Investigating English Language Teacher Attributes for University-Level EFL Learners in the Thai Context Through Exploratory Factor Analysis

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Abstract: The teacher-related factors impact the university EFL learners' experiences and outcomes. However, what specific factors the EFL instructors possess to be deemed effective remain scant concerning Thai University EFL students. This study aims to identify the attributes of effective English language teachers through the lens of Thai university learners by applying exploratory factor analysis (EFA). A literature-based, 32-item questionnaire was distributed to 655 Thai university students. The data met the assumptions for factor analysis, with a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.946 and Bartlett's test of sphericity yielding a significant result ($\chi^2 = 6927.656$, $p < .001$), indicating sampling adequacy and factorability. EFA revealed five main factors: *Dynamic Instructional Competence (DIC), Learner-Centered Pedagogical Adaptability (LCPA), Instructional Expertise and Clarity (IEC), Supportive and Inspiring Teaching (SIT),* and *Teacher Resilience and Well-being (TRW)*. These five factors, with eigenvalues ranging from 1.134 to 13.916, cumulatively explained 60.652% of the total variance. The findings have practical relevance for designing professional development, instructional materials, formative and summative evaluation, and strategic instructional scaffolding for EFL teachers in higher education institutions in Thailand.

Keywords: English language teacher, attributes, exploratory factor analysis, EFL learners

Introduction

The importance of English teachers in shaping the outcomes of EFL learners, especially in Thailand where academics, employment opportunities, and international relations require English, cannot be overlooked. The most effective teachers are those who not only give knowledge, but also motivate, engage, and attend to different students' learning preferences (Damayanti & Rachmawati, 2022; Quieti & Nanni, 2022; Tan & Jiang, 2024; Tatipang et al., 2022). Teachers' language learning efficacy can be maximized through the use of various teaching strategies, problem-solving lessons, and engagement with students' emotional and cognitive levels (Richards, 2015; Tomlinson, 2014). In Thailand, many Thai learners might be lacking confidence and authentic English exposure, and they may be focused on passing tests. This often leads to an inability to communicate. It follows that a knowledgeable teacher is someone who has understanding of more than just the content; it is someone who has pedagogical content knowledge, emotional intelligence, and a positively

constructed learning environment (Dörnyei, 2001; Methanonpphakhun & Deocampo, 2016; Tatipang et al., 2022; Ushioda, 2011). Knowing the characteristics of English teachers is crucial, as these characteristics strongly affect learner motivation and performance in the class (Alzeebaree & Zebari, 2021; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020).

Although it is widely acknowledged that the attributes of an English language teacher are important, there is still no global consensus on what qualities are most critical to effective teaching (Tan & Jiang, 2024), especially in the context of Thai EFL. Some scholars give the utmost priority to linguistic and pedagogical knowledge, while others emphasize the teacher's attitude towards students and emotional skills (Wangdi & Shimray, 2022). Borg (2015) also addresses teacher cognition and discusses the role of teachers' "beliefs, knowledge, and decisions" as essential elements in the effectiveness of instruction.

Some experts argue that pedagogical delivery goes beyond possessing knowledge to include the ability to relate to learners and provide a nurturing environment (Tatipang et al., 2022). Dörnyei (2001) connects student motivation with the interactions the teacher has with them, including discipline management and encouragement, while Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis states that learning improves in low-anxiety conditions or relaxed environments. Nonetheless, Kyriacou (2001) observes that the stress and workload associated with teaching tend to limit the opportunity for such environments, subsequently reducing effectiveness. Other issues that continue to be discussed are adaptable versus detailed lesson frameworks (Richards & Rodgers, 2014) and the role of technology in contrast to conventional practices in teaching the language (Tomlinson, 2014). These differing opinions highlight the gaps that exist regarding what constitutes an effective English language teacher for Thai EFL learners, thus pointing to the need for more systematically designed empirical studies focusing on student perceptions of this topic.

To help identify the key attributes of effective EFL teachers, (Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2015; Alzobiani, 2020; Chanmanee, 2018; Hu, 2020; Külekçi, 2018; Quieti & Nanni, 2022), Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) offers a possible solution towards uncovering unexplained aspects within the data. EFA underlies much educational research as it assists in processing large data sets to identify and group related features into relevant categories (Field, 2024; Hair et al., 2019; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019; Watkins, 2021). In practice, EFA is used to uncover clusters of related teacher characteristics, allowing researchers to construct explanatory models that highlight key components of effective teaching. In relation to teaching English as a foreign language, EFA is beneficial because, contrary to some qualitative observation methods, it allows researchers to uncover subtle factors that are often taken for granted. EFA, as a guide for formulating objective assessment criteria for teachers, helps eliminate vague notions about evaluation processes. This is especially important in language teaching, where the effectiveness of the instructor is multifaceted, spanning pedagogical skills, emotions, and relationships. The importance of such attributes has been heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to online and hybrid learning models. Beyond instructional competence, teachers now face expectations to be emotionally engaged, digitally adaptive, and resilient to shifting pedagogical landscapes (MacIntyre et al., 2020; Trust & Whalen, 2021). These developments highlight the importance of prompt, relevant investigations concerning the aspects of teaching that meet the transformative moments of learners' needs. Thus, this study aims to explore the underlying factors of effective English language teacher attributes as perceived by Thai university EFL learners, using EFA. By analyzing students' perceptions, the study seeks to address the gap between theoretical models of quality teaching and the lived experiences of learners in contemporary, post-pandemic classrooms.

