Saudi English Teachers' Beliefs and Values Towards English Language Teaching in Saudi Arabia

Ebtehal Asiri

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SAUDI ENGLISH TEACHERS’ BELIEFS AND VALUES TOWARDS ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN SAUDI ARABIA

A Thesis
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

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May 2017
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This study utilized a qualitative research methodology to investigate and explore the beliefs and values that Saudi English teachers hold towards the English language teaching and how these beliefs and values could influence their understanding of their students’ academic performance. To be more specific, this study shed light on the beliefs and values that three Saudi English teachers maintain towards English language learning and teaching in a Saudi context.

Structured interview data were collected from these three participants. With the help of the collected data, the factors that shaped and constructed the beliefs and values among the three Saudi teachers were explored. The findings of this study illustrated the sort of beliefs and values that those three Saudi teachers hold, the factors that contributed in constructing these beliefs and values, and the relationships between these beliefs and values and those teachers’ understanding of their students’ academic performance.

The study concludes with recommendations for the Saudi Ministry of Education and with recommendations for future research.
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First and foremost, In the name of the Allah I begin. All my thanks and gratitude go to Him, the most Merciful, the most Knowledgeable for His help and guidance throughout my research journey. In the light of the saying “Whoever does not thank people, does not thank the Lord”, I am bound to thank the people who helped me achieving my goals and helped me completing this work.

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I dedicate this research to my wonderful family in Saudi Arabia. To my parents, Mohammed and Latifah Asiri, for their constant encouragement for me to learn and succeed. Without their ongoing support, care and financial, spiritual and emotional help, I would not have been able to complete this research. I also would like to thank my siblings for their deep belief in me and being the source of my inspiration.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Contextualizing the Research: How Did This All Begin?

Figure 1. My high school certificate. The certificate includes both Arabic and English.

Figure 2. The first international conference of King Khaled University. This poster includes English on it.

The above two figures, for me, represent how critical the English language is in Saudi Arabia. The first figure is my high school transcript, which was received in 2009. This transcript
was written in both Arabic and English and is typical for all Saudi students’ education. Meanwhile, the second figure is a poster of the 1st International Conference of King Khaled University that was held on November 12, 2015; the picture was taken by my friend, Dr. Heba Alqarni, an organizer of that conference. The second poster illustrates the importance of English in the field of Medicine because English is the medium of instruction in Saudi Arabia, not Arabic. It indicates how English has become a vital part of Saudi Arabia’s daily life. These two figures are not representative of every document in Saudi Arabia, but state that the English language is a medium of communication and knowledge distribution in the fields of education and medicine.

According to Alasmri and Khan (2014), “English language is a medium of instruction for various courses in the BA program; for example, medical science, other science subjects, engineering, business administration, information science, and diploma courses of intensive English” (p. 317). These courses represent very important fields in Saudi Arabia and using English as a medium of instruction in such fields reflect its importance among the Saudi society. Therefore, the Saudi government decided to include English as a second language in the school syllabus starting from age ten. To illustrate, Liton (2012) reported that English was taught in Saudi schools because of its use in “international trade, diplomacy, economy and contracts, international aviation, higher studies, research, peace talks, affairs of international cooperation across the globe as well as a shared language of peoples throughout the world” (p. 130). However, even though English is learned in Saudi schools from age ten, Saudi students usually graduate from high school with limited knowledge and skills in English—speaking, listening, reading and writing (Aljafen, 2013; Alrabai, 2014). As a result, I decided to major in English after high school because I strongly believe that learning English would help me develop
my society and improve my personality: I refer to being confident, open-minded and knowledgeable about others’ cultures when I talk about personality.

During my university years, I had many difficulties and challenges while learning English. For instance, at the first week of school I was shocked when I was exposed to different English accents. That was because I used to learn English by only Saudi teachers during intermediate and high school. Those teachers were asking us, the students, to imitate and articulate the tapes that were recorded by Americans and sometimes British people. So the only English that I imagined was only the US and UK English. And even the Saudi teachers that taught me tried to sound like these two accents and that’s why this perspective lingered in my mind. The reason behind that is the role that the Saudi Ministry of Education set towards the English language curriculum and textbooks, in which English must be taught within the US and the UK boundaries (Al-Asmri & Khan, 2014; Alshammari, 2015).

However, in university there were professors from different countries and cultures. I had English professors from India, USA, Bangladesh, Egypt, and South Africa. All of those professors represented different cultures and spoke different Englishes. It was hard for me at the beginning to understand these varieties of Englishes, but day by day, I became more aware of the value of these varieties, unlike most of the students. A large number of the Saudi students paid more attention to the professors from USA since they believed the US professors owned the language, and since it was the US professors’ first language, they seemed to be more knowledgeable and to be able to make students learn English easier and faster. This conception came from the Saudi society itself since in a Saudi context, a variety of educational institutions attempt to have a huge number of native speakers of the English language since they think that those teachers are able to guarantee having high standard outcomes of teaching the language
(Alshammari, 2015, p. 369). I was irritated when I heard some students made fun of the Egyptian or Indian professors’ pronunciations. I was always passive toward such situations because it was not only the students’ own beliefs about the English language but also the whole environment. Sharifian (2009) illustrated that teachers from the Outer Circle countries, the countries that use English as a second language; for example, India, face discrimination in matters of native and nonnative speakers of English. In most Gulf countries, such as Saudi Arabia, only “native teachers,” teachers from the Inner circle countries such as US and Britain, are seen as “privileged” and other teachers are seen as inferior (pp. 34-35). Similarly, Selvi (2014) proclaimed that in the field of TESOL, one of the major reasons behind the NESTs (native English speaking teachers) and NNESTs (non-native English speaking teachers) discrimination is students’ preference for NESTs over NNESTs (p. 589). However, Rucker (2011) and Aneja (2016) elaborated that the beliefs towards NESTs and NNESTs are historically and socially constructed through the individuals and the institutions’ everyday discursive practices. That means, the NESTs preference among the Saudi society was shaped because of the contextual practices that were revolved around them.

This was one example of the difficulties that I faced because of the widespread belief about English in my Saudi context. The beliefs that the Saudi society hold toward English have a great impact on the process of learning and teaching English. These beliefs are not always negative. To clarify, I live in a family which really appreciates the English language and believes in the importance of learning English in enhancing and prospering myself as well as my society. This belief helped me to be succeed in my academic studies. On the other hand, I have had a friend whose family thought that there was no need to learn English. They thought it was useless
since we were Arabs and lived in an Arabic country. This belief shaped my friend’s perspective of the English language and was, in my opinion, the main reason for her low GPA.

These experiences that I had during my English learning journey were the fuel that drove me to choose my research topic. As illustrated above, the beliefs and values that the Saudi community, including Saudi English teachers and learners, hold towards the English language participated in one way or another in shaping the current status of English in Saudi Arabia. These beliefs and values play a paramount role in the process of the English language learning and teaching. Through this research paper, I want to investigate more about the different beliefs and values that the Saudi English teachers maintain toward the English language and their impact on their students’ academic performance.

**Purpose and Rationale for Conducting My Research**

The rationale for conducting this research was to shed light on the reasons and causes for holding certain beliefs, such as the NESTs’ privilege, towards the English language among the Saudi community. I wanted to explore the factors that participated in constructing such beliefs, and the influence of holding these beliefs in the process of English language teaching and learning. Therefore, in this study I investigate the beliefs and values that three Saudi English teachers hold towards the English language. Throughout this investigation, I try to explore the factors that contributed to the construction of such beliefs and values because it is possible that such beliefs and values are communicated in teaching classrooms. Therefore, and beside exploring the sort of beliefs and values that those teachers have, I shed light on the possible impacts of these beliefs and values on students’ academic performance.
Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:

- What are the beliefs and values that Saudi English teachers hold toward teaching English in Saudi Arabia and how they negotiate these beliefs and values within their teaching context?

- In what ways do these beliefs and values influence their understanding of their students’ academic performance?

Significance of the Study

As an English learner in both a Saudi and a USA context, and as a future educator in an academic context, I was aware of the significance of my study before I started exploring the topic. As I started to investigate more about other studies that are conducted to discuss my topic, I realized that this topic is barely discussed or talked about in Saudi society. To be more specific, I could say that the studies that were conducted to discuss the factors that shape or construct the beliefs and values that are held by the Saudi society, or to discuss the beliefs and values that Saudi teachers have towards English, are rarely found. Therefore, this study is significant to the field of international language and to language teacher education in many ways. First, this study is necessary for the English language institutions and curriculum designers since the formulated recommendations that were derived from this study provide insightful advice and knowledge that are fundamental in the field of English language learning and teaching. Second, even though my hope in conducting this study is not to generalize or globalize the findings of this research, this study provides a beneficial source, which might help other researchers to build upon the findings and the outcomes of this study. Third, this study provides a larger picture of the foundations that form the Saudi society attitudes to the English language nowadays and shows how important are
the beliefs and values that Saudi teachers hold towards the English language in the learning and teaching processes. Therefore, this study might contribute to increase the awareness of the English language among Saudi teachers, learners, and the whole society. Undoubtedly, all the above constitute a valuable contribution to the efforts of many Saudi scholars in their attempt of understanding the status of the English language in Saudi context.

**Organization of the Study**

The current study consists of five chapters. I have outlined the design of each chapter of this study as follow:

Chapter One: in this chapter, I introduce the study and present the purpose that led me to chose the research topic. I also demonstrate the significance of the study along with the research questions.

Chapter Two: this chapter is designed to support the study by reviewing the studies and research that are related to the study. It starts with a brief overview on the religious, economic, and political factors that, in my opinion, are the foundations of the beliefs and values that are prevalent in the Saudi society. This part is followed by a brief overview on the current status of English in Saudi context as well as the English language teaching and learning in Saudi Arabia. The last section of this chapter revolves around the concepts of native English speakers (NESs) and nonnative English speakers (NESs) in Saudi Arabia because of their importance in the widespread beliefs and values among the Saudi community.

Chapter Three: this chapter describes the methodology and procedures of the current study. It also illustrates the data sources, data collection, the participants’ criteria, the study site and finally the data analytical method.
Chapter Four: this chapter provides the findings of the qualitative research. Finally, chapter five displays a discussion on any emerging themes or patterns which may have presented themselves during data analysis along with possible implications and recommendations for future study.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is difficult to understand teachers’ beliefs and values of teaching English without understanding the social context that constructed these beliefs and values. The English language in Saudi Arabia is considered the medium of instruction in most of the important fields such as medicine, business, and engineering. Despite its importance, the English language implies different values and beliefs that are held by the Saudi society. These beliefs and values influenced the concept of English and teaching in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, this study aims to shed light on the different beliefs and values that are held by Saudi English teachers and their impact on both English teaching and learning in Saudi context.

The upcoming literature review is divided into five sections. The first section sheds light on the religious, economic, and political factors that shaped the English language in general and English teaching in particular in Saudi Arabia nowadays. The second section reveals the current status of English in Saudi Arabia. The third and fourth section illustrate how the English learning and teaching are perceived by Saudi society. These perceptions are based on Saudi studies and research that discussed the English language teaching and learning in the Saudi context. The fifth section of the literature review revolves around the concepts of native English speakers (NESs) and nonnative English speakers (NNESs) as well as the concept of varieties of Englishes in Saudi Arabia.

The Impact of Religious, Political, and Economic Factors on the English Language in Saudi Arabia

Before I start exploring the factors of religion, politics, and economy and their influence on the English language in Saudi Arabia, it is worth mentioning that one of the things that struck
me is the dearth of research that discusses these factors. As a result, and besides other sources, I relied heavily on Mahboob and Elyas (2014) and Elyas and Picard (2010) because of their detailed textual analyses toward these factors.

English in Saudi Arabian context has undergone religious, economic and political influences that have a great impact on shaping the English language in Saudi Arabia nowadays (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014, p. 128). The demands of using English in Saudi society have mushroomed in order to be able to meet the 21st-century needs (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014, p. 129). In addition to that, Elyas and Picard (2010) illustrated how English teaching in Saudi Arabia “is not neutral or disinterested,” which means English language teaching is being affected by the beliefs and values of the Saudi context (p. 136). Furthermore, Mahboob and Elyas (2014) echoed that “there are processes of resistance to English that question its validity and contribute to a shift in the language to suit local beliefs and practices” to emphasize how English in the Saudi context is not a “neutral” language (p. 128). Therefore, it is worth mentioning that religion, economy and politics play a vital rule in constructing the local beliefs and values towards the English language among the Saudi society.

To begin with, Saudi Arabia is considered a very religious country. Islam is the official religion in Saudi Arabia and Arabic is the official language; most people consider Arabic as a Holy language because it is the language of the Holy Qura’an. According to Alrashidi and Phan (2015), “Islam is at the heart of all aspects of Saudis’ lives and dominates their culture, beliefs and customs” (p. 34). Therefore, many Muslim scholars were concerned about the influence of learning English on young Muslims in being exposed to the thoughts of “Western, especially American, colonization” (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014, p. 131). They hold the misconception that indicates learning English will harmfully affect the learning of Arabic language, especially
among young learners and may drive them to lose their Saudi cultures and customs (Al Dameg, 2011; Al-Seghayer, 2013). In the same manner, Osailan (2009) added that those society members believe that Arabic is the core that guarantee the Saudi people’s identity. They use as an example, Dubai, a city in United Arab Emirates, in which Arabic is barely used even though it is the native language, but Emirati people tend to use English more (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). However, to oppose the fear of losing the Arabic language among the Saudi people, some researchers believe that learning a new language besides the Arabic language, serves and improves the Islamic Saudi community in different ways.

Al-Hajailan (2003) emphasized the objectives of learning English thus: “to equip the students with at least one of the living languages, in addition to their native language; to help them acquire knowledge of arts and sciences from other communities; and to help them take part in the service of Islam and humanity” (as cited in Alasmri & Khan, 2014, p. 317). From an Islamic perspective, Alqahtani (2011) and Al-Shammary (1984) demonstrated that “individuals are encouraged to learn foreign languages (e.g., English) in any society to endorse sound moral, social, and ethical values” (as cited in Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). In addition, Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) claimed that increasing the linguistic competence of English among the Saudi students will help them to participate, illustrate, and present Islamic information all over the world. Learning English enables people to communicate with others from different cultures and nations to provide the ideals of Islam in terms of translating the Islamic-related knowledge to those who want to know more about Islam (Osailan, 2009). Most importantly, Alrashidi and Phan (2015) clarified that “the acquisition of linguistic competence in English will enable Saudis and Muslims to correct the negative image and unfounded prejudice of Islam and Muslims in the West, and enable them to convey the ideals of Islam, which are peace and tolerance” (p. 41).
Mahboob and Elyas (2014) illustrated that other scholars claimed that Islamic cultures are more likely to be connected to the English cultures since there is a huge number of Muslims who speak English. Those scholars tend to use “Surat Al Hujuraat to argue that even in the Holy Qur’an difference in culture and language and noted and welcomed” (p. 133).

(Sura Al Hujuraat 49) Ayah (13).

Oh mankind, we have created you all out of male and female and made you into tribes and nations, so that you may come to know one another. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most deeply conscious of Him.

Osailan (2009) elaborated that the Holy Quran respects the variations of mankind languages since it is as Syeed (1989) described “an important sign of divine power at work in the organization of the universe, the power of Allah, to create helpmates among mankind and ordain love and mercy between them” (as cited in Osailan, 2009). That means the Holy Quran encourages learning new languages among the Islamic nations who speak varieties of languages. Being able to use a language that is the means of communication among a large number of people helps to spread love and mercy that Islam and the Holy Quran promote. To illustrate, Saudi Arabian government provides scholarships and assistance to perform the Hajj, pilgrimage to Mecca, every year to Muslims from all over the world. Most of those Muslims utilize English as their first, second or foreign language, so that the English language helps those Muslims to communicate and interact with each other. In addition to that, Faruk (2014) mentioned that the English language can be used as an important tool to contribute to the “spread of the faith of Islam” (p. 178). That means learning English serves the Islamic cultures and nations.
On the other hand, the concerns that “more English” would lead to “less Islam” is the primary reason behind some of Muslim scholars’ anger toward learning and teaching English (Elyas & Picard, 2010, p. 140). Many scholars see English as a means by which Western ideologies are being transferred. Therefore, those scholars called to follow teaching English with an Islamic approach through creating English syllabuses that reflect the Islamic heritage and “that contributes to Islamic propagation” (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014, p. 132). According to Karmani (2006), many Arab English teachers mentioned that:

The current designed English syllabus in the Arab world doesn’t reflect the true aspiration of the Muslim Nation. It does not contribute to the right upbringing of a true Muslim generation. The English syllabus that we have in our educational institutions is completely based on the western culture which is totally different and far away from the Islamic teachings.

