

A Phenomenological Study of an Effective English Language Classroom from the Iranian EFL Learners' Perspectives at the Tertiary Level

Pooya Drood¹

Masoud Zoghi*²

Hanieh Davatghari Asl³

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Abstract

Since little is known about how EFL learners experience and understand effective English language classroom, this study was an attempt to find out about the Iranian EFL learners' experiences of an effective English language classroom at the tertiary level. The design of the current research drew on a phenomenological study in which the lived experiences of EFL learners concerning the effective English language classroom were explored. The primary data collection method was in-depth interviewing

¹ PhD Candidate, Department of ELT, Ahar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ahar, Iran; p.dorud@gmail.com

² Assistant Professor, Department of ELT, Ahar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ahar, Iran, (corresponding author); m-zoghi@iau-ahar.ac.ir

³ Assistant Professor, Department of ELT, Ahar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ahar, Iran; hdavatgar@hmail.com

with seven Ph.D. candidates (two males and five females) who had been studying English for years and were selected through purposive sampling. The data were coded and explicated using Colaizzi's seven-step coding strategy. The three major resulting themes were a) Teacher characteristics, b) Classroom interaction, and c) Class performance. In addition, key findings from the study suggest that two elements of personal experiences and personal beliefs constitute effective English language classroom from the Iranian EFL learners' perspectives. Recommendations are provided for EFL researchers as the current study reveals.

Keywords: Language Classroom, Perspectives, Beliefs, Experience, Learners

Introduction

Establishing effective English language classrooms has always been a major concern for the individuals involved in the field of ELT. It is obvious that a language classroom can't be defined if we want to take into account involving factors in isolation. Van Lier (1988) describes that a typical classroom is a place that different learners with different social backgrounds arrive and their class performance is based upon these ideas.

As Allwright (1992) properly mentions, English language classrooms are highly complicated settings in the sense that individuals, typically one instructor and a number of learners, come together for an educational reason. Allwright and Bailey (1990) perceive the classroom as the "crucible" - where teachers and students meet up and language learning, we trust, happens. Classrooms, as well as being locations for educational purposes, are social-based environments where lessons being taught carry the social aspects based on social relationships, together with social interactions (Allwright, 1989; Erikson, 1986). The classroom plays an important part in students' educational success (Habibie et al., 2016; Mukminin et al., 2015). Taken into consideration that the classroom environment influences students' academic achievements, the students' and learners' beliefs of the classroom environment are exceptionally vital. Each language classroom can be considered as a unique place because teachers' together with learners' beliefs and classroom practices are involved in the classroom. Personal theories teachers bring with them to the class influence classroom practices, what to teach, roles the teachers and learners take. Besides, because language learners come to class with different beliefs, their perceptions can play an essential role in numerous parts of education. Horwitz (1990) argues that existing mismatches among students' and teachers' teaching desires "can lead to a lack of student confidence in and satisfaction with the language class" (p. 25). Researchers observed that perspectives and perceptions play important roles in empowering learners to memorize successfully in the classroom (Hosseini & Pourmandnian, 2013). Classroom interaction hence gives us ready access to massive amounts of information on ELT learning forms. Wright (2005) observes that any activity in the classroom, by teachers or students, can inspire a variety of probable reactions, extending from the

normal to the unforeseen and these elements of classroom interaction are conducive to learning moments that teachers and learners can benefit from. Of studies into both teachers' and learners' belief systems have been conducted by researchers and teachers (Bell, 2005; Borg & Burns, 2008; Brown, 2009; Davis, 2003; Horwitz, 1987, 1988; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009; Matsuura et al., 2001; Peacock, 1999; Schulz, 1996, 2001; Vásquez & Harvey, 2010). Issues like the relationship between students' perceptions of the classroom learning environment and cognitive and emotional results have been examined (Fraser, 1998; Gür, 2006; Rakici, 2004; Schaper, 2008). Goksu (2015) inspected the contrasts among grades in the understanding of high school students in their genuine classroom learning environment in EFL classes. The results demonstrated that all participants had positive perceptions of their learning environment in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. Studies are also devoted on different aspects of EFL classroom; Difference between teachers' and learners' understanding of favored language classroom (Gür, 2006), the relationship between learners' perception of classroom context and motivation (Wei & Elias, 2011), comparing the effects of one learning environment over another and achievement of various parts of language learning (Torti, 2006). The relationship between students' perceptions of the classroom environment and their inspiration in learning the English language was investigated by Wei and Elias (2011). The findings of the study showed that the larger part of the learners perceived their learning classroom as having affiliation and they were extrinsically persuaded. Gür (2006) also endeavored to discover the contrasts between teachers' and students' perceptions of their genuine and favored classroom learning environment at the college level. The results uncovered that there was a measurably critical distinction between the teachers' real and favored classroom settings. Moreover, the findings demonstrated that the students and teachers similarly favored a more positive environment, and teachers' real and favored scores were more positive than the students. As the related literature indicates, numerous classroom educators do not have the preparation and strategies necessary to successfully address the needs of the expanding ELL population (DaSilva- Iddings & Rose, 2012). Cho and Christenbury (2010) found that instructors are not familiar with how to alter their instruction, teaching materials, or scholarly tasks for their ELLs within the classroom. Non-native English teachers here even take the damaging side. EFL students are regularly set in standard classrooms with educators who are insufficiently prepared for meeting the language and proficiency needs of their ELLs (AACTE, 2002). However, evidence from the literature speaks to the lack of qualitative research that takes into account the ELLs' perspective about effective English language classrooms at the tertiary level. To consider this gap in scholarly literature, this study was devoted to exploring how students experience and understand effective English language classrooms. Using a phenomenological study, the researcher would be able to analyze EFL learners' experiences of an effective English language classroom. Consequently, a better picture of an effective English language classroom would be obtained. This study provides English language teachers with information as to what could constitute an effective language classroom. This research aims to add to the field of existing descriptive phenomenological studies

of qualitative research by providing a background for further investigation in the realm of Iranian EFL learners at the tertiary level. The results of this exploratory and descriptive phenomenological study can, also, be utilized as a beginning step to decide the profundity of information English language teachers should possess about teaching ELLs, and examine their actual instructional practices in their classrooms.

Considering the nature and objective of the study the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the lived experiences of EFL learners concerning an effective EFL classroom?
2. How does this experience of the effective EFL classroom inform the language-learning experience for EFL learners?