This study aims to examine the defining characteristics of effective English language teachers from the viewpoint of Thai university EFL learners. To structure the analysis, the research question,

"What are the underlying components of effective English language teacher attributes as perceived by Thai university EFL students?" was formulated.

Literature Review

The effectiveness of English language teachers greatly influences the learning experiences and outcomes of EFL learners. Numerous scholars have studied the distinguishing features of successful language teachers, including pedagogy, teaching clarity, flexibility, social-emotional skills, and coping skills (Chanmanee, 2018; Chanmanee, 2024; Chen, 2012; Chumworatayee, 2019; Haider & Jalal, 2018; Külekçi, 2018; Meksophawannagul, 2015; Methanonpphakhun & Deocampo, 2016; Quieti & Nanni, 2022; Tan & Jiang, 2024; Tang, 2025; Tatipang et al., 2022; Ubaidillah et al., 2020). Even though no one attribute is largely accepted as the most fundamental, studies emphasize several distinct teacher characteristics that are crucial in English language teaching.

Pedagogical and Instructional Expertise

One of the most important aspects of an English teacher's profile is their pedagogical and instructional skills (Quieti & Nanni, 2022; Tan & Jiang, 2024). That is, how they craft lessons and explain essential details using appropriate teaching methods. In the context of language teaching, it suggests that a teacher should possess immense linguistic knowhow together with appropriate procedures and techniques for analysis applicable to the real world (Borg, 2015; Richards, 2015; Tan & Jiang, 2024). Clarity of instruction is said to be one of the main predictors of students' performance. According to Wayne and Youngs (2003), teachers who explain lessons in steps using simple language to structure their explanations can help students remember information for much longer. Moreover, Tomlinson (2014) points out that many effective language teachers incorporate teacher-driven lessons for visual, audio and movement learners, which makes the lessons accessible for everyone in the class. Richards and Rodgers (2014) assert that teachers who use a variety of approaches like communicative techniques, task-oriented concepts, and direct grammar teaching make a positive impact on learners' engagement and proficiency level. English pedagogy appropriateness and instructional design are crucial for effective engagement with EFL learners.

Adaptability and Learner-Centered Teaching

In an EFL classroom setting, diversity amongst learners poses a challenge to language teachers. Adaptability is the most noticeable trait of an effective English teacher. Adapting teaching strategies to fit the needs of the students greatly increases participation as well as understanding (Dörnyei, 2001; Tomlinson, 2014). Fostering independence and active participation from students translates to a student-centered approach which increases the level of adaptability needed within lesson objectives, assessments, and even modes of teaching interactions (Oxford, 1990; Ushioda, 2011). According to Borg (2015), if teachers are to make successful changes in their classroom practice, it requires some reflection on their teaching as well as the way the students are responding to the changes made. As such, Tomlinson (2014) calls for language instruction to be highly optimized and be designed with learning in mind. This supports the idea, suggested by Krashen (1982), that students learn better when they feel relaxed, highlighting the need for flexible teachers who help lower stress levels within the classroom to enable better performance. The learner-centered paradigm enhances motivation and engagement. Mercer and Gregersen (2020) argue that teachers who adapt specific techniques utilizing student feedback increase motivation among learners and therefore cultivate inclusive environments. Richards and Rodgers (2014) suggest that adaptable teachers utilize multiple approaches like task-based, communicative, and project-based learning to fit the varying needs of students. Some learners will respond better to controlled techniques such as grammar instruction, while others prefer conversational interaction. A blended approach is likely to be more meaningful and more effective. Thus, adaptability and learner-centered

teaching approaches are needed to achieve success in EFL classrooms. Students' language skills, confidence, and motivation are greatly improved when teachers use responsive strategies within an inclusive framework.

Emotional Intelligence and Student Engagement

When English language teachers possess strong emotional intelligence, this enables them to monitor their learners' motivation, atmosphere and engagement in the classroom setting (Alzeebaree & Zebari, 2021; Quieti & Nanni, 2022; Tan & Jiang, 2024). Emotional intelligence positively impacts on teacher-student interactions in the classroom. Some researchers have noted that students need emotionally available teachers since this facilitates greater self-efficacy, guidance, attention and interest in learning and engagement with language skills (Ushioda, 2011). Moreover, highly emotionally intelligent teachers are able to balance and control their own feelings well while responding sensitively to learners' emotional needs. Ushioda (2011) points out that instructors who build a stress-free, positive atmosphere help to lower students' affective filters, which helps the students process and retain new language. In this sense, teachers who apply humor, encouraging words, and positive criticism can reduce student worries, thus increasing participation in class (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020). Additionally, student participation is often a product of the teacher's emotional investment and excitement. Research indicates that teachers who are passionate about the content and care for the students tend to build motivation and active participation (Frenzel et al., 2009; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020). In other words, emotional intelligence entails not only managing emotions but also the capacity to motivate students to learn in a fun and impactful way. This suggests that emotional intelligence should be integrated into teacher training curricula so that EFL teachers are prepared to address the academic and psychological concerns of students.

