

Teaching Practices and Learning Contexts as Determinants of EFL Students' Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness in Bangladeshi Universities

Israt Jahan ^{1*}, Bushra Jesmin Trisha ²

¹Department of English, German University Bangladesh, Gazipur, Bangladesh

²Feni University, Feni, Bangladesh

ABSTRACT

Robust teaching practices and a conducive learning context play a crucial role in enhancing teacher effectiveness in the EFL field. While prior studies have examined teacher effectiveness, limited research has explored this phenomenon from students' perspectives within the Bangladesh tertiary EFL context. Therefore, this study aims to explore the traits of effective teaching practices and examine how the learning atmosphere influences teacher effectiveness among university students in Bangladesh. Employing a qualitative approach, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 30 students, ranging from undergraduate level, recruited using a purposive sampling technique and examined thematically. Findings reveal that instructional expertise, contextualized teaching, subject matter knowledge, language proficiency, translanguaging, collaborative learning, diverse instructional strategies, effective feedback and assessment practices, teacher–student rapport, emotional intelligence, balanced use of humor and strictness, and motivational skills are core traits of effective teaching practices. Additionally, a well-structured curriculum, adequate teaching resources, pedagogical training, and research-oriented education were found to foster a conducive learning atmosphere. However, the study also indicates that a non-systematic syllabus and limited instructional resources may undermine teacher effectiveness despite teachers' instructional competence. This study underscores the importance of aligning teaching practices with institutional learning contexts to enhance teacher effectiveness in tertiary-level EFL programs in Bangladesh.

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1. Introduction

A supportive teaching–learning context and meaningful pedagogical practices play a crucial role in ensuring teacher effectiveness and enhancing students' academic success, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. Teacher effectiveness is closely linked to pedagogical knowledge, instructional strategies, and institutional support (Park & Lee, 2006; Alzubi, 2022; Qaisra & Haider, 2024). Previous studies suggest that a positive classroom climate significantly influences teachers' effectiveness, while inclusive practices contribute to students' academic

achievement (Ghafar & Lestari, 2023). Similarly, academic growth requires proper infrastructure, including modern classroom facilities, multimedia tools, and resourceful libraries (Yangambi, 2023; Alam et al., 2023). A supportive academic context emphasizes flexible assessment policies and diverse evaluation practices that promote students' critical thinking and address individual learning needs. Such an environment also influences teaching practices by shaping educators' instructional strategies, managerial skills, and responsiveness to learners' needs on teacher effectiveness (Islam & Ahmed, 2018; Poddar & Mizan, 2020).

Febriyanti (2018) highlights that teachers' communicative competence, classroom management skills and the ability to address diverse learning styles are essential qualities of teaching practices that contribute to teacher effectiveness in an ideal EFL classroom. Effective teaching practices are often characterized by learner-centered instructional approaches, respect for individual differences, the use of authentic materials, constructive feedback and the integration of advanced learning tools (Kourieos & Evripidou, 2013; Amin, 2017). Çelik et al. (2013) emphasize that teachers' mindful behaviour, constructive feedback, and motivational strategies determine the teaching dynamics. Research shows that expertise in subject matter, language proficiency, and energetic demeanor is crucial for language-teaching practices, thereby reflecting teacher effectiveness (Hung, 2023; Singh et al., 2013). Park and Lee (2006) opine that effective teaching practices are governed by teachers' strong subject-matter knowledge, language proficiency, activity-based learning practices, classroom regulation, tailored instructions, and the use of meaningful materials.

In the context of Bangladesh, teacher effectiveness in university-level EFL classrooms remains a critical factor influencing students' academic achievement, language proficiency, and overall learning experience. Although extensive research has identified key attributes of effective English teachers—such as pedagogical competence, subject mastery, interpersonal skills, and the use of learner-centered strategies; however, the majority of these studies are either context-generalized or conducted in Western or well-resourced educational settings. Moreover, limited empirical attention has been given to students' perceptions of effective teaching practices and to how the learning environment shapes these perceptions within the complex socio-institutional realities of Bangladeshi universities (Amin, 2019; Monira, 2022; Hasan et al., 2024).

To address this gap, the present study aims to explore the components that students perceive as essential to effective teaching practices and how the learning environment influences EFL students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness at Bangladeshi universities. By foregrounding students' viewpoints, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of teacher effectiveness in EFL higher education and to inform pedagogical practices, institutional policies, and professional development initiatives. The study addresses the following research questions:

- (1) What teaching practices do students perceive as traits of teachers' effectiveness?
- (2) How does the learning environment shape EFL students' perceptions of the effectiveness of English language teachers at universities in Bangladesh?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This study employs Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory (SCT) to understand the impact of the teaching-learning environment and teaching practices on EFL learners' perceptions of teacher effectiveness in universities in Bangladesh. SCT posits that learning occurs through the dynamic interplay of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors (Bandura, 1986; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020).

In the context of this research, the learning environment represents the environmental factor, encompassing classroom interaction patterns, institutional support, available resources, assessment systems, and the overall academic climate (Yangambi, 2023). A resourceful environment enables teachers to demonstrate effective instructional behaviors, such as learner-centered teaching, constructive feedback, and motivational strategies (Zhang et al., 2025).