They believe that such a demand of having Islam print on English curricula would facilitate being exposed to “modern-day knowledge” and at the same time be away from the “anti-Islam” conceptions (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014, p. 132).

The religion of Islam in Saudi Arabia has been utilized as a means of both justifying and rejecting the English language learning and teaching since there are two sides who are with or against the expand of the English language in Saudi society. One side encourages English learning and teaching while the other opposes the spread of English saying that it might interfere with learning the language of Islam or it might be the reason behind the import of western cultures and thoughts. Both of these two groups rely on religious views and beliefs. Therefore, the echoes to raise or to decline the use of English have affected the status of English teaching and learning in the Saudi context.
Politically speaking, after September 11th, the Saudi Arabian education system turned to be the target of criticism by Western countries. A great pressure came from the U.S. government on Islamic governments in general and Saudi government in particular, to reconstruct the curriculum and practices of teaching English (Elyas & Picard, 2010, p. 137). Such a pressure led the Saudi Ministry of Education (MOE) to introduce English to all primary schools in a way to provide Saudi students with the concepts of tolerating, respecting, and accepting others or the “West” (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014, p. 130). As a result, most of the English teaching instructions, methods, and curriculum changed. To illustrate, rather than focusing on “local cultures” and eliminating the “Western” cultures (such as, dating, drinking alcohol, and co-education), it has been shown the “differences between sociocultural practices, but not as a clash of civilizations” (p. 131). Moreover, the “Western media” echoed the essential of having broad and secular pedagogies in the Muslim world, which has been followed by the recommendations of “US congress, Institute for American Values (IAV), Freedom House (FH), The Institute for Gulf Affairs (IGA), and The Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-SE)” and others (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014, p. 131).

Therefore, such pressure led the Saudi government to change its curricula in 2003. This change was among the Saudi curriculum in general and English curriculum in particular. The change was regarding “not only the allocation of time to English instruction, but also the way in which English is taught, has come under scrutiny” (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014, p. 131). Such a change had a passive outcome on English learning and teaching in the Saudi context since there are some scholars who have warned people not speak or study English because they were concerned about English interfering with teaching other subjects as “Arabic and Islamic science” after the Islamic classes have been reduced to one class per day instead of four classes (Mahboob
& Elyas, 2014, p. 131). Both Elyas and Picards (2010) argued that embracing the “Western” especially American curricula, content and teaching practices would not help Saudi students and would not meet with their needs (p. 137). This fact indicated that politics is one of the vital factors that influences learning and teaching English in Saudi Arabia, and it is one of the reasons behind spreading the concept of the ownership of English.

Apart from this, English plays a vital role in the economic development in Saudi Arabia since English “has become intrinsically linked with the discourse of petroleum” (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014, p. 130). Such a connection boosts the significance of English among the Saudi economy. It can be explained by the rapid change in Saudi economy, which caught the attention of the United States, for instance, and other foreign companies, and encouraged them to be involved in the growth of Saudi economy (Faruk, 2014, p. 176). To clarify, Faruk (2014) claimed that “the United States became involved in Saudi Arabia through its commercial interest in oil and through commercial actors that are directly and indirectly linked with the U.S. Government, initially Aramco [Arabian American Oil Company] and later many other companies” (p. 75). These companies contributed not only in the improvement of Saudi economics, but also in shaping the EFL educational structure (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014, p. 129). For instance, in such companies, English is the required language for Saudi workers since English has become the “lingua franca” for oil and gas companies (Elyas & Picard, 2010, p. 142).

Al-Abed Al-Haq and Smadi (1996) presented that as a way to meet the rapid needs to use English among the Saudi workers, the Ministry of Education in 1973 constructed a special program for the English language teachers inside and outside the country; therefore, many language centers were established and the English language was in many institutions’ training programs (pp. 458-459). As a result, the central goal of EFL teaching and learning in Saudi
society is to enlighten Saudi students how to communicate perfectly in English to meet the numerous demand of spreading the English language, which would enable them to get jobs in high status companies such as Saudi Airlines, Aramco, Dallah, etc. (Faruk, 2013, p.76; Mahboob & Elyas, 2014, p. 129). Moreover, Elyas & Picard (2010) presented an Arab businessman’s statement in which he claimed that it is essential to “revolutionize” the educational system to meet the needs of achieving full economic potential (p. 142), which, indicated that the English language is used as a way of developing Saudi’s economies. Elyas and Picards (2010) also reported that such a demand placed a great pressure on Saudi workers who tend to learn English in different types of English programs to encounter the communicative competency standards of the companies (p. 142). That means the Saudi economy contributes to the development and improvement of the English language in the Saudi context but, at the same time, it is one of reasons that made the Saudi government value the standard American and British English. To illustrate, although the Saudi economy and business increase the Saudi awareness about the importance of acquiring the English language among the Saudi society, people who want to work in Aramco or Dallah are required to meet the “Standard English” level.

My point in talking about the religious, political, and economic concepts of the English language in Saudi Arabia is to illustrate their strengths and impacts on Saudi Arabia since they are the foundation of the English language nowadays. These factors, one way or another, are considered the base of constructing the current beliefs and values of the English language in the Saudi context. My next step will focus on how English is currently perceived in the Saudi context.
English in Saudi Arabia Nowadays

In the current age, the world’s knowledge is being preserved in English, and that’s why English has become a global language; therefore, learning and teaching English attracted many scholars in a way that made them give most of their attention to the classroom issues in the Saudi context (Khan, 2011, p. 1248). Al-Seghayer (2014) pointed out that “English currently asserts several functions and enjoys an eminent status in various sectors at all levels within Saudi Arabia” (p.17). In the same manner, Faruk (2014) proclaimed that English in the Saudi context has been seen as a means through which people could learn different knowledge in sciences, arts and new inventions as well as exchange this knowledge from and to other communities (p. 178). Similarly, many scholars such as, Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) believed that English in Saudi Arabia is considered one of the important fields in the education system nowadays and that due to its importance in different fields such as technology, science and business (p. 113). Regarding this importance, English teaching and learning “brought to the center-stage” of Saudi educational system in which English proficiency has seen essential to gain knowledge inside and outside the country (Al-Nasser, 2015, p. 1615).

Generally speaking, Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) and Al Zayid, (2012) indicated that the Saudi Ministry of Education (MOE) implemented the English language in its learning system due of the following objectives:

1. Acquire the linguistic competence that is needed to illustrate Islamic-related information and contribute in spreading the ideal of Islam to people who might want to know about Islam, as well as participating in correcting the negative image of Islam and Muslims in the West.
2. Learning English will aid students to require the basic important skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), which will help them to understand its function as a means of global communication.

3. Learning English will improve the learners’ “positive attitudes” toward the English language.

4. Learning English will improve the students’ “awareness about the cultural, economic, religion and social issues” of the Saudi society to be able to engage in providing the effective solutions for these issues.

5. Learning English will enable the students to cope with different life situations and occupations.

6. Learning English will enable the learners to benefit from other cultures’ science and technology and transfer this different knowledge to our nation. That would contribute in the development of our society as well as enhance the concept of respecting the various nations.

According to Shah, Hussain and Nasseef (2013), the social and cultural norms of any context are responsible for the educational process since they made a set of conventions between the teachers and learners in which they can exchange the information. Therefore, “sociocultural context plays a pivotal role in the development of learners’ L2 as it influences teaching practices, classroom environment and learners’ progress” (p. 106). To be more specific, the status of English in the Saudi context is formed based on Saudi people attitudes towards this language. Additionally, Faruk (2013) articulated that “Saudis’ attitudes toward English are highly positive; most Saudi people believe that English is vital to the country’s future prosperity and that it is significantly needed in various domains” (as cited in as cited in Al-Seghayer, 2014, p. 17). In
contrast, even though Saudis strongly embraced the notion that the English language is an essential means through which the social, economic and political position of Saudi society is grown and improved, Al-Seghayer (2014) indicated that “Saudi English education continue to seriously suffer on all aspects and that the outcome has not been satisfying or, to state the least, is not up to the mark” (p. 17). That indicates that the English language has been perceived as important and essential among Saudi people. However, despite the beliefs of its importance, teaching and learning the English language undergo varieties of challenging factors that influence people’s beliefs towards the English language. Regarding this fact, the next step will illustrate these factors in details.

**English Language Teaching in the Saudi Context**

According to Shah et al. (2013), English teaching is a “painstaking vocation demanding a high degree of professional consciousness that is informed by relevant specialist knowledge and explicit values” (p. 105). To clarify, teaching English requires a high level of understanding of its variety of pedagogy, methodology and values. Furthermore, Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) argued that teaching English is a job that requires a challenge work intellectually, emotionally and physically, which means being qualified or having credentials doesn’t mean necessary to be a good teacher (p. 115). Teaching English in Saudi Arabia is a “challenging phenomenon” since some of the EFL teachers feel it is difficult to manage the Saudi pedagogical and sociocultural issues that occur during English learning and teaching. These difficulties might prevent those teachers from encountering unexpected circumstances that happen during the class and be able to modify the teaching materials to meet learners’ needs and class objectives (Shah et al., 2013, p. 105). Moreover, it is fundamental for EFL teachers to acquire the contextual knowledge because it “will develop not only their teaching skills but also the norms of practice expected of them in
an educational institution, both inside and out-side the classroom” (p. 107). In other words, the lack of social and cultural awareness is one of the factors that affect English teaching in the Saudi context. Hence, it is extremely important for English teachers to be more aware and knowledgeable about the Saudi context in order to successfully achieve EFL teaching and learning aims.

In addition to sociocultural factors, Al-Nasser (2015) claimed that the concept of English teaching in Saudi Arabia as a mere subject that needs passing marks must be completely changed since English is a life skill (p. 1613). However, English teachers in the Saudi context are not allowed to choose their own methods in teaching English. Those teachers must adhere to “social conventions, learners’ expectations and school and ministry’s policies about how to teach and what methodology to follow” and that makes it challenging for EFL teachers to pick a method that would be suitable for learners (Shah et al., 2013, p. 107). The Ministry of Education (MOE) in Saudi Arabia expects the English teachers to adhere to the certain syllabus with guidelines and deadlines that they are asked to apply to and follow in their class. These guidelines are controlled by MOE and include learning objectives, teaching methods, learning materials (Shah et al., 2013, p. 107). This, in fact, would make teachers see the given tasks and lessons “beyond their capability and responsibility” as well as hard to achieve or accomplish (Al-Seghayer, 2014, p. 23). Therefore, teachers should have their opportunities to “raise their awareness of classroom dynamics, improve their abilities to assess their own teaching approaches and develop their skills to notice, reflect and enhance their pedagogic skills” (Shah & Al Harthi, 2014, p.1595).

In addition to that and from my personal experience, teacher-centered classrooms might explain the reason for passiveness among Saudi students in English classes. To clarify, Shah et al. (2013) mentioned that teachers are more likely to apply the traditional methods of teaching
rather than the communicative methodologies during their classes because of “socio-cultural and institutional constraints” (p. 108). On the other hand, Shah et al. (2013) proclaimed that teachers with a positive attitude toward teaching English often endeavor for successful achievement in EFL classes since their beliefs and observances of their teaching have a great influence on their teaching efficient skills. Wheatley (2002) termed teachers’ effectiveness as “teachers’ efficiency” (as cited in Shah et al., 2013, p. 109). Also, Heigaard, Giske and Sundsli (2012) defined this term as “teacher’s beliefs about if and how they organize and execute courses of actions and successfully implement a particular task/activity in a specific context” (as cited in Shah et al., 2003, p. 109). Also Shah et al. (2013) defined this term as, “teachers’ individual beliefs about their abilities to perform particular teaching tasks and achieve specific results” (p. 109). From this definition, it can be argued that teachers with high efficiency are more willing to manage the negative experiences and be aware of learners’ needs and behaviors during EFL classes, which is an affirmative factor that affects the pedagogical practices and classroom attitude (Shah et al., 2013, p. 109).

Fareh (2010), Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) pointed out some of the challenges that the Saudi English teachers encounter while teaching English:

1. Students’ low proficiency and motivation

A large number of school teachers and university professors are complaining about the students’ low English proficiency. Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) claimed that even though Saudi students learned English for so many years, a large number of those students have not accomplished the acceptable proficiency (p. 114). In the same manner, Alshumaimeri (2003) proclaimed that “teachers have pointed out that students leave the secondary stage without the ability to carry out a short conversation” (as cited in Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013, p. 114). In
addition to that, other educators claimed that they usually encounter students who are not motivated to learn (p. 115). Scholars referred to unmotivated students as those who believe learning English is useless and will not effectively influence their academic and personal life. So that being encountered with those students will badly affect not only their willingness to learn but also the teachers’ ability to teach.

2. Textbooks and teaching materials:

Despite the huge number of English textbooks and materials that are available in the Saudi market, many of these textbooks are published for commercial needs. Those textbooks lack the linguistic features that are required to meet the students’ needs, which make the “higher authorities” incapable of selecting the appropriate textbooks and materials for the students (Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013, p. 115). The school textbooks, in contrast, are known as English for Saudi Arabia. Such textbooks are free and the same for each grade-level over Saudi Arabia (Almutairi, 2008). Thus, if a school teacher tries to reinforce the information that is given to his/her students by assigning additional and beneficial textbooks, such beneficial textbooks are rarely found in the Saudi context. However, Almutairi (2008) stated that most of the schools that the Saudi MOE provides lack the necessary facilities that every English class needs such as language labs, educational films and tape recorders and where such resources are available, they are mostly out of order because of poor maintenance (p. 14), which indicates another challenge that Saudi English teachers meet.

3. The English language curriculum:

Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) elaborated that “A language program cannot be successful until or unless its curriculum is properly developed with clear cut aims and objectives” (p. 115). Therefore, it is crucial for the Saudi ministry of Education to design a curriculum that will aid the
ELT with explicit objectives. Speaking about designing a curriculum, Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) mentioned that “the policy makers and the syllabus designers of Saudi Arabia fail to design a curriculum or syllabus after conducting a needs analysis program” and that is what makes developing the Saudi curriculum a painstaking and crucial matter (p. 115).

The Saudi curriculum doesn’t match the students’ needs and levels since the designers unsuccessfully developed the curriculum without “an assessment or analysis of the students’ needs at each school level” (Al-Seghayer, 2014, p. 22). Alhmadi (2014) blamed the Saudi curricula in which the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) are given no assertion during the academic year especially the speaking skill, which is the most ignored one (p. 41). Alhmadi (2014) also continued to mention that Saudi curricula prevent English teachers and learners from choosing the skills that the learners need to work on (p. 41). As a result, this failure can be obviously seen in having inappropriate materials and resources for the students. In other words, “this shortcoming resulted in a lack of compatibility or balance between the objectives of the Saudi EFL curriculum and the needs, interests, and appropriate levels for students” (Al-Seghayer, 2014, p. 22/ 23). Al-Seghayer (2014) revealed that Saudi English curriculum has variable constraints that function as a block in the practice of English language teaching (ELT). The ELT in the Saudi context suffers from “limited time for instruction, a lack of learning material resources, the imparting of knowledge, and the constraints of the teaching methodology” (p. 19). All of these limitations impede the effectivity of ELT.

