Lenguas en contexto

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Editorial

Quince años transcurrieron desde la publicación del primer número de la revista *Lenguas en Contexto* en formato impreso, y ocho años desde que se volvió digital, favoreciendo así una más amplia difusión de las investigaciones llevadas a cabo por especialistas del área de lenguas extranjeras. Las contribuciones de esta edición, que giran principalmente en torno a problemáticas del ámbito metodológico del proceso de aprendizaje enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, reßejan la preocupación de los investigadores por enriquecer el campo de estudio y optimizar recursos y estrategias empleados en el quehacer docente. De la misma manera, los artículos que pertenecen a la esfera de los estudios del lenguaje evidencian la pertinencia y el dinamismo de la reßexión sobre el uso del discurso en el contexto de América latina.

Para proporcionar a los lectores una mayor claridad, los artículos han sido reagrupados en tres secciones temáticas: la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras desde la perspectiva del docente, la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras desde la perspectiva del alumno, y el análisis del lenguaje.

La primera sección inicia con el artículo de Isaac Frausto Hernández (Universidad de Guanajuato), "Factors inßuencing identity construction and teaching practice of BA TESOL transnational students", que se centra en aclarar algunos de los factores que inßuyen en la construcción de identidad y mostrar cómo estos moldean la práctica docente de migrantes entre México y Estados Unidos, transnacionales, que optaron por la docencia. El enfoque cualitativo permite ahondar en las experiencias vividas de estos participantes en su proceso de migración e integración a la práctica docente.

Por su parte, María de Lourdes Gutiérrez Aceves y Alejandra Fentanes Miceli (Facultad de Lenguas C-I, Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas), en su trabajo "Aspectos a considerar en el desarrollo de estrategias en la enseñanza del inglés a niños de ocho a doce años con Síndrome de Asperger", hacen un recorrido sobre las características de desarrollo de los niños con el mencio-

nado síndrome, así como de los retos del docente de inglés lengua extranjera frente a este público particular, con el propósito de sugerir estrategias y recursos útiles para el quehacer docente.

Norma Flores, Mónica Zamora y Vianey Castelán (BUAP), en su artículo "Tutoría entre pares: programa de asistencia estudiantil mediante la asesoría", nos presentan los resultados de una experiencia de tutoría a nivel licenciatura en el campo de la enseñanza de la lengua extranjera, para remediar problemas de reprobación en materias específÞcas. Este programa busca reducir los índices de reprobación curricular que las mis-mas autoras presentan en su trabajo. Los resultados positivos de la práctica invitan a su reproducción en otros ámbitos académicos.

La contribución titulada "Implementación de un blog como estrategia pedagógica en las clases de francés", de Iveth Lozano Palacios, María Lilia López López (BUAP) y Karolina Vargas Berra (Universidad del Valle de Puebla), describe una experiencia llevada a cabo en el aula para generar la motivación y la autonomía en los alumnos por medio del uso de un blog como herramienta didáctica. Se analizan los resultados obtenidos, enfatizando la eÞciencia de esta herramienta tecnológica para optimizar el aprendizaje de la lengua meta.

Nidia Janneth López Rivera (Corporación Universitaria Iberoamericana (Bogotá - Colombia), en su investigación sobre "El rol del tutor dentro del proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje en la educación a distancia", recorre el nuevo papel que tienen tanto los docentes como los discentes en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje en la modalidad de educación a distancia bajo tres ejes fundamentales: papel desempeñado, habilidad y competencia; características de los tipos de comunicación entre los actores del proceso y Þnalmente, la retroalimentación en el ambiente virtual. Con esta discusión pone de maniÞesto la necesidad de adoptar nuevas responsabilidades de acompañamiento, el cual genera procesos de reßexión y conocimiento.

La segunda sección de nuestro número, que da cuenta de las percepciones del alumnado, está conformada por cinco artículos, la mayoría en inglés.

El artículo de Óscar Narváez Trejo, Patricia Núñez Mercado y Gabriela Estrada Sánchez (Universidad Veracruzana), "University Students Perceptions of Effective English Language Instruction", examina las percepciones de estudiantes de licenciatura sobre las características de los profesores de inglés para contribuir al debate acerca de lo que constituye una enseñanza eÞcaz en la educación superior, con el propósito de mejorar el aprovechamiento estudiantil. Una de las conclusiones fue que la personalidad del maestro juega un papel relevante en el aprovechamiento del alumno.

Juan Alberto Amador Cruz y Leonel Ojeda Ruiz (BUAP), en su contribución "Mundos Þgurados en dos contextos de enseñan-

za del inglés", incursionan en los modelos culturales de estudiantes de inglés pertenecientes a dos programas distintos. La recolección de datos se llevó a cabo por medio de un relato reßexivo que permitió enfatizar la presencia de dos mundos Þgurados opuestos en los contextos de estudio de la población muestra, en cuanto a la preparación docente, el nivel de inglés y la evaluación.

En su contribución, "Conscious inferences as a while-reading strategy to cope with unknown vocabulary", Esteban Juan Bautista Zárate Mejía (Universidad Veracruzana), se enfoca en la lectura que estudiantes de inglés hacen de textos en Lengua Extranjera y las estrategias que usan al enfrentarse a palabras desconocidas. La investigación reveló que las estrategias de lectura empleadas para tratar vocabulario desconocido fueron: combinar estilos de lectura, combinar habilidades y estrategias y hacer inferencias conscientes.

Héctor Rubén Luna Martínez y Rebeca Elena Tapia Carlín (BUAP), exploran las perspectivas de los estudiantes y de los profesores sobre el uso de grupos de Facebook como recurso de aprendizaje interactivo en su artículo "Facebook groups as an interactive learning resource". El estudio muestra que los estudiantes creen que la implementación de grupos de Facebook en sus lecciones ha sido de utilidad para tener más interacción con la clase y el tema más allá del salón de clases.

Las autoras, María del Carmen Rosas, Araceli Tecuatl Cuautle y Concepción Gutiérrez Aguilar (BUAP), con su artículo "Students' beliefs towards the University cross curricular subjects in the English class", ahondan en las perspectivas y reßexiones de un grupo de alumnos sobre su experiencia durante un curso de Lengua Extranjera. El estudio se enfoca en los aprendizajes, habilidades, estrategias y conocimientos adquiridos a la par de los conocimientos de la Lengua Extranjera y que los alumnos consideraron importantes para un mejor desempeño académico y social durante su estancia en la universidad.