Moreover, teaching practices constitute the behavioral factor that plays a significant role in determining teacher effectiveness (Oliveira Fernandez et al., 2016). Adaptation of innovative and inclusive teaching approaches positively

shapes students' learning experiences. Conversely, ineffective instructional strategies contribute to students' less favorable perceptions of the English language course and undermine the teacher's effectiveness.

Students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness are conceptualized as a personal (cognitive) outcome, reflecting learners' evaluative judgments formed through their interaction with instructional practices and the learning environment (Tosto et al., 2016). Thus, guided by social cognitive theory, this study views teacher effectiveness as the product of ongoing interaction among the environment, teaching practices, and student cognition. The framework assumes that a conducive teaching-learning context and appropriate teaching practices ensure teacher effectiveness, which in turn fosters students' positive perceptions and better educational outcomes in the EFL setting.

2.2. Qualities of Effective English Teachers

Effective English language teachers are viewed as having strong interpersonal skills, content knowledge, communication skills, adaptability and empathy. Clement and Rencewigg (2019) note that Indian students see effective teachers as those with good content knowledge, humor, and an unbiased attitude. Effective English teachers assess students' comprehension and identify learning gaps (Rahman et al., 2021). Begum (2019) points out that effective teachers promote learner autonomy to boost cognitive abilities. Alzubi (2022) highlights the significance of a teacher's personality, instructional methods, language, and subject mastery in influencing effective teaching practices in the learning climate. Research further indicates that strong teacher–student relationships foster a motivating and anxiety-free learning atmosphere, which enhances students' engagement and learning outcomes (Ali et al., 2020). Gafar and Lestari (2023) propose that constructive feedback and project-based learning can improve students' views of effective teachers. Munna and Kalam (2021) argue that educators must adapt strategies to boost students' engagement and address challenges. Berman (2015) notes that effective English educators prioritize communication and self-efficacy to enhance teaching performance in classroom settings. Effective teachers are open-minded, attentive to students' proficiency and gender, and foster strong relationships between teachers and students (Wirantaka & Wahyudianawati, 2021; Chen & Lin, 2009). Mastery of the subject, effective teaching strategies, and the ability to leverage technology are vital in motivating students (Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2015). Moreover, an influential English teacher uses rubrics to enhance students' self-regulation through goal-setting and self-assessment (Wang, 2017). Experienced EFL teachers are typically more knowledgeable, productive, and adept at management than their less skilled peers (Sadik & Akbulut, 2015; Nyagah & Gathumbi, 2017). Raqib (2019) emphasizes that English teachers need pedagogical training to apply innovative techniques fostering academic success in Bangladesh's private universities.

2.3. Teacher Effectiveness in EFL Classroom

A combination of factors—effective instructional strategies, technology integration, creation of a collaborative learning environment, teacher-student rapport, provision of individualized feedback, and cultural needs—bring about teacher effectiveness in EFL context. Teachers with strong subject-matter knowledge can deliver lessons through giving authentic examples and diverse strategies that help students to develop a deeper understanding of the content and also achieve academic excellence (Kleickmann et al., 2013; Munna & Kalam, 2021). Effective teachers create engaging environments using role-play, exploration, reinforcement, and real-life materials (Hamre et al., 2013). In line with this principle, Shariatifar et al. (2017) stated that knowing teaching methods and approaches, teaching strategies, managing large and mixed-ability classes, theories of language acquisition, and age-appropriate pedagogy contributes to a teacher's effectiveness. Berman (2015) notes that effective educators prioritize communication and self-efficacy to enhance teaching performance in classroom settings. Munna and Kalam (2021) argue that educators should foster collaborative learning and address challenges of the individual for productive teaching-learning. Students value teachers who are patient, kind, humorous, and capable of clearly explaining the subject matter (Huang, 2010; Uygun, 2013).

Challenges persist in Bangladesh; teachers' instructional methods, personalities, and classroom management skills significantly affect students' motivation and language learning (Quadir, 2021). In line with the previous literature, Monira (2022) reports that the absence of learner-centered approaches, outdated course contents, limited activity-based learning, and overlooking the adaptation of authentic materials may undermine teacher effectiveness and thereby lead to adverse learning zones. Although English is the medium of communication in higher education, Bangladeshi EFL teachers encounter specific challenges, such as translanguaging due to learner's limited English proficiency may reduce opportunities for meaningful language exposure and affect teachers' ability to create an

immersive EFL environment (Mirza et al., 2012). Traditional teaching methods, ineffective syllabi, and untrained teachers affect English language education negatively (Amin, 2019). Empirical studies have also identified rigid curricula, conventional assessment practices, insufficient academic infrastructure, and limited access to advanced learning technologies as significant concerns that negatively influence teacher effectiveness (Karim, 2018; Jamal, 2018; Aorny et al., 2022; Alam et al., 2023; Hasan et al., 2024; Raqib et al., 2023).

