EFL Teachers' Perceptions in Saudi Arabia of the role of Self-Directed Learning in their Professional Development

Submitted by

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other university.

signature: …………………………………………………...

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Abstract

The central aim of this study is to explore how Saudi English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers perceive self-directed learning (SDL) in the context of their professional development (PD) to view the potential of teachers to take the initiative in pursuing their own professional development and whether this is possible in the context of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). SDL has been proposed as a means of achieving the aims of teachers' PD, but it can be difficult to reach an agreed definition of the concept. However, the literature review suggests a paucity of research on the topic of SDL as a means of teachers' PD, and research on teachers' PD tends to focus on central PD provided by teachers' institutions.

Therefore, this study seeks to address the gap in knowledge regarding the potential of SDL for professional development through a review of current research on the concept and an exploration of the perspectives of EFL teachers in the KSA. The study utilised semi-structured interviews to collect data from twenty Saudi EFL teachers, and the data were thematically analysed.

Whilst the majority of the participants in this study recognised the benefit of SDL for PD, arguing that it can be a cornerstone of PD, they did not consider it to be encouraged institutionally or societally in a broader sense. In addition, the data revealed that the participants usually linked responsibility for the provision for PD with the MoE that they considered responsible for this aspect. Also, the data revealed that teachers perceived that they required the help of the MoE in supporting their learning through the provision of effective PD.

Despite the participants' belief in the benefits of SDL, the data analysis showed that some teachers do not self-direct their learning for their PD and those that do, tend to discontinue to engage in SDL activities due to several demotivating factors. Furthermore, certain teachers explained that they started to engage in SDL later, after several years of teaching while others expressed the view that they do self-direct their learning, but in an intermittent manner. The common denominator or characteristic of teachers' SDL is that it is unplanned and difficult to sustain.

As far as the factors impacting positively or negatively on the participants' SDL are concerned, the data suggest that a number of factors encourage teachers to learn while other factors tend to discourage them. Most of these encouraging and discouraging factors are external factors which relate to the MoE policy or the workplace environment, and a few relate to teachers' personal factors. With regard to the SDL sources, the data showed multiple sources teachers learn from, and it was indicated that most of these sources are outside teachers' workplaces. Finally, the study concluded with a number of implications and recommendations.

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List of Abbreviations

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia   KSA

Professional Development   PD

Self-Directed Learning   SDL

General Directorates of Education   GDE

The Ministry of Education   MoE

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The topic of teachers' learning and its implications for professional development (PD) is a significant area of attention for educators worldwide. Over the course of their career, teachers encounter many challenges and demands "due to the introduction of new curricula, changes in technology, and changes in learning needs of students" (Kolenc Kolnik 2010: 54), which require them to constantly update their skills and knowledge (Day, 1999; Lohman & Woolf, 2001). They can pursue a range of learning opportunities for lifelong PD either through programmes provided by their educational institution or occur outside institutional boundaries. Nevertheless, certain educational sectors may provide teachers with limited PD activities or provide activities that are irrelevant to their needs. As a result, to cope with the demands of their teaching, teachers "have to invest in their own professional development and in some cases, this means that they have to use their own resources to ensure that their students do well" (Mushayikwa, 2013: 227). In this way, teachers are self-directing their learning to develop themselves professionally inside or outside their workplaces, individually or in collaboration with their colleagues. They decide when, where and why to learn to pursue their professional growth.

Self-directed learning (SDL), which has been broadly defined by Mushayikwa & Lubben (2009: 376) as "the professional development arising from the teachers' own initiative", seems to be an effective approach that teachers can adopt for their own professional growth (Brown, Ferrill, Hinton & Shek, 2001; Ellinger, 2004; Minott, 2010). In this kind of learning, the "teacher assumes responsibility for setting goals for self-development and for managing and controlling their own learning" (Richards & Farrell, 2005: 13).

In light of the above, the motivation behind this study relates to my personal experience as an EFL teacher as I taught my first class after graduation from university with neither practical nor theoretical knowledge of teaching. I worked as an EFL teacher without any prior training and did not study any university courses about teaching or education, but only studied a four-year bachelor's degree in the English Language, including courses such as linguistics, phonology and English literature. When I came to the field of teaching, I can recall asking myself on the first day, "Am I capable to teach?", "is teaching an easy task?", "How can I teach my first class?", "What is the best way to teach?", "How can I design tests?" or "How can I manage the classroom?". I often wondered how to deal with many teaching issues, while I did not have any previous knowledge about them.

During that time, I was expected from the MoE to support new teachers like me from the first day or before the start of the academic year, but unfortunately, neither the school nor the MoE provided direct support, apart from a short induction programme before the start of the school year. Therefore, it was a challenge for me as a novice teacher who was "unprepared to address the cultural, personal and academic needs of [my] pupils, along with requiring help with classroom management, understanding school procedures, learning content" and other job-related requirements (Krauss & Guat, 2008: 417). I can recall that the first PD activity provided by the MoE that I attended was after one month of the beginning of my first year; after that one, I also attended a few activities during that year. It is worth mentioning here that these activities that I attended were not always specifically designed for novice teachers or English language teachers; rather, they were proposed by the Department of Education in my city for all teachers regardless of their seniority, novice and experienced teachers under the policy *one size fits all*. Moreover, I can personally recall that during my first year of teaching, I was eager to take part in a presentation skills course, but the MoE did not provide such a course; as a result, I had to

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pay for a course offered in a private training centre in order to develop this particular skill. Hence, during that time, I tried to develop myself in a self-directed manner by taking some personal initiatives. For Mushayikwa & Lubben (2009: 376), "environment in which teachers work in isolation and with minimum support from the education system […] led to the process commonly termed 'self-directed professional development'". In the same vein, in the context of the Cayman Islands, Minott (2010: 329) emphasises that SDL is an important alternative to the "scarcity of local professional development activities". Furthermore, Gallagher, Griffin, Parker, Kitchen & Figg (2011: 881) stress that "in the absence of effective professional induction and mentoring programs […], it falls on teacher educators to attend to their own professional development independently or with colleagues".

SDL is not suitable for teachers alone; rather, it can be an effective approach for lifelong PD in all professions. Guglielmino & Guglielmino (2011: 29) argues that "lifelong self-initiated learning is now increasingly recognized as essential for individuals to function effectively in their personal lives and in the workplace". In the same vein, Guglielmino (2008: 4) emphasises the importance of SDL in this changeable and competitive world. She says that "lifelong self-directed learning is now, more than ever, a necessity for survival". Hence, SDL seems to be important to teachers' PD in the KSA for the reasons illustrated above and due to the fact that the current PD provision provided by the MoE has been censured by many studies which criticised its compulsory nature, its lack of variety and choices, its lack of teachers' involvement and its over emphasis on theory rather than practice (AL-Hazmi, 2003; Alhodithy, 2009; Alharbi, 2011; Albedaiwi, 2014; Al-Seghayer: 2014; Althobaiti, 2017; Alhamad, 2018).

1.2   Significance of the Study

The main focus of this study is to explore Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions and experiences about SDL as a means of PD. Studies on teachers' PD in the context of the KSA have always focused on the MoE provision. While these studies have added a significant contribution to our understanding of the current practices within the MoE programmes, as far as I am aware, no studies have investigated the topic of SDL in relation to teachers' PD in the KSA. This, therefore, may constitute a significant contribution of the study.

This study did not seek to investigate the MoE PD programmes per se; rather, this research aimed to approach this issue of teachers' learning from a different angle. Indeed, I intended to explore Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions and experiences with SDL as a means of professional development in order to contribute to the expansion of knowledge in this particular context, which may constitute a significant contribution to the Saudi educational landscape.

In the KSA, teachers operate within a dictated top-down approach where their voice in designing PD programmes is not heard. The underpinning rationale of the MoE PD is top-down, isolated workshops and courses, which do not necessarily address teachers' PD needs. Also, teachers are not invited to express their needs or participate in PD design. As mentioned above, this study did not aim to examine the MoE PD per se, but the MoE's role is important to create the conditions for teachers to participate in SDL activities for their professional growth. The term *self* in SDL does not mean learning in isolation or not attending formal activities; rather, teachers may as an example enrol in formal learning activities inside the MoE boundaries in a self-directed manner. With this in mind, the

central aim of this study was to explore teachers' views on SDL as a form of PD, whether if their learning is taking place inside or outside the MoE boundaries.

Education is one of the sectors that receives considerable attention in Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 (Vision 2030) announced by the government in 2016 to put in place fundamental reforms in the country. This vision revolves around three primary themes: a vibrant society, a thriving economy and an ambitious nation (Saudi Vision 2030 website, 2016). This strategic plan aims to minimize the country's dependence on oil and develop all of its sectors. According to the Vision Realization Office of the MoE, a fundamental shift is needed toward the development of teachers' PD and a significant transitioning towards digital learning. The latter aims to digitize various aspects of the educational environment to promote the use of technology and support the development of teachers in their professional growth (Ministry of Education, n.d). The main goals of the development of teachers' PD initiative are as follows:

1) developing professional paths for teachers and educational leaders
2) developing an integrated electronic system for educational professional development
3) developing the educational career development centre strategy
4) developing the accreditation of professional training
5) developing methods and evaluation tools of teachers in line with modern education trends. (ibid: n.d).

Vision 2030 aims to create an environment conducive to learning, whereby teachers can self-direct their learning for their PD.

Owing to this, this study hopes to contribute to the issue of teachers' learning for PD in the KSA because it has the potential to open new ways and horizons for Saudi EFL

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teachers' PD by investigating a new area in the KSA which may also trigger further research, enhance professional practice and make recommendations to policy makers in terms of developing the KSA educational field.

While this study hopes to contribute to the Saudi context in an area of research that has not been explored heretofore, it also hopes to add to our understanding of the issue of SDL for teachers' PD in the broader sense because SDL, as a way for teachers' PD, has not been given enough scrutiny in educational research. Generally speaking, "there is a paucity of literature on self-directed professional development" (Weir, 2017: 16). Indeed, SDL has not been given much attention in teachers' PD (Liu et al., 2014; Lom & Sullenger, 2011) and "researchers have tended to concentrate more on evaluating effects of centrally directed professional development" (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009: 376). Moreover, Anwaruddin (2015: 807) states: "I would argue that SDL is still under-theorized and less-utilized in the literature on in- service teachers' continuous professional learning". Furthermore, according to Acar, Kara& Taşkın Ekici (2015: 11), "it is frequently mentioned that lifelong learning skills of teachers, self-directed learning, that will form the basis of lifelong learning, is not given too much area in literature". Also, in terms of teachers' pre-service training, according to Bullock (2013: 104), SDL "has not found its way into the teacher education literature in a significant way".

In the same vein, there was a call from prominent scholars in the topic of SDL (Candy,1991; Merriam & Caffarella 1999; Brockett, 2000; Brockett, 2009) to research SDL qualitatively as a result of the dominance of quantitative approaches in SDL research. The qualitative studies will allow us to "examining the lived experience of the individuals [and] how learners experience self-directed learning in their own lifeworld"

(Brockett, 2009: 43). As a result, this study hopes to fill an existing gap in this topic to extend our knowledge about SDL and its implications for teachers' PD.

1.3   Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore an under-researched topic in the KSA related to teachers' SDL for their professional growth. More specifically, the study aims:

1.   to elicit twenty Saudi EFL teachers' views and experiences with SDL as way for their professional development.

2.   to explore the extent to which they view themselves as self-directed learners.

3.   to identify the SDL activities they undertake.

4.   to identify factors impacting (positively or negatively) their self-directed learning for their processional development

This study followed a qualitative exploratory methodology using semi-structured interviews with twenty EFL Saudi teachers to gain an in-depth understanding of the issue of SDL as a form of teachers' PD through the perceptions and experiences of the participants.

1.4   Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, the following research questions were formulated as follows:

1.   How do Saudi EFL teachers perceive SDL as a form of teachers' professional development?

2.   To what extent do Saudi EFL teachers view themselves as self-direct learners for their professional development?

3.   What is the nature of the sources and activities that Saudi EFL teachers identify as SDL?

4.   What factors do Saudi EFL teachers believe impact (positively or negatively) their self-directed learning?

1.5   Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is arranged into seven chapters beginning with Chapter One, which highlights the rationale and aims of the study. Chapter Two details the context of the study and describes how Saudi EFL teachers are prepared professionally. Chapter Three reviews the relevant literature related to the topic of the study. Chapter Four presents the paradigmatic position and the methodological strategy employed in this study. It also provides a detailed description of the methods of this study, its sampling strategy, data analysis procedures and ethical considerations and concludes by showing how the quality of the research was ensured. Chapter Five reports the findings of the study, followed by Chapter Six, which discusses its main findings. Finally, Chapter Seven concludes the study.

Chapter Two: The Study Context

2.1   Introduction

This chapter presents a general overview of the context of this study. As the sample of this study is made of EFL teachers, this chapter discusses how EFL pre-service and in-service teachers are professionally prepared and qualified. Although this study aimed to explore EFL teachers' perceptions and experiences with SDL as a means of PD, it was not possible to write relevant contextual background about teachers' SDL in the context of the KSA due to the lack of literature about this topic.

2.2   The Educational System in the KSA

The educational system in Saudi Arabia went through multiple historical stages till it was formally established with the foundation of the Ministry of Education in 1954. (Ministry of Education, 2004). In the KSA, the English language is the only language taught in government public schools. It is taught from stage four in primary schools till the last year of secondary school. There are two classes a week at the primary and four weekly lessons at the middle and secondary school level; each lesson lasts forty-five minutes.