La última sección de artículos presenta cuatro contribuciones que ahondan en el análisis del lenguaje.

Isabel Montserrat López Delgado (Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México), en su contribución titulada "Anunciando la muerte: análisis contrastivo de aspectos culturales y eufemismos de muerte en inglés y en español", nos comparte una reßexión sobre diferencias culturales en el uso de eufemismos para referirse al tema de la muerte, apoyándose en el análisis de discursos de locutores de

lengua materna inglés o español. Resalta el carácter de necesidad social de los eufemismos en ambas culturas y se hacen visibles las características culturales inherentes a ambas comunidades lingüísticas.

"La cortesía verbal en la cultura mexicana: los halagos", artículo de Sayan Itzel Sánchez Bautista (Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México), nos adentra en la cortesía verbal en el contexto mexicano, enfatizando aspectos socioculturales y lingüísticos relacionados con el idioma español. El estudio se enfoca en los comportamientos lingüísticos de los locutores sujetos de la muestra, al utilizar estrategias para realizar o contestar los halagos. El análisis de las entrevistas pone de evidencia cierta diversidad en el uso de dichas estrategias.

El artículo "Acoplamiento de los sistemas de transitividad y valoración en introducciones de tesis de licenciatura en antropología social", de Moisés Damián Perales Escudero, Belem de los Ángeles Mendoza Jarillo, y Ana Bertha Jiménez Castro (Universidad de Quintana Roo), propone el análisis de un corpus de introducciones de tesis, indagando en los recursos semióticos para la construcción del mundo experiencial así como el posicionamiento interpersonal. Entre otros elementos, destaca el uso de la valoración positiva de su trabajo por parte de los tesistas con el afán de evidenciar su relación con la comunidad de la lengua meta.

Miriam Almazán Torres, (Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México), en su artículo "Proemio en las audiencias penales en el Estado de México y Chihuahua", nos adentra en el mundo del texto jurídico al analizar y poner bajo la luz las variantes regionales dialectales del primer elemento discursivo identiÞcable en las audiencias penales en dos estados de la República Mexicana, distanciados geográÞcamente, con el Þn de analizar su pertinencia y sus efectos.

Las contribuciones que constituyen esta publicación nos brindan un panorama bastante amplio de la investigación en el área de la docencia y del uso de la lengua materna y de lenguas extranjeras en situaciones de comunicación, este abre pistas de reßexión y brinda espacios de intervención para los lectores. Agradecemos encarecidamente a los autores de los artículos que conforman este número de *Lenguas en Contexto* por compartir sus trabajos y enriquecernos por su investigación, sus experiencias y su dedicación.

Esperamos que el lector disfrute de esta edición tanto como nosotras lo hicimos en conformarla.

Índice

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

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Abstract
According to Hallinger, Heck & Murphy (2014), a large amount of research has been carried out indicating that the quality of teachers signiþcantly affects student learning; therefore, it is important to consider the students' understanding of effective instruction in order to pursue success in their learning. This study, conducted in a Mexican university, examined undergraduate English BA students' perceptions of effective English teachers so as to contribute to the debate on what constitutes effective language teaching in higher education, this in order to improve students' learning achievement. A free composition activity, semi-structured interviews and a Likert-scale questionnaire were used to obtain students' insights and elicit a list of attributes regarded as contributing to effective English teaching. Students' insights about personal and professional characteristics are particularly revealing, indicating that in a combination of both types of attributes, the teacher's personality may play a more important role than it is thought.

Key words: Effective instruction, students' achievement, Language Teaching, undergraduates' perceptions.

Resumen
De acuerdo con Hallinger, Heck & Murphy (2014), investigaciones diversas indican que la calidad de enseñanza impacta signiþcativamente el aprendizaje de los alumnos; por lo tanto es importante considerar lo que entienden los alumnos por instrucción eþcaz para tener éxito en su aprendizaje. Este estudio en una universidad mexicana examina las percepciones de estudiantes de licenciatura sobre las características de los profesores de inglés para contribuir al debate acerca de lo que constituye una enseñanza eþcaz en la educación superior, con el propósito de mejorar el aprovechamiento estudiantil. Se utilizaron una composición libre, entrevistas semi-estructuradas y un cuestionario Likert para obtener las percepciones de estudiantes sobre los atributos que consideran contribuyen a una enseñanza eþcaz del inglés. Los hallazgos sobre las características personales y profesionales fueron particularmente reveladoras, indicando que en una combinación de estos atributos, la personalidad del maestro juega un papel más importante de lo que se cree.

Palabras clave: Instrucción eþcaz, aprovechamiento estudiantil, Enseñanza de lenguas, percepciones de universitarios.

Introduction

Several authors have warned of the dangers of ignoring student beliefs about learning (Smyth & Hattam, 2001; Narváez, 2007) as there may be a mismatch between what students expect and what teachers provide (Narváez, 2009; Wulandari, 2016). If English teachers are truly to embrace a learner-centred methodology, reactive to student needs to improve student outcomes, they must Þrst understand what students deÞne as effective instruction. Nevertheless, this is not to suggest that teachers use information about student learning beliefs and preferences to surrender to student wishes; it is simply a recommendation that all information related to student beliefs and perceptions be used for self-reßection and to (re-)evaluate teaching practice. In some cases, teachers may aim to adjust to their students' ideas; in some other cases, the information about student beliefs may help teachers identify certain attitudes that students might need to change. In any case, the more information about students that teachers have at hand, the better equipped they are to overcome areas of conßict (Beaudrie, 2015; Tavakoli & Baniasad-Azad, 2017).