Method

Participants

This descriptive phenomenological study focused on data that were obtained from a purposive sampling of Iranian English language learners studying at the Ph.D. level who had been studying English for years. Purposive sampling, recognized by Welman and Kruger (1999) as the most important kind of non-probability sampling, was used to identify the primary participants. Purposive sampling aims to look for those participants who are of interest, meet the criteria of the study, and who would best answer the research questions and objectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The researcher selected the sample using his judgment and the purpose of the research, looking for those who “have had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched” (Kruger, 1988, p. 150). In this study, because the researcher knew that people would be able to participate in the general structure and because he aimed for general knowledge about the phenomenon, at first he didn’t know who they were. The question that the researcher had to ask himself was: Do people have the experience that I am looking for? In a sense then, the researcher’s task would be finding and selecting participants possessing specific experience(s) of the phenomenon. Because the focus of this phenomenological study was to describe the Iranian English language learners’ experiences of an effective language classroom, it was appropriate to gain information from diverse participants of EFL learners. The researcher preferred to gather data from active learners at the Ph.D. level. Participants of this kind could provide intended information because they had been studying issues in relation to English language learning for many years (10 years at least) and as the learners of a foreign language had the proficiency level of English in both general and technical terms (they passed the national wide university entrance exam which is a standardized testing instrument, and the one which is also a laborious one). So their experience in language classrooms could match the purpose of this study. The researcher identified Ph.D. groups in telegram whose members were studying English as a foreign language at the time, no matter what field they had been educating in. At first, the

researcher shared the topic of study with the group and emphasized that this group would be of great help because the knowledge and experience of the members were very similar to what the researcher was working on. Then the researcher asked them to inform him in case of any willingness to participate in the research. To this end, he sent his G-mail address. After sending their willingness to participate in research, the next step was to explain by making a reply to them. At this time, the researcher sent an informed consent form (see Appendix A) and asked them to read carefully and sign it if they had wished participation. The researcher requested that he or she complete the consent form and return it to him via e-mail. By their responding to the researcher they granted assent to use their responses as data source and analysis. At last, the participants willing to participate in this study numbered seven. In order to follow the ethical issue of the research, the researcher used informed consent by which participants were provided with the information about the purpose of the study, benefits of the research, method of the data collection, and what will be done with the data to protect the confidentiality of the interviewees.

Research Design

The qualitative approach that the researcher used for this study was the phenomenological methodology of exploring and describing Iranian EFL learners' lived experiences of an effective English language classroom. More specifically, this study used descriptive phenomenology which is based upon the philosophy of Husserl (1913, 1962). Its priority is to describe what is essential and meaningful in relation to the structure of experience.

The Researcher's Role and Bracketing

In qualitative research "the researcher is the primary instrument for data analysis and collection" (Merriam, 2009, p. 15). Considering the researcher himself as an instrument gives him the first-hand information he needs to make decisions. By trying to see the experience from the eyes of the experiencer, it provides a genuine view of what is occurring. This required the researcher to begin interviewing with an unbiased attitude, taking into account that each participant's narrative goes through her or his own perceptions. Bracketing, or holding one's thoughts in abeyance in phenomenological research, came from the numerical idea of [bracketing] in Husserl's (1913, 1962) theory and is basic to descriptive phenomenology to describe the essence and meaning of the phenomenon. According to Gearing (2004), the bracketing includes an orientation point of view which is composed of two components, specifically the researcher's epistemological position, and their ontological perspective. In this research, because the researcher chose the descriptive phenomenological methodology, bracketing has its base in an epistemological position ranging from post-positivism to relativism, with an ontological stance of being critical realism. It is post-positivism because the researcher in this research attempts to get the reality from the viewpoints of the subjects (participants), rather than that of the

observer. It is related to relativism because the researcher suspends (or brackets) his or her own biases (using reflexive journals in which the researcher writes down his natural attitude towards the phenomenon that is classroom) while attempting to understand the experiences of participants in their contexts (language classroom). The researcher takes the critical realism standpoint because the participants' experiences of the phenomenon (experience of an effective language classroom) are zeroed in on and these experiences cannot be independent of human (participants) perceptions. The research took into account the methodological theoretical framework of descriptive phenomenology in order to define the whole process in study design, like the researcher's epistemological position and ontological perspective. The researcher in this study extended the bracketing (preconceptions) to the stages of data analysis that is coding and developing themes. In discussing the findings, especially for research question number two, the researcher's interpretation of data was involved.

Semi-structured Interview Procedure

The foremost way of data collection in phenomenological research is through in-depth interviews (Creswell, 2007). As a result, the primary data collection instrument in this study was in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Based on the research questions in this study, the researcher developed an interview protocol (see Appendix B) in which questions were listed specifically. Some fixed general open-ended questions according to the phenomenon under investigation had been developed. Unlike a leading question, an open-ended question builds up the domain to be investigated, while providing the participant with any direction he or she wants. The interview protocol in this research comprised of general questions that played a role as to direct the participant into the phenomenon under investigation and some follow-up questions or probes which were based on the participants' responses for helping the researcher in clarifying and eliciting rich responses. In designing the interview protocol, the researcher utilized what Spradley (1979) calls the "grand tour" open-ended question in which the researcher requested that the participant remake a huge portion of the experience. In other words, the researcher asked the participant to reconstruct the points of interest of a more constrained time span or of experience. The questions also focused more on the subjective experience of the participant. In sum, based upon the participants' answers to the grand tour questions researcher-developed, while interviewing, some probing questions were formed. Throughout the interviewing process, the researcher moved back and forth through the questions based on the informant's responses. The researcher wanted the participants to describe the lived experience in a way as much free from a social background as possible. Besides, the researcher also used memos. Memoing is the demonstration of recording reflective notes about what the researcher is gaining from the information. Doing the research, the researcher kept memos in terms of his own ideas, beliefs, tendency, and past experience.

Individuals' behavior becomes meaningful, important and justifiable when setting in the unique context of their lives and the lives of those around them. Dolbeare and Schuman (see Schuman, 1982, for discussion) designed three interviews that characterize this approach and permits the interviewer and participant to dispatch the experience and to put it in the context. Based on this approach, the researcher conducted three interviewing structures with participants. The first part of interviewing began by contextualizing the participants' experience by asking him or her to tell about past experiences in relation to the topic. So, the researcher asked them to reconstruct their early experiences in their families, in school, with friends, teachers, etc. The reason for the second part of the interviewing was to target the rich points of interest of the participants' present lived encounters within the area of the study. So, the researcher asked them to reconstruct these details. The researcher put away asking opinion-based questions and looked for the details of their experience, upon which their opinions may be built. In this second interview, then, the researcher's task was to strive to reconstruct the myriad details of participants' experience in the area he/she was studying. In the third part of interviewing, participants were requested to think about the meaning of their experience. This reflection talks to intellectual and emotional connections between the participants' experience and life. The blending of exploring the past to clarify the occasions that drove members to where they are right now, and portraying the wealthy points of their present involvement builds up conditions for reflecting upon what they are directly doing in their lives. Session numbers determined by the time it took for the participants to reach saturation in their responses to each question and probe. It took much time for some participants to respond and for some others, it did less. Some interviewees, due to being bored or tired, wanted to postpone the rest of the interviewing. For this reason, these sessions were set according to the participants' preferred convenient time. Participants were interviewed within a maximally period of a three- day interval.