With regard to the English language curriculum, with the rapid educational reforms over the last few years, the MoE approved one coursebook series for the teaching of English at all stages of the educational system, from the elementary stage to the secondary stage, in all regions of the country (Ministry of Education, 2020). This series is one of the three previously approved series from different publishing companies, used in the three stages: the Macmillan course series, the McGraw Hill course series, and the MM Publication course series. The MoE selected the McGraw Hill series and approved it for the whole country and all stages. The material for each stage consists of the following components:

a student book, an audio program, a workbook, a teacher's guide, a test bank, an interactive whiteboard software and a student e-book, and an online learning platform. All of these materials are used to support teachers in their teaching.

Furthermore, the evaluation of EFL teachers in the KSA is not based on specific evaluation criteria for EFL teachers; instead, teachers are evaluated based on a standardised evaluation system used throughout the KSA for all specialisations "despite the fact that teachers' work is multi-varied and too immense to be reduced to a list of items on an observation sheet" (Troudi, 2009: 60). Hence, one standardised evaluation form is used by schools' principals to evaluate all teachers twice a year. This form is divided into three sections evaluating three areas. First, the focus is on evaluating the teacher's performance using nineteen criteria such as familiarity with work systems and procedures or classroom management. Second, teacher characteristics are also evaluated; these include their appreciation of responsibilities or the extent of their following directives. Third, the evaluation also focuses on the teacher's relationships with colleagues, students and parents.

According to Education Statistics and Decision Support Center and the MoE (n.d), there were 475903 male and female teachers in the KSA in the academic year 2018/2019. Most EFL teachers in the KSA are Saudi nationals as there are around thirty-three thousand male and female teachers, while non-Saudi nationals EFL teachers in the KSA mostly work in the private sector or rural areas. They have to some extent, a heavy workload as the average number of classes per week is between 20 to 24 classes. They are also required to complete additional tasks inside the school, such as supervising students during break times or between lessons. They are also responsible for supervising them until all students leave the school; this supervision is assigned for teachers once a week. In addition to their

weekly teaching load, teachers have cover duties if other colleagues are absent from work. Therefore, given this workload, teachers may not self-direct their learning individually or collaboratively due to the lack of time.

It can be argued that the main source for the students to learn English in the KSA is the teacher. According to Alkubaid (2014: 84), the education system in "Saudi relies primarily on the teacher as the sole source of knowledge" and the textbooks. Through my experience as an EFL teacher in the KSA, there seems to be a common agreement among the colleagues I met in the KSA educational landscape that most students have low English language proficiency levels, which can be attributed, according to Alfahadi (2012: 41), to the fact that most EFL teachers in the KSA are of "poor quality". In this regard, the educational sector has to provide teachers with effective PD programmes because, in order to improve the quality of teaching effectively, it is necessary to regularly engage teachers in suitable PD opportunities (Porter, Garet, Desimone, Birman, & Suk Yoon, 2000). It is also of utmost importance that the teachers self-direct their learning to improve professionally. However, as the MoE PD programmes are one of the main sources of learning for teachers, many KSA studies have criticized these programmes arguing that "Saudi EFL teachers are inadequately trained to prepare students to be good English learners" (Al-Seghayer: 2014: 143).

Teachers' PD provided by the MoE has been the subject of criticism in many studies in Saudi Arabia (Al-Hazmi, 2003; Alharbi, 2011; Al-Seghayer: 2014; Althobaiti, 2017; Alhamad, 2018) in terms of its insufficiency and lack of diversity. Also, the lack of systematicity in designing the PD programmes.

However, the aim of this study is not to fully investigate the MoE PD programmes and its pros and cons but to write about how the EFL teachers are qualified and also to provide reasonable information about one of the main channels teachers learn from which is the MoE courses. In addition, as this study aims to explore the issue of EFL teachers' SDL as a way for PD in the context of Saudi Arabia, it can be challenging to write about the relevant contextual information about teachers' SDL in the KSA due to the unavailability of studies investigating this in the KSA.

2.3 Teacher Preparation Programmes in the KSA

Teachers in the KSA pass through two phases of preparation programmes. The first phase is the pre-service preparation which is provided by certain universities. The second one is the in-service preparation, provided by the MoE in educational training centres or the General Directorates of Education (GDE) premises or rarely inside the schools. The following two sections provide more details about pre-service and in-service teacher preparation in the context of this study.

2.3.1 Teachers Pre-Service Preparation

Before being eligible to teach in state schools and become professional teachers, Saudi EFL teachers spend four years at university to study for a Bachelor's degree in the English language. Upon graduating, they can work as teachers without any prior preparation theoretically and/or practically if there are vacancies and if the MoE need urgently to recruit teachers to fill these job vacancies.

Because Saudi graduates can work as teachers without undergoing pre-service training, Albedaiwi (2014: 34) identifies that "teachers, by no doubt, need several sources of information and modern training that fully prepares them for the work ahead". Likewise,

Alhodithy (2009: 25) criticizes that teaching in the KSA is "generally considered a routine function that anyone can do provided they have a degree; in other words, anyone who has content knowledge can teach". According to (Mahib ur Rahman & Alhaisoni: 2013: 116), many teachers have been recruited "with no professional training, no classroom experience, and little or no knowledge of the subject".

Although the minimum qualification to work as an EFL teacher in the KSA is a Bachelor's degree in the English language, but without any experience, after graduation, prospective teachers can apply to study for a one-year diploma in educational studies in colleges of education in universities across the country. In addition, any teacher who did not obtain this diploma, while he or she is in-service, can study this diploma in the evening time after the working hours. I obtained this diploma after five years of teaching.

This diploma is divided into two semesters whereby students study courses like curriculum studies, educational psychology and school administration. At the end of the second semester, students move on to a practical course and teach in schools as pre-service teacher trainees. However, if they study this diploma in the evening, each student is required to conduct practical lessons in front of his or her lecturer and colleagues at university.

According to AL-Hazmi (2003) and Albedaiwi (2014), these courses do not adequately prepare prospective Saudi EFL teachers and do not meet their needs in terms of professional development. It is noteworthy that, in the near past, the plan of the bachelor's degree in some universities consisted some courses in education, including a final semester (the practicum) whereby students teach in state schools under the supervision of university professors.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that in 2015 it was mentioned in the press (see Okaz, 2015) that the MoE suspended this diploma in all universities intending to develop it. This diploma was fully suspended in 2018, and one of the officials in the MoE announced in the media that this diploma would be replaced by a two-year Master's degree programme where students would undergo intensive training (see Okaz, 2018). To review and reform teachers' pre-service preparation programmes, the MoE suspended all these programmes countrywide. In December 2018, the MoE finally announced and publicised the "Executive Framework for Renewal of Teacher Education Programs in Saudi Universities" (see Ministry of Education, 2018). The MoE instructed the universities to design new pre-service teacher education programmes and announced that no programme would be accepted unless approved by them. The universities should design these programmes based on this new framework. To obtain the MoE's approval and open a teacher education programme, the following steps are followed:

1. The universities have to fill in the "Request for Preliminary Approval for opening teacher preparation program" form and send it to the committee of development of teacher preparation programmes in the MoE.

2. The committee reviews the preliminary applications and decides whether to approve the transition to the second step ("building the program"), to complete some of the requirements, or reject the programme.

3. When the application is accepted, the university should start designing the programme according to the model sent by the committee for the development of teacher preparation programmes in the MoE and then send it to the committee.

4.   The committee for the development of teacher preparation programmes in the MoE reviews the programmes submitted by the universities and decides to either approve the programmes or request amendments. The programme is then resubmitted or rejected.

2.3.2   In-Service Teacher Preparation

In the KSA, reforming the curriculum, changing the textbooks, teachers' training and many other aspects are all determined by the MoE in a top-down manner. As far as in-service teachers' training is concerned, the MoE provides a number of workshops, which is the most common form of training provision, throughout the school year in training centres or very rarely in designated schools. Although this study is mainly about EFL teachers' SDL in the KSA, "where primary responsibility for planning, carrying out, and evaluating a learning endeavor is assumed by the individual learner" (Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991: 24), teachers may participate in formal activities inside or outside the MoE's boundaries. Therefore, PD through continuing professional development (CPD) courses should be highlighted as teachers may participate in these courses in a self-directed manner. Day and Sachs (2004: 4) define CPD as "a term used to describe all the activities in which teachers engage during the course of a career which are designed to enhance their work". This ongoing process of learning activities can take different forms, such as private reading and formal courses. According to Craft (2000: 9), the broad meaning of CPD covers all sorts of learning activities, either formal or informal, but the narrow meaning of CPD is associated with "formal courses".

With regard to in-service CPD courses, the MoE in the KSA provides limited compulsory and optional courses. According to Alfahadi (2012: 41), "to compensate for the lack of practical pre-service training, attempts have been made to provide regular, short, one- to

fourteen-day in-service training courses for teachers throughout the year". These courses and workshops are presented by supervisors who work in multiple departments related to GDE in each city. They plan and facilitate professional development programmes and inform the local schools about the relevant details of these events, and the decision is left to the school administration to give their consent to individual teachers to take part in these PD opportunities (Sywelem & Witte, 2013). In addition, for novice teachers, based on my experience and based on some studies on teachers' PD in the KSA, "there is little if any systematic professional support available to teachers, in particular new teachers" (Alharbi, 2011: 2).

CPD courses provided by the MoE can represent "the training model of CPD" (Kennedy, 2005: 237). The main focus of this kind of training is on specific immediate goals, such as teaching strategies or enhancing subject knowledge. According to Villegas-Reimers (2003), the training model of PD was based on the old approach of teachers' PD "consisting of workshops or short-term courses that would offer teachers new information on a particular aspect of their work". In this PD model, knowledge is delivered to teachers in a top-down approach by supervisors or experts where teachers do not have a voice in designing the courses (Kennedy, 2005; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Al-Bakri & Troudi, 2018). The dominance of this training model in the KSA can be attributed to the culture of "accountability" and "performativity" (Day and Sachs, 2004: 4). Indeed, EFL teachers in the KSA are accountable for delivering the textbooks' content within a specific time frame as well as other tasks. In addition, their performance inside the classroom is measured based on several criteria through supervisors' observations using an evaluation form. Therefore, teachers are provided with specific courses, such as teaching strategies to improve their performance in delivering the content of the textbooks.

Although training is one form of PD, as PD is a general term that consists of all the activities teachers participate in, teacher training and PD are sometimes used loosely and interchangeably (Craft, 2000). Nonetheless, PD, unlike training that consists of one-shot training courses, is "a long-term process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically to promote growth and development in the profession" (Villegas-Reimers, 2003: 12) and facilitates teachers' growth of their understanding of themselves as teachers (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Also, it should enhance "their thinking, understanding and reflecting" (Ismail, Kinchin & Edwards, 2016: 10). Therefore, PD aims to develop teachers to be active agents in the educational scene in a way they can identify their PD goals and how to address them.

It is imperative to note that though certain courses and workshops are specifically designed for EFL teachers, in my view and the view of many teachers I met, the "in-service training programs are currently conducted on a limited scale via the local education departments that are scattered all over Saudi Arabia and are handled in a poor manner" (Al-Seghayer, 2014: 146). Research has investigated the MoE provision in the KSA and pointed to its shortcomings in terms of its compulsory nature, its lack of variety and choices, and its lack of teachers' involvement. In the KSA, the "education system is known for being rather centralised around the MoE and teachers are generally excluded from the decision-making process" (Alnefaie, 2016: 2).

Furthermore, other forms of PD are provided by the MoE, such as conferences where teachers can participate. Also, several initiatives and programmes are launched by the MoE, which can be considered other PD channels. One of the important initiatives is the *Khebrat* (Experiences) programme. This programme aims to establish international partnerships with well-known educational institutions with expertise and experience

worldwide, enabling the MoE to invest in these experiences to develop education. After teachers have passed the admission requirements of this programme, the MoE sends these teachers to international educational institutions in order to receive professional training and immerse themselves in schools within these countries.

2.4   Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I presented a brief outline of how EFL teachers are prepared professionally. The chapter began with a very brief overview of the educational system in the KSA with regards the teaching of English. Then, a general summary of teachers' pre-service and in-service training was presented.

As this study aims to explore the issue of EFL teachers' SDL as a form for PD in the context of Saudi Arabia, it can be challenging to write about the relevant contextual information about the issue of SDL with regard to teachers' PD due to the lack of research in this domain. Hence, as mentioned earlier, this study aims to fill this gap and contribute to teachers' PD in the KSA.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature pertaining to SDL. The first section provides a historical overview of SDL and discusses the concept of SDL and the meaning of *self* in self-directed learning. The second section focuses on the activities which can be considered as SDL. The third section explains the three main categories which outline the massive research that describe SDL. These categories are the goals of SDL, the models of SDL that describe it as a process of learning or teaching and SDL as personal attribute. Finally, it reviews the studies on SDL and EFL teachers PD.

3.2 What is Self-Directed Learning?

As in any other profession, EFL teachers need to pursue their professional development continuously and update their knowledge to cope with the demands of their professions and to enhance the quality of their teaching. Day (1999: 4) defines PD as follows:

> consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives.