2.4. Teaching Practices in EFL Classroom

Pedagogical practices are considered a pivotal factor in teacher effectiveness, as they promote learners' participation, motivation, and learning achievement. Instructional strategies, lesson planning, assessment processes, and feedback mechanisms collectively strengthen effective teaching practices (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Similarly, Alzubi (2022) emphasizes educators' instructional methods, subject mastery and leveraging of technology-enhanced teaching cater to diverse learner needs and promote inclusive teaching in EFL classrooms. Emphasizing continuous assessment and providing constructive feedback help learners identify their strengths and weaknesses and also promotes creativity (Wang, 2017; Gulistan et al., 2017). Ellis (2017) claims that learner-centered teaching practices, such as communicative language teaching and task-based language teaching, improve learners' reading, writing, listening, speaking competencies as well as their problem-solving skills. When teachers employ interactive tasks, students are more likely to perceive the classroom environment as supportive and motivating, which enhances their overall learning experience (Harmer, 2015).

In contrast, teacher-centered and exam-oriented practices may hinder students' academic and professional growth (Qaisra & Haider, 2024). In the Bangladeshi EFL context, research indicates that traditional grammar-based instruction and ineffective teaching practices impede the students' learning outcome (Rahman & Pandian, 2018).

2.5. The Significance of Learning Contexts in EFL Setting

A supportive and inclusive academic environment fosters optimal learning outcomes. Studies have explored various aspects related to a positive classroom climate, such as integrating technology (Rijken & Fraser, 2024), teachers' rapport (Derakhshan et al., 2022), building students' growth mindset, facilitating communication skill, prioritizing self-directed learning, and providing opportunities for teamwork contribute to students' educational success (Ma et al., 2024; Namaziandost et al., 2024). An active EFL learning setting enhances learners' individual learning style, motivation to learn English language, and problem-solving skills (Benzerroug, 2021). A thematic review of empirical studies highlights that students-oriented classroom builds learners' confidence and eagerness to use English, whereas teacher-centric settings tend to minimize students' motivation and learning integration (Jamil, 2025). Another study by Challob and Eid (2025) expressed that academic institutions should establish modern classrooms including sound systems, projectors, multi-media, and internet facilities to promote effective education.

2.6. Interplay Between Teaching Practices and Learning Contexts in Teacher Effectiveness

Academic environment and instructional competence share a dynamic and reciprocal relationship that significantly enhances teacher effectiveness. According to Biggs et al. (2022), a supportive academic environment that values learner-centered approaches, collaboration, and pedagogical competence allow teachers to adopt innovative and interactive teaching methods. Kirtania and Mohakud (2024) opine that ensuring teacher effectiveness requires institutions to offer continuous teachers' training programs so that educators can adapt dynamic pedagogical approaches and technological advancements. Institutions should promote academic research to enable educators to identify the teaching-learning gaps and apply innovative instructional strategies to cater to the multidisciplinary learners (Tatto, 2021). According to Pagels et al. (2025), restrictive environments characterized by rigid curricula, examination-driven assessment, and limited institutional support may constrain teachers' pedagogical autonomy, leading to more traditional, teacher-centered practices.

Conversely, teachers should be self-competent and goal-oriented in their teaching methodologies, as a well-designed curriculum alone is insufficient to ensure teacher effectiveness (Rafique et al., 2025). Thus, the combination of convenient learning atmosphere and teachers' efficiency leads to students' active engagement and improved academic outcomes (Ma et al., 2024).

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

This research was conducted considering a qualitative interpretivism paradigm to explore respondents' individual experiences in detail. The paper employed a phenomenological approach (Moustakas, 1994) to gather first-hand information from the participants (Creswell, 2014). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with 30 participants, each lasting approximately 40 minutes. Learners from the following disciplines participated: Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), English Language and Literature, Computer Science and Engineering (CSE), and Bachelor of Law (LLB). Participants were unaware of the questions beforehand. The researcher clarified the questionnaires and occasionally asked supplementary questions for authentic responses. Notes were taken for data analysis. Interviews were conducted in the participants' native and target languages, recorded with consent, and later transcribed. Students were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. While gathering data, the researcher adhered to essential research ethics for scientific integrity, human rights, and collaboration.

3.2. Context of the Study

The researcher employed students from two renowned universities in Dhaka city and two outside the city. The researcher collected data from two public and two private institutions to understand the students' perceptions of varied teaching practices and learning environments.

3.3. Participants

Thirty students participated in the interviews particularly from public and private universities in Bangladesh. Informed consent forms were signed before the interviews.

3.4. Data Collection

Data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews with 30 undergraduate students, who were selected using purposive sampling to ensure a range of perspectives on teaching practices and learning contexts. A semi-structured interview protocol (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021) was developed based on the research objectives, focusing on effective teaching traits, classroom environment, and learning support. The protocol included open-ended questions such as: "What specific teaching methods did your English teacher use and how effective were those techniques for learning English?" and "How does the classroom environment influence your learning?" The full list of interview questions is provided in Appendix A.

Interviews were conducted until data saturation was reached, which occurred when no new themes or insights emerged from additional participants. In this study, saturation was observed after 27 interviews, and the remaining three interviews confirmed that the previously identified themes were recurring, indicating that further data collection was unnecessary. This approach ensured that the data collected were both comprehensive and sufficient to address the research objectives.