In previous papers, Narváez (2006, 2007, 2009) has highlighted the need to create opportunities for students to communicate their opinions about educational matters and the value of their views to improve our teaching practice. Nonetheless, students are not always willing to express their opinions openly to their teachers as they might be afraid of teacher reactions. This sometimes creates situations where teachers remain unmindful to the fact that some of their teaching behaviours or teaching practices are neither favouring their students nor favoured by them. Therefore, it is essential to establish channels of communication between teachers and students so as to identify students' concerns and opinions. An anonymous student evaluation of teachers is now an accepted way of obtaining general course feedback from students at the institution where this study took place. However, this evaluation is provided post-course when there is no opportunity to adjust or change the course direction. Furthermore, rather than being speciÞc to a course or an instructor, it tends to be very general since a single questionnaire is used to evaluate all teachers regardless of the subject they are teaching, be it Biology, Physics or English. Consequently, these evaluations may not reveal particular opinions or concerns about speciÞc teaching and learning behaviours. Therefore, research that provides additional information about students' perceptions of effective teachers and teaching is needed to Þll this gap. Providing teacher-train-

ees and teachers with a broad base of information about students' perceptions in different contexts may help them to be better prepared to improve their teaching practices (Shahvand & Rezvani, 2016; Uygun, 2013).

In spite of the relevance of knowledge about students' perceptions as a source for more effective teaching, there is a lack of studies on this subject in the Þeld of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), particularly in the Mexican context. The present study, therefore, addresses this knowledge gap. In particular, it identiÞes the characteristics of effective EFL teachers from the perspective of Mexican university students, and investigates why these attributes were selected. The outcomes of this investigation may contribute to providing fresh insights into students' views about effective EFL teaching, which may prove to be informative for teachers and teacher trainers working in higher education institutions in Mexico as well as in other contexts and/or educational levels.

A Review of Previous Studies

In recent years, a growing number of studies into students' perceptions of effective teaching and teachers have been published, mainly from outside the EFL Þeld. Salient from all these are studies involving general university student populations. For the sake of space and focus of the research, only those studies carried out in university settings will be mentioned.

Research into learning and teaching in higher education over recent years has provided a variety of concepts, methods, and Þndings that are of both theoretical interest and practical relevance. Research has revealed the relationships between students' approaches to studying, their conceptions of learning, and their perceptions of their academic context (Axelrod, 2008; Georgakopoulos & Guerrero 2010; Mullock, 2003; Centra & Gaubatz, 2005). It has also revealed the relationships between teachers' approaches to teaching, their conceptions of teaching, and their perceptions of the teaching environment (Duarte, 2013; Harden & Crosby, 2000; Nonis & Hudson, 2004). In addition, it has provided a range of tools that may be used to develop our understanding of learning and teaching in particular contexts and for assessing and enhancing the student experience on speciÞc courses and programs. In what follows, a brief discussion of the available literature will be presented.

Calaguas (2012), based on a study carried out with college students in the Philippines, suggests that both teachers' personal and professional characteristics are equally valued in higher education, and that effective

teacher characteristics can be categorized into four major themes: Teaching-related Behaviour, Relational Expertise, Subject Matter Expertise, and Personality. Exploring students' perceptions of effective and ineffective teachers in face-to-face classroom instruction, Johnson (2012) also concluded that both interpersonal attributes (including personality related traits) and professional attributes (teaching and preparation) were appreciated. Otani, Joon Kim and Cho (2012) found out that the four items rated as most influential in the overall effectiveness of instructors' teaching are clear explanation, effective use of class time, positive learning environment, and stimulating course materials. Therefore, teachers' efforts should be concentrated on improving these aspects to increase effectiveness and efficiency.

Delaney (2010) reports a study on both on-campus and distance instruction, and identified nine characteristics believed to be essential for effective teaching. Although different emphasis was placed on the significance of each characteristic, they were consistent across the two different settings, suggesting that effective in either environment teachers should be: respectful of students, knowledgeable, approachable, engaging, communicative, organized, responsive, professional, and humorous. It is clear that a combination of interpersonal and professional attributes appears to be the key to effective teaching; however, it can be observed that in this study, a greater number of characteristics related to personality were mentioned.

During an investigation in a British university, Allan, Clarke and Jopling (2009) identified four domains of what constitutes effective teaching: providing a supportive learning environment; having high expectations; scaffolding learning; and providing clear explanations. Again, we can observe both interpersonal and professional characteristics. Moreover, as in Delaney's (2010) study, it is suggested that notions of effectiveness are predicated less on university teachers having high academic expectations and more on the provision of a supportive environment in which teachers scaffold learning effectively and promote effective interaction with their students. This probably indicates a tendency to focus on interpersonal attributes, such as Tello (2015) focuses on affective factors as decisive in promoting language learning.

Similarly, Uche's (2012) findings about the students' perceptions of the quality of academic staff seem to indicate that students highly value communication skills and teachers' approachability as important elements for effective course delivery. Moreover, Wohlfarth, Sheras, Bennett,

Simon, Pimentel and Gabel (2008) found out that graduate students seem to develop their critical thinking skills and self-directedness more successfully in learner-centred classrooms where they feel respected as learners. These findings may also indicate that students tend to regard personality traits as highly valuable for effective instruction.

Other personal factors influencing students' perceptions of effective teaching that have been identified are gender, nationality and program-time of study (Pascarella, Trolian & Blaich, 2013). In this study, the team of researchers found out that a net of important confounding attributes increases students' overall exposure to clear and organized classroom instruction and enhances their use of deep approaches to learning.

Finally, Dable, Pawar, Gade, Anandan, Nazirkar & Karani (2012), in an observational study based on beliefs, opinions and personal experiences of senior faculty and students, observed that the respondents feel the need for student motivation more than beginner teachers do. They concluded that there is a need of a teacher development program in order to satisfy the teachers' demand for better educational policies. This appears to indicate that for effective instruction to be possible, it is also important to provide teachers with the appropriate conditions to develop themselves both professionally and personally.

Studies on EFL Teacher Effectiveness
As informative as the previous studies might be, we should bear in mind that, even though carried out in higher education settings, they involve general education students. A review of them is presented below.

Lee (2010) reported a study of Japanese EFL learners' perceptions of some of the unique characteristics of EFL teachers that distinguish them from teachers of other subjects. Students' responses were analyzed to identify the characteristics that are exclusive to EFL teachers. The results indicated that these learners perceive EFL teachers to be unique in four main ways: the complex nature of the subject matter, the content of teaching, teaching approach, and teacher personality. The findings also suggested that the particularity of the sociocultural and educational context may crucially influence how EFL teachers and their work are conceptualized by learners. Lee (2010) concluded that if language teacher education is to provide a more nuanced explanation of the uniqueness of EFL teachers and teaching that may be meaningful and relevant working within particular contexts, the voices of all stakeholders involved in EFL education need to be included in the dialogue on what it means to be an EFL teacher.