Speaking about the limited time of instruction, Shah et al. (2013) pointed out that Saudi students have the opportunity to be exposed to the English language only during the class time, which is usually 45 minutes. Sixth grade students have English classes for two times a week whereas the higher levels (intermediate and secondary) have English classes four times a week.
Throughout these classes, students are not given plentiful, and even chances to process and practice what they learned in the classroom. Furthermore, Saudi classes usually have a large number of students, which the average is according to Shah et al. (2013), “40 to 50 students,” in such classes, teachers usually feel that the class time is “insufficient” and that makes it difficult to accomplish all the tasks and activities that is related to each lesson; therefore, most teachers feel that they are unable to cover all the course materials and skills appropriately (Al-Seghayer, 2014, p. 19/20).

Regarding the learning material resources, lacking the relevant classroom resources such as “wall charts, flash cards, posters, audio and visual aids, language software, e-learning resources, a well-equipped language computer laboratory, and other facilities” contribute in having “inadequate diverse, selective, and appropriate teaching resources” (Fareh, 2010, p. 20). At the same time, Al-seghayer (2014) argued that in case of the availability of such resources in the classroom, these recourses and aids are either “outdated” or in “poor condition” and does not meet with the students’, teachers’ and textbooks’ needs (p. 20).

On the other hand, and speaking about Knowledge vs. Practices Factor, Al-Seghayer (2014) discussed that the content of the English language textbooks in Saudi Arabia is mainly focused on providing the learners with information rather than giving them the opportunities to practice the “given information and materials” (p. 20). Similarly, Rehmand and Alhaisoni (2013) added that Saudi learners are less exposed to the communicative situations, which negatively affect their use of English inside and outside the classroom. Such practices restricted the learners’ ability to express themselves and give their opinions in variable of contexts.
English Language Learning in Saudi Arabia

Researchers (e.g., Al-Johani, 2009; Fareh, 2010; Khan, 2011) contended that most of Saudi students graduated from high schools, after learning English for 9 years, with a low level and unsatisfactory English proficiency. Alhmadi (2014) attributed the lack of Saudis’ English learning skills to the unsuccessful process of teaching and learning (p. 40). Moreover, Alrashidi and Phan (2015) stated that many researchers such as (Alhawsawi, 2013; Al-Johani, 2009; Rajab, 2013) elaborated the fundamental causes for this low competence in the English language among Saudi students. These causes are: “teacher-centered instruction”, teachers’ applications of the “traditional teaching methodologies”, “students’ use of memorization” as an essential learning strategy, “students’ lack of motivation and encouragement, students’ lack of real-world practice”, which means using the English language outside the classroom context, and the false beliefs that both the students and the whole Saudi society maintain about the English language such as, English is pointless and learning it might affect the Arabic language and the Saudi culture (p. 38).

In addition, Al-Nasser (2015) illustrated that English teachers are generally “not trained in linguistics” which makes them only think about how their students could pass the exams (p. 1613). Also, Abu-ghararah (2014) claimed that English teachers usually don’t support or encourage their pupils and that make them doubt their own abilities and believe that they would not be fluent in English but rather they are satisfied with the limited English that they know. And that what makes Saudi English learners believe that it is important to acquire only “minimal competency” that is needed and required to pass the tests. Therefore, those learners tend to memorize vocabulary, grammar structures and written passages (p. 18). To clarify, Alkubaidi (2014) stated that in Saudi English classes, a large number of students utilize memorization and
perceive it as their “sole strategy” to pass the tests. As a result, those students gain higher scores in exams without learning the language, how to be creative in learning or even how to think critically. Alkubaidi (2014) also added that “memorization is among the main reasons that caused students’ insufficient English skills, and many students find it impossible to come even close to the required competence” (as cited in Alrashidi & Phan, 2015, p. 39).

Moreover, a large number of Saudi students observe English as a “passive subject” as well as “a dry and boring subject learned for instrumental purposes, chiefly to pass an examination,” not as a major subject that is needed in different fields of their lives (Al-Seghayer, 2014, p. 19). According to Fareh (2010), this is the reason of using the Grammar Translation Method during the English classes in which most of the classes are run in Arabic. Most of those teachers, as Fareh (2010) claimed, did not take any courses in teaching English as a foreign language so that the less exposure to the English language makes the learning results not appropriately achieved (p. 3602). Fareh here is not criticizing the use of the Grammar Translation Method but rather the heavy dependence on the students’ L1 during English classes, in which English is almost the main opportunity for those learners to speak English. Khan (2011) mentioned that most Saudis communicate in Arabic with their family, friends, and other relations whereas English is used only as an academic subject that generates few opportunities for students to speak English through daily interactions (p. 1249). As a matter of fact, the audio-lingual method (ALM) and the grammar translation method (GTM) are the center of English teaching in Saudi classes (Al-Seghayer, 2014, p. 21). Al-Mohanna (2010) stressed that Saudi English teachers tend to exercise comprehensive repetition of grammar structures, language words and phrases. As a result, those teachers respond to ALM’s “tenet”, which is “an emphasis on stimulus processing and response situations” (as cited in Al-Seghayer, 2014, p. 21). Conversely, Al-
Seghayer (2011) elaborated that teachers who use GTM tend to concentrate on particular demonstrations and grammatical rules, ask student to memorize different vocabularies and grammar structures, and to translate the given texts in detailed while they are teaching.

Apart from that, Alhmadi (2014) argued that the connection between anxiety and English learning efficiency occurs because anxiety regarding English as a foreign language varies from any other types of anxiety (p. 48). Therefore, anxiety is one of the negative factors that influence English learning in the Saudi context since, as Mohammed (2015) claimed, “foreign language classrooms are the places where anxiety-provoking situations occurs the most” (P. 202).

According to Zhang (2001), anxiety is “a distinctive complex of self-perception, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 74). This definition explains how anxiety is considered a major factor in language learning classes.

Mohammed (2015) explained that during the learning of the English language, learners are usually exposed to stress, nervousness and anxiety, which sometimes provoke “mental-block” among these learners while learning the English language. As a result, those learners are usually “alarming” and experimenting to serious norms of anxiety (p. 202). For this reason, some scholars advise to decrease the learners’ level of anxiety and supply a lower nervous atmosphere in an effort to develop learners’ performance in EFL classrooms (Shukri, 2014, p. 193). Alrabai (2014) described Saudi learners’ high level of anxiety as “multifaceted” in which English teachers found it is difficult to decrease the learners’ anxiety during their classes. Alrabia implied the reasons of English classroom anxiety as:

The misconceptions usually linked to learning English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia … the threatening classroom atmosphere in which learners’ errors are not
tolerated, the lack of the learners involvement in class discussion and decision-making; the competitive atmosphere for learning, where learners work against each other instead of cooperating; the overcrowded EFL classes, which generate a real obstacle to the proper involvement of learners; the ready-made EFL curriculum that often cares for the quantity rather than the quality of the content; the strict classroom rules imposed by schools in Saudi Arabia, which do not allow learners to experience sufficient freedom and therefore evoke feelings of anxiety. (p. 241)

Similarly, both Abu-ghararah (2014) and Alrabia (2014) pointed out that English learners’ mistakes are not tolerated but rather they are seen as a problem and a shame. Hence, many EFL learners tend to be passive and don’t speak until the teacher asks them to (p. 282; p. 241). To clarify, Alharbi (2015) commented that “Even if they [learners] have the opportunity to participate, they will not take it, because they are afraid to make mistakes” (p. 108). In that case, it is extremely important for EFL teachers to be more tolerant with the pupils while correcting their mistakes in order to enhance them to learn from these mistakes (Abu-ghararah, 2014, p. 282).

Moreover, English classrooms’ anxiety can be noticed through the “over-competitiveness” among EFL learners in which they attempt to be superior than other mates and obtain positive reinforcements from the teachers (Mohammed, 2015, p. 204). Anxiety can be best seen before the exams since all of the parents, teachers, and learners experience “test anxiety”, which might be a hindrance among the educational process and reduce the academic fulfillment among the learners (Mohammed, 2015, p. 205). In addition to that, Zhang (2001) defined the relationship between anxiety and speaking as “a stable personality trait referring to the propensity for an individual to react in a nervous manner when speaking in the second
language” (p. 74). Saudi students are not experienced enough in the English language and that makes them anxious and worry about their “speech production” (Alhmadi, 2014, p. 48). This kind of passiveness and silence in English classroom is called “student reticence” which Alhmadi (2014) defined it as, “student’s unwillingness to communicate” and that critically impact students’ attitudes in class and lead to lack their academic performance (p. 49).

**Students’ Willingness to Communicate**

Ellis (1999) demonstrated that among every L2 learner, there are some cognitive and affective factors that control and determine the individual differences in L2 learning (as cited in Cao, 2014, p. 1) and that led SLA researchers to focus their attention on the concept of willingness to communicate (WTC). MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clement, and Noels (1998) defined WTC as, “a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2” (p. 547). Cao (2013) defined WTC as, “Willingness to communicate as situated in a L2 classroom is a student’s observable intention to engage in class communication with other interlocutors. This intention entails fluctuation and dynamism due to variations in its individual, environmental, and linguistic antecedents, which interdependently exert facilitative and inhibitive effects on it” (p. 22).

Cao (2013) explained that in order to understand classroom WTC, it is important to consider both individual factors, such as motivation, as well as the contextual factors, such as task or interlocutor. And because there is few studies that discussed the relationship between L2 individual and contextual factors that influence WTC, Cao’s (2013) study aimed to understand the interrelationship between these two factor by relying on context-sensitive approach, which elaborates that “learners’ situational WTC in the L2 classroom will dynamically change as their situational WTC interacts with factors in the classroom environment (including the teacher, their
peers, topics, and tasks) that mediate their psychological conditions” (p. 4). The finding of this study outlined that learners’ WTC is impact by the mutual relations of individual, environmental, linguistic variables among those learners. This result enhanced what Kang’s (2005) claimed, WTC may vary within a single conversation, which is also the same fact as what Do€rnyei (2006) described L2 classroom learners’ motivation as a, “fluid and dynamic construct that displays continuous fluctuation, going through certain ebbs and flows rather than a static attribute”. This indicated that Saudi English learners’ engagement in the class interactions varies within even one class. Sometimes those students may be willing to interact or cooperate in one task or topic, and sometimes in the same class those students tend to be resistance and passive.

To clarify, Cao (2013) proclaimed that there are some individual differences (IDs) among students and these differences alter across classroom contexts (p. 20). The concept of WTC help (ex. English) learners to interact intentionally with someone when there is no obligatory to do so; therefore, many researchers (MacIntyre etal., 1998; MacIntyre, Baker, Clement, & Donovan, 2003) argued that WTC must be included in the (English) learning process.

To get back to the point, the secret behind the “success or failure” of the English language teaching and learning in any society is highly controlled by learners’ “perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes” that they hold and adhere during English classes. These kinds of beliefs, which involve around “a number of internal and external contributing factors” are shaped by “(a) students’ perceptions of English; (b) their experience with learning English; and (c) their expectations about studying English” (Al-Seghayer, 2014, p. 18). Shah et al. (2013) demonstrated that learners’ negative attitude towards learning English might prevent them to accomplish communicative competence since there are many studies that discussed the issues of L2 learners and these studies are highly blamed the learners for their lower fulfillment in
learning English. As a result, English teachers are usually encountered by, as they called
“unmotivated and uncooperative learners in their classrooms who lack exposure to L2 and speak
very little English” (p. 105).

Additionally, Alharthi (2014) pointed out that “a high motivation and a positive attitude
towards a second language and its community help second language learning” (p. 71). Many
researchers believe that motivation in learning the English language is a driving force that will
help the English learners to learn and become proficient in English, improve their
communicative ability and more importantly it will lead to an optimistic and challenging attitude
towards learning English (Al-Nasser, 2015, p. 1614; Khan, 2011, p. 1215; Rahman & Alhaisoni,
2013, p. 116). So what is Saudi studies’ perceptions of students’ motivation?

**Saudi Studies’ Perception of Motivation in Students’ Learning**

Many scholars agreed on the fact that motivation is a key factor in the English language
learning. They believe that motivation is the driving force that leads learners to accept or reject
the English language learning. But the fact is that motivation is a “social psychology concept”
that is very broad and hard to define (Pierce, 1995, p. 16). The aim of providing this section is not
to define the concept of motivation but rather to shed the light on some studies that discuss the
perceptions of the concept of motivation in English learning classrooms and explore the fact that
relied behind these perceptions.

Alharthi (2014) defined motivation in learning as “a learner’s requirement to approach a
goal” (p. 71). As a matter of fact, Alharthi (2014) agreed on McDonough’s argument that
“motivation of the students is one of the most important factors influencing their success or
failure in learning the language” (p. 142). Furthermore, Alrabai (2014) utilized Gardner’s (1985)
conception of learners’ motivation as “the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal
of learning the language plus favorable attitudes towards learning a new language” (p. 225).
Hence, students with a low motivation among learning English are more likely to be misconduct
and lagging behind the motivated students (Alharthi, 2014, p. 71). To illustrate, Shah et al.
(2013) mentioned that the absence of motivation leads learners to not participate in class
activities, cheat more than learn, and depend completely on the teachers’ help. So those students
are usually described as performing and achieving less than is expected (p. 108). In the same
manner, 1990s studies announced that most of the failure in learning English in the Saudi context
was because of students’ low motivation in which they doubted the importance of learning
English in their communication and careers. Conversely, 2000s studies indicated that students’
motivation increased and became moderate, not high, because Saudi students believed that
English is superior than any other language and they admitted its significant in technology, social
and market needs (Golam Faruk, 2014, p. 174).

As an illustration, Shah et al. (2013) explored the reasons behind students’ lack of
motivation as “mismatch” between the ways of teaching and learning, incompetence to conduct
the correct pedagogical plan that would correspond with learning procedures, and the shortage of
interacting in English (p. 108). Additionally, Alrabai (2014) proclaimed that in the Saudi context,
teachers usually give more care for their teaching practices and neglect completely the
motivational aspects in the curriculum, teachers don’t often include their learners in making
decisions such as, choosing test dates, and the EFL curricula in the Saudi context don’t involve
“students’ interests, needs, goals, experiences, daily life activities, and real-world situations” (p.
242/243). Furthermore, Eccles and Wigfield’s (2002) stated that “it is difficult, if not impossible,
to understand students’ motivation without understanding the contexts they are experiencing” (as
cited in Al Shlowiy, 2014, p.131). Therefore, he proclaimed that “there is neither enough English
input outside the classroom nor opportunities for interaction with native English speakers” as well as, Saudi students study English as a mandatory subject but at the same time those students don’t find any objective of learning it in their daily life, which are considered one of the internal forces that low the degree of motivation among those students (p. 131). In other words, Saudi students’ resistance and adherence to these perceptions is derived from the context that they are living in, the context that is shaped and affected mainly by the religious, political and economic factors.

Regarding this, Mohammed (2015) explained the types of motivation as intrinsic/integrative and extrinsic/instrumental in which he defined the terms as “instrumental motivation refers to the learner’s desire to learn a language for utilitarian purposes” whereas the integrative motivation as “the desire to learn a language to integrate successfully into the target language community” (p. 206). In other words, intrinsic/ integrative motivation is connected to students’ educational accomplishments so the students could be highly motivated if they associate their educational results to the internal factors that they can handle, trust their intuitions that they can achieve their goals, and believe in the significance of mastering their learning for their own benefit. On the other hand, extrinsic/ instrumental motivation is connected to outside factors such as, money, punishment, and competition (p. 207).

On the subject of instrumental motivation, Al Shlowiy (2014) believed that EFL learners’ behavior towards learning English is seriously affected by the environment around them and this effectiveness will control the level of motivation among those learners. To clarify, a lot of parents in the Saudi context gave less attention to the English language and to the progress of their children in English classrooms (p. 132). This kind of attitude harmfully influenced English learners and learning in Saudi Arabia. A large number of parents believe that learning English is
useless, has no objectives, affects the native language, Arabic, and it is a mean of transporting the Western cultures. As a result, students no longer believe in the importance of learning English and will unconsciously follow their parents’ thoughts and beliefs. This negative attitude towards Learning English prevent Saudi teachers to accomplish their aims, which challenges the teachers’ ability to improve learners’ interest in learning English. Whereas, students’ positive behaviors toward the English language enable them to be more independent and more responsible for their own English learning, which will support the “diversity and individuality of a language” (Shah et al., 2010, p. 108).