There are certain established models of teachers' PD in the literature. For instance, Kennedy (2005; 2004) classified teachers' PD into three main models: *transmissive*, *malleable*, and *transformative*. In transmissive models, teachers have almost no voice in designing or choosing the PD courses. Knowledge, based on these models, is delivered

to EFL teachers in a top-down approach by external experts. The *training*, *deficit* and *cascade* models represent this form of PD (Kennedy, 2005) which focuses "on technical aspects of the job rather than issues relating to values, beliefs and attitudes [which] does not support professional autonomy; rather, it supports replication and, arguably, compliance" (Fraser, Kennedy, Reid, & McKinney, 2007: 159). The malleable PD models, however, offer teachers slightly more autonomy than the transmissive forms of PD, through coaching/mentoring or communities of practice. Finally, transformative models of PD, such as "teacher learning communities" (Kennedy, 2014), offer teachers greater autonomy in their PD. According to Fraser et al. (2007: 160), "transformative models of CPD have the capacity to support considerable professional autonomy at both individual and profession-wide levels". In fact, "EFL teachers need to have a specific knowledge base that enables them to teach confidently" (Troudi S., & Maazoun, 2020: 7); however, some of the above models tend to reduce the role of EFL teacher to that of the implementer of technical aspects of teaching. Teachers of an additional language should be aware of multiple aspects of their teaching and the language they teach, such as their context, students' needs and dispositions and other job-related requirements (Leung, 2012). Many EFL teachers worldwide are still using old EFL teaching methods due to the lack of systematic PD (Dayoub, & Bashiruddin, 2012). They emphasise that professional development in ELT should not be seen as punctual training courses but as a continuous process.

In Kennedy's PD framework outlined above, there is no indication of SDL as an approach for teachers' PD. Anwaruddin (2015: 807) argues that SDL has not been given adequate attention in teachers' PD. He goes on to claim that despite Kennedy's PD framework being one of the most cited frameworks in relation to teachers' PD, it "does not include SDL". Another classification of teachers' PD, which encompasses SDL, has been

suggested by Gaible & Burns (2005), who categorised teachers' PD into three main models: *standardized*, *school-centred*, and *self-directed* models. The standardized model is similar to the transmissive form of PD in Kennedy's framework, whereby teachers are trained by an external expert in a top-down approach. In the school-centred model, PD usually takes place inside schools in a community of practice. With regard to the self-directed model, teachers "determine their own professional development goals and select activities that will help them attain these goals" (ibid: 23).

The concept of SDL was first introduced in 1967 within the field of adult learning (Boyer, Edmondson, Artis, & Fleming, 2014) as a result of a key question, "how adults learn?", since the founding of adult education in the 1920s (Ellinger, 2004). According to Brookfield (1985), the 1970s were a period of significant empirical research on SDL in order to define and popularise this concept. Although people of different ages may exercise some sort of SDL, it is mainly referred to in the literature to adult learners. According to Bullock (2013: 106), "the consensus in the adult education literature is that SDL is a process in which most adults engage". As discussed further in the thesis (see section 3.3), the self-directed learner does not necessarily learn in isolation of other; SDL can take place in "association with various kinds of helpers, such as teachers, tutors, mentors, resource people, and peers" (Knowles, 1975: 18).

A great number of definitions of SDL have been suggested in the literature (Bouchard, 1996; Ellinger, 2004; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009; Minott, 2010; Liu, Jehng, Chen & Fang, 2014), and according to Hiemstra (2004: 1), "hundreds of terms, concepts, and definitions associated in some way with self-direction in learning have been developed". Nonetheless, Boyer, Edmondson, Artis, & Fleming (2014) mention that the following definition from Knowles (1993: 24) is probably the most widely accepted one:

A process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes.

Many other scholars have attempted to define SDL and according to Brockett and Hiemstra (1991), their views are different. For instance, Garrison (1997: 18) defines SDL as:

(...) an approach where learners are motivated to assume personal responsibility and collaborative control of the cognitive (self-monitoring) and contextual (self-management) processes in constructing and confirming meaningful and worthwhile learning outcomes.

Moreover, following an extensive review of the SDL literature, Candy (1991: 23) summarised SDL as

a) a personal attribute (personal autonomy), b) as the willingness and capacity to conduct one's own education (self-management) and c) as the individual, non-institutional pursuit of learning opportunities in the natural setting (autodidaxy).

For Brockett and Hiemstra (1991: 24), SDL refers to the "activities where primary responsibility for planning, carrying out, and evaluating a learning endeavor is assumed by the individual learner". Furthermore, according to Caffarella (1993:25-26), three distinct ideas relate to the concept of SDL:

a self-initiated process of learning that stresses the ability of individuals to plan and manage their own learning, an attribute or characteristic of learners with personal autonomy as its hallmark, and a way of organizing instruction in formal settings that allows for greater learner control.

However, according to all of these definitions, the general meaning of SDL relates to an initiative taken by learners to learn rather than them being told to learn (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009; Minott, 2010, Lom & Sullenger, 2011; Slavit & Roth McDuffie, 2013). In

other words, this suggests that the learner is autonomous in deciding what, when and how to learn (Chou, & Chen, 2008; Sankey & Machin, 2014). Moreover, self-directed learners normally learn based on specific goals to achieve (Boyatzis, 2002; Chou, & Chen, 2008) and reflecting on their learning process (Lai, Gardner & Law, 2013). Grow (1991: 128) identifies that scholars devoted hundreds of pages to define and analyse the meaning of SDL adding that it could simply be referred to as "learner control".

In fact, the SDL literature is expansive and there seems to be no universal definition for the term (Ellinger, 2004). Merriam (2001: 3) claims that despite the effort that have been made to understand how adults learn, there is no single answer that explains our current knowledge about the notion of adult learning and all the related contextual issues and processes to which it relates. She adds that **"what we do have is a mosaic of theories, models, sets of principles, and explanations that, combined, compose the knowledge base of adult learning"** and one of the important elements of this mosaic is SDL. The absence of a universal definition is due to the different philosophical orientations associated with the concept of SDL, as discussed in more detail further in the thesis (3.4).

In addition, different notions have been used interchangeably to refer to the same process of SDL, that is, when the learner takes the initiative to learn. Brockett and Hiemstra (1991: 18), for example, state that there are "related concepts that are often used either interchangeably or in a similar way [including] self-learning, self-planned learning, self-teaching, autonomous learning, independent study, and distance education". According to (Wang & Cranton, 2012: 16), a review of the literature suggests that "over 200 different names have been given to SDL. All these different names address the same concept, 'self-concept' in adult education". For instance, self-regulated learning (SRL) has been defined by van den Bergh & Beijaard (2015: 143) as "the activity of the teachers in regulating

their own learning". In a broad sense, this definition of SRL is similar to SDL as the learner is seen as responsible to manage his/her own learning. Moreover, a number of studies have linked SRL with informal learning in the workplace while SDL has also been referred to in the literature as informal learning (as it will be explained later). This implies a similarity between SRL and SDL. Furthermore, other terms are recurrent in the literature such as *self-initiated learning*, that is, when individuals engage and take the lead for their own PD (Lohman & Woolf, 2001), which is also similar to SDL in its broad sense whereby the individual takes the initiative for PD. Likewise, SDL is sometimes referred to as *self-managed learning* which, according to Guglielmino & Guglielmino (2001: 37), "is a process in which the learner is responsible for identifying what is to be learned, when it is to be learned, and how it is to be learned". Finally, self-motivated learning, as mentioned by Kolenc Kolnik (2010), is a beneficial way for lifelong PD and is mainly linked with teachers' motivation in participating in various informal activities. Therefore, the nature of self-motivated learning is the same as SDL because self-directed learners are motivated to learn in various non-mandatory activities. According to Knowles (1993: 26), self-directed learning is based on the assumption that intrinsic motivation plays a preponderant role in learners' desire to learn; such intrinsic motives include self-esteem, the will and content for achievement, eagerness to develop or simply an inquisitive mind. According to Boyer et al. (2014), employees who have higher level of self-motivation, spend more time on SDL activities.In fact, in my view, the individuals can be externally motivated by rewards as an example to promote their self-direction toward learning. However, Deci & Ryan (2008: 182) mention that "when people are autonomously motivated, they experience volition, or a self-endorsement of their actions", and it is in contrast with *controlled motivation* whereby the individuals behave differently due to external pressure.

3.2.1 The Meaning of *Self* in SDL

The word *self* in self-directed learning can be understood as when the learner learns in isolation of other. In fact, SDL can also be a collaborative learning activity as self-directed learners do not necessarily learn in isolation; they may depend on others to assist them in their learning or they may collaborate with others. For Bullock (2013: 106), the notion of SDL is commonly attached to an image of isolated learners while, in reality, the term *self* in SDL relates to the idea of control of the learning. Brockett and Hiemstra (1991: 12) argue that SDL "may happen in isolation or in a large group, or when two or more learners share responsibilities for their learning". Brookfield, (2009: 2615) clarifies further the meaning of *self* in SDL and its function in the SDL process:

> Self-directed learning is learning in which the conceptualization, design, conduct and evaluation of a learning project are directed by the learner. This does not mean that self-directed learning is highly individualized learning always conducted in isolation. Learners can work in self-directed ways while engaged in group-learning settings, provided that this is a choice they have made believing it to be conducive to their learning efforts.

Collaborative activities refer to collaboration with colleagues within and outside the school (De Vries et al., 2014) such as, for instance, discussions among teachers in the staffroom, during meetings or in the course of workshops or assessment-related activities, which are beneficial ways in which teachers can exchange their experiences for PD (Little, 2007: 217). When teachers collaborate together for their PD, it takes "teacher development beyond personal, idiosyncratic reflection, or dependence on outside experts, to a point where teachers can learn from each other, sharing and developing their expertise together" (Hargreaves, 1994: 186). These kinds of self- directed collaborative activities between teachers "emerge primarily form teachers themselves as a social group" (ibid: 192). On a personal level, due to the limited PD activities provided by the MoE in the

KSA, I engaged on many SDL activities in isolation and in certain activities, I needed the help of others. For instance, as the MoE does not provide teachers with English language courses, I took the responsibility to learn by enrolling in fee-paying online courses to enhance my English language level. Also, SDL can be "formal education program" as a part of self-directed learner's efforts (Caffarella, 1993: 28) such as postgraduate studies. In sum, "SDL can take place both inside and outside of the confines of formal educational institutions" (Ellinger, 2004: 159). The core of SDL is the individual's responsibility to take the initiative to address his or her learning needs; it is "pursued by any individual for personal reasons employing any means, in any place at any time at any age" (Herlo, 2018: 8).

However, according to Brookfield (1985), while self-directed learners may need assistance from others, good examples of SDL include when the learners are highly effective in designing their SDL with a minimum of assistance. Owing to that, in this study, SDL is seen as occurring when the learner takes the responsibility to learn, whether in isolation or depending on others, regardless of the degree of this dependency.

3.3 SDL Activities

Having identified the concept of SDL above, the types of learning activities that can be considered as SDL need to be examined. In fact, SDL mostly relates to informal learning that occurs inside or outside the institution. As pointed by Conlan, Grabowski, & Smith (2003) and Cho & Kwon (2005), SDL is a good example for informal learning, or another synonymous for SDL (Ellinger, 2004). Furthermore, based on a review of the literature, research on SDL tend to cite articles that focus on informal learning such as, Liu et al. (2014: 395) who mention that their study validated the findings of other studies such as Lohman (2005) while Lohman did not mention the term self-directed but researched the

concept of informal learning. This may indicate that there seems to be an implicit or explicit agreement between researchers on the fact that SDL also refers to informal learning.

Jurasaite-Harbison & Rex (2013: 3) defines informal learning as follows:

> planned by a learner (self-directed) in settings and time frames that are not set aside for learning as such (e.g. individual reflection on teaching, interactions with colleagues in school hallways, cafeteria, playground, over the phone, stopping by colleagues' classrooms, etc.)

Generally speaking, informal learning takes multiple forms such as exchanging information, discussions or simply online research (Lohman, 2005) and this notion can also refer to the spontaneous learning that occurs through the individual or the day to day experiences of the learner. Learning is, above all, in the hands of the learners themselves (Cofer, 2000; Jurasaite-Harbison & Rex, 2013).

On a personal level, I have attempted to engage in various forms of informal learning activities, such as observing other colleagues in their classrooms, reading useful articles and books, asking about and discussing educational issues with teachers, and according to my experience, it is arguable that SDL usually refers to informal learning

The remaining question here is: can formal learning, which is the "planned or supported by the organization" (Choi & Jacobs, 2011: 239) or the formal activities outside the organisation, such as conferences or workshops, be called SDL? Although SDL usually relates to informal learning, in my view, it is a kind of learning that occurs from an individual's initiative to engage in any sort of learning, whether informal or formal. In this regard, Minott (2010: 329) clarifies that attending conferences or workshops could be regarded as a type of SDL, asserting that "visits to other countries for professional

development workshops and conferences […] is a necessity" for teachers whose formal PD provided by their institutions is non-existent.

3.4 SDL, as a Multifaceted Concept

As mentioned before, there is no agreement on the definition of the SDL but there are many portraits describing SDL and they may differ in their process. Based on their extensive review of the SDL literature, Merriam and Caffarella (1999: 290) grouped SDL into "three broad categories, each outlining a major facet of self-directed learning". They are the goals of SDL, the models that describe the process of SDL as a way of learning or teaching, and finally SDL as a personal attribute of the learner (ibid).