Chen (2012) investigated the favourable and unfavourable characteristics of the EFL teachers perceived by Thai university students by means of open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Chen's Þndings are very useful and beneÞcial for the EFL teachers to reßect their personal characteristics and to reconsider their classroom teaching, which may enable them to make some adjustment and preparation in their teaching to achieve better education results.

As with studies in other Þelds, research into EFL effective instruction seems to indicate that interpersonal attributes are highly appreciated by students. Barnes and Lock (2010) studied student beliefs about the attributes of effective EFL lecturers in a Korean university. They found that rapport-related attributes were viewed as particularly important since student anxiety when interacting in English often inhibits effective English learning. Instruction-related attributes were generally supportive of participatory modes of teaching, but the students held different views about how aggressively lecturers should enlist participation. In 2013, Barnes and Lock carried out another study measuring the importance that students from a Korean university placed on a wide range of effective foreign language teacher attributes. Respondents placed high importance on rapport attributes, but also on delivery attributes. The former included characteristics such as friendliness, care, and patience while the latter included the provision of clear explanations, error correction, and a participatory mode of teaching. Impartiality, target language knowledge, and good preparation were also rated highly Similar Þndings are reported by Taqi, Al-Nouh1 and Akbar (2014).

Likewise, Vo (2012), following a quantitative research methodology, explored the perceptions of English as Second Language (ESL) learners toward characteristics of effective ESL instructors at Marshall University concerning what they perceive to be good qualities and characteristics of ESL instructors. The Þndings suggested that the ESL students highly value respect and rapport from their instructors. The research also unveiled that it is important for them that their teachers explain everything clearly, engage students in learning, and care about their students.

When comparing teachers' and students' perceptions of effective EFL instruction the literature seems to indicate that they differ on what they perceive as the most important characteristics of an effective EFL teacher. The Þndings of a study in a high school in Korea, by Park and Lee (2006), indicate that the teachers ranked English proÞciency as one of the most important characteristics, while students considered pedagogical knowledge more

signiÞcant. Student subgroups also held different perceptions of effective teaching. The high achieving students reported different characteristics in pedagogical knowledge and socio-affective skills from the low achieving students, whereas male and female students demonstrated different perceptions regarding socio-affective skills; which seems contradictory to those reported by Taqi1, Al-Nouh1 and Akbar's study (2014) which reported no gender differences in perceptions.

Shishavan and Sadeghi (2009) attempted to characterize qualities of an effective English language teacher (EELT) as perceived by Iranian English language teachers and learners in universities, high schools and language institutes. In this study, teachers seemed to agree more strongly than students that an effective English teacher should assign homework and include group activities into the classroom. Other areas deemed more important by teachers included preparing the lesson well, using lesson plans and assessing what students have learned reasonably. Students, on the contrary, agreed more than teachers that teaching English in students' L1 was one of the prominent characteristics of an effective teacher of English. Moreover, Shishavan and Sadeghi's qualitative analysis indicated that teachers perceived features such as the mastery of the target language, good knowledge of pedagogy and the use of particular techniques and methods as well as a good personality to make an effective teacher. Whereas, learners gave more weight to characteristics relating to teachers' personality and the way they behave toward students as also supported by Hegde and Tungesh (2016).

Despite the scarcity of literature from the EFL Þeld, the Þndings of the studies mentioned are informative to this research as the characteristics identiÞed are often applicable to other disciplines or teaching settings. The present study seeks to contribute to the EFL-related studies by investigating the perceptions of Mexican EFL university students. Moreover, the present study helps to address the apparent dearth of literature about students' perceptions of a wide range of teacher attributes in the EFL Þeld.

As in Barnes and Lock's research (2010) the Þndings of the present study emerged from the data, without consideration of, or inßuence from, previous studies. That is, they were emically produced, grounded in the data. In fact, this study can be described as the result of progressive ethnographic work; details of this will be provided below, in the Methods section. Nonetheless, the Þndings are remarkably similar to and can thus be framed according to

the attributes described by Barnes and Lock's (2010) for easy cross referencing between this study, their study and other literature.

The Study

Context

This study took place at a public university English Department in Mexico in 2013. The aim of the programme is twofold. First, it aims to help students reach a good command of English equivalent to C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Additionally, it aims to provide students with the necessary competences to teach EFL adequately at different levels of education. Given the characteristics of the major, English Language courses are a strong component; these range from Beginners to Advanced, corresponding to the CEFR levels A1+ to C1 (Table1).

Table 1. *BA English courses levels*

BA English Course	CEFR level
Beginners	A1+
Elementary	A2
Pre-intermediate	B1
Intermediate	B2
Upper-Intermediate	B2+
Advanced	C1

The English courses are complemented by other courses in other areas of knowledge, in which English is the means of instruction; thus, students not only improve their English levels but also complement their professional formation.

The teaching staff within the program comprises 66 professors, of which 32 are full time teachers, 22 are permanent teachers and 12 have term-long contracts. 12% of the professors hold a PhD degree, 75% hold a masters' degree, 6% have a Diploma in TEFL while 7% have only a BA degree.

Participants

The population under study was a group of students from all the different English levels studying a major in English language as prospectus EFL teachers. The total sample comprised 195 students, representing 40% of the total students registered in the major at the time of the study. From this sample, 35 students were asked to write the five most significant characteristics of good/effective teaching in a free composition activity, 67 were interviewed and 100 students were surveyed.

Methodology

The present study employed a multi-method approach to data collection in an attempt to enhance validity in the findings. It followed a mixed-approach since it included the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data not only to enhance and enrich students' perspectives but also to develop a more complete understanding of the issue. The research consisted of three stages. In the first stage, a sample of 35 students from different English levels was asked to write the five most significant characteristics of effective teaching and why they considered them important. The researcher provided a table in which students were asked to write, in Spanish, the top five characteristics and the reasons why they consider them relevant. The responses were analysed following the Constant Comparative Method (Strauss, 1987) by listing the characteristics identified by two or more participants and discarding features identified by only one participant. After the compilation of the inventory, the answers were translated into English and further elaborations were collated under each identified attribute. These elaborations contained information about why certain attributes were selected.

