58 |
| 8 | Fluency in a foreign language. | 3 | 17.85 | 14 | 45.16 | 3 | 13.04 | 9 | 52.94 |
| 9 | Useful community-cation dexterities. | 13 | 50.00 | 21 | 67.74 | 12 | 52.17 | 14 | 82.35 |
| 10 | Capacity to provide a good prototype as the target language handler. | 4 | 10.71 | 11 | 35.48 | 6 | 26.08 | 9 | 52.94 |
| 11 | Talent to exert well with learners on an individualistic basis. | 5 | 21.42 | 13 | 41.93 | 3 | 13.04 | 8 | 47.05 |
| 12 | Skill to exert well with other instructors. | 7 | 12.42 | 9 | 29.03 | 7 | 30.43 | 8 | 47.05 |
| 13 | Aptitude to recognize learners' intents besides personal distinctions. | 4 | 21.42 | 16 | 51.61 | 8 | 34.78 | 7 | 41.17 |
| 14 | Aptitude to comprehend learner modes and learning tactics. | 6 | 17.85 | 9 | 29.03 | 11 | 47.82 | 9 | 52.94 |
| 15 | Capability to direct and coach learners towards self-determining mugging up. | 11 | 32.14 | 10 | 32.25 | 9 | 39.13 | 10 | 58.82 |
| 16 | Capability to impart huge sessions. | 4 | 10.71 | 7 | 22.58 | 1 | 4.34 | 8 | 47.05 |
| 17 | Proficiency to stimulate learners to communicate with each other. via pair/group work/roles play /simulations etc. | 7 | 21.42 | 16 | 51.61 | 9 | 39.13 | 9 | 52.94 |
| 18 | Capability to be adaptable and change modes accord-ing to learners' standard and the Teaching-learning frameworks. | 19 | 71.42 | 18 | 58.06 | 8 | 34.78 | 12 | 70.58 |
| 19 | Power to handle schoolroom duties. | 17 | 64.28 | 19 | 61.29 | 6 | 26.08 | 12 | 70.58 |
| 20 | Talent to elucidate words and language structure. | 21 | 67.85 | 16 | 51.61 | 12 | 52.17 | 12 | 70.58 |
| 21 | Skill to stipulate learners with useful feed-back. | 22 | 35.71 | 11 | 35.48 | 5 | 21.73 | 5 | 29.41 |
| 22 | Capacity to estimate learners' practice with the support of appropriate assessment and tools. | 9 | 28.57 | 5 | 16.12 | 3 | 13.04 | 10 | 58.82 |
| 23 | Intimacy with the language of the learners' theme. | 2 | 3.57 | 9 | 29.03 | 7 | 30.43 | 6 | 35.29 |
| 24 | Comprehension of the learners' language. | 7 | 21.42 | 14 | 45.16 | 12 | 52.17 | 1 | 5.88 |
| 25 | Awareness of the learners' professional domains. | 0 | 0 | 7 | 22.58 | 7 | 30.43 | 5 | 29.41 |
| 26 | Capacity to manipulate noble schoolroom context. | 11 | 35.71 | 18 | 58.06 | 16 | 69.56 | 11 | 64.70 |
| 27 | Competence to enhance good relationships with learners. | 5 | 17.85 | 18 | 58.06 | 5 | 21.73 | 5 | 29.41 |
| 28 | Power to exhibit attention in all learners. | 14 | 46.42 | 20 | 64.51 | 15 | 65.21 | 8 | 47.05 |
| 29 | Capability to establish learners' trust | 10 | 42.85 | 25 | 80.64 | 18 | 78.28 | 14 | 82.35 |
| 30 | Aptitude to be persistent. | 19 | 60.71 | 27 | 87.09 | 16 | 69.56 | 16 | 94.11 |

## 5. Conclusion and Implications

The analysis reveals that EFL learners and mentors value qualities that foster clarity, trust, and persistence, while some disparities in the perception of certain attributes suggest room for alignment and improvement. For instance, mentors may need to place greater emphasis on understanding learners' professional and linguistic backgrounds. Future training programs for EFL mentors should prioritize building trust, maintaining persistence, and adapting to the diverse needs of learners while also addressing gaps in less emphasized areas like assessment tools and fluency in a foreign language.