Explicitaion of the Data

The heading "data analysis" is not used here. Hycner explains that "analysis" has perilous intentions for phenomenology. The "term [analysis] usually means a 'breaking into parts' and therefore often means a loss of the whole phenomenon... [whereas 'explicitation' implies an] ...investigation of the constituents of a phenomenon while keeping the context of the whole" (1999, p.161). In this research, the phenomenological explicitation of data was based on Colaizzi's strategy (1978). Figure 1 summarizes the steps suggested by Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method:

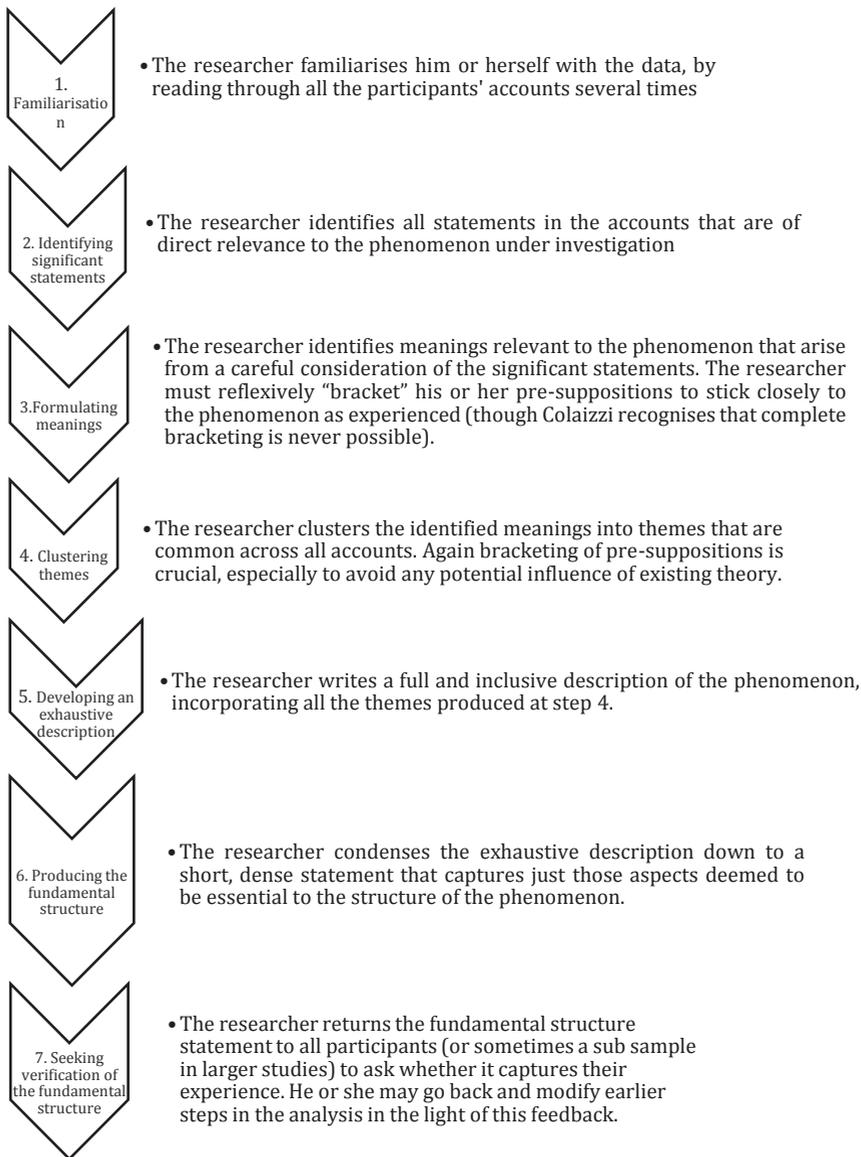


Figure 1. Colaizzi's Descriptive Phenomenological Method

The Trustworthiness of the Study Findings

To ensure that qualitative research findings are as trustworthy as possible, the following recommendations made by Creswell (2008) were taken into consid-

eration: (1) triangulation of data sources (analyst triangulation), (2) rich description of the method (participants, researcher's role and bracketing, data collection (instrument) as mentioned above), (3) Explication of data (coding process), and (4) member checking.

Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the process of “corroborating evidence from different individuals (e.g., a principal and a student), types of data (e.g., observation field notes and interviews) or methods of data collection (e.g., documents and interviews) in descriptions and themes in qualitative research” (Creswell, 2008, p. 266). For this study, in-depth interviews were used as the primary data source. In this research study, analyst triangulation involved using another researcher who had expertise in qualitative research. Having coded the data, the main researcher provided the second person with the data to code. The second researcher stated that he had coded and formulated similar findings with slight differences. Because the different evaluators arrived at the same conclusion, then our confidence in the findings was heightened. The proportion of the exact match in the inter-rater agreement was used.

Thick Description (Data Explicitaion Process)

To have a picture of each participant's description of their lived experience, the researcher initially read transcripts and written answers many times. Because it was vital to involve the participants at this stage of the explication process, the researcher sent them a copy of the transcript with a comment sheet to validate their experiences. Next, statements of importance and phrases that were considered to be related to the topic of the study and research questions were extracted from each transcript. In order to code the statements, transcripts were written in different sheets and each transcripts' page and line numbers were clarified. Each significant statement relating to the description and experience of participants was studied very carefully to determine a sense of its meaning. Meanings that were formulated were developed using preceding and following statements to ensure the contextual meaning maintenance. After having an understanding of all formulated meanings, the method of gathering all these defined meanings into categories that reflect a unique structure of clusters of themes was initiated. Each cluster of the themes was coded to incorporate all defined meanings related to that group of meanings. After that, groups of clusters of themes that reflect a specific issue were incorporated together to create a particular build of the theme. In relation to this research study, the description was used as a narrative account and contained the dimensions of the lived experience of participants. This was accomplished by joining the emergent themes, topic clusters, and defined meanings into the description to form its general structure, and guarantee that it contained the components of the experience. Finally, the researcher condensed the comprehensive description

down to a brief, thick statement that captured just those perspectives considered to be basic to the structure of the phenomenon.

Member Checking (Last Phase in Colaizzi's Strategy)

At this stage, the researcher looked for the validation of the study findings using the "member checking" technique. The member check may be a procedure most regularly utilized to optimize the validity of qualitative research findings. Research participants were asked to assess the following: whether (a) the researcher accurately delivered their experiences that were the target of study and (b) the researcher understood the meaning those experiences had for them. All identified themes were submitted to the participants for member checking to ensure that they agreed with the findings of the study. Eventually, all participants agreed that the results were completely matched to their intentions.

Findings of the Study

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of EFL learners concerning an effective EFL classroom?

The researcher completed grouping the significant statements and developed meaning units and clustered these units of meaning into sub-themes and main themes. Based on the information gathered from the participants, three major themes of 1) Teacher characteristics, 2) Classroom interaction, and 3) Class performance were revealed. To show the participants' responses to interview questions, direct quotations of importance within participants' responses were used.

Theme One: Teacher Characteristics

Sub-theme One: Teaching Method

Some participants described their experience in relation to how teachers taught by telling that EFL teachers inclined to follow just the syllabus that they had been given and the teachers' responsibility was to present what was in the book and transfer the content of the book and no more. The lack of a defined secondary role for teachers caused teachers not to check the learners' learning and learners felt and experienced this during their learning. They believe teaching can be considered as an art that should be dealt with smoothly. Presenting only the contents of the books by teachers without any change in teaching way causes learners to feel that their learning is varied. The traditional way of teaching is common among EFL teachers.