The second stage consisted in interviewing 67 students from different English levels using an interview guide. During the interviews participants were asked to describe, in Spanish, the characteristics of effective EFL teachers as well as the reasons why they perceived these features as important. These interviews allowed the researcher to further elaborate on what students had mentioned previously. All interactions were recorded digitally, transcribed and translated into English.

The third and final stage of the study comprised surveying 100 students. The instrument employed: Barnes and Lock's questionnaire (2013) which was translated into Spanish and slightly adapted to suit the context. All the stages gathered data in Spanish as the participants are Spanish speakers and the intention was to obtain more accurate information and giving them freedom to express themselves in their mother tongue. In what follows, the main findings of the study are presented.

Findings

Data was analysed in the same order as it was collected. Analysis of the **free composition** data resulting from 35 students (FC1 to FC35) listing the top five characteristics

of good/effective teachers produced a list of 59 features. After discarding those features only mentioned once (34), an inventory of 25 was created. The top ranked attributes of effective teachers were: Knowledge (23), Patience (22), Instruction (16), Respect (11), and Responsibility (10). Surprisingly, three of these have to do with 'personal' attributes rather than 'technical' features, which seems to indicate that even at university level, the affective domain prevails.

Knowledge

Regarding this 'technical' attribute, students approved of teachers of English who

- ✓ Know about the topic they are teaching
- ✓ Have a high level of English
- ✓ Have good pronunciation and accent
- ✓ Have a wide vocabulary

Similar to results reported by Kepol (2017) on teaching quality, students want their teachers to be fully proÞcient in the English language. They elaborated on this issue by providing interesting insights as to why this attribute is relevant. The following verbatim quotations serve as illustration:

- *[Teacher knowledge is important] so they are conÞdent about what they are doing. (FC7)*
- *This [teacher knowledge] is important so that students understand better and grasp the contents of the course more easily. (F8)*
- *Teachers who know more can teach better. (FC22)*
- *A teacher who knows what s/he is teaching is really valuable. (FC24)*

Patience

It is relevant to observe how students perceive this 'personal' feature to be almost as important as knowledge and more important than the actual *instruction*. The fact that *patience* is given almost an equal value as *knowledge* might imply that teachers at the investigation site may need to work on this. When explaining why patience is important, students revealed that,

- *In order for students to be conÞdent to approach the teacher any time he or she needs to, to get students' conÞdence. (FC2)*
- *Because some students learn slowly. (FC27)*
- *This is important so they can solve our doubts. (FC32)*

It can be inferred that sometimes teachers may lose sight of the importance of providing time for students to assimilate the information; it appears that students feel resentment when teachers do not take into consideration that learning a foreign language is a slow, long process that needs explanations and clariÞcations on their part. It seems that students favour -and grow conÞdent- when teachers not only give them time to grasp the contents, but are also willing to explain as many times as necessary for the 'slow' learners to understand. Students expect teachers to clarify any doubts and when this is not done, they believe that the teacher lacks patience.

Instruction

The second of the 'technical' attributes, ranked third, *instruction* was closely related to dynamics and the ability to explain clearly. Students were able to express some of the characteristics commonly found in the literature. In students' words, it is not only important for teachers to be proÞcient in the language, but they must also be able to 'teach well'. To describe what they consider as efficient teachers, students used words such as dynamic, prepared, humour, ßexibility, conÞdence, good mood, interested in teaching, easy going, as well as being able to provide explanations and clarify doubts. However, something worthwhile highlighting is the emphasis they place on the teacher's effect on student learning. This is illustrated in the following extracts:

- *... [the teacher] must know how to explain because if he/she doesn't, nobody will learn anything. (FC2)*
- *Each student has a different learning style; therefore, the teacher has to Þnd the best way to teach them. (FC6)*
- *It is important that their lessons are not boring so we can understand the topic well. (FC8)*

It is clear that the students participating in this study are quite aware of the features a good, effective teacher must possess to teach at university level, particularly on an English BA degree. They consider that teachers still have a main role in their learning, that learning is the result of what teachers do within the classroom to promote this process.

Respect

This other 'personal' aspect is also somewhat surprising considering that it was university students who participated in the study. The fact that this attribute was included

among the most important characteristics of good/effective teaching seems to indicate that students have experienced some sort of disrespectful attitude from some of the teachers at the institution. By reading the exemplary extracts below, it becomes clear why these students emphasise this aspect:

- *Teachers must be ethical and respect students, without discriminating them in any way. (FC4)*
- *Respect is important to work in a nice environment. (FC8)*
- *Equality and respect are important in order not to affect students' motivation. (FC14)*
- *Respect is important because teachers and students must have a good relationship in and outside the classroom. (FC30)*

Respect is expected among all the parties involved at school. Teachers usually promote respect amongst classmates and also expect it for themselves; however, it appears that sometimes they may act in ways that students interpret as disrespectful. That is, if teachers want to establish a pleasant, respectful environment they must set the example and be careful not to act in ways that may be understood as a lack of respect towards students. As one of the student mentioned, not showing respect to them may affect students' motivation to learn.

Responsibility
Ranked Þfth, another personal attribute comes into play. Being responsible implies different things from the student perspective: preparation, punctuality, organization, professionalism and commitment. These are exempliÞed in the extracts below.

- *It is important because they set the example. If they are responsible, we are responsible too. (FC8)*
- *Every single thing the teacher does, every activity he does/sets must be done responsibly, acting at the top of his capacity. (FC17)*
- *When [the teacher] sets homework, he [has to] review [it], [make] observations and [give it] back to the student. (FC27)*
- *In that way, if the teacher goes to classes always, is likely that students attend the classes too. (FC31)*

As may be understood, students are quite aware of teachers' behaviours. Students' interpretation of teachers' actions is relevant and seems to be sending a cry for teachers to assume their job and perform professionally.

In short, students want teachers to be committed to their learning, and perform according to what is expected from a teacher.