3.5. Research Instrument

The researcher designed seven interview questions for university students for qualitative analysis, favoring this approach because it involves understanding phenomena through ongoing interaction with data (Mackey & Gass, 2016).

3.6. Method of Data Analysis

The data were analyzed following an inductive approach as data were collected through open-ended questions by interviewing the learners to receive their understanding of teaching practices and the learning conditions as well. An analytical framework method was applied to analyze the data following several steps. First, the students' responses were recorded and transcribed in English. Next, the researcher started coding by segmenting the data into meaningful units and highlighting important keywords, concepts and ideas in students' responses, as per Braun and Clarke (2006). Subsequently, groups of similar codes were placed under certain categories of concepts and ideas to extract essential information from the transcriptions to develop themes and subthemes. Thematic analysis efficiently reveals participants' perspectives, highlights similarities and dissimilarities, and produces unexpected insights (Nowell et al., 2017).

4. Findings and Discussion

Understanding the effectiveness of English teachers requires identifying the key factors of teaching practices and academic context. In the subsequent sections, the researcher presents the findings and analyses of the interview data.

4.1. Content Knowledge for Teacher Effectiveness

Sound content knowledge helps students comprehend concepts properly, going beyond surface-level understanding (Kleickmann et al., 2013; Alzubi, 2022; Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2015).

4.1.1. Subject Expertise and Experience

This sub-theme underscores that subject expertise and teaching experience are essential components of teaching practices. Teachers with many years of experience encourage students to draw knowledge from various resources, thereby broadening their cognition from theoretical and practical perspectives (Nyagah & Gathumbi, 2017; Sadik & Akbulut, 2015). Therefore, learners expressed a preference for instructors who have a strong command of content knowledge and can connect the content with authentic examples, which enables them to comprehend the concept deeply (Munna & Kalam, 2021; Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2015). Thus, the data suggest that teaching practices are strongly influenced by subject expertise and teaching experience rather than by relying on textbook-based knowledge alone.

“There is no visible difference I found between novice and experienced teachers’ regarding their teaching process. But I noticed that experienced teachers provide a lot of resources and also present real-life examples than novice teachers to make us grasp the content.” (S18)

Experienced teachers excel in delivering lectures that include real examples, helping students bridge the gap between theory and real-world scenarios. Students view positive teaching practices as developing critical thinking and achieving academic excellence. As noted by Ismail et al. (2018), effective instructional practices involve professional teachers who are strategic, mature in handling challenges, and skilled at fostering students’ higher-order thinking skills. This aligns with Sadik and Akbulut (2015), who found that in terms of instructional strategies, experienced teachers are typically more knowledgeable, productive, and adept at management than their less skilled peers.

“The teachers’ who have years of experience in teaching can teach the students’ well and understand the students’ strengths and weak points of learning whereas sometimes the new teacher faces an issue to deliver the content from different perspectives.” (S4)

4.1.2. Enhancing Communication Through English and Translanguaging in EFL Classroom

The interviews revealed that the translanguaging approach can be considered an effective teaching strategy for enhancing teacher effectiveness in EFL classrooms. In EFL classrooms, students often come from diverse educational backgrounds and have varying levels of language proficiency. By closely observing classroom dynamics, teachers can maximize the use of English while strategically incorporating students’ native languages as a supportive communication medium. This translanguaging approach may help all learners comprehend content more effectively while improving their overall target language competence. Consistent with these findings, previous research by Mirza et al. (2012) and Quadir (2021) have shown that teachers usually adapt translanguaging practices in response to learners’ limited proficiency in English. Students’ preference for a balanced use of L1 supports a comforting learning environment for comprehension and motivation. This, in turn, shapes the teaching instructional practices, which ultimately influences students’ cognitive perceptions of teacher effectiveness (Bandura, 1986).

“In the classroom, using both native and English language makes the content easier to understand. Teachers’ can speak approximately 70% of the time in English and 30% in their native language to deliver the complex concepts in the classroom. This strategy will help students to have a clear idea on the content and also help them to develop their language proficiency.” (S19)

4.2. Pedagogical Knowledge for Teacher Effectiveness

Pedagogical knowledge is crucial for implementing effective teaching strategies that address students’ diverse needs (Rafique et al., 2025; Munna & Kalam, 2021; Febriyanti, 2018). A strong knowledge foundation enables teachers to

create engaging, inclusive, and impactful experiences that promote critical thinking and overall academic success for students.

4.2.1. Using Real Examples and Avoiding Lecture-Based Teaching

Employing various strategies to effectively engage students in class is essential. Adhering only to coursebooks without practical applications can render teaching ineffective and impede meaningful discussions. Students often lack opportunities to voice their ideas in lecture-based settings, because teachers dominate classroom discourse (Qaisra & Haider, 2024; Monira, 2022; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Connecting content with real-world examples improves understanding and retention, thereby enhancing students' cognitive abilities. This finding aligns with Munna and Kalam (2021), who noted that students expect educators to incorporate cooperative learning and real-life examples into their teaching.