Ali believes that EFL teachers play the role of the presenters and there is no obligation for teachers to check the learners' learning. He also emphasizes that

there is not a defined responsibility for the EFL teachers to feel accountable in class:

As I said, teachers just were presenters. They were not there to check their learnings or things like that. I think it was because nobody had asked them to do that. There was no effort from teachers to overcome because nobody asked them or it seems it's not their duty or responsibility to do that.

Other participant sees teaching as an “art” that English teachers should possess it. EFL teachers must act independently and being “creative” is of an important factor. Vahid says:

Teaching is an art and it shouldn't be just based on some structures given to the teacher for teaching and teachers should be creative in class.

In responses to the question “*If teachers were aware of being repetitive in class*”, Zahra mentions that:

Yes, but they all had the same answer “we are only responsible for teaching what is in your books, you can have self-study and ask any question you have”.

In relation to the question of “*What did your English teachers use to do most of the time in class?*”, Negin remarks that teachers utilized “traditional” ways of teaching:

Their method was mostly traditional. They just transferred knowledge to students. There were no tapes or videos. They just taught the book.

She also defines this transferring of knowledge as:

I mean just teaching. Teaching was one-way from the teacher to the students.

The translation is the method that EFL teachers bring to class and this confuses learners and affects their learning. Participants note the role “translating” has in their learning and their performance in class.

Ali doesn't see knowing the translation of the contents as the learning issues. He states that:

... However, comprehension of the content in your mother tongue doesn't mean you have learned the target language. To pass the English courses I needed to learn English.

Vahid considers translating as a barrier to learning by mentioning that:

They just translated the passages into Farsi And then we couldn't put what we learned into practice in class and then we couldn't learn.

Rozhin when being asked that “*If the translation was of any use to her*” mentions that it affected some parts of the learning materials:

What I remember clearly is that they gave the meaning of the new vocabulary of each lesson in our mother tongue and translated the text that you read. We did nothing extra.... I don't think so because maybe I just learned some new words.

Sub-theme Two: Teacher Behavior

In relation to this sub-theme, participants described that the ways EFL teachers tried to face learner- related issues in the class were varied. Some participants mentioned that they were “surprised” by the way teachers reacted to their questions in class. Teacher personality was another factor that had been mentioned by the participants intervened in their learning. Learners explained that EFL teachers’ strategy to deal with learners’ questions made them feel that they were not well suited to teach English, and consequently, the results were not beneficial. According to them EFL teachers’ misbehavior towards learners affected their understanding and learning.

Negin talks about the behavior of her EFL teachers and the impact such behavior had on her:

The second-year I had a teacher who was really beautiful and kind. I liked her very much. So her good behavior had a good impact on me. In the third year, our teacher was the same woman and the story was the same.

She continues to talk about the other aspect of teacher that inspired her in later academic life:

There was an English teacher who was very cute and energetic. She taught well. I got interested in her and the English language.... I decided to continue my studies in this field. I always enjoyed English classes.

EFL teachers’ misbehavior towards learners raised tension even with those that were good learners. Ali explains this:

Our teacher was trying to make some conversation with us to show that he knew something or he knew how to speak English. But actually, for other students, it was a disaster because they were not able to make a sentence.

EFL teachers’ act in class affected learners’ feelings toward learning. This is apparent in the learners’ words. Zahra talks in this way:

Whether I liked the teacher or not didn't change my mind about loving English, but I could see most of my classmates developed hating English just for the reason that the teacher didn't behave well.

Zahra mentions that asking some types of questions seemed ridiculous for teachers:

I hated it when I asked a question and the professor behaved in a way that showed my question was too easy and absurd. Especially, I couldn't bear it when he asked others to answer my question. That made me stop asking questions in class.

Elham sees the “logical behavior” of the teacher in the following way:

I mean the teacher was not behaving logically and correctly. The teacher had to pay attention to most of the students, not to one student.

Sub-theme Three: Teachers' Competence

Based on the information gathered from participants, the qualities of being up-dated and knowledgeable English teachers are of great importance. Participants relate knowledge of their teachers to the long-term effect they have on participants. Teachers can play a role as the stress – lesseners. EFL teachers' negative act in class can have an effect on their learning.

One of the participants talks about being up-dated and knowledgeable teachers and the effect they have on learning. Ali says:

It was really motivating to see other students that could speak in the classes and most of the teachers were educated and their knowledge was updated. They did know how to teach and were aware of updated methods and they were trying to use them in the classes.

He sees knowledge as a factor that good teachers can have and it causes learners to get motivated:

They [EFL teachers] were really knowledgeable and tried to motivate students to more games and learning more and new things.

Vahid mentions that transferring the information is another issue that motivated him:

Teachers were behaving well, teaching well, and you gradually became motivated.

For example, in our linguistics class, we had a teacher that was very successful in transferring the information we needed.

Like the above-mentioned participant, one of the female participants mentions that teacher knowledge can have a long- term effect. Rozhin states:

Some of them were really effective. I mean that their affection was life-long because they were really knowledgeable and they were so good. I can't really express how good they were.

Nazanin talks about the role her EFL teacher played in raising the "self-confidence". She expresses this as:

At first, I didn't pay attention to learning. I mean I didn't know what learning meant at the university. But there were some teachers that really helped me to gain my self-confidence.... When I asked my teacher to help me to understand the words and how to read, she told me that at first, you didn't need to know everything. Getting the whole point would be enough for this class.

She also felt that the class was effective because the teacher removed and lessened the the stress she had in class:

It was because the teacher removed factors that caused me to feel stressed by assuring me that learning is knowing why you don't know something.

Elham sees effective language classroom is related to the teachers' knowledge. She states:

... They were really effective. Again we had great and knowledgeable professors and I enjoyed their classes.

Participants also describe their experience in relation to EFL teachers' negative aspects and action in class that made the class non-effective.

Vahid describes the unpleasant way of teaching of one of his teachers in university that made him think he was "incompetent" in teaching and affected the outcome by telling:

It was as if this teacher hadn't been matched for this lesson. I never found him interesting, helpful, useful, nor did I find the teacher qualified for teaching because what we studied was the repetition of the same thing.

Nazanin explains that she suffers from the gap in her knowledge because the teacher was not effective in teaching. She explains that:

In one of the MA classes, the teacher didn't teach well and I was surprised at how he was qualified to teach at this level. He was exceeding showing us pictures. No clear way of teaching. No systematic one. Not a clear voice. There was no difference in the sessions of this class. We were just listeners like a lecture. Nowadays I also suffer from the gap of knowledge in this field.

Theme Two: Classroom Interaction

Sub-theme One: Teacher and Learner Relationship

According to participants, the relationship that exists between learners and EFL teachers varies in degrees based on the acts of both sides. Participants mentioned that their relationship with their EFL teachers is dependent upon teachers' actions in class. Both teachers and learners are responsible for this relation. EFL teachers' "expectation" of learners can be understood by the participants. A good relationship between learners and teachers can have positive results.

Ali mentions that the relation between his EFL teachers and his classmates varies:

We had some relations or maybe some distant relationship with the English teacher in some conversations. But on the whole, there had been no relationship between me and the English teachers I had for three years.