All of the studies and research above show how scholars linked Saudi students’ resistance and unwillingness to communicate to motivation. Pierce (1995) argued that there is a need to problematize the concept of motivation. Similarly, Norton (2000) stated that even though motivation is diametrically a social psychology concept, there are attempts to conceptualize motivation in second language learning to “to quantify learners’ commitment to learning the target language” (p. 10). Scholars such as Dornyei and Tseng (2009), Judge (2011) and Nishino (2007) proclaimed that it is hard to define the term motivation since it is a very sophisticated term that depends on the dynamic changes in a person’s psychology. Moreover, in Pierce study (1995), she found that even though all of the participants were motivated to speak English, they were uncomfortable to interact with people who they had “material investment”, which indicates that motivation is a different and sophisticated term than it is perceived in SLA field and should be understand as learners’ investment in the target language (p. 19/20).

Norton (2000) demonstrated the concept of investment “signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it” (p. 10). Furthermore, Ellis (1994) defined investment as, “the
learners’ commitment to learning an L2, which is viewed as related to the social identities they construct for themselves as learners” (p. 140). The concept of investment is best understood through Bourdieu’s (1977) notion of cultural capital. Pierce (1995) defined Bourdieu’s (1977) cultural capital as, “the knowledge and modes of thoughts that characterize different classes and groups in relation to specific sets of social forms” (p.17). To clarify, investing in a second language means if learners learn that language, they do so with a realization of the unattainable resources that they expect to gain in turn. These unattainable resources might be language, education, friendship and so on (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

My point is, instead of conceptualizing Saudi students as having motivation in learning a language, they, in fact, invest their learning of the English language to return high marks, passing test scores, and jobs. Pierce (1995) argued that the term motivation in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) failed to illustrate the relationships between power, identity and language learning and the term investment rather captures the social and historical relationships between learners and their willingness to practice the target language that they’re learning (p. 17). Likewise, in her book Identity and Language Learning, Norton (2000) disagreed with Krashen’s view (1981) that indicated that learners have affective filter that includes learner’s motivation, self-confidence and anxiety state, all of these aspects are related to individual rather than the learning context. Pierce (1995), on the other hand, argued that motivation is not something stable in one’s personality but rather it depends on the “social relations of power” that enables English learners to speak, and despite having a high effective filter, learners’ investment in the English language establishes the chances for those learners to speak; such investment must be perceived in terms of complex, multiple, subject to change identities (p. 26).
Power, Resistance and Motivation

Hurt, Scott and McCroskey (1978) defined power as “a teacher’s ability to affect in some way the students well-being beyond the student’s own control” (as cited in McCroskey, 1983, p. 113). Whereas Alpert (1991) declared that resistance is “used in educational research to explain and interpret various student behaviors in schools that indicate the existence of tensions and conflicts between school and the wider society to which the students belong” (p. 350). Gorlewski (2011), announced that there is a connection between power and resistance in any institutional setting since “where there is power, there is also resistance”; in classrooms, power usually exists through interactions (p. 195). Lantolf and Genung (2002) claimed that in classrooms usually teachers are the only individual who have the power to assign “explicit rules of interaction” (p. 177). In the same manner, Auerbach (2000) added that all classrooms are “teacher-centered” to the extent that is the teacher conception of education that shapes how the learning community develops. Clearly teachers have their own goals, their own understandings of effective L2 pedagogy and most importantly they have power. “To deny this is both irresponsible and disingenuous; students know it and teachers act on it whether or not they acknowledge it” (as cited in Lantolf & Genung, 2002, p. 192). However, this is not the case with Saudi teachers; many researchers believe that not all teachers feel that they have power, and not all teachers are empowered in the same ways.

In addition, Gorlewski (2011) applied Foucault’s (1975, 1983, 1993) conceptualization of resistance as “a corollary component of power” to illustrate the connection between power and resistance in classrooms. For example, the rules that indicate attending the classroom is obligatory among the students is a clear example of power, therefore; skipping classes or arriving late is a form of resistance (p. 196). Other examples of resistance are, the refusal of doing
classroom assignments or participating in classroom interactions. These examples articulate the “power/resistance dynamic” in English classrooms, in which “anyone who is subject to someone else’s exercise of power has the capacity to comply or resist” (Gorlewski, 2011, p. 196). The English language in Saudi society represents power, since it becomes the medium of instruction in the most important fields such as, medicine, business, engineering (Alrabai, 2014, p. 227); therefore, the refusal of spreading or learning this language among number of the society members is also an example of resistance.

Apart from that, teacher’s control in the classroom discourse has been seen as a force that works against reflexive education (Candela, 1999, p. 140). In her article, Pierce (1995) argued that SLA theorists have not illustrated how “power limits” the English learners’ opportunities to practice the language outside the classroom (p. 12). Spolsky (1989) pointed out that it is fundamental for second language learners to be able to practice the target language and be extensively exposed to that language since learning cannot enhance the learning process and be effective without exposure and practice. Spolsky (1989) also claimed that “the more exposure and practice, the more proficient the learner will become” (as cited in Pierce, 1995, p. 14). As a result, English teachers must encourage and enhance the English language learners to speak and practice the language outside the classroom (Pierce, 1995, p. 26).

After the deep discussion about the English language teaching and learning in the Saudi context and how the former studies and research reflected on these two aspects within the the Saudi context. My next step will shed the light on the concepts of Native English Speakers (NESs) and Varieties of English, and their influence on the English language in Saudi Arabia since I believe they are reflecting a crucial part of this study.
NESs and Varieties of Englishes

According to Leung (2005), the concept of native and non-native have a major role in shaping the “bedrock of transnationalized ELT” even though they are not the determiners of language or language users (as cited in Aneja, 2016, p. 572). So who are the native English speakers (NESs)? Are the Americans, Australians and British people the only native speakers in the world because their parents are Americans, Australians or British respectively? Or because they were born and raised in these countries and they and their family have social identities, ex. social security numbers and passports. Or because their first language is English? In that case, what about the non American or British who were born and raised in the US or the UK and they speak English with American like or British like accents? What about the non American or British families who send their kids to US or UK schools and their kids acquire and speak English as a first language before they speak their parent’s language? (Radwanska-Williams, 2008; Rampton, 1990; Al-Omrani, 2008). Davies (1991) defined native speaker as, “The first language a human being learns to speak is his native language; he is a native speaker of this language” (as cited in Bloomfield, 1933, p. 43).

Rampton (1990) claimed that “being born into a group does not mean that you automatically speak the language well, many native speakers of English can’t write or tell stories, while many non-native speakers can” (p. 18). Similarly, Modiano (1999) announced that being able to use the English language appropriately and proficiently has nothing to do with one’s birth place or “nativeness” since “birth does not determine proficiency in speaking English” (as cited in Al-Omrani, 2008, p. 27). Likewise, Kramsch (1997) argued that NS term is neither a privilege of birth nor of education but “acceptance by the group that created the distinction between native and nonnative speakers” (p. 363). Aneja (2016) preferred to not
separate the terms native and nonnative speakering and use them as one term (non)native speakering (p. 577), which Aneja defined as, “a poststructural orientation that denaturalizes (non)native speakerist ideologies and argues that (non)native speakered subjectivities are historically grounded as well as constructed over time through the discursive practices of individuals and institutions” (p. 575). Similarly, Rucker (2011) used the notion of “Whiteness as property” in his article to argue that the concept of native speakerism is constructed through the daily social discourses (p. 400); to form a “hierarchy of power and dominance” (p. 406).

Ruecker (2011), on the other hand argued that the reason behind having a “simplistic definition” of native speaker is the believe that there is “one standard English” (p. 405). A large number of people believe that this standard English belongs to the native speakers of the English language. Kramch (1998) proclaimed that “as a rule, native speakers are viewed around the world as the genuine article, the authentic embodiment of the standard language” (p. 16). In addition to that, Holliday (2005) demonstrated that native English teachers are usually seen as the owners of the “right cultural and linguistic attributes” of the target language (as cited in Creese, Blackledge & Takhi, 2014, p. 938). Creese, Blackledge and Takhi, (2014) declared that NESTs have been perceived as a “model, a norm, and a goal” in the field of teaching English as a foreign or second language, which makes them superior to NNESs (p. 938). That means embracing the belief that native speakerist is a privilege self-selected group (Widdowson, 2003) of language teachers, creates the marginalization among the NNESs (Rajagopalan, 2005; as cited in Selvi, 2014, p. 578). However, Widdowson (1994) argued that the possession of the English language does not belong to the native speakers but to all people who share this language aside from their nativeness.
In the same manner, Park (2012) claimed that myths of perceiving native speakers as superiority maintains as a hindrance for nonnative English speaking teachers and learners (as cited in Nuske, 2015, p. 286); native speakers are “positioned as the ultimate exemplars and arbiters of English use” whereas nonnative speakers are, “condemned to perpetual inferiority” (Nuske, 2015, p. 286). Jenkins (2007) announced that English native speakers’ models are still the norms of the English language teaching and learning worldwide, and for this she blamed the “gatekeepers” (p. 239). Examples of gatekeepers are, “government institutions, examination boards, universities, publishers, The British Council and other British and American cultural–political institutions such as English Only” (Young & Walsh, 2010, p. 125). Jenkins (2007) added that practically those gatekeepers tried to, “promote a particular view of good English and good English speakers, and to have a malign influence on teachers’ (both NNS and NS) . . . attitudes towards the English language, which in turn lead to linguistic insecurity among NNES teachers” (p. 246).

The purpose of mentioning the above section is to provide the reader with a general overview of the concept of native English teachers, which the Saudi society believe are the “authentic” owners and standards of the English language. Regarding this fact, the next point will demonstrate more the status of varieties of Englishes in the Saudi context.

**NESs and Varieties of Englishes in Saudi Arabia**

Kachru (1985) characterized the English that is used all over the world into three circles: The Inner circle, the Outer circle, and the Expanding circle. These circles outline the “the type of spread, the patterns of acquisition and the functional domains in which English is used across cultures and languages” (Kachru, 1985, p.12). Under the Inner circle are the countries of Britain, USA, Canada, and Australia, which are seen as native speakers (NSs). The Outer circle
represents the countries that use English as a second language for example, Hong Kong, India, and Singapore. And finally those who use English as a foreign language come under the Expanding circle such as, Brazil, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia (as cited in Alshammari, 2015, p. 366). According to Al-Omrani (2008), the countries that represent the expanding circles are those that never were colonized by any inner circle countries and perceive the significant of English as an international language (p.22), which is the case in Saudi Arabia. I know that the Kachru’s three circles have been problematic for many scholars but the aim of presenting them was to show how English in Saudi Arabia is being perceived by the scholars.

However, English in Saudi Arabia is taught and learned as EFL and it is limited within the traditional boundary of Standard American or British English (Alamari & Khan, 2014, p. 317/318). According to Al-Omrani (2008) standard English is, “forms of written and spoken English that is thought to be normative for educated users” (p. 33). Many researchers presented that teaching English within the standard American and British boundaries restricted the teachers’ ability to teach and leaners’ willingness to learn, which result in having challenges in English classes (Al-Asmri & Khan, 2014; Alshammari, 2015). Matsuda (2003) claimed that “the international scope of learners’ English learning agenda should logically be matched by pedagogical approaches that teach English as an international language (EIL), in part through inclusion of varieties of World Englishes” (p. 719). In other words, being exposed to different types of English is profoundly important not only because those learners might confront with English speakers of Outer or Expanding circles, but also because this exposure will enhance the learners’ awareness towards the English language.

In addition to that, Al-Asmari and Khan (2014) stated that the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia has highly governed the English curriculum and the opportunity to enhance
varieties of English is neither recognized nor encouraged (p. 318) and even if Saudi teachers are interested in including the approach of WEs or EIL in their teaching, they are not able to apply these concepts without the permission from the Ministry of Education (p. 370). In Young and Walsh’s (2010) study, the teachers who participate in the study stated that they didn’t have the ability or right to choose which English to teach and the Saudi participants claimed that the teaching materials transcribe the “type” of English that they utilize. For instance, “students are exposed to all kinds of ENS speech through tapes” (p. 131). Moreover, Alshammari (2015) discussed that the English courses in the university level are totally based on US textbooks, which entirely contrast the Arabic/ Islamic culture as well as the Saudi society values and beliefs (p. 367). In same manner, Matsuda (2003) argued that teaching English must be connected to the narratives of its spread in all over the world and the changes in its distinguish shapes and usage since English is no longer owned by the Inner circle countries and “the assumption of native-speaker authority that underlies teaching inner-circle varieties of English puts the other circles in an inferior position to the NSs” (p. 722). Similarly, Sharifian (2009) claimed that English doesn’t belong to the “West” or any other people but rather it is an international language that belongs to its users (p. 44).

In addition, Tanghe (2013) stressed that multilingual teachers have a powerful and valuable advantage in classrooms in which they can share their first language with their learners (p. 41/42), but unfortunately this is the absent truth in Saudi Arabian context. In the Saudi context, variety of educational institutions attempt to have a huge number of native speakers of the English language since they think that those teachers are able to guarantee having high standard outcomes of teaching the language (Alshammari, 2015, p. 369). And that is what makes NNESTs compete with NESTs for teaching jobs since NESTs have the “advantage of
speakerhood” even though they might be less professional and qualified than NNESTs (Sharifian, 2009, p. 25). As a result, Saudi English teachers try to adapt an American like or British like accents. For instance, one of Aneja’s (2016) participants attempt to “Americanize her accent by mimicking YouTube videos” since she was afraid that otherwise she wouldn’t have a job (p. 586). Also, embracing the belief that US and UK English are the only type of English that is preferable among the Saudi society makes the English teachers meet this demand. To illustrate, all the teachers who participated in Young and Walsh’s (2010) study felt that they wanted to teach American English to the students since the local contexts demand this type of English. In the same manner, the Saudi female teacher stated that some of the young learners that she taught prefer being taught an American English since they wanted to sound “cool” (p. 134).

The belief that values the “Standard American and British English”, as well as the native English teachers, is considered a hindrance in the English language teaching and learning in Saudi Arabia. Many researchers explained that the aim of reaching the American like or British like level of the language made English learners and teachers lose their own language identity. Therefore, the dominance of this belief is the reason behind the absence of appreciating varieties of Englishes among the Saudi community.

**Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter revolves around the English language in Saudi Arabia in sense of: the factors that shape the status of English in the Saudi context, how English is perceived in Saudi community these days as well as the English learning, teaching and speaking skills among Saudis. In addition to that, this literature review shed the light on the concept of World Englishes and how this concept is perceived among Saudi society. The next chapter introduce the research method to conduct this study.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to explore Saudi English teachers’ beliefs and values towards the English language in Saudi Arabia. The main purpose of the study was to determine how could these beliefs and values influence the ways those teachers understood their students’ academic performance. To be more specific, in this study I focused on the types of beliefs, values and perceptions that Saudi English teachers hold toward the current status of the English language teaching in the Saudi context. Therefore, this chapter sheds the light on the methodology used in this study in order to find answers for the following research questions:

- What are the beliefs and values that Saudi English teachers hold toward teaching English in Saudi Arabia and how they negotiate these beliefs and values within their teaching context?
- In what ways do these beliefs and values influence their understanding of their students’ academic performance?

Research Design

This study was conducted in Saudi Arabia. Particularly, it addressed the graduates from the English department in a Saudi university. This study utilized a qualitative research methodology to investigate the Saudi teachers’ beliefs and values of teaching and learning English in Saudi classes. Both Denzin and Lincoln (2000) elaborated qualitative research as:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs,
recordings, and memos to the self. ... This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (p. 4/5).