"While delivering the lecture, content-related examples should be used to simplify topics. I appreciate when our faculty uses real-life examples for clarity. However, I dislike one-way lecturing, where there is little interaction or concern for students' understanding." (S21)

4.2.2. Self-Directed Learning

Students view instructional practices as providing learning materials and resources to enhance their understanding from various perspectives (Hamre et al., 2013). This approach helps set personal goals, activate prior knowledge, hold students accountable, and develop higher-order thinking skills. Begum (2019) noted that teachers can promote learners' autonomy by supplying additional resources, thus reducing traditional spoon-feeding. Many students agreed that a variety of resources motivate learners to gain knowledge beyond the classroom, suggesting that access to different sources encourages independent and experiential learning, driving success in learners' future careers (Kourieos & Evripidou, 2013; Amin, 2017).

"Our faculty provided diverse learning resources for deeper understanding of the content and shared pre-learning materials to help us prepare and participate actively in class." (S15)

The interviews revealed that resource deficits negatively impact students' academic outcomes and growth, isolating them from the evolving world and limiting their experiences to textbooks and lectures. Previous studies, including Hasan et al. (2024) and Pagels et al. (2025), have identified the lack of teaching resources as a barrier to positive teaching practices, adversely affecting teacher effectiveness and student grades.

"Our teacher hardly shared the resources (e.g., PDF file, article, webpages) as supplementary learning on the subject matter." (S17)

4.2.3. Valuing Both Content and Language

Effective teaching practices are perceived through the integration of content knowledge and language skills. Teachers' language proficiency aids learners in understanding classroom instructions and motivates them to communicate in the target language. Strong linguistic competence also builds students' confidence and creates a warm learning environment. Hung (2023) and Berman (2015) noted that communicative competence plays a vital role in empowering teaching practices to address modern educational demands. Additionally, modern teaching practices involve the implementation of deep subject knowledge—facts, theories, and principles—to teach students effectively (Oliveira Fernandez et al., 2016; Ellis, 2017; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Thus, combining subject knowledge with language proficiency enables instructional practices to enhance students' content idea and language skills (Shariatifar et al., 2017; Singh et al., 2013). This aligns with Çelik et al. (2013), who state that teachers' subject knowledge and language efficiency fosters a supportive learning environment.

"I guess both content and language need to be incorporated in teaching because students could develop their concrete knowledge of content along with necessary language skills." (S3)

4.2.4. Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning is an effective strategy because forming teams allows weaker students to learn from more knowledgeable peers. Cooperative and activity-based learning fosters learners' creativity and problem-solving abilities (Hamre et al., 2013; Park & Lee, 2006; Munna & Kalam, 2021; Harmer, 2015).

"Classroom learning seems more impactful when the teacher emphasizes group/pair work, and provides real-world examples, such as the importance of teamwork in the job sector that prepare students' for future workplace challenges." (S14)

4.3. Feedback and Assessment Strategies on Teacher Effectiveness

While teaching practices focused on proficiency and pedagogy, learning feedback (Zhang et al., 2025), rubrics and alternative assessments (Richards & Rodgers, 2014) are significantly crucial factors that positively influenced students' academic outcomes.

4.3.1. Constructive Feedback

Giving constructive feedback is an essential aspect of teaching practices that leads to becoming an effective teacher (Gafar & Lestari, 2023), enabling students' learning development as teachers highlight their strengths and weaknesses. It serves as a core tool that provides emotional support and motivation for learning. Al-Mahrooqi et al. (2015) and Gafar and Lestari (2023) suggest that it enhances learning, promotes excellence, and builds resilience.

"My faculty consistently provided feedback on every assessment and discussed the strengths, weaknesses, and also the reasons for score deductions when we sought clarification. This ongoing support helped me improve my learning." (S18)

A lack of feedback demotivates learners and affects their grades. Students expect constructive feedback from formative assessments to address their mistakes and prepare for summative assessments, leading to better academic performance. Al-Mahrooqi et al. (2015) found that Bangladeshi learners prioritize teacher feedback in pedagogy to learn effectively. Learners with diverse capabilities need constructive feedback, requiring instructional practices to act as guiding sources for retention (Gulistan et al., 2017; Çelik, 2013; Kourieos & Evripidou, 2013).

"Lack of feedback creates a learning gap. As a result, we often perform poorly in final examinations, which negatively impacts our overall academic grades." (S5)

4.3.2. Rubrics

Rubrics are an effective teaching-learning tool that help both teachers and students in academia, as they provide clear learning outcomes and serve as guidelines for learning assessment. Additionally, rubrics act as a roadmap for fair assessments, reducing bias and promoting self-regulation, which motivates students to achieve strong academic results (Wang, 2017).

"Presenting rubrics including clarification helps us to understand the assessment process, and also makes us aware of how to write effectively, encourages us to think about our learning and also analyzes our work to match the standard criteria of rubrics." (S27)

Students struggle without rubrics and lack clear guidelines for self-assessment. This absence may lead to grading bias, as teachers rely on personal preferences, negatively impacting academic grades (Wang, 2017). Thus, rubrics are essential in the teaching-learning process. To align with this principle, previous study has emphasized that teaching practices are enhanced when facilitators incorporate diverse assessments in teaching practices (Poddar & Mizan, 2020).