Vahid believes that it is the teacher himself that plays an important role in shaping the relation between teachers and learners and this affects learners' learning:

I said that the only speaker was the teacher and students couldn't speak and engage in learning. Because of that, we had to be quiet and listen to the teacher. So for me, this was, at least, the reason that was conducive to a cold relationship with EFL teachers.

Nazanin talks about the positive aspect of the teacher-learner relationship:

Teachers tried, either directly or indirectly, to establish a friendly relationship with learners in different ways. For example, when we had a test our teacher was sure that students were ready to answer them or other times when she asked us to join in research about English...They were valuable for me because I became interested in studying and learning more.

Elham feels satisfied with the relationship that they used to have with their EFL teacher and how this relation had positive consequences:

My relationships with my English teachers were very good. In fact, seeing that my EFL teachers valued the learners by feeling closer to them to help motivated me. They were delightful because I learned lessons well.

Sub-theme Two: Classroom Atmosphere

The class atmosphere is another issue that participants assumed to get affected by teacher action. The teacher can make learners feel scared or humiliated in class. The relation of learners in class can be affected by the positive or negative class setting.

Vahid talks about the boring atmosphere of the class that he thinks the teachers create and consequently learning is affected by it. He states that:

It's boring because in Iran, we don't have experienced English teachers or maybe because of the way that the teachers are teaching. The only speaker is the teacher and students can't speak or engage in learning. Just the teacher speaks.

Rozhin strongly confirms that:

The teacher didn't motivate nor did they provide an interesting classroom setting.

Nazanin talks about the positive class setting:

It was warm and friendly. You could easily talk with other students and the teacher.

And in response to the question that "What happened that you thought it was warm and friendly she responded that:

We shared our knowledge, we had competition.

Zahra emphasizes that not having a "friendly" class setting causes negative emotional reactions' of the learners. She says:

We are not so friendly and there are only a few classmates who accept to work in groups and help each other. Most of them see each other as rivals.

Elham adds that because there was no question waiting to be answered by learners, classroom atmosphere was "relaxing":

We felt relaxed because we knew that no question was waiting for us.

Theme Three: Class Performance

Sub-theme One: Autonomy

Participants state that activities learners are assigned are a big help in making EFL class effective and emotionally affect the learners. If learners feel that they are satisfied with the class performance it means further development to them. Class effectiveness was defined in terms of helping learners to find their own ways of learning. Effective class for participants means transferring of information and self-reliance. Seeing the rationale behind the teaching is important for an effective EFL class.

Ali talks about the differences that he perceived exist comparing school and university classes. The nature of the class activities was the issue that explained by him:

The methods used in those classes were really different. The students were trying to participate in class communication, speaking, and teaching. Some of the students were studying before the new material was presented and those students who were presenting those new contents to the other students. So it was totally different participation of students in learning.

Vahid talks about the satisfaction that is directly related to the development in class. He states:

It is your satisfaction with the class that decides further development.

And he continues to talk about the non-effective features of a non-effective class:

On the contrary in a non-effective class, you are wondering and asking questions like why am I studying this? What is it that I can use to compensate for my knowledge gap? In my opinion, my BA courses were neutral except for one or two classes.

Zahra mentions the point that the classes were effective because it helped her to find her own strategy. She says:

The remarkable part of the efficiency of the classes was developing our English language knowledge not only by studying what we were to but also by learning the strategies to learn, studying or researching in this field of study. In fact, we were trained to know how to find our own special strategy and mix it with new and the best methods so as to learn more.

Rozhin talks about the differences in in-class activities that seemed different from school and made the class effective. She describes:

We could negotiate, we could transfer our ideas, and we always wished to talk on every subject we liked ... we discussed English

She also describes her Ph.D. courses as:

Compared to MA classes, we have a big jump in the Ph.D. course. The first conspicuous issue is that we are self-dependent. We are teachers and learners at the same time. We can benefit from our interaction. The

class is a place for exchanging information and no matter how much it is accepted or not, we always discuss and argue.

Nazanin sees the rationale behind an effective class for learning. She evaluates her achievements as follows:

We didn't learn. We just memorized things like methods of teaching from the book Freeman. So why? Why should I memorize things that I won't use them...? Teachers followed similar patterns as BA teachers did. You only have to pass the class with good grades, which again is due to memorizing. Learning doesn't happen.

Elham describes the ineffective EFL classes she had and talks about the role of the teachers in informing class quality and how this leads to change in their learning. She explains:

We were just listeners and we tried to take notes while speaking. There was no aim in speaking and no rational thing in teaching. We were passive in class became disappointed in learning and then no motivation.

Sub-theme Two: Effective Elements

In this part, participants reflect upon their experience of an effective EFL classroom.

Some of the participants mentioned that effective class should be based on the learners' needs. In relation to this, Vahid states that:

Due to the nature of the English language and its role in learning materials in our field, being meaningful means it is matched to the needs of the learners to show that EFL learners' needs are taken into account and based on these needs meaningful activities are exploited.

Rozhin believes that "filling the gap" is of great importance:

For me, an English language classroom should satisfy learners' needs. They are in class to meet needs and fill the gaps in their knowledge. So I expect this more than anything else. Everyone should benefit in this way.

She also states that teachers should not "misuse" their power in class and "pay attention" to all learners. Furthermore, she explains that:

Teachers should take responsibility for the learning of the learners. Never misuse the power of being a teacher Pay attention to all learners so it shows the dexterity of the teacher in teaching.

Ali mentions that it is the nature of the classes that makes them effective:

It should be project-based or discussion-based. I believe students will gain some background information, and they will study. Then they are going to participate in the classes and they are going to share their own ideas.....

According to Nazanin, it is not the teachers' needs but the learners' needs should be taken into account. She states:

Teaching materials should be guided towards the needs of learners, not teachers'. They are important because it is us that are influenced by these activities. And they may have long-term effects on us..... As well as previously mentioned ones such as not being confusing, it should be systematic in every step. Planned in a way that you are motivated. Enjoy every moment you are in class.

She reflects on the “absorbing” factor of an effective class. She states:

English classes should absorb learners and not repulse them. If this factor is taken into account, other factors of success are reachable.

Having organized classes is another issue that was mentioned by the learners. Zahra explains an organized class as:

Being organized in new lessons taught, or asking for the homework or exams, being fun and not letting the learners feel bored, doing various things and not working on only one skill...

Elham believes that effective class is “memorable”:

I believe an English class should be active, enjoyable, and useful. A class that you finish it you miss it.

Negin explains that effective class should have an “enjoyable” setting:

I personally prefer that an English language classroom to be enjoyable because you get eager to do more related things...

Sub-theme Three: Intervening Factors

According to the learners, the educational system we have is not appropriately matched to the goals of developing language for “communicative functions” in classes. Because EFL classes are teacher-centered in Iran, and because the needs of the learners are neglected it becomes useless in terms of education. They talked about the lack of motivation in-school experience to continue English as their major in university. Participants complained that they couldn't put into practice what they learned in school. Participants' internal motivation was at work when choosing English as their major in university.