3.4.1 Goals of SDL

The goals related to SDL have been classified into three general categories depending on their philosophical underpinnings. Merriam and Caffarella (1999: 290) classify them into three major goals: (1) to promote the potentiality of the adult learner to self-directing his/her learning, (2) to promote transformational learning as a central notion of SDL and (3) to enhance transformational learning and political and social action as a fundamental component of SDL.

With regard to the first goal pertaining to promoting the potentiality of adult learners to self-direct their learning, it is "grounded in a humanistic philosophy posit that self-directed learning should have as its goal the development of the learner's capacity to be self-directed". (Merriam, 2001: 9). The role of the teacher in adult education is to aid learners to plan their learning, how to transfer the plan into practice and to aid them to evaluate the outcomes of their learning. The main "aspect of this goal is that when adult educators are involved in the SDL process, their role becomes that of guide or facilitator"

(Ellinger, 2004: 162). The second goal is similar to the first goal to promote the ability of adult learners to self-direct their learning, but it is based on the premise of transformational learning. This goal aims to promote adult learners to "reflect critically" (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999: 290) on the world they are living. The self-directed learners should "engage in critical reflection and reevaluate the assumptions they have made about themselves and their world" (Baumgartner, 2001: 17). Therefore, the aim of this goal is not only to generate normal learners who develop their skills and knowledge, but also to form individuals who can read their world and change it. As a result, the third goal has been elicited from the second goal which aims to encourage adult learners to problematise the political and social aspects in their life. As far as the aim of the third goal in the educational landscape is concerned, it aims at "shifting to learners as much control as possible for conceptualizing, designing, conducting, and evaluating their learning and for deciding how resources are to be used to further these processes". (Brookfield, 1993: 233).

3.4.2   Models of SDL

Different models have been suggested in the literature to describe the process of SDL (Caffarella, 1993; Ellinger, 2004; Bullock, 2013). In the early 1970s, researchers examined the notion of SDL through several models and theories (Bullock, 2013). After reviewing the literature, Merriam and Caffarella (1999: 293) mentioned that three different models had been suggested to explain the process of SDL: (1) the linear, (2) the interactive and (3) the instructional model. They added that such "models represent a mixture of conceptual empirical and experientially derived views of the process of self-directed learning". Moreover, most of these models are based on the premise of the first goal above is to encourage adult learners to be more skilful, self-directed learners.

3.4.2.1 Linear Models

According to Caffarella (1993: 26), "the most popular and most often quoted scenario of how adults learn" is the description of SDL that "adults use mostly linear, stepwise process (for example, identify their learning needs and decide which activities, methods, and techniques they will use)". Such a conception views SDL as an external management of the learning process, regardless of cognitive, psychological or contextual factors (Garrison, 1997).

Two of the most prominent figures that have represented SDL as a linear process are Tough (1971) and Knowles (1975). Tough, for instance, "proposed the first comprehensive description of self-directed learning, which he termed self-planned learning" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999: 293). In this model, learning is viewed as "a deliberate effort to gain knowledge or skill" (Ellinger, 2004: 162). Based on a review of the literature and the result of an exploratory qualitative study conducted by means of interviews, Tough (1971) developed a list of preparatory steps that learners usually take in their self-planning learning. According to him, these steps based on experience and interviews as well as on logical analysis" (ibid: 95). These steps are:

1.   "deciding what detailed knowledge and skill to learn;"

2.   "deciding the specific activities, methods, resources or equipment for learning;"

3.   "deciding where to learn;"

4.   "setting specific deadlines or intermediate targets;"

5.   "deciding when to begin a learning episode;"

6.   "deciding the pace at which to proceed during a learning episode;"

7.   "estimating the current level of his knowledge and skill or his progress in gaining the desired knowledge and skill;"

8.   "detecting any factor that has been hindering learning or discovering inefficient aspects of the current procedures;"

9.   "obtaining the desired resources or equipment or reaching the desired place or resource;"

10.   "preparing or adapting a room for learning or arranging certain other physical conditions in preparation for learning;"

11.   "saving or obtaining the money necessary for the use of certain human or nonhuman resources;"

12.   "finding time for the learning; and

13.   taking steps to increase the motivation for certain learning episodes" (ibid: 95-96).

In the same vein, Knowles's (1993) definition of SDL suggests that he views this process as consisting of seven steps: "(1) taking the initiative, (2) diagnosing learning needs, (3) formulating learning goals, (4) identifying human and material resources for learning, (5) choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies and (6) evaluating learning outcomes" (ibid: 24).

In fact, Knowles's conception of SDL has been critiqued by certain scholars because it excluded several important factors such as the context of the learning or the culture. Accordioning to Hewitt-Taylor (2001: 497), Knowles's work has gained criticism because "he reduced the issues involved in SDL to specific methods or techniques, with

less emphasis on the important areas of knowledge acquisition processes, power and culture". Knowles' view of SDL as a linear process has been criticised because the learning process is more complex. Bullock (2013: 107) identifies that a number of "theorists have argued that learning is more complex than the linear models". Garrison (1997: 18), for instance, criticised the fact that before the emergence of his model, SDL was viewed as "external management of the learning process". Moreover, Long (2009: 24) explains that although Knowle's definition of SDL is the most quoted, he and Tough "focused on procedures" while neglecting other factors such as psychological or social issues that may have an impact on SDL.

Therefore, the conception of SDL as linear learning process has moved to a more comprehensive understanding taking into consideration a number of factors within the SDL process, as explained below in the interactive and instructional models

3.4.2.2 Interactive Models

As mentioned above, certain theorists have suggested that learning is more complex than a mere linear process. They posit that multiple internal and external factors affect the SDL process such as "opportunities people find in their own environment, the personality characteristics of learners, cognitive processes, and the context of learning, which collectively interact to form episodes of self-directed learning" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999: 295). As a result, different interactive models have been developed in the literature to describe the process of SDL from this angle.

For instance, Spear and Mocker (1981) developed the first interactive model whereby the learners "are not described as strictly planning their learning in time and space, but instead, learning is depicted as rather disorganised, unplanned manner allowing for the

unexpected to occur" (Caffarella, 1993: 28). In this learning process, "rather than preplanning, learners tended to select from limited alternatives that occur fortuitously within their environment and that structure their learning" (Johnson, 2006: 19).

Spear and Mocker (1984) conducted a qualitative study with seventy-five participants engaged in SDL activities and concluded that their learning was not a pre-planned process; rather, it was found that SDL is affected by the learner's environment, which they referred to as *organising circumstances*. Likewise, it appears that the self-directed learning activities that learners are engaged in are more based on unexpected events related to their context than the result of a planned linear development.

Another interactive model see (Figure 3.1) below, namely, the Personal Responsibility Orientation (PRO), has been developed by Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) to explain the process of SDL. Brockett and Hiemstra (1991: 26) clarify that the idea of SDL comprises "both instructional method processes (self-directed learning) and personality characteristics of the individual (learner self-direction)". They add that the instructional method processes and personality characteristics of the individual are both affected by the social context. In the instructional dimension, the learner takes the responsibility to plan, implement and evaluate the learning process whereby the "education agent or resource often plays a facilitating role" (Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991: 24). While within the second dimension, the idea of learner self-direction represents the "learner's desire or preference for assuming responsibility for learning" (ibid: 24). Regarding the social context, Brockett and Hiemstra (1991: 32) argue that certain conceptions of SDL have been the subject of criticism for their over-emphasis on of the individual in this process and, in turn, their neglect of the determining role played by the social environment.
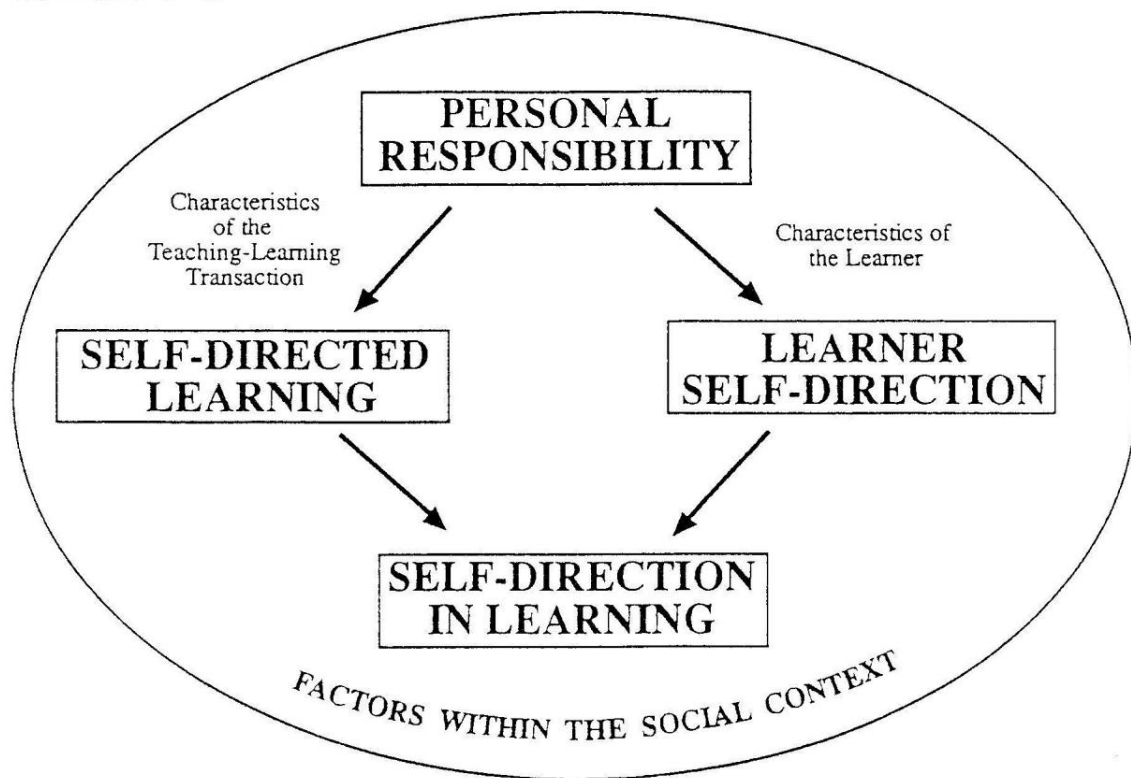
Figure 3.1: The Personal Responsibility Orientation. Model adapted from Hiemstra &

Brockett (1991: 25).

Hiemstra and Brockett (2012) reconfigured the PRO model to an updated model named

the Person Process Context (PPC) Model. In this reconfiguration (see Figure 3.2 below),

the basic elements (person/learner, process and social context) of the PRO model are

remained but they are equally important. The main difference between the PRO model

and the PPC model is that the PPC model gives equal importance to the context and the

other two elements (the person/learner and the process). Hiemstra and Brockett (2012)

define the elements of the PPC model as follows:

- **Person**: Includes the learner's or individual's characteristics, such as "creativity,

    critical reflection, enthusiasm, life experience, life satisfaction, motivation,

previous education, resilience, and self-concept such as life experience" (ibid: 158).

- **Process**: Involves "teaching-learning transaction, including facilitation, learning skills, learning styles, planning, organizing, and evaluating abilities, teaching styles, and technological skills" (ibid: 158).

- **Context**: This comprises the environmental and socio-political milieu, including "culture, power, learning environment, finances, gender, learning climate, organizational policies, political milieu, race, and sexual orientation" (ibid: 158).

Although the elements of the PPC model are given equal importance in understanding SDL, a single element may have a greater role in some situations, a factor that Hiemstra and Brockett (2012: 159) suggest was lacking in the PRO model, indicating that this shift enables the PPC model to determine the critical role played by context, which they say: "is very much a focal point in understanding SDL". However, the ideal situation for SDL to be most successful is when these three elements are in balance, which means that the individual is highly self-directed, the teaching-learning process is arranged to promote the individual to take the lead in their learning and the climate for SDL is supported by both the socio-political milieu and the learning environment.
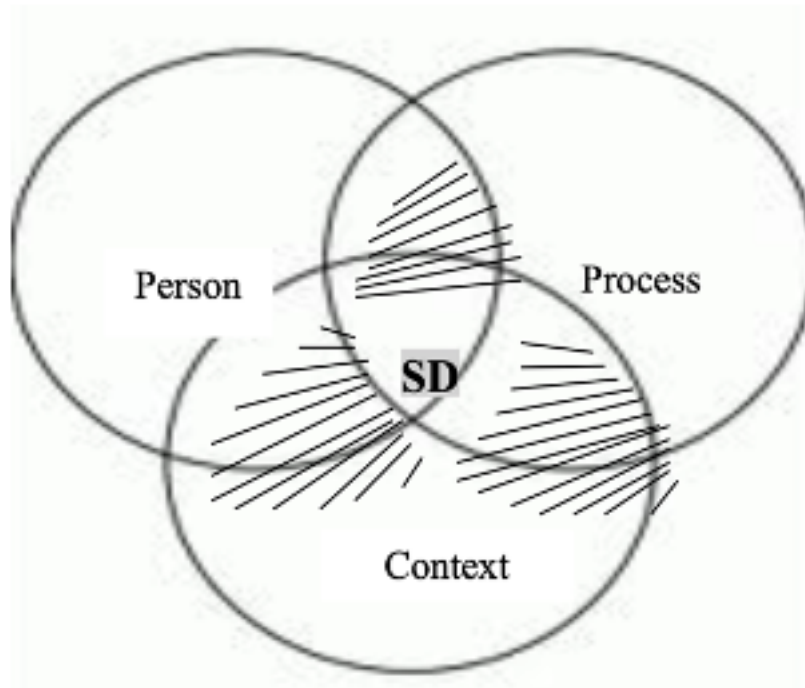
Figure 3.23: The ─Person, Process, Context (PPC) Model. Model adapted from

Brockett & Hiemstra (2012: 158).