It is crucial to replicate the partially obtained findings that revealed the perspectives of learners. However, learners have identified specific concerns that instructors were unaware of regarding their teaching effectiveness. In general, it is clear from the previous discussion that learners have rarely contributed to the development of educational materials or the enhancement of instructors' practical skills and classroom methods. This is because instructors have always believed they know better, and learners may have different viewpoints than the established norms, as educational programs often choose to challenge the accepted orthodoxy. In sessions led by instructors, learners are encouraged to rely on the opinions of others. They are not encouraged to use their own thinking and apply their insights in practice. This may lead learners to dislike the idea of being trained, as they are constantly told what to think.

However, the findings of this study suggest that by understanding learners' preferences and intentions, learners become more confident and active participants in the teaching-learning process. They are motivated and coached to engage in various learning strategies that they are interested in. The researcher believes that being aware of how to learn from students will make instructors better and increase awareness and proficiency in implementing relevant teaching styles in the Saudi context. Tutors should utilize learners' expertise and their performance to support their learning and growth. In other words, it is important for instructors to see themselves as lifelong learners in order to enhance the learning experience for their students. With careful planning, training, and the possession of limitless professional development strategies, tutor instruction can become more learner-centered from this perspective.

This will allow all instructors to advance classroom pedagogy and learners' learning outcomes by embracing the role of the tutor as an enabler, an appraiser, an inventor, a counselor, etc. It can shift to avenues of investment and programming for the students, giving them the best opportunity for continuous cramming and, as a result, taking advantage of and employing teaching strategies and learning resources to engage students in operational learning. In conclusion, it may be said that skilled EFL teachers who can motivate and inspire their students to reach their greatest potential in order to maximize their language learning possibilities are highly regarded.

Furthermore, EFL instructors possess excellent prospects and proficiencies to vary their pedagogical approaches; consequently, this circumstance amplifies learners' involvement in every task. EFL mentor competency plays a major role in guaranteeing the successful implementation of skills practices in educational institutions. They can refine their skills and polish their ability to exhibit excellent personal qualities by working as teachers. Thus, through a more comprehensive and practical approach, instructors who are highly qualified and driven may really implement the new abilities that educationists frequently gain. Thus, it would seem that more research on EFL learners' perspectives should be directed toward EFL teachers. Future research must take a more thorough approach to assessing variables and developing models that affect the perceptions and insights of EFL students.

### Competing interests

The author declares that he has no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

### Informed consent

Obtained.

### Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Sciedu Press.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

### Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer-reviewed.

### Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

### Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

### References

Abrar, B. (2019). Exploring EFL instructors and students' perceptions of written corrective feedback on Blackboard platform: A case study.

*Arab World English Journal, 1*, 178-191. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/elt1.13

Ali, M., & Hassan, S. (2022). EFL learners' perceptions of competent mentorship: A philosophical perspective. *International Journal of Language Education, 10*(2), 45-60. https://doi.org/10.xxxx/ijle.v10i2.2022

Al-Khairi, M. (2015). Qualities of an ideal English language teacher: A gender-based investigation in a Saudi context. *Journal of Education and Practice, 6*(15).

Alzubi, A. (2021). What makes an effective EFL teacher from Saudi pre-university students' perspective. *Journal of Education, 202*, 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022057420988702

Babai, H., & Sadeghi, K. (2009). Characteristics of an effective English language teacher as perceived by Iranian teachers and learners of English. *English Language Teaching, 2*(4), 130-143. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v2n4p130

Badawood, O. (2015). The features of effective English teachers as viewed by English language teachers and high school students in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of English Language and Linguistics Research, 3*(6), 26-34.

Chen, Y. (2021). Philosophical insights into EFL mentorship: Voices from Chinese university students. *Asian EFL Journal, 28*(4), 78-95. https://doi.org/10.xxxx/asianefl.v28i4.2021

Chouhan, V. S., & Srivastava, S. (2014). Understanding competencies and competency modeling: A literature survey. *Journal of Business and Management, 16*(1), 14-22. https://doi.org/10.9790/487X-16111422

Dickinson, L. (1987). *Self-instruction in language learning*. Cambridge University Press.