Professional Development and Lifelong Learning

Professional development and continuous self-learning are key attributes of effective English language teachers, because they allow teachers to incorporate new teaching paradigms and optimize their teaching methods to improve student learning. As language education, technology, and student demographics change, there is a necessity for teachers to self-learn and self-improve to meet educational standards (Farrell, 2022). Investing in professional development courses enables teachers to be more reflective and innovative, further increasing their ability to navigate the complexities of language instruction. Professional development enables teachers to adapt to new changes in teaching and helps them become more open-minded. Tomlinson (2014) reinforces this perspective, arguing that effective teachers embrace experimenting with many ways of teaching while focusing on meeting the needs of many learners, as opposed to sticking to a single instructional framework. This is particularly the case in EFL classrooms where students vary in learning styles, cultural background, and language proficiency. For instance, through self-development, teachers can learn and incorporate a greater range of techniques including but not limited to task-based and flipped classroom approaches, as well as the use of technology in language teaching. Furthermore, self-development aids in achieving greater satisfaction in a teacher's professional roles and responsibilities. According to Kyriacou (2001), staying motivated and avoiding professional burnout is easier for teachers who actively pursue further learning opportunities throughout their careers because such learning aids them in achieving goals and remaining aligned with their passions. Mercer and Gregersen (2020) contend that teachers who practice self-reflection along with active professional development tend to cope with challenges in the classroom more effectively (Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2015), which enhances the overall atmosphere of the learning environment for students. Hence, training and further education programs related to teaching EFL should be centered around creating opportunities for lifelong learning.

Recently, research has broadened the scope of teaching effectiveness in different EFL contexts by building on foundational models to include more diverse aspects. For instance, Farrell (2022) argued for a reflective practice model that integrates teacher identity and classroom effectiveness. Tan and Jiang (2024) supported that a qualified English teacher typically exhibits core characteristics: demonstrable pedagogical skill, a command of the language, and the capacity to create a classroom atmosphere that actively sparks student curiosity. These perspectives from contemporary scholarship illustrate that modern EFL teaching has developed beyond static pre-designed theories, emphasizing the importance of emotions, context, and teaching fundamentals.

Moreover, in the context of the recent global changes in education caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, students' perceptions of effective teaching have undergone considerable transformation. Emotional support, flexibility, and resilience—alongside the more traditional knowledge-acquisition abilities—are being prioritized as teachers continue to function in fully online, hybrid, or digitally mediated teaching contexts. For example, in a recent study, MacIntyre et al. (2020) discussed how emotionally regulated and adaptable teachers helped sustain engagement with students in remote classes. Trust and Whalen (2021) highlighted that in remote teaching contexts, relationships and digital literacy skills are fundamental. The authors also attended to how students weigh the quality of teaching in relation to these factors. These emphasize the critical importance of the current study and its focus on the perception of educator effectiveness in the EFL instruction context after the pandemic.

Methodology

Samples

A sample of participants for this study was drawn using stratified sampling, which ensured representation from different disciplines and fields of study. Thus, faculties were clustered into social sciences, business, and science. The inclusion of these differing perspectives strengthened the findings regarding Thai university learners. Approximately three-quarters of the students were females; around a quarter identified as males. Most participants were first-year undergraduate students, which is common for the English curriculum alignment at this university. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 22 years. Participants were estimated to have studied English for a period ranging between 10 to 12 years, which is typical for Thai university students. This demographic snapshot illustrates the typical composition of a Thai university classroom while also demonstrating the broad perspectives.

Determined from suggestions by Hair et al. (2019), a sample size of 5 to 20 participants per variable was set for the factor analysis. Having 32 questionnaire items meant a minimum sample size of 640. To reduce data loss and improve dataset completion, 5% of the target sample was added, raising the goal to 672. Of these, 655 responses were obtained, leading to a 97.47% response rate. Although the final response number fell short of the target, the response number was able to sustain the minimum threshold required for pursuing an EFA. Tabachnick and Fidell (2019) support this by stating that a sample size of 300 is the required minimum.

Research Instrument

To examine the English language teacher perception attributes of Thai university students, a 32-item questionnaire was developed as the primary research instrument. It was created based on an extensive analysis of the existing literature regarding English teachers' attributes in secondary and tertiary education institutions (e.g., Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2015; Borg, 2015; Brosh, 1996; Chanmanee, 2018; Chanmanee, 2024; Chen, 2012; Chumworatayee, 2019; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Meksophawannagul, 2015; Methanonpphakhun & Deocampo, 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Wangdi &

Shimray, 2022; Wayne & Youngs, 2003). While a significant amount of prior research focused on secondary school teacher attributes, great effort was made to evaluate, modify, and ensure each item aligned well with the university EFL setting, including shifting focus to specialized areas associated with university teaching such as critical thinking, academic English, and greater student-centered learning.

Additionally, the questionnaire employed a 4-point Likert scale with 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree), intentionally omitting a neutral midpoint. This was based on the claim that forced-choice formats eliminate the central tendency bias (Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011). In EFL settings, particularly in cultures where students are reluctant to share strong views, the absence of a neutral option tends to promote more interpretable and decisive responses (Plengkham et al., 2025). Nonetheless, the approach has its limitations. Using a 4-point scale may compel some respondents to select an opinion when none exists, introducing response bias. Furthermore, a 4-point scale sacrifices granularity compared to 5 or 6 point scales which would capture more nuanced attitudes. Regardless of these limitations, the chosen scale best suited the respondents' diverse academic backgrounds and English proficiency levels, alongside the desire for clarity, decisiveness, and ease of completion. The questionnaire was presented in a bilingual (Thai-English) format, minimizing potential ambiguity in item interpretation (Plengkham et al., 2025).

To ensure the content validity of the instrument, three experts in English language education were gathered to assess how each questionnaire item aligned with the intended concepts using the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index. These were two university lecturers holding PhDs in Applied Linguistics and one senior teacher trainer who had over five years of experience in EFL methodology and the development of English teachers. Given their scholarly and professional qualifications, their evaluation was pertinent to the measured construct, which was teacher attributes valued by Thai EFL university students. The agreement as measured by IOC yielded scores between 0.67 and 1.00, a range which suggested satisfactory consensus on the relevance and suitability of the items.