Another interactive model has been developed by Garrison (1997) who suggests that a more comprehensive model which integrates the cognitive and motivational dimensions is needed to describe the SDL process as without such an approach, SDL "lacks the comprehensiveness of a foundational concept" (ibid: 18). Based on this, Garrison (1997: 18) defines SDL as "an approach where learners are motivated to assume personal responsibility and collaborative control of the cognitive (self-monitoring) and contextual (self-management) processes in constructing and confirming meaningful and worthwhile learning outcomes". This definition is based on three overlapping dimensions: self-management (task control), self-monitoring (cognitive responsibility) and motivation (entering task).

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │       Motivation        │
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  │   Self-Monitoring    │ ←──────→ │   Self-Management    │
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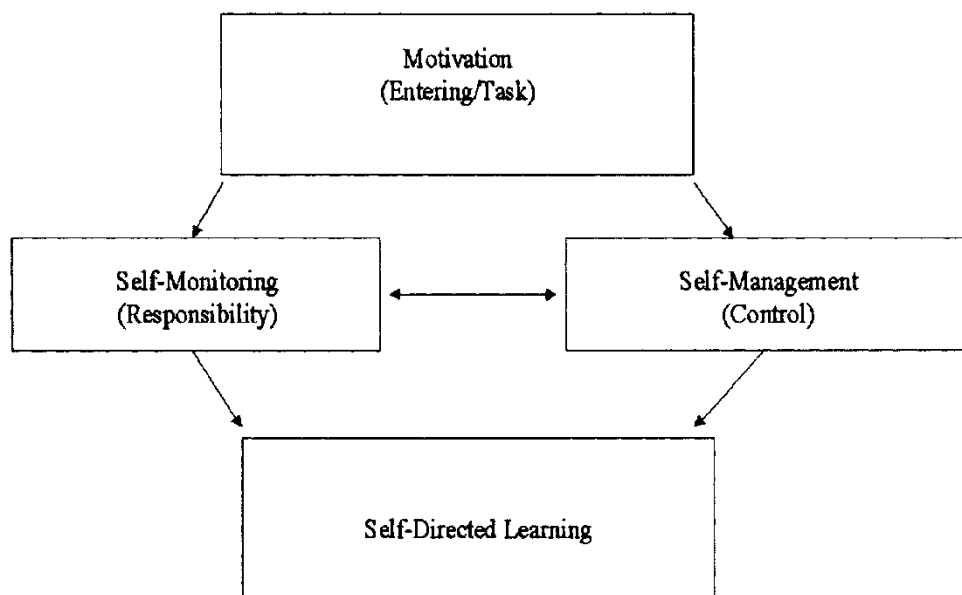
Figure 3.3: Garrison's Model of Self-Directed Learning adapted from Garrison (1997: 22).

The idea of self-management pertains to aspects of task control and emphasises on the importance of the social and behavioural implications of learning and the concrete tasks related to this process. In addition, the notion of self-monitoring relates to the cognitive and the metacognitive aspects of learning, that is, monitoring learning strategies and being aware of one's own learning and thinking. Garrison (1997: 24) identifies self-monitoring as "the process whereby the learner takes responsibility for the construction of personal meaning". Finally, the motivation aspect is of determining importance in terms of the various efforts needed throughout the learning process and to achieve cognitive objectives. However, Garrison (1997) acknowledges that further research is needed to explore in more detail the cognitive and motivational dimensions.

3.4.2.3 Instructional Models

The idea of SDL instructional models implies that SDL is a teaching process that provides educators with a guideline to apply SDL in a formal setting. According to the literature, two known models have been developed to give learners more independence in their learning in a formal setting.

Grow (1991), for instance, proposed a model, the Staged Self-Directed Learning (SSDL), to assist teachers in formal settings and allow students to be more self-directed in their learning as he claims that "self-direction can be learned – and it can be taught" (ibid: 127). Students, at each stage, can be described as *dependent, interested, involved and self-directed*. While previous models, such as the linear and the interactive models, do not view SDL as a specific kind of learning that takes place in formal settings, Grow's model refers to SDL as "the degree of choice that learners have within an instructional situation" (p.128).

In his model, Grow (1991) suggests four different stages of learning. (1) learners of low self-direction, (2) learners of moderate self-direction, (3) learners of intermediate self-direction and (4) learners of high Self-direction.

With respect to the first stage involving learners of low self-direction, learners depend to a large extent on their teachers who direct them in what, how and when to do the tasks. To teach the learners of this stage, Grow (1991) suggests two ways of teaching, through coaching and insight. Through the coaching approach, teachers have to organise everything in the learning process for the students and prescribe clear objectives and straightforward methods to achieve them. For the insight approach, teachers try to involve their students in the design of the content of their learning. While Grow (1991: 131)

claims that "some Stage 1 learners are not good candidates for insight approaches, and they may resist sharing responsibility for learning", he argues that insight approaches are essential to prepare the learners to rise their self-direction in learning and move to the next stages.

As far as the second stage is concerned, which involves learners of moderate self-direction, learners of this stage are not directed by teachers passively as in stage 1; rather, they are more interested in sharing the responsibility of their learning. Motivating the learners during the learning process is a way suggested by Grow who believes that at this stage, teachers create an environment where students are eager to learn and take pleasure in their learning. The teaching process in this stage is quite directive and teachers have to explain to the learners the benefits of their learning and identify its value for them. Grow (1991: 132) adds that "if students remain dependent upon the teacher for motivation to learn, however, the teacher has failed".

Furthermore, the third stage involves learners of intermediate self-direction whereby according to Grow (1991: 133), learners "have skills and knowledge, and they see themselves as participants in their own education". They are not completely self-directed learners but work well in the design and implementation of their learning with their teachers who work as facilitators and share the decision-making with them.

Finally, the last stage relates to learners of high self-direction who "set their own goals and standards – with or without help from experts. They use experts, institutions, and other resources to pursue these goals" (Grow, 1991: 134). Learners in this stage take the initiative and the responsibility for their own learning. However, according to Grow (1991), Stage 4 learners are not completely learning on their own without assistance and

may need some help in certain parts of their learning. Nonetheless, the role of teachers in this stage is that of a consultant or delegator whereby they "consult with the learners to develop written criteria, an evaluation checklist, a timetable, and a management chart and discuss everyone's project" (Grow, 1991: 135).

In Grow's model, the teaching style must match the learners' actual stage. For example, when directive teachers teach self-directed learners, certain problems may arise, such as student boredom or demotivation. According to Grow (1991: 136), "problem arise when the teaching style is not matched to the learner's degree of self-directed".

Table 3.1:The Staged Self-Directed Learning Model Adapted from (Grow,1991)

	Student	Teacher	Examples
Stage 1	Dependent	Authority Coach	Coaching with immediate feedback. Drill. Informational lecture. Overcoming deficiencies and resistance.
Stage 2	Interested	Motivator, guide	Inspiring lecture plus guided discussion. Goal-setting and learning strategies.
Stage 3	Involved	Facilitator	Discussion facilitated by teacher who participates as equal. Collaborative small group work. Non-directive and truly andragogical.
Stage 4	Self-directed	Consultant, delegator	Internship, dissertation, individual work or self-directed study-group. Creativity. Mentorship.

Nonetheless, according to Ellinger (2004), Grow's model has not been tested and there was no practical side during the development of Grow's model. Rather, the model proposed by Grow as a theoretical proposal for teachers to use in their classroom with the

aim of raising students' self-direction. The model was developed according to his own experience and based on a review of the literature on adult education in relation to the Situational Leadership model of Hersy and Blanchard (1988). However, Grow (1994) defended his model clarifying that many teachers, graduate students and some college departments informed him that his SSDL model was beneficial in teaching and the curriculum.

As illustrated above, these models conceptualise SDL from different angles. However, some theorists insist about the impact of some factors such as political ones. Brookfield (2000: 9), for instance, explains that "the political context, cultural contingency and social construction of SDL activities have generally been ignored". Based on the current review of the literature, no models in SDL contain all of these suggested factors. In this regard, another instructional SDL model has been developed by Hammond and Collins (1991) to be applied in formal education settings. A significant feature of this model is that it focuses on the socio-political and environmental issues that impact on learners and foster their personal and social growth within the learning process (Ellinger, 2004). Hammond and Collins adapted Knowl's definition of SDL and used critical SDL as a framework to describe SDL. Although critical SDL aims to help the learners to take more control of their learning, "its ultimate goal is to empower learners to use their learning to improve the conditions under which they and those around them live and work" (Hammond and Collins, 1991: 14). This model allows to achieve the third goal of SDL that illustrated above (see 3.4.1).

For their model, Hammond and Collins propose nine components to assist learners to be critical self-directed learners. First, they suggested building a cooperative learning climate with the aim of developing a democratic environment where learners can

critically examine their learning and challenge the political, social and economic issues whether inside and outside their educational setting. In addition, the model emphasises on analysing the situation through, first, asking: "what skills, knowledge, and attitudes do I need in order to function competently in my work, both now and future?" (Hammond and Collins, 1991: 95). As the ultimate goal of critical SDL is to improve the conditions of the learners in their life inside and outside their educational setting, the purpose of this situation analysis phase is to question critically, reflect on and raise the consciousness about all the situation aspects in which learners and educators are involved. It can be "applied at many different levels in education, from macro-level, global analysis to micro-level analysis of individual learning needs" (Hammond and Collins, 1991: 58). Moreover, the third component relates to generating a competency profile, after asking the question in the previous phase, learners need to list the skills, knowledge, attitudes they need to function effectively. According to Hammond and Collins (1991), as the nature of SDL is to leave the decision of the learning in the hands of the learners, they are the ones who must list their competencies profiles, not their teachers. Furthermore, Hammond and Collins stressed on the importance of diagnostic and the self-assessment of learning needs. This suggests that learners evaluate their actual competence at the beginning of a period of study through combining the above competency profile with a self-assessment approach in order to allow them to pinpoint their own needs and put in place adequate learning strategies to meet these needs. Hence, using self-assessment methods, learners are able to specify in the beginning of the learning what competencies they need and exclude what they do not. The fifth component relate to drafting learning agreements; this phase consists in a report completed by learners about their overall learning plan and teachers may participate in preparation of this report. This report includes details about "what will be learned (usually phrased as learning objectives), how it will be learned, by

when, what criteria will be used to evaluate the learning, and how learning will be validated" (Hammond and Collins, 1991: 131). Moreover, the model focuses on self-management of learning whereby following the previous phase, learners implement the drafting learning agreement. The philosophy of SDL implies that learners have the responsibility to manage their learning. According to Hammond and Collins (1991: 153), since the learners are involved in designing their learning, they should be encouraged to manage their learning. Another component of the model relates to reflection and learning. In this phase, learners have to reflect on their past learning experiences and re-evaluate them; this process of reflection encourages to deeply immerse themselves in their leaning process. While the process of reflection is a private initiative, it can also be done in a group with peers (Hammond and Collins, 1991). In addition, the model includes the notion of evaluation and validation of learning. The evaluation occurs during and after the time of the learning, which can only be an hour or two, and can also be a longer period of time such as a month or a year. The evaluation is similar to reflection but it is a more "structured process in which learners make a judgment about activities they have performed or the quality and/or quantity of learning they have done" (Hammond and Collins, 1991: 183). Finally, the model highlights the importance of co-ordinating critical self-directed learning. According to Hammond and Collins, three aspects help educators co-ordinate critical SDL. First, they need to adopt a new role that is consistent with the idea of SDL. In other words, they ought to be more liberal in their role rather than being the centre of the learning process. Second, as educators may encounter certain constraints in the application of critical SDL in their institutions, they need to be aware of these constraints and try to resolve them. Third, educators should have certain competencies to cope with the demands of critical SDL.

In conclusion, as explained above, different models have been suggested in the literature to describe the process of SDL. At an early stage in theorising SDL, it has been described as a linear, step-by-step process. Then, some scholars criticised the fact that SDL is a planned linear process and suggested that SDL can be affected by several factors. On the other hand, some scholars have proposed models that instructors can utilise in formal education to raise the ability of learners to self-direct their learning.

3.4.3 SDL as Personal Attribute

The third major scope of the scholarly work pertaining to SDL is "self-directness as a personal attribute or characteristic of the learner" (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999: 305). Certain scholars have emphasised on the importance of the person's attitude towards learning to detriment his/her self-direction in terms of learning tendencies. Although it has been argued that SDL is impacted by the context multiple manifestations as explained in (3.4.2.2), the learner characteristics play a major role in SDL. Although certain learning situations can promote more self- direction in learning than other ones, "it is the personal characteristics of the learner—including his or her attitudes, values, and abilities—that ultimately determine whether self-directed learning will take place in a given learning situation" (Guglielmino, 2008: 2). These personal characteristics trigger the individuals to self-initiate his/her learning without being directed by others. According to Bouchard (2009: 13), "learners with a high-level of psychological control, for instance, can be highly motivated to learn without necessarily being given the opportunity to choose in what ways they learn". Also, according to Knowles (2015: 68), adults learners "are responsive to some external motivators […] but the most potent motivators are internal pressure".