"Students' academic achievement is impeded by the deficit of clear writing structure. During the class session, we had to understand every teacher's individual preference for each course, for example some teachers prefer descriptive writing, while others are looking for specific answers in the exam script. In my first semester, I struggled to demonstrate appropriate writing in exam scripts." (S18)

4.3.3. Alternative Assessments

The teaching-learning dimension has evolved. Today, learning assessment should go beyond traditional paper-and-pen methods. To meet students' needs, assessment reform is essential in standard teaching practices (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Alternative assessments help students develop higher-order thinking skills, as they often rely too much on rote memorization. In e-learning, computer-based assessments create a flexible environment, minimize human interference, provide instant feedback, and allow personalized assessments based on comprehension (Kirtania & Mohakud, 2024). Thus, technology-based assessments should be integrated in pedagogical practices to enhance learners' competence in modern learning (Aorny et al., 2022). Additionally, portfolio assessment enhances critical thinking as learners articulate knowledge in written form, integrating real-life skills. It also tracks learning processes, fosters self-reflection, and identifies individual strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, portfolio assessments allow teachers to reflect on their teaching and understand students' learning comprehension (Wang, 2017). Peer assessment is also practical, involving students in evaluating each other's work, which exposes them to diverse perspectives. This strategy encourages learners to be proactive, responsible, and critical thinkers (Poddar & Mizan, 2020). For efficient teaching practice, teachers should provide clear guidelines to ensure fair assessments. Moreover, varied assessments boost creativity, motivation, autonomy, and problem-solving skills among tertiary students in Bangladesh (Namaziandost et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2021; Wang, 2017; Islam & Ahmed, 2018; Poddar & Mizan, 2020).

"Assessment diversity is important in the teaching system. Ensuring classroom infrastructure, computer-based assessments should be introduced in learning assessment where no human biases will appear. In addition, journal writing and peer assessment should be incorporated to encourage students for classroom participation." (S24)

Supporting the previous learner's view, another learner appreciated the alternative assessment and new assessment tools. Through a viva, learners' critical thinking improves, and teachers assess instinctive knowledge using diplomatic questions. Viva minimizes students' affective filter, aiding their professional development. Additionally, podcasts and documentaries enhance students' creativity. Creating podcasts requires synthesizing information systematically, while documentaries merge visuals and narratives to foster in-depth analysis with multimedia tools, simplifying complex concepts (Namaziandost, 2024; Rahman et al., 2021). This data also aligns with the idea of Islam and Ahmed (2018), who found that integrating multimedia tools can make learning more engaging and interesting to the learners.

"Viva, podcast, and documentary should be the part of learning assessment. Viva fosters critical thinking while podcasts and documentaries promote creativity..." (S7)

4.4. The Importance of Socio-Affective Factors in the Classroom for Teacher Effectiveness

Socio-affective filters encompass teachers' interpersonal skills that are reflected in teaching practices and foster an inclusive learning environment that empowers ultimate teacher effectiveness (Clement & Rencewigg, 2019).

4.4.1. Teachers' Rapport

Teachers with good rapport help learners understand lessons faster and foster seamless communication for academic guidance. A positive relationship builds trust and encourages active engagement in the classroom. Students appreciate strong bonds with the teachers that significantly impact students' academic performance (Chen & Lin, 2009; Derakhshan et al., 2022). A dynamic teacher-student relationship enhances effective teaching practices (Wirantaka & Wahyudianawati, 2021; Park & Lee, 2006).

"We share a good bond with our course teacher and as a result we could easily raise questions if anything was unclear to us." (S17)

An opposing view shows that maintaining good relations with particular students negatively affects teaching practices in the classroom. This bias hinders students' academic learning. Fostering relationships with all students is crucial (Chen & Lin, 2009). Teachers should address the issues of irregular students and provide individual support to aid their educational progress, thereby ensuring teacher effectiveness in the learning atmosphere. Maintaining good relationships with only particular students negatively affects teaching practices and teachers' reputations (Ali et al., 2020).

"In our class, the teacher maintained a positive relationship with the CR (Class Representative) or those who were attentive to the study. But those students who were insincere about the study were being detached from the teachers' attention." (S3)

4.4.2. Teachers' Empathy

Language learning and students' psychological factors are interconnected; if one falters, the other suffers. For effective teaching practices, educators can mentor and provide tailored support to weaker students to help them achieve better performance. This aligns with Chen and Lin (2009), emphasizing students' appreciation of emotional support during challenges.

"Our course teacher tried to support us in both academic and non-academic matters. Sometimes he counseled irregular students in the class to be sincere in their studies." (S1)

4.4.3. Sense of Humor and Strictness

In pedagogy, teachers' interpersonal skills implicitly enhance students' productivity. Teachers with humor foster a comfortable environment and promote positive classroom interactions (Clement & Rencewigg, 2019). Conversely, an intimidating demeanor can raise students' affective filters, hindering their engagement and learning. Thus, teachers must balance flexibility and rigidity; too much friendliness or strictness can lead to ineffective teaching practices in EFL classrooms (Huang, 2010). Managerial skills, positivity, and playfulness are essential for cultivating students' language competence (Ali et al., 2020; Uygun, 2013).