Ali mentions that the English teaching system for classes is unproductive and the goals of communicative functions are not met. He states that:

In Iran, everybody knows that the system we have and the books that are taught are not very suitable for communicative language teaching...If the goal is to get familiar with the structure or the meaning of the language that's ok and after some time learners forget about the meaning and grammar but if the aim is speaking or communicating, it was useless and wasn't very good at all.

The needs of the language learners can't be satisfied by the current educational system. Vahid sees English teaching as a useless thing:

You know I had lots of students that told me “I have been studying English for 4 years at school” but he/ she can’t say a sentence in English. It’s really bad... English teaching in classes is really a useless thing.....

In response to the question that “*Were the English language classes of any use*”, Zahra puts it in this way:

They were not helpful for my speaking at all. I used the grammar and words in my speaking but I didn’t learn how to use them in high school but in institute classes.

Elham also confirms that high school English classes mean nothing when being asked that “*Was the English language class of any use to you in terms of the books and exercises?*”:

It was not useful during high school but later I went to an institute....

Producing the Fundamental Structure

In this part the researcher attempted to state a comprehensive statement that involves those aspects considered to be essential to the structure of the phenomenon:

Overall, Iranian EFL learners who participated in this research bring out into open some aspects of an effective EFL classroom, which are “personal experience of an effective English classroom” and the “personal beliefs” they have towards it. They consider an effective language classroom consisting of those factors that should/shouldn’t have been there or done and should be removed from the immediate situation. Consequently, based on these findings, classroom effective learning environment as a whole appears different to each individual and learning in such conditions is determined by experiences and beliefs of the EFL learners.

RQ2: How does this experience of the effective EFL classroom inform the language-learning experience for EFL learners?

In relation to research question number two that asks for the effects of the experience on the learning of the EFL learners, participants mentioned the factors that are effective and have a belief-based nature. Teacher behavior in class, the formation of the relation between teacher and learner, teacher and learner responsibility, classroom interaction, the effectiveness of the educational system, teacher competence, and class performance. Participants of this study made various convictions, assumptions and biased thoughts of their own encounters and what they had been exposed to informal and casual teaching/learning circumstances. Considering that members have accumulated a great bargain of experience over the course of their instruction up to college, they are most likely to form certain beliefs around what constitutes successful or ineffective learning. Beliefs have much in common with concepts such as dispositions, certain hypotheses, previously established inclinations, attitudes, values, suppositions, judgments, points of view and indeed individual hypothe-

ses so in their attempt to learn a foreign language, participants try to form a sense of their own world and develop their beliefs on the premise of their own experience. In this way, all sorts of experiences are unique, within the sense that they are individual and basically subjective. In this study when participants were asked to give meaning to their experience and how this experience affects their learning, they mostly used verbs like *effective EFL classroom means, for me it is, I expect, it should be, because this... does that, or suggestive tone of words like, should do this, never do that, I believe, it needs to be*. These, as well as the above-discussed issues, contribute a clearer understanding of a process involved in the learning of language learners and this process is crucial in forming the beliefs of the learners. EFL learners have a kind of understanding of the current situation. They talk about their past experiences and factors involved in helping them to see better while looking back. When they tend to give their ideas towards what would it be like there are some quite different responses within the same system.

Discussion

In response to research questions of Iranian EFL learners' lived experience of an effective language classroom and how this experience informs their language-learning in this study, it can be explained according to EFL learners' *personal experiences consisting of teachers' characteristics, classroom interaction, class performance, and personal beliefs that EFL learners have towards effective learning in English classroom environment, which form and give direction to their thinking*.

In the coming section emerging themes that were based on the past and present experience and reflection of the meaning of the EFL learners in relation to effective EFL classroom and how does this experience of the effective EFL classroom inform the language-learning experience of EFL learners will be discussed.

Theme One: Teacher Characteristics

The first theme revealed in this study speaks to the ways EFL teachers' characteristics are perceived by the participants. EFL learners give their EFL teachers the role of the presenters of the books. Similar to the experiences of the participants of this study in relation to teachers being book dependent, Mathew (2012) asserts that there are a number of English teachers who primarily depend on books and leave other learning assets for the classroom. Making the use of books as the only resource of information impedes EFL learners' enhancement since it limits students learning span. So this supports the perception of the participants of this study that presenting only the content of the books by teachers without any change in teaching way or checking their learning causes learners to feel that their learning is varied. The results might suggest the problems EFL books carry with them. Teachers and learners face with

some potential difficulties caused by coursebooks. First, the lack of authenticity is one of the most crucial problems in many coursebooks. Richards (2014), for instance, argues that coursebooks are specifically written for classroom usage and do not represent the real language. However, based on the findings of this study, when participants talk about the way teachers teach from the book affects their learning in class more plausible explanation is EFL teachers' perceptions of course books. McGrath (2006) appropriately mentions that the way teachers understand the coursebooks has an influence on how they use them and consequently learners' learning will be affected. So understanding these attitudes seem very important. For this reason, the learning process is influenced by the teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards course books. Also, the results of this research contradict some other findings. For example, Khodabandeh and Mobini (2018) in their study showed that instructors and students were fascinated by the book in all criteria but social considerations. According to their study, there was no significant difference between Iranian teachers' and students' perceptions of the book. The participants of this study considered it as a tool by which teachers try to teach things without considering what is being taught or they are convenient materials relative to their needs. So, this study emphasizes that the evaluation of the English language learning books can be taken into account in terms of the learners' perspectives. It can be suggested that neither the teachers nor the books decide their learning, but rather it is learners using the books and teachers as the mediators that learners preferred.

According to participants, the perception of using translation as a method by the EFL teachers is damaging as well as somehow helpful in learning some parts. They feel "self- confident" or they learn some "new words" or it causes some "fake learning". Here participants use these terms to suggest that they have the personal judgment of their own learning. It is apparent that learners are aware of their learning using different methods. They derive their sense of self-esteem from the accumulation of experiences with the method (translation) which has either a positive or negative effect on their learning. When EFL teachers use translation in the classroom, learners use their metacognitive strategy in their learning process to think about their learning process. The information given by the participants of this study sheds light on such important an issue that translating can't always be useful for second or foreign language learners, regardless of having positive aspects.