It can be argued here that the learners' personal attributes towards learning are very important to stimulate the learners, but the environment and the context may decrease the internal motivation of the learners to exercise autonomy in learning. In other words, although the learner may have a high level of internal motivation to self-direct their learning, they may be exposed to certain factors which may dishearten them and lower this internal motivation. For instance, can a highly motivated teacher who used to self-direct his/her learning in a certain workplace environment exercise the same level of self-direction towards learning in another workplace environment which is unsupportive and non-conducive? Merriam and Caffarella (1999: 312) suggest to research how the process of SDL changes when the learner becomes an expert in a particular subject matter as opposed to when he/she was a novice. In my view, further research about this should be undertaken to investigate whether the personal attributes of the learner change over time and space, that is, when the context changes.

The numerous studies related to SDL as a personal attribute have examined the readiness of the individual towards SDL. A number of researchers have designed scales to measure the tendency of the learner towards self-direction in learning. The notion that self-direction is a characteristic of learners is best illustrated through Gugliemino's (1977) Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale (SDLRS)" (Wang & Cranton: 2014: 1016). A considerable amount of experimental research have tested the learners' SDL readiness very often using the above scale (Ross-Gordon, 2003). The SDLR was designed to measure the characteristics, skills, attitude of the individual's level of readiness towards SDL.

Based on the literature pertaining to SDL, Chou & Chen (2008) summarised the characteristics of SDL learners as follows:

1. Independence. The self-directed learners are ultimately responsible individuals who can autonomously plan, plan, carry out, analyse, and assess their own SDL activities.

2. Self-management. The self-directed learners can determine their own needs, set their learning aims, control their effort time, and reflect upon of their work.

3. Desire for learning. The self-directed learners are highly motivated to increase their knowledge.

4. Problem-solving. The self directed learners are able to manage their own learning and use their resources properly so they can overcome any difficulties in the learning process.

3.5 Previous studies on SDL and EFL teachers.

The central aim of this study is to explore how Saudi EFL teachers perceive SDL in the context of their PD to view the potential of teachers to take the initiative in pursuing their own professional development and whether this is possible in the context of the KSA. SDL has been proposed as a means of achieving the aims of teachers' PD but it can be difficult to reach an agreed definition of the concept. The study aims to explore qualitatively teachers' perceptions with SDL to hope to gain a wider picture about the topic of SDL and its implication on teachers' PD in order to contribute more to the field of teachers' PD. The aim of this study was not to examine, analyse or capture the real meaning of SDL; rather, it aims to explore Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions and experiences with SDL as a form for their professional development taking into consideration the impact of the context on SDL.

As mentioned in (1.2), there is a relative paucity of research that addresses the area of teachers' SDL and PD (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009; Lom & Sullenger, 2011; Liu et al.,

2014; Weir, 2017). An extensive search for SDL and EFL teachers was run in several databases, including (the International Journal of Self-Directed Learning, ProQuest, EBSCOhost, ERIC, JSTOR, Google Scholar, Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, Sage journals, ScienceDirect, Scopus, Taylor & Francis, Springer Journals, Wiley Online Library, DOAJ, IEEE Xplore, Web of Science, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global and Ethos) using in combination the following key search words: 'self-directed learning', 'teachers' OR 'educators', 'English' OR 'EFL' OR 'TESOL' OR 'ESOL' OR 'ELT' OR 'TEFL'. Also, to ensure that any relevant studies were not missed and to facilitate a broader search, I used the same search words but instead of using *self-directed learning*, I used only *self-directed* as some studies may use self-directed professional learning. Therefore, the search will be broader, and I could ensure that no relevant studies had been missed out. As a result, these search strategies yielded very limited studies in the area of SDL as a means for in-service EFL teachers' PD and none of these studies had been undertaken in the context of this study.

Although I was unable to find any study that had been undertaken in Saudi Arabia in the previous search; to ensure that these had not been missed, another search was carried out within the same databases and using the same keywords, but with the addition of (Saudi Arabia or Saudi). Nevertheless, this second search was also unable to locate any study about SDL and teachers' PD in general or EFL teachers in particular which could be deemed an important contribution of this study in the Saudi context. It has to be mentioned that a further search was run using the same databases to find SDL studies in the KSA in general; for this search, the keywords that were used in combination were 'self-directed learning' OR 'self-directed' AND 'Saudi'. This search yielded studies about the topic of SDL but they focused on students; knowing that studies about teachers' PD in the KSA are mainly focused on MoE formal PD, this may constitute a valuable

contribution to teachers' PD in the KSA. It is worth mentioning that, Alzahrani addressed SDL with university EFL teachers in the KSA in an interpretive doctoral study, completed in 2019, to explore the nature of the self-directed professional development pursued by university EFL teachers, focusing on the impact of WhatsApp as a tool for Virtual Community of Practice (VCoP). The study shows that the participants employed individual and collaborative self-directed PD with more preference for the former. Alzahrani found that SDL enhances teachers' self-empowerment, autonomy, confidence, motivation, and professional identity and concludes that the VCoP through WhatsApp positively impacted teachers' practice and their students (Alzahrani, 2019).

Most of the studies that addressed the topic of SDL and EFL teachers' PD focused on investigating the use of technology-based learning as SDL tool for EFL teachers' professional growth (Harker, 2004; Lee & Kim 2016; Cosgun & Savaş, 2019; Herman, 2019). These studies aimed to investigate the use of modern technology as SDL tool, such as the use of SMART Teaching 3.0: Mobile-Based, the use of video or the use of ICT in general. For example, Lee and Kim (2016) conducted a mixed-methods study in Korea with 149 English teachers. The study developed a virtual teacher training programme called SMART Teaching 3.0, which is accessible through desktop computers and mobile devices and consists of 42 video clips with a total running time of 570 minutes; the video content is based on teachers' needs and was collected through a survey and interviews. This study aimed to shift the mainstream top-down, institution-centred teachers' PD to bottom-up, learner-centred PD where teachers can self-direct their PD learning "anytime, anywhere" (ibid: 335). Teachers tested the SMART programme over five months and the study used multiple data collection methods, including website statistics, comments, weekly journals and interviews. During the five-month testing period, teachers were asked to write their comments on the video clips and write weekly journals for subsequent

content analysis. As far as the data analysis is concerned, the study conducted data analysis over three stages, the first of which collected website statistics and revealed usage patterns such as the number of website visits or page views. In the second stage, participants' comments on the video clips and their weekly journals were collected for content analysis and the third stage involved interviewing five participants to examine their perceptions of the programme. The findings suggested that this programme was beneficial in facilitating teachers' SDL. The website statistics showed that teachers participated actively in the programme but indicated that this decreased as time went on, which was attributed to factors including their busy schedules and their consumption of the video clips over time. Nonetheless, the findings showed that this programme motivated teachers to self-direct their learning, and some content was perceived as more beneficial than others. Furthermore, the data demonstrated that SMART Teaching 3.0 was perceived by the participants as valuable because it was based on teachers' needs and shifted their PD from a top-down to bottom-up approach, while it gave teachers the freedom to learn at a time and place that was convenient to them. Moreover, the data revealed that the SMART programme content was applied practically by teachers in their classrooms and also suggested that this programme was advantageous for novice teachers "in terms of length, the number of instructors, and content topics and types" (ibid: 344). On the other hand, this programme was not without its limitations, one of which was that the programme content needed to be updated regularly, as otherwise, its usage declined gradually over time.

In the same vein, Harker (2004) conducted a mixed-methods PhD study to investigate how Korean EFL teachers perceive themselves as proficient in English and to ascertain a way that their English proficiency could be improved without having to attend classes. Essentially, the study suggested that video could be used as SDL tool to improve Korean

EFL teachers' proficiency in English. Prior to using the video, the teachers' English proficiency was tested through self-assessment and language proficiency tests and after they finished using the videos, they were tested again to determine the difference. The video materials were used by teachers during one semester and the findings demonstrated that video can improve teachers' proficiency in English as they achieved higher scores in the post-test than in the pre-test.

Another study that investigated technology-based learning as a tool for EFL teachers' SDL was conducted in Turkey with 184 in-service English teachers. Cosgun & Savaş (2019) aimed to examine the use of ICT "especially the Internet" (ibid: 230) of EFL teachers in Turkey as a means of SDL for their PD. The study used an online questionnaire to collect the data, which consisted of Likert-type items that were analysed using SPSS and open-ended questions that were analysed through a coding process. Overall, the findings indicated that Internet use benefited teachers' PD and also showed that the majority of the teachers used Internet searching for classroom practices such as "preparing classroom materials" (ibid: 235). Moreover, the data demonstrated that most of the participants used the Internet to collaborate with others, particularly in terms of benefiting from others' experiences or providing support to other teachers. The data also revealed that certain factors promote the Internet use as SDL tool, including if teachers believe that it will increase their creativity. In contrast, some inhibiting factors emerged in this study, such as slow Internet connection or lack of motivation among students and teachers.

In addition to the above studies, I found another study Riddle (2018) which its focus was not on technology-based learning as SDL; rather, it investigated the process of SDL of English and Math teachers. It is worth mentioning that English in this study is English as

a first language, not as a foreign language as in the present study. Riddle's (2018) PhD study adopted a mixed-methods approach, using surveys and semi-structured interview to explore the SDL process among 17 secondary school English and maths teachers (14 English teachers and three maths teachers) in Ontario, Canada. The study also aimed to describe teachers' practices during the process of SDL. The findings showed that teachers self-direct their learning in an iterative cycle where they (1) set their professional goal; (2) decide the learning activities that will allow them to achieve these goals; (3) apply their learning into practice; (4) reflect on the previous steps to revisit their goals, decide new learning activities or apply their learning in different methods. The data showed some barriers that may impede the SDL process, such as lack of time or resources and the administrative decisions. The study then described the practice of each participant individually, including for instance information about their goals and how they intend to achieve them.

Although the participants of the current study are English language teachers, an additional search was run using the same keywords on the same databases, but excluding the use of 'English' or its abbreviations. The aim of this search was to find qualitative studies that more broadly explored teachers' views of SDL among those who taught subjects other than English. This search yielded some studies and among them, three studies explored qualitatively teachers' views on SDL were identified through this search, all of which were conducted in North America; Wagner's (2018) study was published in the International Journal of Self-Directed Learning, while both Fox (2011) and Weir's (2017) studies were PhD theses.

Fox (2011) utilised semi-structured interviews with 10 veteran elementary school teachers with at least 10 years' experience in USA. The study aimed to investigate the

impact of their prior learning experiences, the reasons behind their SDL, their SDL process description and the impact of SDL on their practice. Fox (2011) hypothesised that if a teacher had a positive previous SDL experience, they might choose this kind of learning again but if the experience was negative, the teacher would seek out an alternative form of SDL. The data revealed that previous learning or previous PD experiences appeared to have little impact on why teachers opted to self-direct their learning or which kind of SDL activity they would engage with. Moreover, the findings suggested that teachers' participation in SDL activities was not motivated by job promotion or material incentives; instead, their learning aimed either to boost students' enthusiasm toward the content of their subjects or to gain additional information for students that was not available in the curriculum. In addition, the data showed that teachers self-direct their learning in order to challenge themselves as teachers and to constantly grow as learners by the means of taking "field trips, reading books, experimenting, or searching the Internet" (ibid: 165). The study described participants' SDL process as linear with starting and ending point, which means that they decide their learning need, decide which learning sources they use or engage with and then take the initiative to learn. Fox (2011: 197) suggests that "there was no evidence of teachers redirecting their learning mid-stream and little evidence related to reflection and revision of a self-directed project". The data showed that the impact of SDL on teachers might take various forms, for instance, some participants shared their learning experiences with other teachers or sought to engage students in the same learning experience. Furthermore, the impact of SDL implies that "the resulting outcome of new learning and excitement fuelled their need to always be self-directing their learning" (ibid: 175).

Weir's (2017) qualitative study used individual interviews and focus group interview to explore elementary mathematics teachers' perspectives on SDL in Ontario, Canada. The

study investigated teachers' views on SDL, their SDL activities, the factors or the conditions that support them to self-direct their learning and the extent to which SDL is transformational. The data demonstrated that teachers view SDL as an alternative source of professional learning that supports their PD. The study's data showed that most teachers engage in some form of SDL, including Internet-based activities such as Twitter, individual activities like reading research papers and collaborative activities such as conducting action research with colleagues. Teachers' motivation to learn is shaped by sharing their learning, learning additional content, becoming more proficient, improving their teaching practice and fostering their professional growth. The findings suggest that SDL is transformational as it changes teachers' practice for the better; for example, SDL helped some teachers to become more aware of different teaching approaches and strategies for teaching mathematics.