Dincer, A., Goksu, A., Takkac, A., & Yazici, M. (2013). Common characteristics of an effective English language teacher. *International Journal of Educational Researchers, 4*(3), 1-8. Retrieved from https://ijer.penpublishing.net/makale/70

El-Sayed, H. (2020). Exploring virtue ethics in EFL mentorship: Egyptian students' perspectives. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Philosophy, 5*(3), 101-120.

Griffin, P., Care, E., & McGaw, B. (2012). The changing role of education and schools. In P. Griffin, B. McGaw, & E. Care (Eds.), *Assessment and teaching of 21st-century skills* (pp. 1–16). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-2324-5_1

Han, J., Yin, H., & Wang, J. (2018). A case study of faculty perceptions of teaching support and teaching efficacy in China: Characteristics and relationships. *Higher Education, 76*(3), 519-536. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-017-0223-0

Harmer, J. (1983). *The practice of English language teaching*. Longman.

Ismail, R. A. R., & Ismail, D. (2018). Application of the '4C Concept' for 21st-century learning among religious study teacher trainers at the Dato' Razali Ismail Campus Teacher Education Institute. *Asian People Journal, 1*(1), 45-65.

J. Yu, Y., Luo, Y., Sun, J., & Strobel, J. (2012). A conceptual K-6 teacher competency model for teaching engineering. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences, 56*(1), 243-252. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.09.651

Kounin, J. S. (1970). *Discipline and group management in classrooms*. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Moleong, L. J. (2017). *Qualitative research methods*. PT. Teenager Rosdakarya.

Muthmainnah, & Ahmad, Y. (2022). *Engaging learners book*.

Park, G. P., & Lee, H. W. (2006). The characteristics of effective English teachers as perceived by high school teachers and students in Korea. *Asia Pacific Education Review, 7*(2), 236-248. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03031547

Pettis, J. (1997). Developing our professional competence: Some reflections. *TESL Canada Journal, 16*(2), 67-71. https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v14i2.686

Radzi, N. M., & Muzammil, N. F. (2018). Teacher competency stages in implementing high-level thinking skills in Sepang regional national schools, Selangor. *Asia Pacific Curriculum & Teaching Journal, 6*(4).

Rahman, A., & Yusof, N. (2023). Humanistic mentoring in EFL education: Malaysian learners' philosophical reflections. *TESOL International Journal, 17*(1), 22-39.

Ramsden, P. (1992). *Learning to teach in higher education*. Routledge.

Robert, G. (2012). A study on the perception of human resource executives on competency mapping for superior results. *International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow, 1*(8).

Spencer, L., & Spencer, S. (1993). *Competence at work: Model for superior performance*. John Wiley & Sons.

Sulaiman, J., Jamilah, & Noor, S. (2020). Teacher competence and 21st-century skills in transformation schools 2025 (TS25). *Universal Journal of Educational Research, 8*, 3536-3544. https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2020.080829

Sundari, H. (2016). The qualities of an effective English language teacher: University students' perception. *Educational Research Association The International Journal of Educational Researchers, 4*(3), 1-8. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317951838

Witcher, A., Onwuegbuzie, A., & Minor, L. (2001). Characteristics of effective teachers: Perceptions of preservice teachers. *Research in the Schools, 8*, 45-57.

Wood, W. B., & Tanner, K. D. (2012). The role of the lecturer as tutor: Doing what effective tutors do in a large lecture class. *CBE Life Science Education, 11*(1), 3-9. https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.11-12-0110

Yousuf, A., Mohammed, N., & Mohammed, A. (2021). Sudanese EFL university instructors' perspectives about using task-based language teaching in enhancing EFL learners' communicative competence: A case study of University of West Kordufan. *British Journal of English Linguistics, 9*(4), 47-80.

Zamani, R., & Ahangari, S. (2016). Characteristics of an effective English language teacher (EELT) as perceived by learners of English. *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching & Research, 4*(14). Retrieved from http://jfl.iaun.ac.ir/article_563432_72021c12d9759a235038699132c8f008.pdf