The second set of data emerged from **interviews** to 67 students (I1 to I67) from three different proÞciency levels (beginners, intermediate and advanced). Resulting from the analysis, the following seven features were considered as the most relevant for an efficient teacher to possess:

Figure 1. Features emerging from interviews
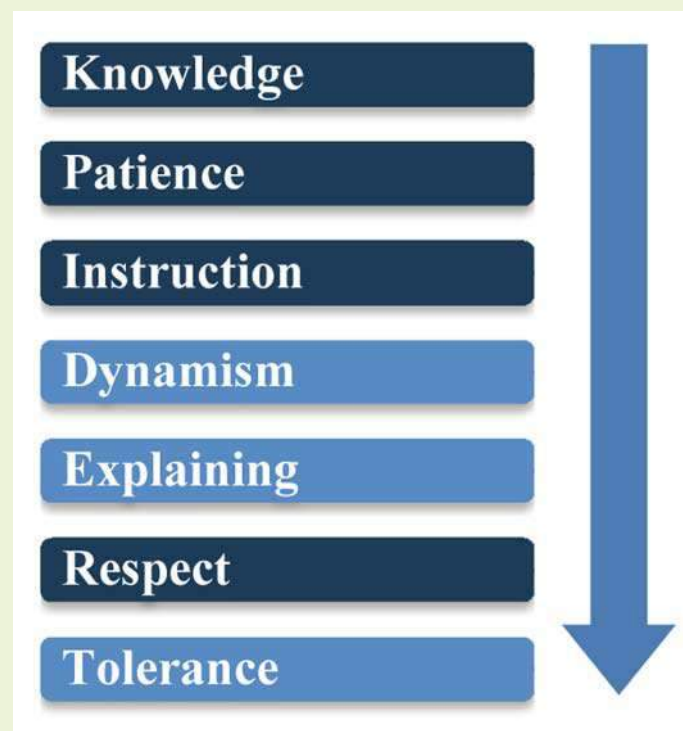
As can be seen in Figure 1, the Þndings from the interview data are consistent with those of the free composition exercise described above; four of the characteristics are the same: knowledge, patience, instruction and respect (dark blue). These attributes emanating from the interview data can be further divided into personal and technical characteristics; that is, *Knowledge, Instruction* and *Explaining* can be catalogued as technical features as they have to do with the kind of abilities and competencies that can be developed in language teaching courses and programs.

In relation to *Knowle*dge, as we are talking about EFL teachers, students mostly emphasized that teachers should be proÞcient in the language, which is consistent with the data obtained with the free compositions. The following, are the most representative mentions of this:

- *Full command of the language (I28)*
- *Command of the language in every skill(I29)*
- *The four skills writing, speaking listening and reading. General knowledge of grammar (I35)*
- *That s/he knows how to use the language well (I67)*

There were also some students who made reference to knowledge of the subject in general, without mentioning the language proÞciency: "Knowing their subject very well in order to be able to answer any questions" (I10). "S/He must know what s/he is teaching very well" (I17). "It is essential that s/he fully masters the topic" (I35), and "To know his/her subject very well" (I56), but they were being asked about the qualities a good English teacher should have, which implies they all refer to language proÞciency.

Other important aspects to mention about the *Knowledge* feature is that some other students paid special attention to pronunciation: "Good language command or to have a good pronunciation" (I6). "Good pronunciation in English" (I7); "Good pronunciation or very good" (I8), and "S/He must have knowledge of the language, good pronunciation" (I24), for example, which is also consistent with what students mentioned in the free compositions.

Moreover, as in Demiroz &Yesilyurt's (2015) study, some students considered knowledge about culture an important element of language teaching effectiveness: "S/He must have a wide knowledge of the language and culture of the English-speaking countries" (I26), "Knowledge of the language, knowledge of the culture of the language" (I12), and "To have a wide knowledge of the language. Cultural knowledge" (I4).

The features of *Instruction* and *Explaining* correspond to the feature of *Instruction* mentioned in the free compositions. Regarding *Instruction*, just as in the free compositions, students refer to the importance of having efficient teaching methods in order to be able to teach, to transmit the knowledge:

- *Good teaching method (I8)*
- *That s/he knows how to teach (I30)*
- *To have good teaching strategies (I56)*
- *Capacity of knowledge transmission according to the context and the individuals immersed in it (I11)*

It is also important for them that the teacher knows how to *explain* and answer their questions when they have them, which was also mentioned as part of the feature of *Instruction* in the free compositions. However, it appeared more times and more explicitly mentioned in the interviews, as can be seen in the following examples:

- *S/he must have the ability to explain the students' questions clearly, whether they are about the language or the culture (I25)*
- *To know how to explain and clarify doubts (I27)*
- *That s/he explains well, that s/he answers my questions and in some cases that s/he repeats something I didn't understand (I53)*

The remaining attributes: *patience, dynamism, respect, and tolerance*, two of which were also mentioned in the free compositions, entail personal attributes that are neither the content of teaching programs nor part of professional development courses; they are more innate attributes. In the interviews, *Patience* was often mentioned along with *Respect* and/or *Tolerance*, and often making reference to the importance of understanding that students will make mistakes and that every student is different. As follows, the most representative examples of this:

- *Patient and respectful (I31)*
- *Patience and awareness that not every student learns at the same pace (I42)*
- *Patience: since every student learns in a different way, respect: it is not right to make students feel stupid (I46)*
- *Patience… respectful (I47 and I 48)*
- *To be patient with his/her students and tolerant, that s/he knows how to listen to different opinions and worries (I60)*

Regarding Dynamism, the most representative examples are:

- *S/he must stimulate his/her group with dynamics which are not very complicated and which are fun (I18)*
- *S/he must be able to maintain his/her students' attention and do not give a boring lesson, because many times students show lack of interest and this results in not attending to his/her class (I20)*
- *S/he must be dynamic, know how to manage a class, not like those who make you asleep when they start giving a lesson (I24)*

Although this feature might be related to *Instruction*, as it deals with the way of teaching, it was considered as a different feature because it rather reßects a personal attribute. A teacher may have knowledge about efficient

teaching techniques, but they might not necessarily be always dynamic. Moreover, *Dynamism* could be related to an extrovert teacher's personality.