That means qualitative research does not aim to predict the events in the future, but rather, it provides an understanding of what happened in a particular setting and time. In addition, Richards (2009) drew on Denzin and Lincoln and clarified that qualitative research “is sensitive to, and seeks to, understand participants’ perspectives on their world … it is context sensitive and does not study isolated aspects independently of the situation in which they occur … it depends on a process of interpretation that involves immersion in the data and draws on different perspectives” (p. 149). According to Black (1994), “qualitative methods take a holistic perspective which preserves the complexities of human behavior” (p. 425). Likewise, Barbour (1999) claimed that “qualitative methods can illuminate the variety of meanings attached by different individuals to particular events or issues- whether these arise from their professional backgrounds and training or from personal experience- and can provide an understanding of how these different perspectives give rise to particular conflicts, misunderstandings or breakdowns in communication” (p. 157). Therefore, the rationale for using qualitative research is because it enabled the researcher to determine the beliefs and values that Saudi teachers hold and their impact on Saudi students’ academic performance. Moreover, using the qualitative research showed the researcher the “views and opinions” of the interviewees, it “explicitly embrace[d] the contextual conditions” where the participants live and it enabled the researcher to illustrate very wide social behaviors based on the participants’ perceptions of the English language (Yin, 2015, p. 9).
Consequently, this study was conducted as an interview-based qualitative design because, based on Merriam (2015), “interviews are a primary source of data in qualitative research” (p. 137). Kvale (1996) defined interviews as, “an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes the social situatedness of research data” (p. 14). Moreover, I used the structured interview, which is according to Nunan (1992), working via a list of questions that are previously organized by the researcher (p. 149). The aim of using structured interviews was because I wanted to give all the participants the same context of questions; also this type of interview enabled me to control the topic and the format of interview (Kajornboon, 2005, p. 4). In order to explore the questions of this research, I preferred to explore these research questions by looking at teachers’ prospective perspectives, their own experiences and point of views of learning and teaching English, and the way they respond to their students’ academic performance; therefore, a qualitative interview based approach was conducted in the study. The aim of the study was to provide a deeper analysis into the type of values and beliefs that Saudi English teachers maintain, and how do those teachers negotiate these values and beliefs within their teaching experiences.

Research Context

This thesis research was determined in advance that the site study is in Saudi Arabia. To be more specific, the participants of this study graduated from a Saudi university. This University is located in a mid-sized city in the southwestern region of Saudi Arabia. In this study, I wanted to bring to light the graduated from the English department from a university located in this city. This city has an ancient and famous public university that has variety of branches distributed over several towns. This university is a rapidly growing institution that has many faculties and majors. The English department in this university is divided into two
faculties: English Literature department and Languages and Translation department. Again, these two department are distributed in many different towns.

Based on the university website, the English department initially had only one faculty, which is the English literature department. The Faculty of Languages and Translation was first established under the name, “institute of English and Translation”. Then in 2003, Languages and Translation became the second faculty of the English department. The English department has both undergraduate and postgraduate programs. According to the university website, students who want to get accepted at the English department must earn a high score in their high school education as well as pass the “Qyias” tests. Qyias tests are more likely to be replacement tests or standardized tests to assess the scholastic achievement of the students applying for universities (qiyas.sa). A bachelor degree in the English department is 4-year program, in which the students have to complete 120 hours. These hours are divided into 8 levels; each level represents a semester. During their academic journey, students initially have to learn the basic skills for the first 4 levels (reading comprehension, writing, listening & speaking, grammar, vocabulary) and then they have the opportunity to experience different English courses such as, literature, linguistics, applied linguistics, language acquisition, teaching methods and translation.

For my study, I was interested in those who graduated from the English department in general and either teach English in Saudi universities or local schools. According to the university website, this university has around 72,000 undergraduate students majoring in different departments. It is worth mentioning that this university, as any Saudi university, has a gender segregation in which there is a separation of men and women in social settings.

1 Qiyas is a national Saudi center for assessment.
Participants

Table 1

Participants' Background Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Educational degree</th>
<th>Country of graduation</th>
<th>Years of experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor Amal</td>
<td>Master’s degree in English Literature</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>16 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Sara</td>
<td>Master’s degree in Linguistics</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Rose</td>
<td>Bachelor degree in Languages and Translations</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the participants (table 1.1) were found through using purposeful sampling strategy, which is according to Merriam (2009), “purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 77). Those participants are females who graduated from the English department of the Southwestern University. I also selected only females because of the Saudi Arabian education system in which there is a gender segregation so that I wanted to focus only on the context with which I’m familiar. Furthermore, I selected those three participants because they were convenient to recruit for the study and I did not consider selecting participants that are representative of the entire Saudi teachers. I, as a researcher of this study, was not aiming to generalize or globalize the findings of this research. The findings are not a representation of the whole Saudi English teachers; instead, the hope of this study is to explore understanding perceptions of teachers in under-researched environment.

2 this name is a pseudonym used in the thesis
The rationale of choosing those participants was that they are Saudi teachers who have various years of experiences and teach in three different places. They also met the following criteria:

1. Participants must be Saudi citizens.
2. Participants must have graduated from the Southwestern University, and from the English department.
3. Participants must be teaching English in Saudi Arabian schools or universities.
4. Participants must have no less two-years experience of teaching English.
5. One of the participants must have conducted her study abroad and the others must have conducted their study in Saudi Arabia.

The first participant Professor. Amal, is a lecturer in one of the universities that is located in the capital city of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh. After her graduation from the Southwestern University, she completed her Master’s degree in English literature at one of the universities in Saudi Arabia. She has been teaching at Saudi universities for 16 years. Throughout her teaching experience, she has taught basic language skills for non-specialized departments for English, since English is taught as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. Also, she has taught in the English department as well many subjects such as, poetry, novel, grammar, advanced writing and translation to levels 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The second participant Professor. Sara, is an English lecturer in the Southwestern university; she is also working as the Head of the English Department (HoD). Her responsibilities involve both teaching and managing the department academically. Throughout her teaching journey, she has taught various courses and levels, starting from freshmen students and up to serious. However, she got her Master’s in Linguistics abroad from a Midwestern
university in the United States. She topped that with a diploma in TEFL from a Western
university in the United States.

The third participant, teacher Rose, is an English teacher at a private school in
southwestern region in Saudi Arabia. She got her undergraduate Bachelor degree in Languages
and Translation from the Southwestern University. She has taught the beginning levels the main
four skills which are reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Therefore, the researcher prioritized the teachers since it was crucial to investigate their
perspectives and understandings about both their English learning and teaching experiences, and
their understanding of their own students’ academic performance. On the other hand, the
participants were fully aware that the personal information they provided would be kept
anonymous and strictly confidential.

**Researcher’s Positionality**

I believe it is important to mention that I have (to varying degrees) personal-professional
relationship with the three participants. I believe this relationship is what made it easy for me to
contact and interview them. This advance knowledge helped “to facilitate a flow of conversation
classified by a natural and emotionally supportive atmosphere” (Blichfeldt & Heldbjerg,
2011, p. 12). I was afraid, before interviewing the participants, of the complexity that such
relationship might impact the data validity and trustworthiness. However, it turned out the
opposite since the “priori knowledge on the informant’s values, norms, characteristics” enabled
me to “understand and comprehend the informant’s lines of interpretation” (Blichfeldt &

This kind of academic-personal relationship enabled me to freely communicate and
interview those participants. I also noticed that this relationship facilitates the interaction among
the interviewees and gains sincere and, sometimes, personal responses. I conducted the interview in lighthearted and comfortable atmosphere, which helped to reduce the tenseness and confusion. In other words, those participants welcomed any follow-up question or inquiry that I had related to their answers. On the other hand, I think that the participants were freely answered the questions and asked if they didn’t understand or had any question without hesitation. All of these personal and academic relationship advantages were effectively helped me to address the research questions.

Data Collection

The present study is based on interviews that were designed to elicit participants’ beliefs, opinions, values and experiences about their English teaching in Saudi Arabia. After contacting the participants, who agreed to participate in this study, interviews were conducted. Furthermore, since each participant seems to have a unique and different backgrounds, the researcher tried to explore their viewpoints in terms of their experiences and conceptions of learning as well as teaching the English language. Additionally, the researcher attempted to understand the link between the teachers’ values and beliefs of the English language and their understanding of their students’ academic performance.

The interviews lasted 40 to 50 minutes. The interviews were carried out in English, except for one interview, where the participant preferred to talk in Arabic. I gave the participants the choice to be interview in either English or Arabic. Two of the participants chose to be interviewed in English since they believed that English would enable them to vividly interpret and explain their answers. The other participant, told me that she would be more comfortable and able to express her thoughts and opinions in Arabic; she wanted to conduct the interview in an informal way. Because of that, this interview was the only one that was translated into English.
All of the interviews were digitally recorded, transferred to the researcher’s computer and transcribed for the analysis. Materials from the digitally recorded interviews and interview transcriptions were kept in a password-protected computer file.

Although the interview questions were structured, it is worth mentioning that, besides these questions, there were some follow-up questions that the researcher felt must be asked since they were related to the content of the interview. I asked the interviewees the same exact questions and these questions were in order. The questions that were distinguished were just the follow-up questions. However, the interview questions were divided into four main sections. Each section reflected on a particular theme (see the appendix for the interview questions).

For the first section, it was designed as open-ended questions so that these questions could warm up the conversation in an informal way. These questions helped the participants to talk freely about themselves; moreover, these questions aided the researcher to build an overview about each teachers’ perspectives toward their teaching conceptions.

Regarding the second section, the participants were free to share information about their experiences of learning English in general. The purpose of asking these questions was to find out if their learning experiences shape their current values and beliefs of teaching the English language. Furthermore, these questions were asked to acquire a general view of each participant’s experiences while they were learning English.

The third section of the questions focused mainly on the teacher’s teaching expertise. The purpose of asking these questions is to gain more information about their teaching goals and methodology, and their beliefs and values towards the role of the Ministry of Education and the English language in Saudi Arabia, in general. Throughout these questions, the researcher wanted
to know the sort of values and beliefs that they hold, and whether these beliefs and values influence their understanding of their students’ academic performance.

The fourth section was a turning point in the interviews. It moved the topic from general to particular. The objective of asking the participants these questions was to measure their awareness about the concept of varieties of Englishes since this concept is still new in the Saudi context. Therefore, the researcher aimed to explore the participants’ thoughts and beliefs toward this notion, and most important of all, those participants provided valuable data by giving their rationale on having varieties of Englishes.

**Data Analysis**

The next step after conducting the interviews was to transfer the data to my personal computer under a password-protected computer file. Then I translated and transcribed one of the interviews that was conducted in Arabic and sent it to the participant’s personal email to review it, because at that time I was already in the United States. I asked the participant to delete the file from her email and so did I. The final step was to transcribe the other data and save all of the materials under the protected file.

As for the data analysis, I analyzed my data through using grounded theory and content data analysis. These two methods were used in this study since they “both are based on naturalistic inquiry that entails identifying themes and patterns and involves rigorous coding” (Cho & Lee, 2014, p. 1). According to Glaser and Strauss (1967) grounded theory is, “the discovery of theory from data—systematically obtained and analyzed in social research” (p. 1). Grounded theory includes the “use of an intensive, open-ended, and iterative process that simultaneously involves data collection, coding (data analysis), and memo-writing (theory building)” (Groat & Wang, 2002, p. 181). On the other hand, Hsieh & Shannon (2005) defined
content data analysis as “a research method for subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (p. 1278). To be more specific, content data analysis is used to “systematically [describe] the meaning of qualitative material” (Schreier, 2012, p. 1). Additionally, Abrahamson (1983) demonstrated that content data analysis is a method that is used to analyze different types of communication materials such as, “narrative responses, open-end survey questions, interviews, focus groups, observations …etc” (as cited in Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278).

As a matter of fact, in my data there were some codes, categories, or themes that were “directly drawn” from my data and that is called the inductive approach and this approach is related to content data analysis (Cho & Lee, 2014, p. 4). Whereas other data needed some comparative analysis to create subsequent data collection and analysis and that is called theoretical sampling. The theoretical sampling is “the process of collecting data for comparative analysis” and that is related to the grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 9). In addition, the purpose of using grounded theory is to create a “substantive theory” that will contribute in the illustration of specific data in my study (Cho & Lee, 2014, p. 5). The grounded theory seemed appropriate since no theories were generated to discuss the role of the religious, economic and political factors in reconstructing the beliefs and values of the Saudi community towards the English language. Also, the grounded theory was used to understand how the participants negotiate their beliefs and values towards the English language. When in fact, the aim of choosing qualitative content analysis in my study is to “systematically describe the meaning” of my data that are related to my research questions (Schreier, 2012, p. 3). Moreover, Heikkilä and Ekman (2003) claimed that Qualitative content analysis answers the questions “what, why and how, and the common patterns in the data are searched for” (p. 138). Therefore,
I utilized the qualitative content analysis to find out why Saudi English teachers hold certain beliefs and values? What sort of beliefs and values do they hold? And how could these beliefs and values influence their understanding of their learners’ learning performance?

**Coding**

Cho and Lee (2014) illustrated that the data analysis in both grounded theory and qualitative data analysis include a “systematic coding process” even though the coding procedure is different in both theories (p. 7). Corbin and Strauss (1990) described coding as “the process of concept labelling and categorizing” (p.7). Coding is also defined as, “categorizing segments of data with a short name that simultaneously summarizes and accounts for each piece of data....[it is also] the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 43/46). Furthermore, Bryant and Charmaz (2007) explained coding as, “a process of breaking data down into much smaller components and labelling those components and comparing data with data, case with case, event with event, code with code, to understand and explain variation in the data” (p. 80/ 81).

After I was done with the transcription, I printed them out and started to read them word by word and line by line; that is how I started the open coding, which is “the initial step of theoretical analysis that pertains to the initial discovery of categories and their properties” (Glaser, 1992, p. 39). All of the interviewees were asked mostly the same questions and they all nearly experienced the same English learning atmosphere and have encountered similar teaching challenges. Because of that there were so many common aspects of their answers as well as some differences. Therefore, this open coding involves also comparison of case/ event with other cases/ events in terms of similarity and differences (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 12).
After finishing with the open coding, I selected codes from my data and marked each transcript with these codes. I highlighted these codes with different colors; each color represented a code (e.g., learning experience, teaching methods, goals). While coding the transcript, there were some lines that are not related to the assigned codes so that I put them under new codes. Subsequently, I grouped the similar codes and put them in categories. My next step was to draw a diagram on a large poster paper and write all the categories that emerged from the data; under each category, I listed all the codes that related to them. Then I tried to go into more depth and figure out the relationship between these categories, this is known as the axial coding. Strauss (1987) defined the axial coding as, “a process of exploring the relationships among categories” (as cited in Cho & Lee, 2014, p. 8). Finally, I specified the most important and repeated codes and from them I came up with three main themes and that’s called selective coding, which is according to Cho and Lee (2014), a “process by which researchers select one or more core categories intended to generate a story that connects the categories” (p. 8).

**Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter provided the reader with a clear and concise description of the steps taken to complete this study. It first shed the light on the rationale behind doing this research as well as demonstrated why did the researcher employ the qualitative research and the specific data collection method in this research. In addition to that, this chapter presented the research context, participants, and the data analysis in terms of coding. Moving forward into Chapter Four, the findings, the data analysis is revealed and described in detail, which finally contributed to the whole study, investigating the Saudi English teachers’ beliefs and values towards the English language and how do these beliefs and values impact their understanding of their students’ academic performance.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of this study based on the data that were collected through structured interviews from three Saudi English teachers who graduated from the Southwestern University in Saudi Arabia. The study aims to investigate their beliefs and values towards the English language teaching in the Saudi context. The research questions leading this study are:

- What are the beliefs and values that Saudi English teachers hold toward teaching English in Saudi Arabia and how do they negotiate these beliefs and values within their teaching context?
- In what ways do these beliefs and values influence their understanding of their students’ academic performance?