"Balancing humor and strictness create a positive learning environment. If a teacher always shows flexibility, he will lose the command of effective teaching. Occasionally, by telling jokes, the teacher can make learning more comfortable. By contrast, if the teacher is always in a serious mood, classroom learning can become monotonous." (S23)

4.5. Impact of Teaching-Learning Context on Teacher Effectiveness

The teaching-learning context shapes students' future career paths by providing well-structured curricula, adequate instructions, and facilitating their creativity (Ma et al., 2024).

4.5.1. Academic Curriculum and Resources

Students value a well-organized learning environment that enhances their critical and creative skills to achieve their goals. The university curriculum should focus on being a hub of learning, excellence, innovation and research (Challob & Eid, 2025). Learners appreciate organized university archives for knowledge access from diverse sources (Biggs et al., 2022), which aid their competency in global networks. Additionally, students favor e-libraries for gaining knowledge beyond physical limits (Challob & Eid, 2025; Yangambi, 2023; Alam et al., 2023). University collaborations provide access to digital resources from international institutions through e-libraries and other means. Universities must also offer real-world learning experiences to help students develop the proficiency needed for success. These resources create a well-rounded environment that equips students with academic knowledge and practical skills. To achieve this goal, educators must address educational and individual challenges while creating curricula that meet the skill levels (Munna & Kalam, 2021; Ma et al., 2024; Totto, 2021; Alam et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2025).

"I believe that my university provides the best support for convenient learning. Furthermore, our library is equipped with books, journals, digital media and comfortable seating and has the facility of an e-library. Furthermore, I am a member of a debate and language club where I have seen a bunch of programs arranged to teach the students real-life skills." (S13)

A student showed a negative attitude towards academic resources. Learning extends beyond teachers' instructions and suggested books, making access to a well-resourced library essential. A lack of reading space hinders metacognitive skills, as compelling reading requires an inclusive atmosphere. This is supported by Karim (2018) and Jamal (2018), who found that insufficient resources and rigid curricula negatively affect students' academic performance, particularly in primary and secondary education in Bangladesh.

"I have mixed feelings about my university teaching-learning culture. In the first semester, we received foundation courses that helped me develop my basic skills. However, our library is not well equipped with books and desktops and has not yet started an online library for students. Furthermore, we are not allowed to read our books in the

library and there is no reading room. Regardless of cultural programs, workshops/seminars are arranged twice or thrice a year.” (S1)

4.5.2. Classroom Environment

Classroom climate is one of the most essential factors in ensuring teacher effectiveness. An optimal relationship with students helps create a warm and safe classroom environment so that students can achieve their potential, as they feel secure and confident attempting new tasks and collaborating. Zhang et al. (2025) emphasize that the classroom context is interlinked with teacher effectiveness, while a comfortable atmosphere determines students' achievements (Biggs et al., 2022). In line with the previous study, Jamil (2025) and Benzerroug (2021) opine that learner-centric classrooms increase students' motivation in learning and promote learners' autonomy.

“Our classroom is student-friendly according to the number of students where the teacher can easily monitor the students' learning and also help them if they need. Even more, a sitting arrangement is feasible for group work.” (S20)

Students show strong concerns about the classroom environment. Classrooms should integrate digital media and adequate logistics to help students realize their potential. Teacher effectiveness also requires well-ventilated and spacious rooms that provide a comfortable learning atmosphere. Yangambi (2023) and Alam et al. (2023) emphasized that academic excellence relies on strong infrastructure, including modern classroom facilities and multimedia tools.

“Desktops and projectors were not utilized properly. Some of our classrooms are large whereas others are comparatively smaller. Smaller classrooms have mostly no impact on our learning as long as the course instructor is giving such an activity that requires enough space to move around. On the other hand, the distance between the teacher and students in a large classroom creates a problem in understanding the teachers' instruction because there is no sound system in our large classroom.” (S8)

4.5.3. Research in Academia

Promoting research-based education can bring positive changes to the learning environment for both students and teachers. Through classroom observation, teachers can systematically identify the students' learning gaps and implement effective methods and strategies to enhance the learning outcomes (Tatto, 2021), while students can develop their analytical and critical thinking ability. Moreover, students can also benefit if institutions provide them opportunities for research assistantship that foster students' research skills and deeper academic engagement.

“Academic institutions should focus on research-based teaching-learning so that we could get in-depth knowledge and develop problem solving learning skills.” (S15)

4.5.4. Teachers' Training

The teaching-learning process has evolved. Teachers require ongoing professional development to meet the needs of new-generation learners (Kirtania & Mohakud, 2024). Educators must adopt updated strategies to address diverse preferences, enhancing teacher effectiveness (Ellis, 2017). Universities should offer short-term training programs for novice teachers, emphasizing 'learning by doing' to reduce the traditional teaching approach. Teacher effectiveness cannot be gauged by grades, institutional affiliations, or publications, as authentic learning involves empowering others. Therefore, universities should prioritize teachers' training to promote academic excellence and address evolving learner needs. Continuous professional development involving various techniques is vital for improving instructional effectiveness (Quadir, 2021; Raqib, 2019; Amin, 2019).