Additionally, a pilot study with 30 university students from a similar discipline was conducted before the main study. This ensured that all components were clearly defined, appropriate, and relevant within the given context. During the pilot, we obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .939, demonstrating very high internal consistency and reliability (Sukserm, 2024). As the learners were being taught English at the university level, which places greater importance on academically advanced writing, oral presentation, structured content instruction, and independence, the framework of the learning goals and educator roles needed to be advanced. Because university-level learning supports foundational qualities like clarity, supportiveness, and adaptability, these were ensured in phrasing and validation, while also considering practical applications.

Data Collection

The data collection phase spanned three months during the first semester of the year 2024. Before data collection commenced, ethical approval was granted by the Institutional Review Board for Research with Human Subjects (IRB No. 268/67). Participants were fully briefed on the study, provided guarantees regarding anonymity and confidentiality, and were invited to give informed consent prior to voluntarily completing the questionnaire. After undergoing validation and pilot testing, a comprehensive 32-item questionnaire was constructed in English and Thai for cross-linguistic comparability and deep understanding. This was supplemented with a demographic section aimed at capturing relevant background information.

Subsequently, the survey was transcribed onto Google Forms and shared through academic email and students' LINE chat groups. Public university English instructors were reached and requested

to disseminate the survey link to their classes. Throughout the three months, responses were tracked on a weekly basis. To boost participation in the survey, bi-weekly reminders were issued, while progress trackers confirmed that the desired sample size was on target. After the collection of data, all responses were analyzed for completeness. Inconsistent or incomplete responses were removed from the dataset, which resulted in 655 usable responses out of a target of 672. The information collected was kept in files protected by passwords and accessed only by the researcher. No identifiable information was gathered, ensuring that participant privacy was upheld.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was performed in line with the objective of the study. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to establish the multi-dimensional nature of issues related to attributes of effective teachers. The number of components was determined in several ways. During the first step, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy established whether the data was appropriate for factor analysis (Kaiser, 1958). A KMO result of 0.5 or higher (approaching 1) indicates that the data is adequate. Second, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was conducted to assess the factorability of the correlation matrix at the $\alpha = .05$ significance level (Watkins, 2021). After this, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was applied to extract components from inter-correlated variables, thus reducing the variable matrix to make its interpretation easier. Components with eigenvalues ≥ 1 were retained, accounting for at least 60% of the variance (Hair et al., 2019). For factor rotation, orthogonal rotation was used, specifically the Varimax method. This rotation method is based on the principle that each component is not correlated with each other. As stated by Hair et al. (2019), a loading of 0.3 or higher was regarded as significant. Communality (h^2) values were also calculated and, for further analysis, values of at least 0.5 were deemed adequate. After this step, new variable groups were created and named, based on the characteristics of the factors to which they were attached.

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Results & Discussion

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To assess the suitability of the data for factor analysis, the results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure for sampling adequacy and the Bartlett test for sphericity are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.952
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	12874.087
	df	496
	Sig.	< .001*

Note. *p* < .05*

The obtained KMO value of 0.952 was much higher than the 0.6 threshold (Kaiser, 1958), suggesting that the sample was adequate for conducting factor analysis. In addition, Bartlett's test of sphericity showed an approximate chi-square value of 12874.087 with 496 degrees of freedom and a p-value of < .001. This demonstrated that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix, indicating that significant relationships existed among the variables for the application of factor analysis (Hair et al., 2019). All these results imply that the data was suitable for exploratory factor analysis. Also, to ensure data normality, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was conducted, as the sample size exceeded 50. The results indicated that the data followed a normal distribution (*p* = .073).

Table 2 below shows the results of an exploratory factor analysis (EFA), which focuses on the total variance explained by different components in the data.

Table 2
Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	13.916	43.487	43.487	13.916	43.487	43.487	5.733	17.916	17.916
2	1.737	5.427	48.913	1.737	5.427	48.913	5.237	16.365	34.281
3	1.369	4.277	53.190	1.369	4.277	53.190	3.938	12.306	46.587
4	1.253	3.917	57.107	1.253	3.917	57.107	3.297	10.303	56.890
5	1.134	3.545	60.652	1.134	3.545	60.652	1.204	3.762	60.652
6	0.984	3.075	63.727						
7	0.871	2.721	66.448						
8	0.811	2.533	68.981						
....	....	....	....						
....	....	....	....						
31	0.189	0.590	99.474						
32	0.168	0.526	100.000						

In this analysis, the eigenvalues for each component were calculated, and their corresponding value within the components was noted. The first five components had eigenvalues greater than 1, implying that these were the most critical factors to capture. The first component has an eigenvalue of 13.916— higher than that of other components—which enables 17.916% of variance to be explained. This shows that this component accounts for a substantial proportion of variance in the data. The cumulative variance for these factors explained 60.652% of the total variance. This was important in the analysis because it showed that these five components together accounted for more than 60% of the variance in the data, which is a benchmark in factor analysis (Hair et al., 2019).