The data was analyzed according to different codes that emerged from the data. I grouped these codes and divided them into 3 main themes. These themes emerged based on the participants’ responses and they are:

1. Teachers’ beliefs towards their teaching methods and their students’ academic performance.
2. Teachers’ beliefs towards the classrooms’ hindrances
3. Teachers’ beliefs and values over the ownership of the English language and the relationship between these beliefs and their understanding of the English language learning/teaching.
Teachers’ Beliefs Towards Their Teaching Methods and Their Students’ Academic Performance

As illustrated in the literature review, a large number of studies have been done to explore the reasons behind the Saudi students’ low performance in English classes. Many of these studies revealed that even though the English language in Saudi Arabia is taught in schools from age ten, most of the Saudi students graduated from high school with a very low level of English proficiency and their English learning achievements are far below expectations (Bandar Saleh, 2013; Alrabai, 2014; Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013; Fareh, 2010). Al-Seghayer (2011) is one of the Saudi researchers who attributed the students’ low language proficiency to the teachers’ teaching methods, “Saudi English teachers employ a number of techniques to carry out traditional teaching methods” and he assumed these methods would lead to the students’ failure in being “able to take part or engage in a basic conversation or comprehend a simple oral command or written message” (p. 22). However, that is not what the Saudi English teachers, who participated in this study, were aiming to:

I believe that motivating students and inspiring them to learn is the main goal of all English teachers and Saudi teachers are no exception. Teaching literature specifically has a cultural value and my goal is to help students to understand and appreciate their own culture as well as other cultures around the world, hoping that they will participate in making the world a better place.

(Professor Amal, interview, July 21, 2016)

Professor. Amal revealed that teaching literature is one of the ways that she uses to teach her students their own culture. She believes that her students are mirrors of their own culture. Therefore, it is important for them to be taught their own culture in English to represent it easily
and sufficiently for other cultures. Additionally, professor Amal tries to make the students participate in her classes through building upon the knowledge that they already know and connect it to the new knowledge that they have in her classes. She believes that this way of teaching would effectively help the students. Also, she frequently reminds the students of the main reasons and objectives of learning English, since it would encourage the students to learn:

I try to involve students in the learning process to help them feel the urge and importance of learning. Therefore, I basically try to concentrate on what the students already know and connect what they are learning with their previous knowledge. In addition, students must be reminded frequently with the reason of learning, which I always do.

(Prof Amal, interview, July 21, 2016)

Speaking about the learning objectives, it is worth mentioning that, middle eastern countries in general, and Saudi Arabia in particular, has become under the spotlight of the Western countries especially after the 9/11. Many attempts have been done to correct the false images that portray the Saudi society. Researchers believe that it is important for Saudi English teachers to equip the students with the linguistic competence to make them represent their religion, culture, and country to non-Islamic societies (Rahman & Alhosaini, 2013; Osailan, 2009). Also based on the literature review, this doesn’t come only from the teachers, but also from the Ministry of Education as well as the whole environment. The Ministry of Education sets the objectives of learning English and stated that learning English would enable the Saudi students to represent the religion of Islam and the Saudi culture appropriately. These objectives of learning English are associated with the classroom needs based on the demands made by the Ministry of Education, which some Saudi English teachers perceive as their primarily intended to
enhance these reasons of learning the language repeatedly among the students. I believe this explains the reason behind the frequent reminding of the learning objectives that Professor Amal mentions in her classes. However, despite her teaching methods that aim to encourage the students to learn and enhance their learning skills, Professor. Amal still encountered with, as she described, low motivated students:

From my own perspective, students learn the language to pass tests and to have a better opportunity in job market. They don’t take the process of learning seriously because they believe that the minimum amount of proficiency in English is enough in their own Arabic-speaking society which is not the case at all. So we can say that the ignorance of the real situation in job requirements is one of the factors of lacking motivation

(Professor Amal, interview, July 21, 2016).

Those types of “unmotivated” students, who perceive the English language as a means that is only important to pass the test, seem to be a broad issue among these Saudi teachers. As illustrated in the literature review, a huge number of Saudi students believe that a minimum competency of the English language is needed to pass the tests. Like Professor. Amal, Ms. Rose also addressed those students as “low motivated students”:

دائمًا اواجه طلاب عدتهم رغبة يتعلمون وطلاب لا. بس بصراحة الطلاب اللي مالهم رغبة يتعلمون أكثر بكثير. بعضهم قالني إنه يعتبرون الانقليزي مادة كاي مادي في المدرسة استخدامها بينتهي بنهاية السمستر بعد ما ينجحون فيها. فعشان كذا هم يعتبرون الانقليزي مادة مو أداة بتطور وتسهل حياتهم

I have been always encountered with low and high motivated students. But to be honest, the low motivated students are the majority, because most of them told me they consider English as only a school subject that its usage will end at the end of
the semester when they pass the test. So they perceive English as a subject not as a means that will improve and facilitate their lives

(Ms. Rose, interview, July 28, 2016).

Similarly, Professor Sarah mentioned that despite her frequent attempts to integrate distinguish learning methods, the students’ outcomes were not always satisfactory and she was still encountered with “unmotivated students”:

During my five years of teaching, I was trying varieties of methods to enhance my students’ English language, but I always encounter by unmotivated students. So let me be brutally honest, I gave up with my students.

(Professor Sarah, interview, June 16, 2016).

So all three participants refer to the students’ discouragement and unwillingness to learn as “low motivation.” In fact, by viewing these events through the lens of resistance, you are able to come to new insights about these teachers’ beliefs and the ways they are implicated in larger power relations. Researchers illustrated that resistance could happen in English classrooms because of different reasons (White, 2011; Gorlewski, 2011; Vetter, Reynolds, Beane, Roquemore, Rorrer & Shepherd, 2012). One of the reasons is because of the role of power that English teachers practice during their classes. The second reason, and based on the data, might be because of the huge responsibility that most teachers, such as prof Amal place on the students’ shoulders while learning the English language. The understanding of students’ behavior as ‘resistance’ might allow for a clearer connection between the objectives of the MOE and the tendency of some students to reject such a role. As clarified above, the Saudi MOE’s main objective of English learning is to fitly represent the Saudi and Islamic culture and correct the negative images that are held against the Saudi and Muslim countries. Professor Amal claimed
that she repeatedly reminds her students about the learning objectives as a way to enhance their willingness to learn, which might cause them to resist and reject the learning of the language. Another aspect of the responsibility that is placed on students, and might lead them to resist the learning of the English language, might be because of the certain standards of the language efficiency that some teachers seek:

وإذا اتمنى انهم يعرفون الفرق بين اللهجتين. بس جد اتمنى انهم يتكلمون اللهجة الأمريكية لأنه هي المستخدمة والمنتشرة أكثر.

I would like them [the students] to know the difference between these two accents [British and American]. And I hope that my students have the American accent since it is the most popular one.

(Ms. Rose, interview, July 28, 2016).

Ms. Rose wants to educate her students with the English that she perceives as the most “popular” one. She has a great appreciation for the American English and she wants to transfer this appreciation to her students too. The hope that Ms. Rose wants her students to accomplish might be a reason behind their resistance. Those English learners are expected to represent a certain standard that is sometimes unattainable.

To get back to the point, Professor Sarah was one of the participants who tried to enhance the students’ learning effectively. During her classes, she aimed to get the students to be motivated and willing to learn:

The main challenge that I have with my students is raising the level of motivation for learning. I tried different ways to make the students more willing and more open to learn the language; therefore, I used communicative teaching method.

But there was no result and the students are still unmotivated to learn.

(professor. Sarah, interview, June 16, 2016).
Although Professor Sarah embraced different ways and teaching methods, such as the communicative teaching method, she still displeased about her students’ outcomes. She perceived the communicative teaching method as a method that would help the students to interact and develop their English skills, especially their speaking skill. She used the communicative teaching method since she thinks it would enhance and encourage her students to learn. She also mentioned that her students prefer the grammar translation method because they are not eager to communicate or interact. She linked the students’ preference of the grammar-translation method to their failure to improve their learning skills:

Previously my teaching method was based on communicative teaching method, but after I received harsh feedback from my students, I went back to the grammar translation method.

(Professor Sarah, interview, June 16, 2016).

Speaking about the grammar translation method, not only Professor Sarah but also Ms. Rose showed a great disinclination to the use of grammar translation since she believed that it would not contribute to the development of her students’ learning:

أكره استخدام الطريقة المترجمة لأنني ادرست المبتدئين في اللغة غالباً اعتمدت على الأشياء المرئية والمحسوسة وأحيانا نغني كمان.

I hate using grammar translation method because I am fed up with it. Some of my students prefer this method but since I am teaching the beginners, I usually depend on using visual and tactile aids, and we sing most of the time.

(Ms. Rose, interview, July 28, 2016).

Ms. Rose, as the other participants, believes that the grammar-translation method is an ineffective method. That’s why she tends to apply various methods that she sees as more
effective than the grammar translation method. In classes, where the grammar translation method is used, the teacher is the main speaker and the orchestra leader, and the students are asked to receive the teachers’ knowledge passively. So having students who participate, interact, and communicate might be the clear evidence, among those teachers, that the students are motivated and willing to learn, and that’s might explain why these teachers disfavor this method. Additionally, the well-known fact among the Saudi English teachers that using the grammar-translation method negatively impacts the students’ learning might also be a purpose for them to oppose using this method.

Through the reported experiences of those three participants, I noticed that their understanding of their students’ academic performance is connected to their perceptions of the students’ “motivation.” The Saudi English teachers describe the students’ resistance and rejection to learn the English language as low motivated students who want to be taught by grammar translation method, and who believe that the English language is a subject that they need to pass. But the reality that is laid behind these beliefs might be to refuse the huge responsibility that the teachers as well as the MOE place on the students to achieve the learning objectives that are required. Or it might be to escape the real communication situations in which the teachers are expected the students to sound like certain native speakers.

**Teachers’ Beliefs Towards the Classrooms’ Hindrances**

Being a teacher is a noble profession that contributes to the world in meaningful ways. Every teacher has his/her own goal as a teacher that s/he wants to accomplish successfully. The three Saudi English teachers have their own goals as Saudi English teachers as well. When I interviewed the participants, they were very enthusiastic about fulfilling their goals as Saudi English teachers:
I try to teach students the basic skills in a very effective way to facilitate the acquisition of the English language

(Ms. Rose, interview, July 28, 2016).

I try to produce some effective ways to learn English

(Professor Sarah, interview, June 16, 2016).

However, they believe that these goals are sometimes unattainable since they think that there are some hindrances in their classrooms that sometimes restrict their ability to teach or manage their classes. They believe that these hindrances influence not only their teaching practices but also their students’ learning process. Both Professor Sarah and Ms. Rose agree on the fact that the Saudi English textbooks are considered one of the hindrances that they face in their classes. The textbooks that the Saudi Ministry of Education assigns for the students are not contributing to the development of English learning. Professor Sarah believes that teaching English would be more effective if the English teacher uses authentic materials, which are not found in Saudi English textbooks:

I believe in the beneficial aspects of using authentic materials in teaching English.
That is why I never depend on textbooks because they are out of date and have no authentic materials.

(Professor Sarah, interview, June 16, 2016).

Professor Sarah stated that she doesn’t use the textbooks while teaching. However, and based on the literature review, the Saudi Ministry of Education is highly governed by classroom textbooks and syllabus (Al-Seghayer, 2014; Al-Asmari & Khan, 2014). Therefore, it is highly unusual that Saudi English teachers have the freedom of selecting their own learning materials.
But professor Sarah believes that using authentic materials (e.g., posters and web pages), instead of the MOE textbooks, in teaching English is an effective way that benefits her English classes. However, this is not the case with the other participants since they are asked to apply the curriculum that the Ministry of Education assign for the students and they have no right to change it:

We are asked to adhere to the curricula and not using any information that is not mentioned in the textbooks and that really bothers me. The Saudi curriculum is sometimes good and sometimes not. Some lessons are very simple in a way that, I believe, will not help the students. Whereas, there are other lessons that we are asked to illustrate in an intensive way, which is so effective.

(Ms. Rose, interview, July 28, 2016).

Ms. Rose is one of the teachers who is not able to choose what she sees beneficial and helpful for her students. She is asked to follow the curriculum as it is. Her concern here is not only because she is not able to use any additional sources outside the curriculum but also because she believes some of the lessons that are provided in the Saudi curriculum is not adequate to her students’ level and that would influence their learning process.

Similarly, Professor Amal appears to agree on what Professor Sarah and Ms. Rose stated regarding the Saudi textbooks. She had the opportunity to teach English for specialized and non-specialized English students. But she still believes that the English curriculum that is assigned to the English learning students is not suitable for their needs:
The Saudi curriculum in teaching the English language for specialized students in universities is so broad and covers all aspects of learning English. It consists of eight levels and we teach skills intensively in two levels: literature and linguistics in six levels in addition to translation. In the eighth level, students are required to choose a book to translate to Arabic as a graduation project.

(Professor Amal, interview, July 21, 2016).

Professor Amal believes that providing the students with all of these different courses do not effectively help students to learn. These courses covered most of the English language aspects, which would confuse them and make them unable to concentrate and benefit from these aspect. However, she also believes that this broadness in Saudi curriculum has effectively participated in “enriching [her] way of teaching”. She claimed that she has employed her teaching method to harmonize the curriculum so that she makes use of this “broadness” and not let it a hindrance in her teaching practices:

Teaching grammar and advanced grammar rules helped me to set some general rules for students in criticizing literary works and setting rules in general for any subject I teach. Teaching writing have helped me to analyze with my students how literary authors capture readers’ attention. Teaching translation have helped me in helping students to avoid recurrent mistakes in grammar and in writing due to interference with their mother tongue. Studying applied linguistics and language learning theories in my masters have helped me to understand thoroughly how language is acquired.

It is worth mentioning that, Professor Amal was the only participant who has been teaching at the university for almost 16 years. Therefore, she believes that this long time of experience made her able to manage and control any hindrance that she might face in her classes. The only challenge that she can’t control is having a large number of students in one class:

In my situation, the huge number of students gathered in one classroom with one teacher affects students’ ability to learn. The teacher is not able to follow each student's progress.

(Professor Amal, interview, July 21, 2016).

She thinks that the Ministry of Education provides large classes that can contain a large number of students and they perceive this matter as an advantage for the university since it is one of the most popular universities in Saudi Arabia. But Professor Amal disagrees with this huge number of classroom students since she assumes it restricts the teacher’s ability to deliver the knowledge to students appropriately. She also believes that it is fundamental for teachers to work individually with the students to recognize their strength and weakness of the language, which is not the case with her:

The majority of my students lack proficiency. They tend to make errors in grammatical structures, use limited vocabulary and have unclear pronunciation. They tend to have better marks in receptive skills but they are notable weak in productive skills.

(Professor Amal, interview, July 21, 2016).

So she believes that the huge number of students that she has in each class has prevented her from improving the level of her students’ proficiency. Unlike Professor Amal, Professor Sarah complained about the lack of the important materials that she believes are necessarily
needed for her teaching as well as her students’ learning. In addition to that, she believes that the students are sometimes disrespectfully treated and that is considered one of the obstacles that she believes is affecting the students’ language efficiency:

The students are basically taught as if they were in high school and such lack can negatively impact their learning. Also, I would say the campus environment itself has a huge impact. The campus is lacking professional supervisors who would treat students as grown ups. Most teachers disrespect students, and never treat them with reliability.

(Professor Sarah, interview, June 16, 2016).

The classroom materials, such as digital tools and online materials, are fundamental in facilitating the English lessons. The context that Professor Sarah is teaching in is not completely lack the materials, the computers, projectors and the Internet, but such classes are not always available in her context. Furthermore, she believes that the above factors, the lack of class materials and dealing with the students’ inappropriately, participated in her students’ low language proficiency:

Students’ reading, writing and speaking abilities are seriously low. They have slightly better skills in listening

(Professor Sarah, interview, June 16, 2016).