“Universities may recruit teachers who have a good CGPA or belong from a public university and many papers in reputed journals. Along with these things, the university authority should consider the teachers' capabilities of teaching and offer a short-term training session for the teachers to facilitate the students towards effective learning.” (S27)

5. Conclusion

Teaching practices encompass teachers' subject matter knowledge, instructional expertise, and experience. Additionally, prioritizing contextualized teaching, strategic translanguaging, collaborative learning, diverse

instructional methods, educators' feedback, assessment strategies, motivation skills, teachers' rapport and compassion, and strategic use of humor and rigidity are deemed essential attributes of teaching practices that reflect spontaneously in teacher effectiveness in EFL classrooms. Moreover, teacher effectiveness is empowered by the institution's curriculum, advanced learning tools, educators' training and research-based learning, which collectively enhance teachers' pedagogical competence and positively impact students' academic performance. Despite a teacher's competence, an unstructured syllabus and insufficient teaching resources may undermine the effectiveness of an English teacher in teaching practices.

Therefore, the findings align with Bandura's social cognitive theory by showing that teacher effectiveness emerges from the dynamic interaction between environmental conditions (curriculum, resources, infrastructure), teacher behavior (pedagogy, feedback, socio-affective practices), and students' cognition (perception, comprehension). The relationship between the academic environment and teaching practices should be understood as mutually influential rather than unidirectional. Sustainable improvement in teacher effectiveness requires attention to both contextual conditions and pedagogical practices, recognizing that a lack in one domain inevitably impacts the other. Thus, educational institutions should promote competent teaching practices and provide in-service and pre-service professional development programs while also ensuring adequate teaching-learning facilities to effectively address learners' diverse needs.

The study has some limitations, as it was conducted at only four universities (two public and two private) in Bangladesh by interviewing only thirty students. However, these universities do not represent all other universities in Bangladesh. Including more universities in Bangladesh could have resulted in richer and broader data. Additionally, the data were collected once in a short period. Conducting the study longitudinally over a more extended period would lead to more authentic and reliable responses.

5.1. Recommendations

The following key findings of the current study might be helpful in future teaching-learning of a foreign language in higher education.

- (1) Teaching practices encompass university-level English language teachers being well-versed in inclusive education, diverse teaching methods and strategies, and effective feedback techniques to support students' learning.
- (2) Teachers' linguistic and content knowledge are crucial for instructional practices to increase students' communication competency and academic performance. English as a medium of communication is deemed a challenge for EFL learners. To accommodate these disparities, flexible teaching strategies incorporating cognitive, minimal translanguaging and emotional aspects are essential for promoting inclusive educational settings.
- (3) Higher education institutes must offer in-service teacher training programs demonstrating how to facilitate students' implementation of diverse methods and strategies considering learning objectives. A well-trained teacher can teach with a broad understanding of the teaching framework.
- (4) Pedagogical practices involve empowering learners by motivating them, providing sufficient resources for self-directed learning, and prioritizing collaborative efforts to promote students' growth mindsets and creativity.
- (5) Practicing alternative assessments to measure students' learning is an effective tool as it expands students' critical thinking ability and creative knowledge while minimizing memory-based learning assessments that may not accommodate the learners' expectations.
- (6) As traditional teaching approaches fade over time, technology-integrated teaching is one of the best tools for teaching students and meeting their demands. Therefore, one must stay updated and increase digital literacy for dynamic teaching practices for teacher effectiveness.
- (7) Rubrics should be considered a roadmap for fair assessment in pedagogy, reducing unintentional bias and enhancing learners' self-regulation, motivating them to achieve excellent academic grades.
- (8) Institutions should promote research-based education for both educators and the learners in order to gain competence with global learning standards.

- (9) Teachers should maintain rapport, emotional intelligence, and a balance between humor and rigidity to ensure the teacher's effectiveness in the EFL classroom. Moreover, teacher effectiveness can be enhanced by simplifying content using various techniques and authentic examples.
- (10) The academic curriculum and classroom environment should be updated and well-structured to promote students' learning excellence in 21st-century education.

Statements and Declarations

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing financial or non-financial interests that are directly or indirectly related to the research submitted for publication.

Ethical Issues and Concerns:

While gathering data, the researchers adhered to essential research ethics for scientific integrity, human rights, and collaboration. The researchers' ensured participants were not harmed and correctly cited all references to avoid plagiarism. The data collected was used solely for analysis, and respondents' identities were kept confidential.

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Appendix A

Questions for In-Depth Interview

1. What is your overall experience of learning English at your university?
2. How does the classroom environment influence your learning?
3. What specific teaching methods did your English teachers use, and how effective were those techniques for learning English?
4. To what extent do your teachers facilitate collaborative learning?
5. What assessment strategies does an effective English language teacher apply to evaluate students?
6. How does your university's teaching-learning culture/environment influence your expectations and perceptions of English language teachers?
7. How do the resources and facilities at your university shape your learning experience and your views about the English teachers?

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