The scree plot depicts the eigenvalues corresponding to the 32 extracted components. A steep drop occurs from the first component (which has an eigenvalue of around 13.9) to the second, after which a more gradual drop follows. There is a noticeable "elbow" at the fifth component, beyond which the curve becomes approximately horizontal (Hair et al., 2019). This implies that the remaining components add only minimal additional variance, thus justifying the decision to retain five factors for subsequent analysis.
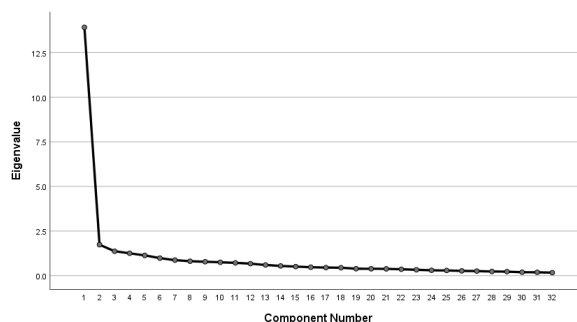
Figure 1
Scree Plot

Table 3 below demonstrates the results of principal component analysis (PCA) after applying the Varimax method with orthogonal rotation. This matrix displays the factor loadings of the five components in relation to the respective items, thus aiding factor interpretation.

Table 3
Rotated Component Matrix

Variables	Component				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
The English language teacher experiments with new teaching formats.	0.780				
The English language teacher creates diverse, inclusive lesson plans.	0.759				
The English language teacher uses body language effectively to aid teaching.	0.674				
The English language teacher utilizes knowledge of learners' cultures to facilitate teaching.	0.651				
The English language teacher collaborates well with other teachers.	0.599				
The English teacher integrates various learning methods effectively.	0.590				
The English language teacher selects interconnected information to support the learning process.	0.590				
The English language teacher facilitates critical thinking among students.	0.588				
The English language teacher innovates teaching methods to enhance learning.	0.513				
The English language teacher analyzes educational data to improve lesson plans.	0.458				
The English language teacher empathizes with students' emotions to improve learning outcomes.	0.421				
The English language teacher considers the diverse needs of all learners.		0.811			
The English language teacher manages differing learner requirements well.		0.796			
The English language teacher understands the mindset of their students.		0.751			
The English language teacher adapts teaching methods to suit the learning styles of students.		0.698			
The English language teacher adjusts their teaching style to meet students' needs.		0.674			
The English language teacher identifies areas where students require additional support.		0.560			

Variables	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
The English language teacher uses storytelling effectively to simplify difficult concepts.		0.494			
The English language teacher frequently revises teaching plans to optimize learning.		0.480			
The English teacher engages students effectively in learning activities.		0.439			
The English teacher has a deep understanding of the content they teach.			0.709		
The English language teacher explains lessons in detail.			0.693		
The English language teacher employs various teaching methods.			0.610		
The English language teacher searches relevant information to enhance teaching.			0.571		
The English language teacher addresses important issues in teaching effectively.			0.571		
The English language teacher communicates clearly and effectively.			0.450		
The English language teacher demonstrates a passion for teaching.				0.761	
The English language teacher treats students with respect.				0.733	
The English language teacher fosters a learning atmosphere that students desire.				0.558	
The English language teacher supports students' learning processes.				0.432	
The English language teacher shows resilience to deal with stress in the classroom.					0.706
The English language teacher maintains a healthy work-life balance to support their well-being.					0.695

The rotated component matrix provided a clear breakdown of five main factors that contribute to English teacher attributes. These factors resulted from grouping the different challenges based on their loadings, which indicate how strongly each element was associated with a particular factor. Also, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed to measure the internal consistency of factors. Results demonstrated high reliability for all five factors at .951, thus confirming the internal consistency of the weighted factors.

English Language Teacher Attribute 1: Dynamic Instructional Competence (DIC)

The findings of this study indicate that the first factor comprises attributes that emphasize teacher adaptability, innovative teaching strategies, and the ability to foster active learning environments. The clustering of these attributes within the same factor suggests that teachers who engage in diverse instructional techniques tend to also demonstrate flexibility, creativity, and responsiveness in their pedagogical approaches. This reinforces the notion that effective teaching in EFL has to do with having a teaching style that is tailored to the students, rather than applied in a uniform manner to all learners.

Experimenting with new teaching formats (0.780) and *creating diverse, inclusive lesson plans* (0.759) had high loadings of 0.780 and 0.759 respectively. It can be concluded that students perceive that teachers who are frequently changing and innovating within their approaches to teaching are more effective. This supports constructivist learning theories, which argue that learners become more engaged and interested in their lessons when teachers take the initiative to implement a variety of teaching strategies and design complex lessons. Moreover, it might be the

case that the capability to adapt teaching approaches is most needed in EFL contexts where participants have different linguistic and educational backgrounds.

What's more, the inclusion of *using body language effectively to aid teaching* (0.674) within this factor suggests that non-verbal communication is important in dynamic teaching. Research has suggested that gestures, facial expressions, and other non-verbal cues help to clarify meaning, especially for EFL learners who may struggle with verbal explanations alone (Brosh, 1996). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that teachers who effectively integrate body language into their lessons are also likely to engage in other dynamic teaching practices.

It is worth noting that *collaborating well with other teachers* (0.599) also emerged as part of this factor. This indicates that instructional dynamism may encompass collaboration between professionals, not just individual teaching methods. Teachers who participate in peer collaborations and team teaching are more likely to adopt new strategies due to available shared teaching resources. The relationship between collaboration and instructional flexibility suggests that teaching well is not a self-contained activity but rather an activity which undergoes constant development through reflection and professional interaction.

This factor is related to how students appreciate teachers who are flexible and creative in their approaches to teaching. In the Thai university context, where English is taught in large, monologic lecture formats and instruction is heavily test-driven, students seem to appreciate some form of escape from the rigid routine of standard textbook-based instruction. The strong loadings on innovation, body language, and multimodal teaching strongly suggest that students associate dynamic engagement with greater access and inclusion. The EFA results indicate that Thai university EFL students seek to engage with instructors who go beyond the grammar-translation framework and incorporate participatory, visual, and interactive elements into their teaching. Thus, DIC indicates the need for teaching adaptation, illustrating the readiness of Thai students towards a shift from teacher-centered classrooms.