On the other hand, Ms. Rose complained about the context in which she is teaching. She is teaching English in a private school. This school is monitored by the Ministry of Education but unlike the other participants, her classes are totally unprepared for a teaching environment:

حرفياً كلاساتي مافيها ولا اي وسائل ولا أدوات ولا شي. مافي نت ولا بروجكتور ولا كمبيوتر. هذا النقص يؤثر علي كمدرس

لان احيانا اضطر احذف بعض التمارين والواجبات اللي اشوفها مهمه للطلاب.
My classes literally have no means or tools. There is no internet, no projector, no computers. The lack of these materials affect my teaching because sometimes I delete some tasks and activities that are so important for students’ learning.

(Ms. Rose, interview, July 28, 2016).

As mentioned above, Ms. Rose doesn’t prefer using the grammar-translation methods and she uses visual and tactile aids instead. This different method of teaching requires a classroom that is completely equipped with all the needed means and tools, which is not the case with her situation. She brings all the materials that are necessary for her class on her own every day:

والمحطة المكتبة متنقلة. معي شنطة كبيرة بكفرات اسحبها من كلاس لكلاس. هذي الشنطة فيها كل شي ممكن احتاجه للكلاس وللطلاب فيها مسجلات ولاب توب ويو اس بي بروجكتور وبطايق وأقلام حبر ورصاص وأقلام سبورة وأوراق الطلاب ومفاتيحهم.

I am like a mobile bookstore. I have a big suitcase with wheels that I pull from one class to another. This suitcase has all the materials that I need for the students such as recordings, laptops, USB projector, cards, pens, pencils, markers, students’ papers and files.

(Ms. Rose, interview, July 28, 2016).

Ms. Rose believes that her goal, as a Saudi English teacher, is sometimes hard and seems impossible to attain because of the hindrances that she meets in her classes. And despite her own attempts to equip her classes with all the materials that are necessary and obligatory to facilitate her teaching process, she is unsatisfied with her students’ outcome:

حاول أحفزهم يتعلمون بس ماشي قايده

I try to motivate my students’ to learn but that is not helping.
Even though of all these three participants’ attempts to attain their own goals and objectives successfully as Saudi English teachers, the hindrances that they believe occur in their classes are more likely to prevent them from achieving these goals. These hindrances or challenges influenced not only the teachers’ practices but also the learners’ learning processes.

**Teachers’ Beliefs and Values Over the Ownership of the English Language and the Relationship Between These Beliefs and Their Understanding of the English Language Learning/Teaching**

The concept of English ownership plays a paramount role in shaping the status of the English language in Saudi Arabia nowadays. The Saudi society maintains the belief that English is owned by the Native countries and the English that is utilized by Saudis must be limited within the native boundaries. This belief is derived from the limitation boundaries that the MOE sets for the English language (Alamari & Khan, 2014). Professor Amal and Ms. Rose, for example, believe that the English language belongs to Inner Circles countries, such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom, and any English learner would learn better by native English teachers:

اعتقد اني شيء مهم جدا أن الواحد يكون عنده مدرس لغته الأم الإنجليزي لأن هذا الشيء يسهل تعلم اللغة بطريقة سهلة ومو سهلة

I think it is extremely important to have native English teachers because these teachers will help the students learn English easily and effortlessly.

(Ms. Rose, interview, July 28, 2016).

Ms. Rose said that she reached this belief after her experience as a Saudi English learner. She thinks that if she would have been taught English by native speakers, she wouldn’t face the difficulties that she faced during her learning experience. She perceives the native English
teachers as language facilitators. She attributed her dislike of English to NNES teachers, who she believes were the reason behind her dis-satisfaction with her listening skill:

Look you are my friend and you know the difficulties that I faced during my learning years. So since I have some obstacles during my learning experience at the university, I really feel how much difficulties Saudi students in general and my student in particular face while learning English … I had some teachers who really didn’t know how to teach us appropriately and that made me hate the English language at first … To be honest, I still have some difficulties with my listening skill and I’m very ashamed about it.

(Ms. Rose, interview, July 28, 2016).

Ms. Rose is one of the participants who believes that her learning experience influences her teaching beliefs and practices. Even though these harsh experiences, that she claimed, made her appreciate the accomplishments that she achieved in her academic life and made her proudly “want[s] to sound like [herself],” she believes that native English speaking teachers would have helped her to learn the English language without efforts. So she attributes the difficulties that she had as an English learner to the “non-native teachers.”

Likewise, Professor Amal believes in the importance of exposing students to the native-like environment. Therefore, she attempts to establish a “native environment” for her students to practice the English language since she believes that would help them improve their communicative skills:
I’m Trying to create situations in classrooms for students to practice their English. In college, we do have subjects and workshops dedicated for this. Speaking only English all day in college creates the native environment that students need to practice their language.

(Prof Amal, interview, July 21, 2016).

Professor Amal believes it is obligatory for the students to be taught by native speakers. But the social media has made it less necessary to have native speaking teachers in the classroom, hasn’t necessarily led to a change in attitude about the value and the rights of non-native speaking teachers. So that students are able to improve their own communicative skills through communicating with native speakers outside the classroom:

Nowadays there is no need to have native English speaking teachers (NESTs). I believe that social media has participated a lot in the increase of English speakers. People tend to use English more in order to use technology and to use a lot of applications. So, not only students, but all sorts of learners now have direct access to teachers of English via Facebook, twitter, YouTube and Snapchat in addition to hundreds of applications and sites for learning and teaching English.

(Prof Amal, interview, July 21, 2016).

Professor Amal values the concept of native English speakers and gives the right of English to the “Native speaking countries.” But she believes that the native-like level is not something hard to attain since she worked very hard until she achieved the “native-like level” that enabled her to successfully manage and guide her classes:

I have used also other self-taught ways to develop my language skills by listening to audio books and news, reading books and watching programs… I have studied
English for 14 years including master degree. I have taken the learning process seriously from the very beginning. In the intermediate and high schools, I learned the basic skills of the language. In college, I was introduced to literature and linguistics. Learning the English language shapes your mind and broadens your way of seeing and comprehending what happen around you. By the time I graduated, I had new tools to understand even my own culture. I believe now that in order to learn something, you need the passion to be serious and the time. After studying the master degree and being familiar with theories that controls language acquisition and teaching, I do always compare the ways I was taught against these theories and try to create better environment in my classes for students to learn.

(Professor Amal, interview, July 21, 2016).

Professor Amal thinks that she has reached the native like-level because of her hard working and passion for learning English. She reached this feeling after years of self-teaching and major acquaintance of the language. That’s why she didn’t expect her students to sound like Americans or British, but rather speaking “correct fluent English” is just enough for them. I believe she said so because she feels that she has been working so many years on developing and improving her own English and be a “native-like” speaker, unlike her students who still lack the expertise. Therefore, she hopes and wants to sound like British, not American, because I believe she perceived this accent as more formal, which fits her Academic status:

I sound like an American but I want to sound like the British… it doesn't matter that my students have an American or a British accent, as long as they speak correct fluent English.

(Professor Amal, interview, July 21, 2016).
Moreover, Ms. Rose also holds the belief that English belongs to the native English countries. So that, holding the belief of native ownership of English might be the reason behind her students’ shyness of speaking in her classes. Ms. Rose wants her students to sound like Americans, as mentioned before, and that might lead them to be silent and passive during her classes because they don’t want to sound different:

طلابي يستحون انهم يتكلمون. أكثرهم يحافظون يغلطون وهم يتكلمون.. وإذا جو يتكلمون معى وكذا كلامهم يكون مخلط بين العربي والإنجليزي

My students are shy when they speak. Most of them are afraid of making mistakes… They use a mixture between Arabic and English when they interact or communicate with me.

(Ms. Rose, interview, July 28, 2016).

The mixture between Arabic and English might be a way that her students use to avoid the real speaking situation. They also might not want to be inferior to their mates who can speak with American accents.

The beliefs and values that those two English teachers’ hold toward the concept of English ownership might be derived from the environment that they live in. Professor Amal and Ms. Rose learned the English language in Saudi Arabia, in which there is a great respect to the native countries and native English teachers (based on the second chapter of this study).

On the other hand, Professor Sarah strongly opposes the beliefs of the ownership of the English language. She was the only participant who believes that English doesn’t belong to certain nation or country but rather to its speakers. She mentioned that she is “happy with her accent” and doesn’t want to sound like certain people. It is worth mentioning that, Professor Sarah was the only participant who had the opportunity to study abroad and saw the English
language in a much more complex way. Therefore, this experience had enriched her own perspectives about the English language and helped her to embrace the concept that English no longer belongs to certain countries, which would break the image of English that the Saudi community hold. In Saudi Arabia, the concept of varieties Englishes or English as an international language is neither known nor explored. So that, by studying in the US, Professor Sarah came to know and value the belief that English is owned by its speakers:

You don’t have to live abroad or meet native speakers in order to be a professional English language learner. English language learning can be achieved with hard work. It is not something scientific.

(Professor Sarah, interview, June 16, 2016).

In addition to that, the experience that Professor Sarah had in the US contributed in constructing her beliefs towards having varieties of Englishes. She strongly encourages having varieties of English teachers in classes since that would reinforce the students’ learning. She believes that having varieties of English teachers would make the students aware of the fact that English is no longer belong to certain countries, and it doesn’t matter what type of accent that one has:

Personally, I believe it is good to expose oneself to different English accents and get used to non-native speakers teaching English since it wouldn’t impact the students negatively but rather teach them that it doesn’t matter at all what type of accent that they have.

(Professor Sarah, interview, June 16, 2016).

It is hard for me to say that but having the opportunity to study abroad and explore the English language in an Inner Circle country is the reason that made Professor Sarah evaluating
the varieties of Englishes. As I recently mentioned, the concept of varieties of Englishes is still not considered or appreciated in the Saudi society, and that is what makes Professor Amal and Ms. Rose believe in the concept of the English language ownership. Those two participants have encountered with internal and external factors that might lead them to reach this belief. An example of the internal factor might be, the widespread belief that speaking English with an accent would make one inferior to other speakers. However, an example of the external factor is the US and UK boundaries that the Ministry of Education put for the English language in Saudi Arabia, as illustrated in the literature review.

**Summary of the Chapter**

This study aimed at exploring the beliefs and values that Saudi English teachers hold towards the English language in the Saudi context. The three teachers participating in this study reported their learning experiences, their perceptions of the language learning and learners and their practices of language teaching. based on the data that were collected from these reported experiences, I compared and contrasted the different codes that appeared from the data. I chose to narrow my focus on three themes that I believe are the answers to my research questions. These themes are:

1. Teachers’ beliefs towards their teaching methods and their students’ academic performance.
2. Teachers’ beliefs towards the classrooms’ hindrances
3. Teachers’ beliefs and values over the ownership of the English language and the relationship between these beliefs and their understanding of the English language learning/teaching.
In chapter V, detailed discussions of the results that were emerged from the data analysis, along with implications and recommendations will be presented.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter aims at providing discussions of the findings of the study and recommendations based on the research findings. The objective of this discussion is mainly to provide insights on the research questions which are:

- What are the beliefs and values that Saudi English teachers hold toward teaching English in Saudi Arabia and how they negotiate these beliefs and values within their teaching context?

- In what ways do these beliefs and values influence their understanding of their students’ academic performance?

The purpose of the study was to explore the beliefs and values that three Saudi English teachers hold towards the English language. The study also attempts to investigate the connection between those teachers’ beliefs and values and their understanding of their students’ academic performance. In addition to that, by looking closely at the data, that I collected through interviewing three Saudi English teachers, several codes were emerged. And by comparing and contracting these codes, I was able to come up with three main themes. These three themes are based on the main research questions that were aimed to be answered throughout the study.

The themes discussed below were emerged from the interviews of the three participants. Those themes are as follow:

1. Teachers’ beliefs towards their teaching methods and their students’ academic performance.

2. Teachers’ beliefs towards the classrooms’ hindrances.
3. Teachers’ beliefs and values over the ownership of the English language and the relationship between these beliefs and their understanding of the English language learning/teaching.

Discussions of the Findings

In this discussion, the findings of the study will be presented and discussed. Specific concepts showed up from the data, including the following.

Teachers’ Beliefs About Students’ Motivation

Based on the findings of the three themes, there were some revealed connections between the three Saudi English teachers’ beliefs and values and their perceptions of their students’ academic performance. For instance, these teachers tend to believe that their students are unmotivated to learn or to communicate. They tend to link the concept of low motivation among the students to their students’ tendency to the grammar translation method in classes and to their students’ desires to pass the tests. Attributing the students’ academic performance to motivation might basically be the reason behind the constant low English level of Language proficiency that researchers (e.g., Bandar Saleh, 2013; Alrabai, 2014; Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013; Fareh, 2010) demonstrated. In fact, it is preferable if we do not view these events as a psychological trade but rather as resistance and investment. Alpert (1991) declared that resistance is “used in educational research to explain and interpret various student behaviors in schools that indicate the existence of tensions and conflicts between school and the wider society to which the students belong” (p. 350). To illustrate, Professor Amal mentioned that she always keeps reminding the students of the reasons and objectives of learning the English language. According to Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) and Al Zayid (2012), one learning objective that the Saudi Ministry of Education (MOE) implemented in the learning system is to acquire the linguistic competence that is needed to
illustrate Islamic-related information and contribute in spreading the ideals of Islam to people who might want to know about Islam, as well as participating in correcting the negative image of Islam and Muslims in the West. We, the Muslims, deeply want to change what the media and the incidents, after 9/11, constructed about Islam and Muslims, but I believe linking the learning of the English language with this objective is not favorable. This objective places a huge responsibility among the students and might cause them to resist the learning of the language.

In addition, both Ms. Rose and Professor Amal tend to describe their students as unmotivated students, who only perceive the English language as a subject that is important to pass the tests and “to have better opportunity in job market” (Prof Amal, interview, July 21, 2016). However, the fact might be that those students try to invest in the English language. By invest I referred to how Norton (2000) demonstrated this concept as “signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it” (p. 10). Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) illustrated that investing in a second language means if learners learn that language, they do so with a realization of the unattainable resources that they expect to gain in turn. These unattainable resources might be language, education, friendship and so on. The Saudi learners might try to invest in the English language to gain certain unattainable resources such as, the participants illustrate, passing the tests, which would lead them to have better opportunities in the job markets.

Another related point worth mentioning is based on what Ms. Rose, who said she wants her students to know the difference between the American and British accents and hoped her students could sound like Americans. Introducing the students during the English classes to the “standards American and British English”, as what the MOE called and assigned, would make the Saudi students perceive the Saudi English as inferior. So, I believe the hope that the students
could sound like native American speakers is a huge hope per se, which might cause Ms. Rose’s students to use a mixture between Arabic and English while they speak or to be shy and afraid of making mistakes. Alharbi (2015) elaborating that “even if they [learners] have the opportunity to participate, they will not take it, because they are afraid to make mistakes” (p. 108). So the hope that Ms. Rose wants her students to achieve is hard and sometimes unattainable, which might lead her students to be resistant.