Teachers' behavior in class causes the learners to feel their learning affected. A few participants specified that they were "surprised" by the way instructors responded to their inquiring questions in a lesson and for them being an EFL instructor implies having a variety of abilities. What can be drawn is that teachers in class have more than one role for the learners at the same time in the same place. Schulz (1996) argued that L2 students' satisfaction in the language class can adversely be affected by mismatches that exist between students' and teachers' expectations and this can possibly lead to the cessation of L2 study. The success of the learners demands the success of the teachers since when the teachers are successful in their teaching, their learners succeed in

their study. That's why, arguing in favor of a social constructivist approach to language learning, Williams and Burden (2015) considered the close relationship between beliefs and actions among both teachers and students. They claimed that teachers' beliefs can have an effect on their actions and asserted that their beliefs "will influence their actions in the classroom" (p. 48-49). It is argued that what is considered important within the social constructivist approach is to identify what teachers' beliefs are. For example, when being asked about the meaning of a word by an EFL learner, the EFL teacher responded a way that is an indicator of the belief she held "I am not a walking dictionary". All in all, this study, in relation to an EFL teacher's behavior in the classroom, suggests that learning of the language learners is affected by the experience the teacher forms in their mind. Given the experience and description of the behavior provided by the current research participants in relation to EFL teachers such as "skillful teacher", "motivating teacher", "personality of the teacher", an EFL teacher is formed in their mind as a model. This accentuates students' attitudes towards the immediate language learning context including the environment, teacher, tasks, materials. Participants showed that they are aware of this point of not being an effective language teacher which is afflicting their learning. What participants of this study mentioned according to EFL teachers' knowledge is that they perceive and experience them, for example, as "being up-dated and knowledgeable" or motivating "transferring the information". They also see EFL teachers as non-effective, not "qualified" teachers in their learning. For one reason, this contradictory perception can exist as Canagarajah (1999) mentions that it isn't vital to have full knowledge of a language in order to teach it well because most of the world's English instructors are non-English speakers.

Theme Two: Classroom Interaction

The second revealed theme that was based on the learners' description of an effective EFL classroom was classroom interaction. As participants of this study emphasized the reciprocal relationship that exists between learners and EFL teachers changes in degrees based on the acts of both sides. As is parallel to what participants of this study described, developing more positive relations such as friendship is dependent on how comfortably students perceive the teacher and the environment. So they can create a better way to act within the social setting and improve their social skills (Larson, 2011). Participants of the study mainly emphasized that their relationship with their EFL teachers is conducive to positive relations and influence. This impact, or control, can altogether affect the learning environment, which, in turn, influences a student's accomplishment. The foremost capable weapon teachers have when attempting to cultivate a favorable learning climate could be a positive relationship with their understudies (Boynton & Boynton, 2005). Student perception of a teacher-student relation plays an important role in the classroom environment. According to participants of this study, it is suggested the teacher-learner relation affects the learners' perception of an EFL classroom towards the positive or

negative side. When Students feel their teacher is not of any help they develop a sense of less interest in learning and are less engaged in the classroom. Therefore, the student's perception of the teacher's behavior impacts the relationship (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2012). Also, participants perceived their EFL classroom atmosphere as being "friendly", "learner afraid of teacher feeling", "boring atmosphere", and "relaxing". And such perception of classroom setting affects their ways of learning. This points to the importance of the classroom psychological aspect. To build inspiration and confidence among learners, and speed up the processes of teaching and learning, it is an important component of the classroom to help teachers and students to keep a good relationship. The classroom atmosphere can also be understood from sociocultural perspectives. The theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) is vital to a supportive classroom environment in the L2 classroom. Language learners' learning improves if being provided with support from the teacher and their peers. Scaffolding informed by ZPD is hence able to contribute to a positive learning climate, which in turn encourages language learning. Also, according to sociocultural points of view, the development of an ideal classroom atmosphere for learning does not only rest upon the teacher's effort to supply critical instruction but, moreover, requires the students to work out and take ownership of their own learning. By exercising learner choice and by asking the learners to actively participate in classroom activities a positive engaging classroom atmosphere with the teacher can be constructed.

Theme three: class performance

This study's finding for effective language classrooms has gone so far as to say elicitation is a very viable strategy since one can bring information from students rather than giving it to them. It increases students' participation and bolsters learners' self-certain confidence during the lesson, too. English learner autonomy sheds light upon student-centeredness; namely, learners systematize their own learning. Such an understanding of autonomy has defined autonomy as an "educational endeavor" (Jiménez Raya & Vieira, 2015, p. 18). The information given by the participants of this study parallels Dams' saying that in "an autonomy-oriented classroom, the learners select their own strategies and exercises, feel obliged to keep a written record of their learning exercises and assess learning frequently" (as cited in Little, 2004, p.18). But what is more important here according to the findings of this study is that this autonomy is not just a mere factor for itself. It is experienced and perceived rather than being considered as a produced factor by learners. So, this confirms the requirement for learner inclusion and interest inside the FL instructing and learning and asking learners to learn to recognize and acknowledge full responsibility. Similarly, Macaro (2008) mentioned that learners have to hold responsibility for a process that empowers them to move from being helped by others to help themselves.

Relative to the second sub-theme of the third main theme in this study, past and present experiences of learning of the participants lead them towards the

state of the mind one which affects their interpretation and consequently, they see and perceive effective language classroom as a setting manipulated by the different elements which are called effective ones here. Nešić and Stojković (2017) have recently found evidence that can be obtained by diary studies proving that learning a foreign language is closely related to how learners experience the learning and this influences their attitudes and motivation for learning the language. The findings of this study relative to effective elements revealed that language learners consider effective items and issues in language learning and past experience something of having interpretive rather than reason-based nature. This makes the role of the teacher more and more critical. Corzo and Contreras (2011) have specified that specific lesson strategies make a great enhancement in learners' activities and learners' performances. Similarly, Manson (2012) claimed that a skillful teacher can link the new materials with previous information. Participants of this study emphasized the point that the educational system has a great role in their future planning and majoring either positively or negatively, along with their learning in those classes. The findings of this study suggest that the educational system effect is evident in the learning and motivating of the participants. This framework of influence has been so strong that it has penetrated into nearly all human exercises, deliberately or intuitively Blommaert (2009) also, argues that "language users have conceptions of language and language use: conceptions of 'quality', value, status, norms, functions, ownership, and so forth. These conceptions guide the communicative behavior of language users" (p. 241).

To create an important and interesting EFL classroom for both the instructor and the learners, it is crucial to have certain components. The problem with FL learners lies within the fact that they have little chance to use the target language in lifestyle hence, they have to depend completely on classroom exercises as for the larger part of them, the classroom is the only environment in which they can practice communicating within the target language. "So EFL instructors must bear it in mind that neither control nor teach but setting a fitting atmosphere for learning in their course is their most critical assignment for classroom management" (Yi, n.d. p.130).

Implication

The most critical suggestion of this research is for teachers to become mindful of and recognize their students' beliefs about what constitutes an EFL language classroom. Attitudes and beliefs inferred from student perceptions can have a significant effect on the learner's affective state. Language teachers, researchers, and even students themselves should be aware that learning a foreign language in the classroom involves different factors and these in return can influence learners' performance in acquiring the target language. The learning process is not free of the individual, the past experiences and feelings. That is why learning which is based on experience puts emphasis on these and it is vital to include the total personality. To make language learning classrooms a successful setting for language learners to learn EFL teachers, instructors