English Language Teacher Attribute 2: Learner-Centered Pedagogical Adaptability (LCPA)

The second factor identified in this study includes characteristics related to a teacher's skill in identifying, addressing, and accommodating the educational requirements of learners. The clustering of these traits suggests that well-developed EFL instruction in Thai contexts may require more elasticity and responsiveness than uniform teaching frameworks offer. Considering the variety among language learners—each with particular learning methods, thinking styles, and motivating factors—it is indeed expected that pedagogical flexibility will become an essential skill for English language teachers (Tatipang et al., 2022).

An analysis of the loadings reveals differentiation and learner awareness as dominant attributes for this factor. For example, *considering the diverse needs of all learners* (0.811) and *managing differing learner requirements well* (0.796) were some of the highest ranked attributes. This implies that teachers who adjust their instruction to suit the needs of students are more effective. This aligns with research emphasizing the role of differentiated instruction in language learning, where tailoring lesson content to accommodate varying levels of proficiency enhances student engagement and achievement (Tomlinson, 2014). While traditional EFL instruction has often leaned toward uniform, textbook-driven approaches, there is growing evidence that customizing lesson delivery can lead to more meaningful learning experiences.

Additionally, *adapting teaching methods to suit the learning styles of students* (0.698) reinforces the idea that effective teachers are those who actively engage in pedagogical decision-making that prioritizes student cognition and emotional well-being. Research in second language acquisition

suggests that learning outcomes are significantly influenced by how well teachers align instructional techniques with students' preferred learning modalities, whether visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or a combination of these (Oxford, 1990). While it remains difficult to tailor instructions perfectly to each individual, the ability to recognize broad learning patterns and make corresponding adjustments appears to be a defining trait of adaptable EFL educators.

Furthermore, the inclusion of *identifying areas where students require additional support* (0.560) within this factor implies that adaptability in teaching extends beyond content delivery to include formative assessment and responsive intervention. Teachers who identify learning challenges and modify their instructional pace may increase the degree of support for learners, especially those who have difficulties. This is in line with the literature on teaching practices that has shown that scaffolded instruction—where educators offer specific, limited assistance before gradually fostering independent work—is more effective in EFL environments (Vygotsky, 1978). Nevertheless, it could be said that the degree to which a teacher can attempt such tailor-made assistance is likely to be shaped by surrounding factors such as class size, institutional expectations, and available teaching resources.

This shows exactly how much Thai university students value teachers who respond to their requirements in the right way. This does not mean providing an easier lesson, but rather "flexibility"—changing the pace, explanation, and technique to encourage more active engagement or reduce inattention. Furthermore, this underscores an evolving educational culture shift: rather than emphasizing passive rote learning in traditional Thai classrooms, students now seem to actively desire responsive engagement and personalized instruction. The takeaway for instructors is simple: adjusting plans to attend to student voices deserves equal consideration to crafting strong lessons.

English Language Teacher Attribute 3: Instructional Expertise and Clarity (IEC)

The third factor includes the fundamental skills associated with effective communication by English language teachers, the integration of instruction, and the application of teaching methods that promote understanding (Tan & Jiang, 2024). The fact that these traits are subsumed under the same factor indicates that teachers who have profound content understanding are likely to use appropriate teaching strategies and plan well-organized lessons. This supports previous research that emphasizes the importance of pedagogical content knowledge and communicative clarity in teaching effectiveness (Borg, 2015; Brosh, 1996).

One of the most important aspects within this factor is *having a deep understanding of content* (0.709). This supports the argument that teaching requires a well-developed understanding of the subject to be delivered effectively. Thailand might be thought to be an example of how students tend to approach their teachers as the sole providers of any linguistic exposure, which might be problematic. This lack of expertise with content knowledge is very likely to lead to misconceptions, faulty reasoning, and diminished learner trust in the process (Chen, 2012).

Also, *explaining lessons in detail* (0.693) emerged as a defining attribute of this factor. This reinforces the notion that students consider some form of instructional clarity an integral dimension of effective teaching. It has been assumed that clear instruction in language teaching leads to the active comprehension of the material taught, less mental effort, and greater retention of information (Quieti & Nanni, 2022; Wayne & Youngs, 2003). This is very important in EFL situations since students are often faced with unfamiliar new words and complicated sentences. Instructors who explain such aspects effectively tend to use concept reinforcement and scaffolding, which are likely to be perceived positively by learners.

Moreover, regarding the item *addressing important issues in teaching effectively* (0.571), this factor focuses on the effectiveness of continuous professional development in teaching (Quieti & Nanni, 2022). Perhaps learners value and respect the efforts of teachers who appear to be in touch with current changes in teaching methods, educational technology, and language teaching research. In many EFL settings, fixed and outmoded teaching practices may restrict learner participation and authentic language opportunities. Consequently, teachers who stay up to date with current innovations and developments in language teaching and revise their teaching methods are likely to be regarded as competent and effective.

This factor highlights that for Thai university EFL students, to be a 'good' teacher starts with possessing strong knowledge of the subject matter (Tan & Jiang, 2024)—and communicating it unambiguously. Students in this study resonated strongly with items related to detailed content knowledge, high-quality explanations, and methodical teaching. When a teacher simplifies complex processes, whether it is grammar, vocabulary, or essay construction, trust is built. This suggests that even with their desire for these qualities, students still expect teacher expertise to be palpable. It could be said that students feel that the combination of these factors empowers their ability to use English confidently in real-world contexts.