Two other attributes that were identiﬁed in the interviews should be highlighted: *devotion to the profession* and *youth*. The former has to do with the teacher's involvement in the profession because they like it, and not just because they 'landed' in the job:

- *Good attitude and actually enjoy teaching. Vocation. (I9)*
- *To be committed to students' learning (I29)*
- *To have the vocation, not only stand up there and talk (I61)*
- *That s/he is willing to teach, not only because s/he has to give a course (I67)*

Students recognize when teachers are passionate about teaching and respond similarly. Youth is also interesting since these students match youth with good teaching, when asked about why this is relevant, students mentioned that usually, young teachers - recently graduated, younger than long-standing teachers are more prone

to prepare, more active and tend to include visual material other than the textbook. This may have to do with older teachers' burnout or with the fact that young teachers want to create a good impression and be hired permanently. Whatever the case, this is an issue that demands further study.

The third set of data emerged from a **survey** answered by 100 students from different levels. The questionnaire used was based on the one administered by Barnes and Lock (2013), then, translated into Spanish and slightly adapted to suit the context. The questionnaire is divided into three main categories. The ﬁrst one relates to the features that a good English teacher must possess; the second section of the questionnaire refers to a general overview of English teachers; the ﬁnal section is designed to collect information about the students' English learning background.

The results in the ﬁrst section of the survey showed that from the 41 attributes of effective teachers depicted in this instrument, the following 5 top ranked attributes emerged: Knowledge of vocabulary, Knowledge of grammar, Good planning of the class, Teaching of grammar and Error correction while speaking.

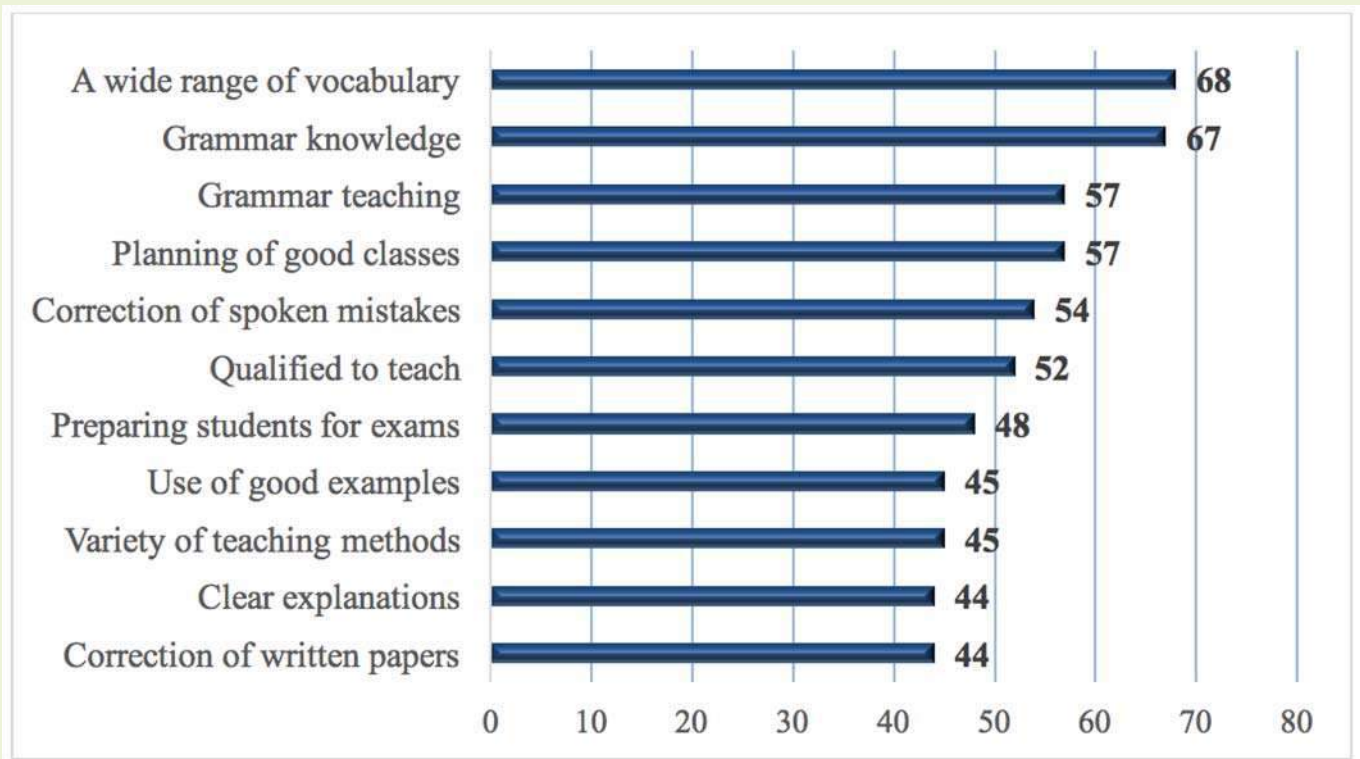*Figure 2.* Top 10 characteristics of a good English teacher

Figure 2 presents the top 10 characteristics from the 41 answers provided in the survey. These Þndings are closely related to what the qualitative data showed. It is conÞrmed that knowledge is an important attribute as it is planning and actual instruction. Regarding this last point, students consider important, and regard as a positive attribute, when teachers actually *teach* grammar. Whether this perception comes from experiencing grammar instruction or from a lack of, it is worth investigating. Nonetheless, this expectation may go counter current teaching theories which tend to emphasize more the development of competences and/or language skills, an issue that many teachers have interpreted as overlooking grammar instruction.

From Figure 2, a feature that also needs to be highlighted since it had not been mentioned before is the one referring to *teacher's correction of the spoken skill*. It seems that students like it when teachers correct their mistakes while speaking, contrary to the belief that doing so may affect student self-conÞdence. It would be worth investigating why these students expect teachers to correct them and whether doing so may help them build their conÞdence.