should incorporate discussions around the nature of language learning as a normal portion of their instruction. As EFL learners' beliefs around language learning can be based on the restricted information and/or experience, the teacher's most viable course may be to go up against erroneous beliefs with new information. Any given FL learners will most assuredly have varying opinions from their instructors on a few striking issues in FL instructional method. This study brings to the surface some flawed considerations that teachers may make about language learners, namely, 1) learners believe that their instructor will choose those exercises that will most motivate language learning and are most fitting 2) learners concur with the teacher's educational choices within the classroom and will not question them, 3) learners don't have adequate capacity to understand fundamental SLA theory and how can this be put into practice. In fact, instructors may want to engage language learners in brief cursory discussions of SLA by first clarifying their method of reasoning behind certain activities.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study includes only a limited number of Iranian EFL learners at the tertiary level (Ph.D.). There needs to be further research including other various perspectives, tertiary levels such as BA and MA. Using the same methodology utilized in this study can provide an opportunity for researchers to have a better understanding of the process and changes that can be occurred while learners move to the upper levels. Another further research this researcher can suggest is that because both male and female participants participated in this study, there would be a better picture of the male and female lived experiences if taken into account separately. This researcher recommends that other researchers investigate the particular branches of English language such as translation, literature, TEFL, currently being taught in universities. The differences and similarities that can be found are conducive to further understanding of the learners' state of the mind. Also, a longitudinal study of some samples could be done to see how the perception of the language learners change over time and what barriers or advantages learners encounter during their academic life. This study took the features of descriptive phenomenology into account, so the researcher intended to describe only the understanding of EFL learners. Others can take the interpretative phenomenology of this type to see "why is that what is there".

Conclusion

One of the ways this study differed in relation to EFL learning in class was its use of methodology which has rarely been done in this field. Rather than trying to disarrange the environment, the researcher desired to describe what is happening naturally. So the descriptive methodology was chosen because its underlying philosophical roots matched the nature of this study. The other difference lies in the factors the researcher intended to describe. Here again, based on the

descriptive phenomenology's characteristics, learners' perspectives towards EFL learning class were taken into account not by referring to single elements, but by the whole picture they could have in their mind.

For one thing, what can be concluded from the themes surfaced by the information given by the participants of this study is that these EFL language learners are in a state of the mind that is "propositional attitudes", which is a category of mental state. In an effective EFL classroom, learners are in a state that is susceptible to change. There are some positive aspects for learners while others can lead to negative effects of language learning. They are always on the move towards forming beliefs and metacognitive knowledge. Learners give belief to their experience which consists of procedures towards learning that is a cognitive entity. EFL learners here have the realization of the facts (knowledge). Secondly, the classroom setting for them is not consensual. In other words, an effective EFL class for each learner appears differently. It means that for these participants the class features are interacting and this interaction causes to emerging of the complex system of the classroom. This researcher calls these language classrooms "positive messy". It is positive when you can benefit from every problem or challenge teachers face with and it is messy because the understanding of the cumulative issues of language teaching and learning, together with classroom management, would be a little bit confusing for teachers and practitioners.

Limitations and Delimitations and of the Study

The first limitation that this researcher faced was the responses provided by the participants. The researcher can't tell that the responses of the participants exactly express their real feelings. Factors like anxiety, having the fear of offending, or avoiding giving some further explanation of their accounts are likely to interfere with the description of their experience.

Secondly, while the way the samples were chosen and the number of the participants (purposive sampling) limited its generalizability to a larger population, by assuring the trustworthiness of the data, the researcher can increase the validity nature of the research.

Thirdly, the research was conducted in a three-session long period each lasted between 30 to 60 minutes. Here the researcher couldn't control the effect this time period may have had on the learners' responses. Further, such a time period wouldn't be enough for the researcher to ask and elicit much more information from participants.

The first delimitation was the choice of the problem itself. The language classroom is a complex and highly sensitive setting in which teachers, learners, materials of teaching come into contact. language classrooms' differing qualities, centralized, and situation-specific nature makes it troublesome to provide a settled definition of an effective classroom. lack of qualitative research that takes into account the ELLs' perspectives about effective English language

classrooms at the tertiary level evoked this researcher to undertake the study to explore factors contributing to an effective English language classroom from EFL learners' perspectives.

Secondly, it is the particularity of the qualitative investigation that although it creates profound, rich, and significant data gathered through triangulation of methods and steady reflexivity and acknowledgment/documentation of individual inclination and personal bias amid the exploration procedure of an investigation, it is less probable to generalize the findings to the population at large because it focuses on non-specific samples or substantial population grouping. A descriptive phenomenological methodology of the qualitative study was chosen as the technique for this study due to the gap within the academic literature addressing the research problem and in order to form an exploratory, a foundational system for broader, more centered, and possibly quantitative study in this under-addressed area in future examinations. Thirdly, all of the participants were not of the same field of studying university. Participants of this study came from three different fields of *TEFL*, *Translation*, and *Literature*. In this study because the researcher was looking for the participants that had the experience he was looking for, the researcher's task was to find and select participants possessing specific experience(s) of the phenomenon.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study, which will take place in spring of 2018. This form details the purpose of this study, a description of the involvement required and your rights as a participant.

The purpose of this study is:

- to gain insight into an effective English language classroom

The benefits of the research will be:

- To better understand the lived experience of English language learners at tertiary level
- To identify significant components that could help in development of planning for English language classroom

The methods that will be used to meet this purpose include:

- One-on-one interviews
- Recording and transcribing gathered data

You are encouraged to ask questions or raise concerns at any time about the nature of the study or the methods I am using. Please contact me at any time at the g-mail address or telephone number.

Our discussion will be audio recorded to help me accurately capture your insights in your own words. The tapes will only be heard by me for the purpose of this study. If you feel uncomfortable with the recorder, you may ask that it be turned off at any time.

You also have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. In the event you choose to withdraw from the study all information you provide (including voice) will be destroyed and omitted from the final paper.

Insights gathered by you and other participants will be used in writing a qualitative research report, which will be read by my professor.

Though direct quotes from you may be used in the paper, your name and other identifying information will be kept anonymous. (in case of being asked).

By signing this consent form I certify that I _____ agree to (Print full name here) the terms of this agreement.

(Signature)

(Date)

Appendix B

Semi-structured Interview Protocol

1. Talk to me as much as possible about your English lesson times in classes when you were in the Junior and high School. (What can you tell me about your experience?)

Probes if not mentioned by the participants.

- a. Describe the English class the first time you began studying English at junior school? (if possible)
- b. Talk about the atmosphere of the classes.
- c. Explain the relationship you had with your English teachers and classmates.
- d. What did your English teachers use to do most of the time in class? *Why?*
- e. Did you use to talk with your parents about issues happening in English classroom? (*Why?*)
- f. Was the English language class of any use to you in terms of the books and exercises?

Explain more.

Points of interest that suddenly are being expressed by the participants but can't be asked immediately.

2. How did you come to choose English as your field of studying at university after finishing high school?

Probes if not mentioned by the participants.

- a. Did you have any consultation exercise?
 - b. Given the information before, what was the help you used as your experience in English language classroom in selection of the English language as your field of studying at university (BA, MA)?
3. In what ways were BA & MA English classes effective? *Why?* What impact did they have?

Points of interest that suddenly are being expressed by the participants but can't be asked immediately.

4. As a student, what do you expect of an English language classroom? *Why* do you have that belief?
5. What are the current details of your present classroom in terms of being effective? That is, what are some examples?
6. Given what you have said or mentioned, what are important characteristics for an English language classroom to have? *Why* are these important to you?