English Language Teacher Attribute 4: Supportive and Inspiring Teaching (SIT)

The fourth factor emphasizes the interpersonal and emotional aspects of teaching, particularly how teachers manage to create a positive and inviting environment, actively engage with their work, and establish respectful relationships with students (Tan & Jiang, 2024; Tang, 2025). This aligns with research emphasizing the role of teacher enthusiasm, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal rapport in facilitating student engagement and motivation (Alzeebaree & Zebari, 2021; Dörnyei, 2001). A particularly notable attribute in this factor is *demonstrating a passion for teaching* (0.761), which emerged as one of the strongest indicators of an effective English language teacher. Passion is regarded as a hallmark of high-impact teachers due to its positive correlation with student motivation, engagement in the class, and learning in general (Alzeebaree & Zebari, 2021; Frenzel et al., 2009). Additionally, dedicated and enthusiastic teachers both heighten learners' intrinsic motivation and foster an atmosphere where students are willing to risk making mistakes in language learning, which is vital for acquiring communicative competence (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020).

In addition, the importance of relationships with teachers in building positive classroom environments is highlighted by *treating students with respect* (0.733). Tan and Jiang (2024) argue that students tend to have a more favorable attitude towards learning and actively participate in class when they feel their teachers are empathetic and considerate. Respect in the classroom also aids in reducing affective filters, as Krashen (1982) hypothesized that anxiety and apprehension about making errors can obstruct the process of acquiring a new language, so anxiety is an important factor to investigate (Kalra & Siribud, 2020). Consequently, it can be said that a learner's confidence and willingness to take part in language practice is nurtured in a positive, academically respectful atmosphere which is free from emotional threat.

Another key component of this factor is *fostering a learning atmosphere that students desire* (0.558). It appears that the effectiveness of a teacher does not rest solely on content delivery, but rather on how to create an engaging and enjoyable learning space. Students are likely to have more willingness to persist in learning a language if their surroundings make the classroom enjoyable (Ushioda, 2011). It seems feasible that while learning remains a focus, some teachers may enhance the experience by including enjoyable student-friendly activities.

The strong internal consistency of this factor suggests that passion for teaching, respect for students, and the ability to foster a positive atmosphere are not independent variables but rather interrelated components of a holistic teaching approach. Teachers who inspire their students often do so through enthusiasm and by creating an emotionally safe space where students feel valued and motivated to learn. This finding is particularly relevant in Thai EFL contexts, where cultural norms emphasize the teacher's role as both an authority figure and a mentor.

The emergence of this factor suggests that for Thai University EFL learners, effective teaching goes beyond knowledge to connection. These learners appear to appreciate instructors who infuse their lessons with enthusiasm, care about learners' feelings, and work to make the process of acquiring English less daunting. For instructors, this outcome serves as a reminder that their attitude towards their learners influences the motivation as much as the content.

English Language Teacher Attribute 5: Teacher Resilience and Well-being (TRW)

The fifth factor captured the ability of English language teachers to manage stress and maintain a balanced professional life. High loadings for attributes such as *showing resilience to deal with stress in the classroom* (0.706) and *maintaining a healthy work-life balance* (0.695) emphasized that effective teaching requires not only pedagogical skills but also the ability to sustain personal well-being. The results indicated that teacher resilience directly impacts classroom performance and the ability to foster a positive learning environment.

This final factor underscores the crucial role of emotional stability, stress management, and work-life balance in sustaining effective teaching practices. Unlike the other identified factors, which primarily focus on instructional competencies and student engagement, TRW shifts the perspective towards the teacher's ability to maintain personal and professional equilibrium despite challenges in the teaching environment. The grouping of these attributes suggests that teachers who demonstrate resilience in dealing with stress also tend to prioritize well-being, ensuring long-term sustainability in their profession. This observation aligns with research emphasizing the direct relationship between teacher well-being and overall instructional effectiveness (Day & Gu, 2013).

The most salient attribute within this factor, *showing resilience to deal with stress in the classroom* (0.706), highlights the importance of emotional endurance in teaching. In many educational contexts, teachers face considerable pressures, including heavy workloads, diverse student needs, and administrative expectations. The ability to cope with these stressors effectively may distinguish teachers who thrive in the profession from those who experience burnout (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Resilience in teaching is often linked to emotional regulation strategies, social support networks, and the ability to maintain a positive outlook despite setbacks (Tait, 2008). It is therefore possible that teachers who exhibit resilience are also more likely to sustain motivation, adapt to challenges, and remain committed to student success.

Also, *maintaining a healthy work-life balance* (0.695) further reinforces the idea that teacher effectiveness is not solely determined by instructional expertise but also by personal well-being. When teachers experience excessive workload and emotional exhaustion, their instructional quality and engagement levels may decline, potentially affecting student learning outcomes (Kyriacou, 2001). A balanced approach to professional responsibilities and personal life may therefore be essential for ensuring long-term job satisfaction and preventing burnout.

The strong relationship between these variables denotes that resilience and well-being reinforce each other—teachers who can manage stress may maintain a balanced lifestyle, and those who achieve work-life balance tend to be more resilient when facing challenges. While teaching remains one of the most challenging professions, teachers who actively employ effective workload

management, practice self-care, and utilize emotional support are likely to experience higher job satisfaction and greater professional commitment.