Wagner (2018) conducted a mixed-methods study using Gugliemino's (1977) Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale (SDLRS) and interviews. The participants were elementary school teachers based in the USA and the study aimed to measure teachers' readiness to engage in SDL using SDLRS, to discover whether they participated in SDL activities; what these activities were; whether these activities translate into the classroom. In the quantitative phase, the SDLRS was distributed to 100 teachers. The data showed that teachers' readiness scores were categorised into five ranges; five teachers were rated as having 'Below Average' readiness for SDL, 19 teachers were rated as 'Average', 43 teachers were rated as 'Above Average' and 33 teachers were rated as 'High'. In the study's second phase, interviews were conducted with nine female participants who had scored 'High' or 'Above Average' on the SDLRS. The data identified that all nine participants had participated in SDL activities, some of which were not related to their teaching, such as reading for pleasure; while others were related to teaching, such as

workshops, learning strategies and researching. Before starting any SDL activities, they began with an idea and then decided whether to collaborate with a colleague or seek out a mentor or simply do their own learning by reading or using the Internet. The participants engaged in SDL activities due to some situations, "including their classrooms, job or grade level transitions, student behavior, or district mandates that left them needing or desiring more knowledge" (ibid: 27). Moreover, the data suggested that these activities did translate into the classroom since the participants stated that when they attended a workshop or read a book, they sometimes modified what they had learned and applied it in the classroom.

While the previous studies have contributed to the knowledge of this area, the present study is different in terms of its broader aim to explore EFL teachers' views and experiences of SDL as a means of PD. For instance, some of the above studies have focused on specific aspects of the SDL topic, such as the use of new technology as a tool for teachers' SDL for their PD. However, the present study seeks to explore teachers' views to ascertain their perceptions of SDL and to not only determine if and why they perceive themselves as self-directed learners for their PD but also, if they do not, why this is. Therefore, asking teachers about the concept of SDL and their views and experiences of it can enhance understanding of (1) SDL as a means of EFL teachers' PD in the KSA, (2) whether EFL teachers in the KSA self-direct their learning inside their workplaces and/ or outside their workplaces (e.g., at home) and (3) if some teachers have no self-initiative and only attend the MoE programmes because they are obliged to do so. Moreover, investigating teachers' views will allow it to be determined which activities they engage with and how the MoE can facilitate their learning, especially in the workplace. Furthermore, investigating teachers' views on SDL will engender an improved understanding of the factors that affect their learning and what drives or

discourages them from learning, knowing that "self-direction in learning does not exist in a vacuum; rather it takes place within a larger social context that influences both the learner and the teaching-learning process" (Hiemstra & Brockett, 2012: 156). Owing to this, the theoretical model underpinning this study is the PPC model outlined in (3.4.2.2) above.

The PPC Model comprises three main elements: the *person* (EFL teacher), the *process*, and the *context*. The *person* encompasses the characteristics of the learner such as creativity, independency, enthusiasm and motivation. The *process* relates to the learning procedure that includes aspects such as learning styles, learning resources, technological skills, and learning skills. The *context* is the environment where teachers operate, whether within the MoE boundaries or society as a whole. Therefore, this study takes into consideration all these aspects to gain a deeper understanding of SDL. For instance, it does not consider the individual as a major factor in the learning process without the presence of other essential factors such as the context. The person element relates to "an individual's beliefs and attitudes that predispose one toward taking primary responsibility for their learning" (Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991: 29). Similarly, Guglielmino (2008: 2) argues that personal attributes, such as attitudes and values, "determine whether self-directed learning will take place in a given learning situation".

Therefore, exploring EFL teachers' views about and experiences with SDL can enhance our understanding of EFL teachers' attitudes towards SDL. For instance, it is worth questioning whether –and why– teachers view themselves as self-directed learners. Hence, this study seeks to explore EFL teachers SDL process, particularly the nature of the sources and activities that Saudi EFL teachers identify as SDL. In doing so, the study investigates whether the SDL process takes place inside or outside the teachers'

workplace and if it is conducted individually or collaboratively. Moreover, the context is a critical element in understanding SDL (Hiemstra & Brockett, 2012) because it can encourage or discourage individuals' SDL. There is, however, a lack of research and scrutiny on the impact of the context on SDL, as explained below in further detail.

Scholars and researchers in the field of SDL, including Brockett (2009), Hiemstra & Brockett, (2012) and Morris (2019) emphasise that the focus of SDL research over the years has been on individual learners, with less focus on the social context. This conception suggests that SDL does not take place in a vacuum without the impact of contextual factors. Therefore, to develop the MoE PD policy, this study also aims to explore EFL teachers' views about the contextual factors that impact their SDL. Morris (2019: 649) mentions that "further studies on self-directed learning should therefore place a central emphasis on understanding the learner's social context".

The scholarly literature suggests that learning can be enhanced or inhibited by several surrounding factors; in this study, these contextual factors encompass the influencing factors within MoE boundaries and the factors within the socio-political milieu. The underpinning rationale of the MoE PD provision, as stated in (1.2) above, is top-down, isolated workshops and courses, which do not necessarily address teachers' PD needs, while teachers are not invited to express their needs or participate in PD design. In fact, in the context of this study, the KSA, "the issue of power is crucial in the education system and is a key factor in the exclusion of individuals". (Alnefaie: 2016: 4). Hence, this particular context in which teachers have almost no voice in the decision-making process such as the design of PD programmes could yield new perspectives in the SDL field and EFL teachers' PD. Brockett (2000: 543) explains that "to go to the "next level" of understanding self-direction, it will be necessary to raise questions about the limits of

self-direction, and how self-direction interfaces with issues of power and conflict in various practice settings". Brockett (2009) affirms again that it is a time to move SDL scholarship forward in new multiple practice settings to conduct research and share experiences and opinions. Example of these workplace settings are the health and medical fields, business and industry and continuing professional education (Brockett, 2009; Merriam, 2018). Therefore, the context of this study may have a different impact on teachers' self-direction towards their learning to develop professionally other than some contexts where teachers have a voice in decision-making. Guglielmino (2008) suggests that "as researchers, it is our responsibility to learn all we can about the process of self-directed learning and the best ways to facilitate the skills and attitudes of self-direction in learning". By exploring participants' views about the topic of SDL, this study may enhance teachers' professional practice in the KSA and make recommendations to policymakers, while it hopes to fil more in this the gap where few studies address the topic of SDL and in-service EFL teachers' PD. Brockett (2009: 47) explains that:

> many pieces of the puzzle of self-directed learning have been filled in; however, much remains to be done in order to understand more fully potential of self-directed learning as a means of helping learners reach their fullest potential and in reaching those whose views have often been overlooked or marginalized in the world of adult learning.

This study seems to be the first in the KSA that has investigated the topic of SDL with teachers in general and EFL teachers in particular. The KSA has its own distinct culture, language and educational policy, so researching this topic in a new context may contribute more to the SDL field with regard to EFL teachers' PD. SDL originated in North America and the majority of SDL research has been conducted in the West. Merriam (2018: 93) identifies that "adult learning theories and models […] have evolved in the West and dominate the thinking, research and writing on adult learning theory". To enrich SDL

theory and practice, scholars and researchers have called for the topic of SDL to be studied in different contextual cultural backgrounds. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) recommended that further SDL research should include diverse cultural backgrounds. Similarly, Nah (1999: 25) said, "I found that self-directed learning theory would be enriched with the flavor of adults from different cultural and contextual backgrounds", adding that to develop SDL theories further, research should involve contexts other than a white, middle-class culture. Although these scholars were researching back in 1999, this idea is still recurrent in the literature. Nasri & Mansor (2016: 2755) suggest that SDL research is influenced by Western or Confucian cultures without taking into account the backgrounds of other cultures and as a result, studying SDL in different contexts and cultures would further efforts to attain a global definition for SDL. Boucouvalas (2009: 6) emphasise that "over the past twenty years we have arrived as a community of scholars, or a community of scholars has coalesced (although they may not yet know each other), to acknowledge the need for a more global perspective on self-directed learning". Meanwhile, Merriam (2018: 93) states, "the more we know about how adults learn, the better we can design learning activities that facilitate learning and the better we can prepare adults to live full and engaging lives in today's world". It may therefore be concluded that studying this topic in the context of the KSA has the potential to contribute to these efforts to improve the field of SDL and EFL teachers' PD.

3.6   Summary

This chapter started with defining of the concept of SDL and discussed the meaning of self in self-directed learning. Then, it outlined the nature of SDL activities. It discussed also SDL as a multifaceted concept and outlined the three broad categories (goals of SDL, models of SDL and SDL as personal attribute) that describe the concept of SDL. After that, it reviews the previous studies on SDL and EFL teachers.

The central aim of this study is to explore how Saudi EFL teachers perceive SDL in the context of their PD to view the potential of teachers to take the initiative in pursuing their own professional development and whether this is possible in the context of the KSA. SDL has been proposed as a means of achieving the aims of teachers' PD but it can be difficult to reach an agreed definition of the concept. The study aimed to explore qualitatively teachers' perceptions with SDL to hope to gain a wider picture about the topic of SDL and its implication on teachers' PD in order to contribute more in the field of teachers' PD. This study views SDL in its broad meaning "where primary responsibility for planning, carrying out, and evaluating a learning endeavor is assumed by the individual learner" Brockett and Hiemstra (1991: 24) taking into consideration the impact of the context. SDL is a concept that "derived from adult learning theories based on the view that teachers are able to formulate their own learning needs and consequently direct their learning". Therefore, the aim of this study was not to examine, analyse or capture the real meaning of SDL; rather, it aims to explore Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions and experiences with SDL as a form for their professional development. Thus, this study is based on the assumption that SDL is a kind of learning that does not take place in a vacuum without the impact of contextual factors whereby teachers take the responsibility and the initiative to learn in order to address their professional needs.

Chapter Four: Design of the Study

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a holistic overview about the research design of this study that aimed to explore Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions about SDL as a form of PD. It begins with the research questions followed by the philosophical assumptions underpinning this study. Then, it highlights the methodology employed focusing on the research method and the sampling strategy. In addition, this chapter illustrates the procedures of data collection and analysis, the ethical considerations and shows how the quality of this research was ensured.

For the purpose of this study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. How do Saudi EFL teachers perceive SDL as a form of teachers' professional development?
2. To what extent do Saudi EFL teachers view themselves as self-directed learners for their professional development?
3. What is the nature of the activities that Saudi EFL teachers identify as SDL?
4. What factors do Saudi EFL teachers believe impact (positively or negatively) on their self-directed learning?

4.2 Paradigmatic Position

Before commencing a research project, researchers should identify their paradigmatic positions because it can formulate the conceptions of the researchers and "shape their subsequent theorising" (Carr and Kemmis: 1986: 74). Such paradigmatic positions differ

in terms of the perspectives and beliefs in conceiving the social reality which in turn guide the approach to conducting educational research in a particular way.

Generally speaking, each paradigmatic position has its own framework and worldview. This framework, known in the literature as a *paradigm*, has been defined by Carr and Kemmis (1986: 72) as follows:

> A 'paradigm' embodies the particular conceptual framework through which the community of researchers operates and in terms of which a particular interpretation of 'reality' is generated. It also incorporates models of research, standards, rules of enquiry and a set of techniques and methods, all of which ensure that any theoretical knowledge that is produced will be consistent with the view of reality that the paradigm supports. structure the perceptions of researchers and shape their subsequent theorising. They enter into decisions about such things as what constitutes a research problem, what kind of knowledge is considered appropriate to its solution, and how this knowledge is to be acquired.

Major traditions have emerged in the field of educational research resulting from paradigmatic and philosophical differences such as the positivist paradigm and the interpretive paradigm. From their worldviews stem several traditions adopted by researchers. Moreover, three aspects are fundamental to the concept of paradigm: ontology, epistemology and methodology (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). These three notions determine how researchers conceive the social reality and what methodology is appropriate to access this reality. The concept of ontology refers to "the nature of this reality" (Scott and Morrison, 2005: 85). In other words, ontological assumptions concern what reality is; as Crotty (1998: 10) explains, ontology is "concerned with 'what is', with the nature of existence, with the nature of reality as such". On the other hand, epistemology has been defined as ways to "know the reality" that researchers seek to investigate (Scott and Morrison, 2005: 85).

The notions of ontology and epistemology shape our understanding of educational research; therefore, it is crucial that researchers comprehend the various approaches in educational research when embarking on any research project in order to follow the appropriate methodological path. Methodology has been described as "a plan of action designed to achieve a specific goal" (Denscombe, 2010: 3). In other words, it relates to the ways in which knowledge is to be sought when conducting research. It is also a general strategy for conducting research which means that "one should have a work-plan that defines what will be done, who will do it, when it will be done and how" (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998: 166).

Historically speaking, multiple paradigms have emerged in educational research resulting from paradigmatic and philosophical differences. As mentioned above there are mainly two dominant paradigms in educational studies: the positivist paradigm and the interpretive paradigm. The positivist paradigm is inspired from objectivism and realism that both view reality as existing separately from the mind (Crotty, 1998). The ontological position of positivism conceives reality as existing 'out there' and waiting to be discovered by researchers (Cohen et al., 2007); this reality is therefore conceived as independent of the mind. Thus, the reality, or the educational phenomena, exist as such and are separate from researchers. As far as this epistemological position is concerned, positivists believe that the researcher and what is to be discovered are two separate entities, independent from each other. Consequently, objects are not a result of the researcher's mind but need to be discovered through inquiry and research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

With regard to the interpretivism, interpretive research is commonly conducted in natural settings and often labelled as "naturalistic" research (Lincoln & Guba 1985). Because

people's experiences are shaped and transformed by their contexts, they are best comprehended as they normally operate; in their natural settings. Unlike positivism, the interpretive approach is rooted in the belief that reality does not exist as such, objectively or independently from the mind; therefore, reality is not considered as the result of discovery. Ontologically, interpretivism is based on a subjective conception of reality that is conceived as multiple and different from one individual to another (Crotty, 1998; Guba, 1990). Epistemologically, that is, how reality can be known, interpretivism views reality and knowledge as dependent on each other. Reality is being constructed as the result of interactions and negotiations. Because we co-construct knowledge, the meanings people attribute to reality will depend on our subjective interpretations (Pring, 2000). This approach also stems from the assumption that people's actions cannot be understood by means of measurements because they are shaped by the meanings people ascribe to their reality (Henn et al., 2006). For instance, interpretive research will seek to collect data on participants' experiences by means of in-depth interviews. Instead of discovering a reality 'out there', interpretive researchers tend to be concerned with exploring perceptions, experiences views and opinions. In addition, interpretive researchers are concerned with making sense of the lived realities of their participants by focusing on how reality is perceived from their subjective perspective as it is filtered through their mind; therefore, researchers attempt to present an account of how participants construct this social reality.