**Ownership of English and its Implications for Teaching**

The finding of the study showed that the beliefs and values that Professor Amal and Ms. Rose hold toward the ownership of the English language and the native English teachers could have a great influence on the Saudi students’ academic performance. Many researchers illustrated that teaching English within the standard American and British boundaries, the boundaries that MOE assigned, restrict the teachers’ ability to teach and learners’ willingness to learn, which result in having challenges in English classes (Al-Asmri & Khan, 2014; Alshammari, 2015). Also, Park (2012) claimed that the myths of perceiving native speakers as superiority maintain as a hindrance for non-native English speaking teachers and learners (as cited in Nuske, 2015, p. 286). I believe that their beliefs and values towards the native speakers and the ownership of the English language had been constructed because of the environment in which they live. Both Professor Amal and Ms. Rose learned the English language in Saudi Arabia. During their learning, the Saudi context held certain environmental conceptions and attitudes to the English language. These conceptions and attitudes might impact their beliefs and values of the English language. To illustrate, the literature review of this study revealed how the Saudi economy, after the discovery of the oil and especially in the 1970s, participated in the belief of the significance of the English language. This discovery grabs the attention of many
Western countries, such as the United States, and made them be a substantial part of the Saudi economy. “The United States became involved in Saudi Arabia through its commercial interest in oil and through commercial actors that are directly and indirectly linked with the U.S. Government, initially Aramco [Arabian American Oil Company] and later many other companies” (Faruk, 2013, p. 75). As a result of this huge development in the Saudi economy, the Ministry of Education created special programs to educate the Saudi workers in the English language. The main objective of these programs was to perfectly communicate in the English language (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014, p. 129). The high standard requirements that such companies wanted and such program expected enhanced the value of the native speaker like level. That made thousands of Americans currently work in such places (in the oil companies or in English programs) (Faruk, 2014, p. 177) to meet the demands that the government seeks, which has been become the demand of most Saudi society.

In addition to that, the Ministry of Education (MOE) had also participated in spreading the beliefs and values towards the ownership of the English language. The MOE in Saudi Arabia is highly controlled the English curriculum and the syllabus, which they designed within the boundaries of Standard American or British English (Al-Asmari & Khan, 2014). So as the MOE, which is considered one of the major ministries in Saudi Arabia, highly values and appreciates the Standard English and believes that the English language belongs only to the Native countries, it is a fortiori to be a widespread belief among the Saudi people, including learners and teachers, as well. Therefore, I was not surprised when I found out what both Professor. Amal and Ms. Rose believe about the English language. That was because they had been encountered these concepts throughout their learning experiences, as well as their teaching experiences, through the MOE’s rules and curriculum.
Conversely, Professor Sarah was the only participant who is strongly against these notions and beliefs. She believes that the English language mustn’t be taught within the traditional boundaries of American English or British English. I believe she achieved this belief because of her learning experience and the context that she was in during her learning journey. Professor Sarah completed her Master’s degree in the United States. Through these years, she was able to explore the reality behind this fallacy. During her learning experience, she encountered with English speakers from all over the world, which might make her value the concept of varieties of Englishes. As I mentioned before, varieties of Englishes still unexplored fact in the Saudi society. That’s why I believe Professor Amal and Ms. Rose were not able to perceive the English language the same way as Professor Sarah. So, both the economic factors as well as the Saudi MOE participated in the spreading and the high evaluating of the concept of the ownership of the English language among the Saudi society in general, and those three teachers in particular.

**Relationships Between the Role of the MOE and the English Language Teaching**

As appeared in the findings, not only the religious, political and economic factors were contributing to constructing the Saudi teachers’ beliefs and values towards the English language, but also the MOE had had The lion’s share. As illustrated above, the policies that the MOE designed and assigned, regarding the Standard English and the learning objectives, framed the teachers’ beliefs and values over the ownership of English as well as the purpose for learning English. These beliefs and values had influenced their understanding of their students’ academic performance and might be the essential reason for the students’ low linguistic efficiency. Additionally, all of the three participants attributed their beliefs about the classroom hindrances to the MOE in one way or another. All of them complained about the Saudi curriculum and
textbooks that the MOE designed and assigned to the students, and perceive them as one of the earnest hindrances that they encountered in their classes. For instance, Professor Amal said that the curriculum that is designed for the English learner is “so broad and covers all aspects of learning English”. Similarly, Professor Sarah claimed that the Saudi textbooks are “out of date and have no authentic materials”. Whereas Ms. Rose stated that “the Saudi curriculum is sometimes good and sometimes not. Some lessons are very simple in a way that, I believe, will not help the students.” They believe all of these aspects of the Saudi curriculum participated in their low academic performance. Fareh (2010), Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) pointed out that the Saudi English curriculum and textbooks, as well as the class materials, are considered some of the challenges that Saudi teachers face in their classes. Al-Seghayer (2014) elaborated that the Saudi curriculum is neither match the students’ needs nor levels and it has variable constraints that function as a block in the practice of the English language teaching. likewise, Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) mentioned that “the policy makers and the syllabus designers of Saudi Arabia fail to design a curriculum or syllabus after conducting a needs analysis program” (p. 115). Instead of providing the English classrooms with a suitable curriculum, textbook and materials that would facilitate the process of the English language learning and teaching, the MOE makes this target unattainable: “The students are basically taught as if they were in high school and such lack can negatively impact their learning” (Professor Sarah, interview, June 16, 2016), “my classes literally have no means or tools… the lack of these materials affects my teaching” (Ms. Rose, interview, July 28, 2016). And that what makes the Saudi teachers believe that the MOE curriculum negatively impacts not only their teaching practices but also their students’ academic performance.
Additionally, Al-Asmari and Khan (2014) stated that the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia has highly governed the English curriculum and the opportunity to enhance varieties of English is neither recognized nor encouraged. The three participants believe that their inability to choose the knowledge resources that they believe is essential for their teaching practices, instead of the assigned textbooks, makes the given tasks and lessons unattainable because they feel that they are “beyond their capability and responsibility” (Al-Seghayer, 2014, p. 23). Moreover, Professor Sarah and Ms. Rose believe that the lack of the classroom materials, such as “wall charts, flash cards, posters, audio and visual aids, language software, e-learning resources, a well-equipped language computer laboratory, and other facilities” is a serious barrier in their classes since it prevents them from meeting the students’ needs and contributes to having “inadequate diverse, selective, and appropriate teaching resources” (Fareh, 2010, p. 20). It is worth mentioning that unlike them, Professor Amal, who is teaching in one of the well-known university, believes that her classes are fully equipped with all materials she needs, but her dilemma is with the large number of students gathered in one room, which diametrically influences her capability to assess each students’ needs. That according to Al-Seghayer (2014), makes most teachers feel it is hard to cover all the tasks and activities that assign in each lesson, which, on the other hand, makes it difficult for them to go over all the course materials and skills effectively. So that, they believe these hindrances and restraints affect not only their teaching process but also their students’ academic performance.

**Recommendations to the Saudi Ministry of Education**

As clarified above, the Saudi MOE partially or completely participated in shaping the beliefs and values of the three Saudi teachers and their understanding of their students’ academic performance. Therefore, I believe that there is a definite need to:
1. Design a national EFL curriculum that involves the concepts of varieties of Engishes and Saudi English. As clarified above, the current English curriculum in Saudi Arabia supports the notion of ownership over the English language and that impacts the Saudi English learning and teaching.

2. Provide different teaching programs and workshops for Saudi English teachers that address the concepts of native speaker fallacy and varieties of Engishes. The data has shown that the two participants, who conducted their study in Saudi Arabia, lack the knowledge about the concept of verities of Engishes, which makes them highly value the concept of native English speakers. Such a belief negatively reflected on the way they understood their students’ academic performance.

3. Analyze and define the students’ needs, levels, and necessities, as well as set learning goals and objectives in regards to these needs and necessities. All of the three participants agreed on the fact that the Saudi English curriculum doesn’t meet the students needs and levels, and that is what makes their students’ academic performance far below their expectations.

4. Provide a selection of classroom materials and technology that directly reflect the curriculum’s needs. As illustrated from the data, the lack of the necessary classroom materials and technology restricted the Saudi teachers’ teaching and their students’ learning.

5. Give the Saudi teachers the freedom to lead the curriculum by creating their own activities, choosing their classroom textbooks and materials, and adding any additional resources according to the different lessons’ needs, as well as their students’ abilities, levels, and interests.
The beliefs and values of the Saudi English teachers and the level of the Saudi students’ academic performance are anticipated to remain at their level unless the above recommendations are taken into consideration. The results of implementing the mentioned recommendations are expected to have positive outcomes in teachers’ teaching practices and the students’ academic performance. Most importantly, I was motivated to write these recommendations because there has been a new initiative to reform and improve the Saudi curriculum (this initiative is called 2030 Saudi vision) and as a response to this initiative, I mentioned the above points since I see my work is contributive to the 2030 Saudi vision.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The researchers that discuss the Saudi English teachers’ beliefs and values towards the English language has rarely been discussed. Therefore, the findings of this research paper are considered basic and needed further research and discussion. Even though this study doesn’t aim to generalize or globalize its findings, further studies are needed to examine the findings of this study. There is a need to explore the Saudi English teachers’ beliefs and values from different contexts, backgrounds, and experiences in order to gain a vivid picture of their beliefs and values. Moreover, the Saudi students’ academic performance can be also measured through analyzing students’ performance in different academic contexts.

In addition, future research should be conducted to discuss the differences between motivation and resistance in Saudi English classrooms. Also, there is a need for a future study that explores the influence of the religion, political, and economic factors on the status of English in the Saudi context. A further recommendation is to conduct a study that explores and discusses the role of the Saudi Ministry of Education in influencing, negatively or positively, the English language learning and teaching in Saudi Arabia.
Conclusion

The current study, which focused on the Saudi English teachers’ beliefs and values towards the English language, brings additional insights regarding the connection between the teachers’ beliefs and values and their understanding of their students’ academic performance. These beliefs and values are constructed because of the religion, political and economic factors in Saudi Arabia, and also because of the role that the MOE presents and holds towards the English language in the Saudi educational system. The findings of this study not only answer the research questions but also provide a discussion topic for future studies to build upon to discover more about the issues that are related to the English language in Saudi Arabia. Finally, this study should be regarded by Saudi society in general, and educational authorities in particular, as an attempt to draw their attention to the need to provide appropriate English environment to its teachers and learners in order to implement and maintain effective and productive teaching and learning.
References


Editorial Dunken.


Appendix A

Email to the Participants

Dear Ms. ____________,

My name is Ebtehal Asiri. I graduated from King Khaled University, Languages and Translation department. Currently, I have a scholarship to pursue my M.A. degree in Teaching English to the Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, USA.

I’m conducting a research on the beliefs and values that Saudi English teachers hold towards the English language in Saudi Arabia. My research attempts to explore these beliefs and values as well as investigate their impact on teachers’ understanding of their students’ academic performance.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be interviewed and asked to share your learning English backgrounds, your teaching methodology and practices as well as a description of your students’ level of English. The interview questions will focus mainly on your teaching experiences, curriculum, textbooks and students. This interview will be conducted for 50 minutes.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate, your identity will be protected by a pseudonym or replaced by initials. Without any doubt, you can withdraw at any time you want. For more details about privacy and confidentiality, read the consent form attached to this email.

Thank you for your time and consideration! Your teaching and learning experiences are valuable for the study. Most importantly, your participation would contribute enormously to the research on teaching English in Saudi Arabia.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask me.
Looking forward to hearing from you,

Best regards,
Ebtehal Asiri
Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

You are invited to participate in this research study. The following information is provided in order to help you to make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask. You are eligible to participate because you are a Saudi English teacher or lecturer who graduated from King Khaled University (KKU).

The purpose of this study is to explore the values and beliefs that Saudi English teachers hold and their influence on their understanding of the students’ academic performance. Furthermore, this paper aims to investigate the factors that lead to construct these beliefs and values among the Saudi teachers. Through this study, you will have the opportunity to reflect on your experience as an English teacher as well as your teaching experiences. The researcher will schedule an interview meeting (50 minutes). The interview contains different questions that will reflect on your teaching experiences and your own teaching methods in the Saudi context.

As a Saudi English teacher, your participation in this study will enhance the field of English language teaching and learning. However, the outcomes of this research are anticipated to improve the Saudi curriculum and the level of English learning and teaching.

Your contribution in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying the researcher of the study. Upon your request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information, including the recordings, will be held in strict confidence and will use only for the purpose of this study. Moreover, all the data will be retained in a protected computer that has a password known only by the researcher.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below and you will be given a copy of the consent form.

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).
VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:
I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (PLEASE PRINT) ______________________ _____________________________________________

Signature ___________________________________________ _______________________________________

Date __________________________________________________ _______________________________________

Phone number or location where you can be reached ____________________________________________

Best days and times to reach you ____________________________________________________________

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, potential benefits and risks associated with participating in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised and have witnessed the above signature.

_________________________________________  ________________________________

Date                      Researcher’s Signature
Appendix C

Interview Protocol (English)

Hello dear______,
Hope you are in good health and high spirit. I would like you to know that I really cherish your time and interest in this study.
The following is 50-minute interview, I would like you to answer the questions as honest and detailed as possible. You might answer the questions in English or Arabic. The interview is divided into four sections.

Section 1:
1. Tell me about yourself?
2. Could you describe a typical day on the job?
3. How long have you been teaching English? What courses and levels?
4. What is your main goal as a Saudi English teacher?

Section 2:
1. Where did you learn English?
2. What are your conceptions of your learning experience?
3. What are the difficulties that you faced while learning English?
4. Did your learning experience affect your teaching method? How?

Section 3:
1. Tell me about your teaching method?
2. What are the main challenges that you and your students confront during English classes?
3. How could you, as a teacher, overcome these challenges?
4. What is your perceptions of the Saudi English curriculum, textbooks and classroom materials?
5. Tell me about your students’ linguistic level? Describe your students’ proficiency and performance in your classes?

Section 4:
1. Give me examples of the countries that speak English?
2. Who do you want to sound like?
3. Does it matter that your students have an American or British accents?
4. Do you believe that in order to acquire the English language, one needs to encounter with US or British teachers? Why or why not?
5. Do you think that having varieties of English teachers such as, Chinese English teachers, Indian English teacher and Saudi English teachers could impact student’s learning of English? Why or why not?
مرحبًا عزيزتي.....،

اتمنى أن تكوني بخير وصحصة جيدة. في البداية اسمح لي بان أوضح لك مدى تقديري لوقتك واهتمامك بهذه الدراسة.

التالي هو أسئلة لمقابلة مدتها ٥٠ دقيقة، اتمنى منك أن تجيبي على هذه الأسئلة بكل صراحه ودقة. تستطيعين الإجابة على هذه الأسئلة باللغة العربية أو الإنجليزية. هذه الأسئلة مقسمة الى أربعة أقسام:

القسم الأول:

١. تحدثي عن نفسك؟
٢. أوصفي لي يوماً عادياً في مهنتك
٣. منذ متى وانتي تدرسين اللغة الانجليزية؟
٤. ماهو هدفك كمدرسة لغة انجليزية سعودية؟

القسم الثاني:

١. أين تعلمتي اللغة الإنجليزية؟
٢. ماهو تصورك لتجربة تعلمك اللغة الإنجليزية؟
٣. ماهي الصعوبات التي واجهتك أثناء دراسة اللغة الإنجليزية؟
٤. هل تجربة تعلمك للغة الإنجليزية اثرت على طريقتك في تدريس هذه اللغة؟ كيف ذلك؟

القسم الثالث:

١. تحدثي عن طريقة تدريسك؟
٢. ماهي اهم الصعوبات التي تواجهك او تواجه طالباتك خلال حضورك للغة الإنجليزية؟
٣. كمعلمة، كيف تتغلبين على هذي الصعوبات؟
٤. ما هي تصوراتك عن المناهج الإنجليزية السعودية، والكتب، والإدوات المتوفرة في صفوفك الدراسية؟
٥. تحدثي عن مستوى طالباتك اللغوي؟ أوصفي درجة تمكنهم من اللغة واداؤهم في الصف؟

القسم الرابع:

١. اعطيني امثلة عن دول تتحدث اللغة الإنجليزية؟
٢. هل تريدين التحدث بطريقة معينة؟
٣. هل يهمك ما إذا كانوا طالباتك يتكلمون لهجة أمريكية أو بريطانية أثناء تحدثهم؟
٤. هل تعتقدين أنه من أجل تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، يجب أن يخالط المتعلمين مدرسين أمريكيين أو بريطانيون؟
٥. هل تعتقدين أنه اشتمال سلك التدريس على معلمين من مناطق مختلفة (كمعلمون من الصين، من الهند، السعودي) قد يؤثر على تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية؟ لماذا؟