Figure 3. General overview of teachers
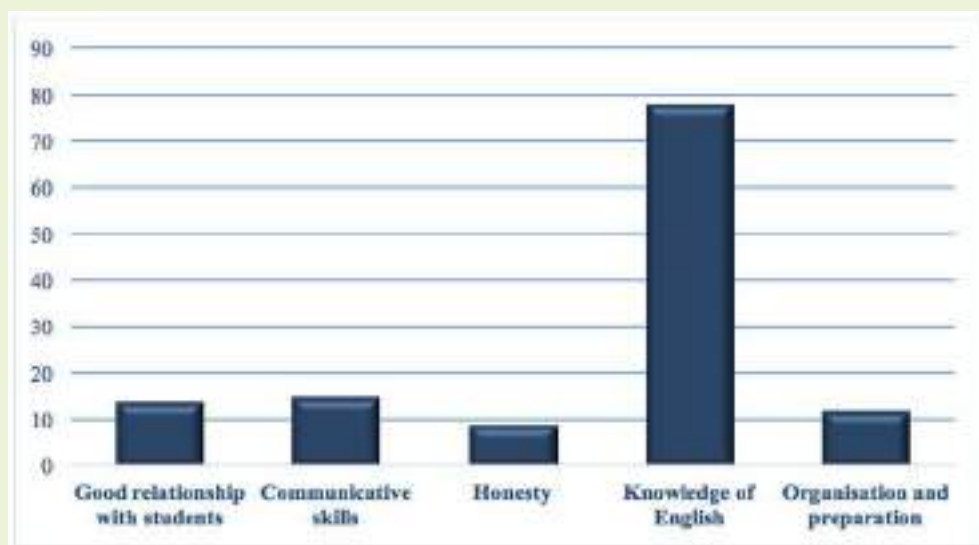
The second section of the questionnaire asked for a wide overview about the characteristics of English teachers. As can be seen in Figure 3, the results showed that, knowledge of the language is again the main factor to consider when describing a good English teacher. The second most important aspect for students is communication and teaching skills. These attributes can be divided into personal and technical characteristics as knowledge

and teaching skills are acquired at school, but the communication skills have to do more with the teacher's personality, and therefore cannot be learnt. These Þndings from the questionnaire data are consistent with those of the interview and the free composition discussed above.

Conclusions and Implications

Figure 4 summarizes the outcomes of the study. It includes the Þve most important teaching attributes identiÞed in each set of data.

All attributes identiÞed were taken into consideration as a way to make visible how the axiological attributes are as relevant as the theoretical and heuristic attributes. Nonetheless, this does not mean that a teacher who may possess all of the personal attributes can be an effective teacher as students demand that they also master the language and instructional skills. In a nutshell, an efficient EFL teacher is one third knowledgeable about the subject and teaching theories, one third practicum skills and one third personal values. It seems that in order to be considered a good teacher, an amalgam of knowledge, skills and values is needed. This is in line with what Celik, Arikan and Caner (2013) found in a study on the qualities of successful language teachers in Turkey. The extent to which each element in the amalgam is more emphasized than the others may depend on many contextual conditions such as the content and aim of the lesson, purpose of the program, age of students, etc.

From these elements, both theoretical and heuristic attributes are usually the content of teaching programs and teaching manuals which may lead us to think that they can be transferred somehow in a classroom. However, the axiological attributes are rarely considered in such courses and handbooks.

This study has established what the participating students perceived to be the attributes of effective EFL teachers. Data indicates that students think that good teachers have a combination of characteristics. Ideally, teachers should master the English language, have optimal teaching skills in order to be able to 'transmit the knowledge' they possess to students as well as a positive personality. This includes being patient and aware of the

students' development through the course considering that not all students learn at the same pace. EFL teachers should be responsible so that students can be responsible too; that is, they are still role models for these students. The explanations of why such characteristics have been singled out were also quite informative and useful for gaining deeper insights into the motivations behind the students' perceptions. Zadeh (2016) and Kourieos & Evripidou, (2013), have reported similar Þndings.

Figure 4. Five most important teaching attributes

Free composition	Interviews	Survey	Survey wide view
Knowledge	Knowledge	Knowledge of vocabulary	Knowledge
Patience	Patience	Knowledge of grammar	Communication skills
Instruction	Instruction	Good planning of the class	Instruction
Respect	Dynamism	Error correction while speaking	Organization and preparation
Responsibility	Explaining	Grammar Instruction	Honesty

These Þndings have the following speciÞc implications for existing and prospective EFL teachers in Mexico and elsewhere.

a) Considering the fact that teachers' personal traits are considered as relevant as knowledge and instruction, it may be a good idea to include these in personal development courses in the curricula of EFL teacher training programmes.
b) Given that how students interpret events in the classroom shape what they think, feel and (re)act, we should pursue understanding from the learners' perspective. Identifying what they expect from teachers in every single course should be the basis for course development, regardless of course level or content.
c) Considering the data hereby discussed, teachers face the challenge of attaining information about the lived experience of students to make sense of what learning EFL means to them and use this information for (self) development.
d) Data seems to indicate that, even at this level of education, students consider that it is still the teach-

er's task to provide the conditions for learners to meaningfully engage in learning activities. That is, university students expect teachers to create appropriate learning conditions, including a pleasant working atmosphere in which they feel conÞdent to participate.

Effective teaching at EFL contexts and settings such as the one investigated is crucial to the development of improved and new EFL curricula, and, as Zhang and Ben Said (2014) suggest, teacher training and professional development are key to achieve it. Considering that the site of investigation forms future teachers of English, this in turn may help to eventually overcome the deÞcient teaching of English in Mexico, which currently permeates all levels of education. This study has attempted to build on existing knowledge of how effective EFL teaching is regarded at university level by gathering both qualitative and quantitative data in order to identify what are perceived to be optimal ways in which a range of main attributes involved in effective EFL teaching can be conÞgured. It is hoped that the resulting picture of 'effective teaching' will be of value to others working in similar contexts elsewhere, as the Þnal goal is the students' success in their learning.

Further research
Even though this investigation provided valuable suggestions about EFL teacher effectiveness, more in-depth studies are merited in order to have better tools to improve students' achievement. First, a broader quantitative follow-up would add signiÞcant value to the Þndings in the present study. This would include researching another body of students such as those attending English courses that the same university offers on different campuses. This, in turn, could provide a wide picture of university students' perceptions of effective English instruction. By broadening the scope of the study, generalizations of teacher attributes that Mexican university students favour could be made. Second, further investigations into preferences for diverse teaching modalities or modes are also

needed. Third, broadening the focus of the investigation to include the perceptions of students from other majors would also be worth pursuing. Finally, including teachers' perspectives on effective teaching could not only be enriching but also help to broaden our understanding of the issue from the other main actor of the teaching/learning encounter.

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