This factor's presence is quite revealing. It seems that university students in Thailand pay attention to their teachers' coping mechanisms alongside their teaching abilities. The value placed on stress management in the classroom and work-life balance indicates that students appreciate emotionally regulated instructors as being more impactful. This is reasonable in contexts where instructors encounter acute teaching challenges, including large class sizes, overwhelming administrative responsibilities, and relentless performance-driven expectations. In these contexts, teachers' calmness, composure, and presence bolster students' comfort and security. This finding underscores the relevance of self-care, mental health, and institutional support for teacher well-being.

Although the five extracted factors correspond to the literature on the attributes of effective teaching practice, quite a few limitations need to be considered in relation to the findings. In particular, the presence of TRW as an independent factor could reflect an awareness of teacher burnout in the Thai context, which is less emphasized in earlier models focusing solely on teaching skills. This might indicate a shift in student expectations, perceptions, or concerns, perhaps owing to societal discourse around mental health. Moreover, while SIT and DIC reflect globally researched traits, their strength may be a result of cultural norms in Thailand that emphasize teacher empathy, harmony, and authoritative leadership. Therefore, the outcomes should be understood within the framework of Thai sociocultural paradigms where regard for hierarchy and teachers shapes students' perceptions and evaluations of their teaching practitioners. As with any survey-based research, there is no denying that the interpretation of Likert-scale items is prone to varying interpretations due to social desirability, situational context, or theoretical familiarity. These related cultural and methodological considerations imply that the findings, while having merit within EFL contexts, will require greater scrutiny if applied beyond the Thai context.

Conclusion

This study provides insights regarding five attributes of English language teachers within the context of EFL in Thailand. Dynamic Instructional Competence (DIC) is defined as the level to which the teacher engages students with active innovations such as appropriate body language and structured teaching strategy changes. Learner-Centered Pedagogical Adaptability (LCPA) is the skill of adjusting lesson plans and teaching styles to the learners' needs, learning styles, and feedback. Instructional Expertise and Clarity (IEC) focuses on the importance of relevant instructional expertise and providing clear explanations. Supportive and Inspiring Teaching (SIT) emphasizes the importance of respect, enthusiasm, and encouragement in creating a supportive class environment. Teacher Resilience and Well-being (TRW) deals with stress management and the impact of work-life balance on teaching effectiveness. These five factors describe critical aspects of teaching that have implications for the design of teacher education, professional development, and language teaching policy.

This research provides actionable insights for EFL teachers in Thai higher education by identifying five key traits upon which effective English teaching is built. For instance, the focus on Dynamic Instructional Competence (DIC) stresses the need for teachers to incorporate a broader range of instructional methods, such as task-based instruction, and ensure that their teaching is authentic and multimodal, so as to accommodate varying learning styles and boost their engagement levels. Also, the emphasis on Learner-Centered Pedagogical Adaptability (LCPA) demonstrates how important it is for instructors to attend to students' specific challenging pedagogical gaps. This requires adoption of tailored teaching approaches including guided flexible instructional strategies, personalized tutoring, formative assessment, and actively fostering self-directed

learning. Moreover, Instructional Expertise and Clarity (IEC) focuses on teachers' content knowledge and their ability to communicate content clearly. EFL teachers should frame their lessons to help deepen understanding through a step-by-step approach while connecting new information to learners' prior knowledge of the language. Many of the identified characteristics like adaptability, instructional clarity, and supportive classroom environments are emphasized in cross-cultural research. This study shows, however, that Thai students greatly value emotional intelligence, respect, and teacher well-being, which may be culturally shaped perceptions influenced by overarching Thai social norms that prioritize harmony and relational respect within educational contexts. This study highlights the importance of integrating teacher evaluation, professional development frameworks, and localized student perspectives. Furthermore, these findings can contribute to comparative studies of different teaching contexts and form a basis for further research on responsive EFL teaching in.

However, there are some limitations that should be acknowledged. One key limitation of this study concerns the participant sample, which was drawn from a particular educational context within Thailand. Factors such as institutional policies, class sizes, and available resources could influence how students perceive effective teaching practices. For example, students in urban, well-funded schools may prioritize different teacher attributes compared to those in rural or under-resourced settings, where access to technological tools and professional development opportunities may vary. In addition, it should be pointed out that the questionnaire was designed to capture students' general thoughts regarding English language teachers at the university, without distinguishing between native English speakers, foreign non-native instructors, or Thai EFL teachers. Hence, the findings provided most likely indicate a blended perception based on multiple English teachers and instructors that they have learned from during their English educational experiences. However, considering that the majority of participants in this study had undergone instruction in general English courses, which were predominantly conducted by Thai EFL instructors, it is plausible that most of the responses were influenced by experiences with Thai instructors. Still, this ambiguity should be regarded as a limitation in interpreting the extent to which the findings are relevant to a certain population of teachers.

Therefore, future research should focus on broadening the methodological approaches and examining the practical applications of these attributes in real classroom settings. While this study primarily employed exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to identify key teacher attributes based on student perceptions, future research could benefit from a mixed-methods approach that integrates both qualitative and quantitative data, or from using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). What's more, incorporating classroom observations, teaching self-assessments, and structured interviews could provide a more complete understanding of how these attributes manifest in practice. By triangulating data sources, researchers can validate the extent to which students' perceptions align with teachers' self-reported behaviors and classroom dynamics. Further research should also examine how these attributes directly influence student learning outcomes, engagement, and motivation. Future studies could explore whether students in classrooms with teachers who exhibit strong Dynamic Instructional Competence (DIC) or Supportive and Inspiring Teaching (SIT) demonstrate higher language proficiency gains compared to students in classrooms where these attributes are less emphasized. By incorporating pre- and post-test assessments of student language skills, researchers could measure the tangible effects of different teacher attributes on student progress.

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