As explained before, the aim of this study was to explore Saudi EFL teachers' views on SDL as an approach for PD. consequently, the study adopted the interpretive paradigm to gain in-depth information about the topic investigated.

The interpretive paradigm that informed this study seemed appropriate to conduct this project and served as a theoretical framework for comprehending the participants' views

and perceptions of the topic of SDL in relation to PD. This qualitative approach helped me negotiate with participants and construct knowledge to gain a deeper understanding of their experience about SDL as a form of their PD. Ontologically speaking, the current study was concerned with how the experiences and perceptions of the participants on the topic of SDL with regard teachers' PD would generate a meaningful representation of reality of this topic. Epistemologically, the study sought to construct meaning through interpretations taking into account the different perspectives and views of the participants about the phenomenon under investigation, that is, SDL as a means of PD.

Qualitative research, as explained by Creswell (2009: 176), is used as "a form of interpretive inquiry in which researchers make an interpretation of what they see, hear, and understand". Qualitative research is an account of the interpretation of the perceptions of the participants and highly depends on observing people in their 'natural setting' and engaging with them in their interactions using their language (Kirk and Miller, 1986). It is built on the simple idea that because people are more aware of their environment and more able to describe their own reality, it is better to let them talk about it themselves (Anderson & Arsenault; 1998). Likewise, reality needs to be comprehended through an in-depth understanding of how individuals subjectively ascribe meaning to this reality (Carr and Kemmis, 1986); therefore, this understanding "has to come from the inside, not the outside" (Cohen et al., 2007: 19).

However, as far as the current research project is concerned, as mentioned earlier, this study aimed to elicit Saudi EFL teachers' views and experiences of SDL as a form of their professional development. Thus, I did not conceive, like positivists, this reality as existing 'out there'. Likewise, my methodological approach did not follow a positivist line because the positivist paradigm mainly utilises scientific tools and instruments to address

the issues or phenomenon under investigation. The interpretive stance of this study, therefore, mainly sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the views and experiences of Saudi EFL teachers about SDL through negotiating and interacting with them to construct a greater understanding about the topic of SDL with relation to teachers' PD.

4.3   Methodology

Methodology has been described as "a plan of action designed to achieve a specific goal" (Denscombe, 2010: 3). In other words, it is "the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes" (Crotty,1998: 3). A number of methodologies are commonly used in qualitative research and it is crucial to have a clear understanding of the issue that is being investigated prior to choosing the methodological approach of a project. Therefore, as mentioned by Denscombe (2010: 4), "to decide which strategy is likely to work best, the researcher needs to consider three key questions": (1) "is it suitable?, (2) is it feasible? and (3) is it ethical?". That is to say, "one should have a work-plan that defines what will be done, who will do it, when it will be done and how" (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998: 166).

This study followed a qualitative exploratory methodology which was useful to gain an in-depth understanding of the issue of SDL as an approach for teachers' PD, through the perceptions of the participants' and their experiences with SDL. Exploratory methodology is used when "little is known about a phenomenon or existing research is limited [and] its purpose is to discover new ideas and insights, or even generate new theories" (Heigham and Croker (2009: 9) As mentioned before, research about SDL as a means of EFL teachers' PD in the KSA is needed in order to investigate this issue and contribute to the teachers' PD in the KSA because, as far as I am aware, no studies have

investigated why/why not Saudi EFL teachers develop themselves in a self-directed manner. This approach appeared beneficial to gain an in-depth understanding of the nature of the current practices of SDL as a form of teachers' PD from the lens of the lived experiences of the participants as the result of the fact that it seems that this study is the first in the KSA that addressed this area and little if any is known about the topic of SDL and EFL teachers' PD.

One of the keys aims of qualitative research is "seeing through the eyes of others – understating the perspectives of respondents" (Harding, 2013: 10). As mentioned earlier in (1.1), the issue of SDL as a form of teachers' PD is a topic that caught my attention due to my experience as an EFL teachers and because I first started this career without following any teaching preparation programme. As a result, I relied on my personal attempts to develop myself in a self-directed manner. Thus, I became keen on capturing and exploring Saudi EFL teachers' experiences and views about the issue underlined above. In addition, to the best of my knowledge, this issue has not been explored and researched before in the Saudi context. Therefore, as mentioned above, I am eager to explore and research this issue qualitatively in order to get an in-depth understanding of it.

4.4   Data Collection Method

There are a number of data collection methods in qualitative research and for this research, semi-structure interviews were used as the main method. This section describes the method of data collection and its design. Also, it outlines the procedures followed for the interview trials.

4.4.1 Research Method: Interviews

Cohen and Manion (1994: 284) point out that "the preliminary stage of the interview study will be the point where the purpose of the research is decided […] and the reason why interview approach was chosen". In qualitative research, interviews are the most widely used method for collecting and gathering data. The choice of interviews as a method for gathering and collecting data stems from the philosophical foundations of interpretive research. Indeed, interpretive research seeks to gain a detailed in-depth understanding of social reality by investigating how individuals ascribe meaning to their world. As illustrated before, reality, for the interpretive researchers, is perceived as multiple and different from one individual to another and the role as a researcher is to interact and negotiate with people in their natural setting to construct the reality of a certain phenomenon. Therefore, the interview is "a meeting of two persons to exchange information and ideas through questions and responses, resulting in communication and joint construction of meaning about a particular topic" (Janesick, 2011: 100). As I am interested in teachers' perceptions and experiences with SDL as a means of PD, the interview "allows for greater depth than is the case with other methods of data collection" (Cohen & Manion, 1994: 272) to elicit "responses about [teachers'] experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings and knowledge" (Patton, 2002: 4).

There are three main kinds of interviews: the structured interview, the semi-structured interview and the unstructured interview. In the structured interview, the sequence and wording of the questions are inflexible and the freedom to make modification to the questions is little (Cohen & Manion, 1994). It is similar to some extent to the questionnaire where the questions are closed-ended and used with a large number of participants (Wellington, 2000). By contrast, in the unstructured interview, the sequence and wording of the questions are entirely flexible and the interviewer has the freedom to

modify, add or omit questions based on the research objectives (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

It is mainly used with ethnographic inquiries where "ethnographers gather data through participant observation and record field notes as they observe from the side lines and/or as they join in the activities of those they are studying" (DiCicco-Bloom, B, F Crabtree, 2006: 315). The third kind of interviews is the semi-structured interview which is between the openness of the unstructured interview and the tightness of the structured interview.

For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interview was chosen as the main method to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences with SDL as a form of PD. It is a widely used method and raise "the expectation that the interviewed subjects' viewpoints are more likely to be expressed in an openly designed interview situation" (Flick, 2009: 150). It is unlike the structured interview where the respondents have to choose one of the answers provided by the researcher and cannot avoid "forced-choice responses" (Borg, 2006: 203). Also, it is unlike the unstructured interview which requires a longer time whereby the interviewer has a general topic of inquiry and the conversation is open without sticking to a checklist of topics.

Semi-structured interviews were used because they provide room for flexibility based on a checklist or a guide to follow (Wellington, 2000: 74, Harding, 2013: 31). This flexibility allows respondents to express their thoughts and opinions in greater details and thus, provides researchers with in-depth information on the phenomena they investigate (Denscombe, 2010). They were composed of a series of questions and prompts that helped me elicit more information about a certain point. In fact, the interview protocol is not a rigid guide that should be adhered to rigorously; rather, during the course of the interview, the researcher may ask new unprepared questions to gain a deeper understanding of the respondents' thoughts, perceptions or feelings. Also, the researcher may not follow

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exactly the order of the interview questions and prompts. Indeed, he/she may change the "sequence and forms of questions in order to follow up the specific answers given and the stories told by the subject" (Kvale, 2007: 51). Therefore, this kind of interviews helped me manage the time of the interview by focusing on certain topics and being flexible to ask new questions and further explore any unexpected point.

As mentioned above, the semi-structured interview follows a schedule that consists of some key questions or topics with additional prompts. For this study, the interview schedule (see Appendix 1) was designed based on the research questions and in light of the literature pertaining to SDL, particularly on Hiemstra and Brockett's (2012) PPC model mentioned in section (3.4.2.2). The PPC model is an updated version of the PRO model proposed by Brockett and Hiemstra (1991). The main difference between the PRO model and the PPC model is that the PPC model gives equal importance to the context and the other two elements. The PPC model comprises three basics elements in understanding SDL: the person, process and context. First, the *person* relates to EFL teachers' responsibilities and characteristics (e.g., motivation) to self-direct their learning for their PD. According to Brockett & Hiemstra (1991: 27), "the point of departure for understanding learning lies within the individual". Therefore, the first two sections of the interview protocol focused on exploring how Saudi EFL teachers perceive SDL in the context of their PD to explore the potential of teachers to take initiatives in pursuing their PD and whether this is possible in the context of this study. Second, the *process* comprises different aspects such as learning resources, learning skills, evaluation, and technological skills (Brockett & Hiemstra, 199; Hiemstra and Brockett, 2012). This study seeks to explore the nature of the sources and activities that Saudi EFL teachers identify as SDL. Finally, with regards the *context*, according to several scholars, there has been an over-emphasis on individual learner on SDL, with less focus on the context where the learning

takes place. In this respect, it has been argued that "learning activities cannot be divorced from the social context in which they occur" (Brockett & Hiemstra, 199: 32), which is why the context has a critical impact on SDL. Owing to this, the final section of the interview explored the factors that Saudi EFL teachers believe impact (positively or negatively) their SDL. As a result, the interview questions focused on the following topics:

1. Teachers' perceptions of SDL as a means of teachers' PD.

2. The extent to which they view themselves as self-directed learners.

3. Learning sources and activities they identify as SDL for their PD.

4. The factors that might promote their engagement with SDL for PD or might dishearten them to self-direct their learning for PD.

4.4.2 Interview Trials

In order to conduct interviews in an adequate manner, it is essential to trial them during a pilot study (Dörnyei, 2007). The pilot study is an essential step in the research process in order to check the instruments of data collection in terms of its feasibility before fieldwork (Cohen et al., 2007) and to estimate the length of the interview (Yin, 2011). In addition, it helps the researcher to "identify potential difficulties and so to reduce the danger that flawed data is collected" (Harding, 2013: 48). Before the pilot study, an interview schedule was designed with the main questions and possible prompts. Therefore, piloting the schedule enable the researchers to check what questions are best suited their studies (Janesick, 2011). Hence, one of the most important benefits of the interview trial is to improve the quality of the schedule so that the researchers will "feel confident to use" (Harding, 2013: 49).

As it is of benefit to pilot the study with "the same type of people you will include in the real study" (Phellas, Bloch & Seale, 2011: 197), I piloted two interviews with two Saudi doctoral students in the UK who have teaching experience in the KSA. After that, I piloted the interviews with two EFL teachers located in the KSA over the phone due to the geographical distance, to save time.

It was hoped that the pilot study would be helpful to shed light on the possible lack of clarity of some of the questions, which might minimise the effect of potential misunderstandings in addition to adding or omitting some questions. For the first tow pilot interviews, I had prepared as many as interview questions with potential probes and it was conducted with two doctoral students in the UK. It assisted me to identify redundant and ambiguous questions. As a result, redundant questions were removed while several questions where amended to avoid ambiguity. After that, I contacted two of my colleagues located in the KSA and I piloted the interview over the telephone; the interview questions were clear and did not require any modification.

4.5   The Participants of the Study

One of the fundamental steps in data collection is "to engage in a sampling strategy that will best help you understand your central phenomenon and the research question you are asking" (Creswell, 2012: 205). Hence, this study utilised a purposeful sampling strategy whereby the researcher selected participants who can "purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (Creswell, 2013: 156).

This study utilised a sample comprising twenty Saudi male EFL teachers employed in government schools in Makkah city, KSA (see table 4.1) below. Due to gender

segregation in the KSA public schools, it was not possible to recruit female EFL teachers to participate in this study. In addition, being employed in the men's sector of the GDE, I had to contact the head of the English language department in the same sector, who is only responsible for English language male teachers and supervisors in the GDE.

The participants of this study are working in separate schools from different parts of the city. The choice of the sample may base on "socio-demographic characteristics, or may relate to specific experiences, behaviours, roles, etc." (Ritchie et al., 2003: 78). For this study, I aimed to interview the teachers with more than five years of teaching experience because I assumed they could provide richer information about the topic investigated due to the extent of their teaching experiences. After these years of experience they could provide more in-depth information about their SDL experiences and views in addition to their experiences in relation to their context and its possible effect on their SDL. In this regard, purposeful sampling utilises "those who have in-depth knowledge about particular issues, maybe by virtue of their professional role, power, access to networks, expertise or experience" (Ball, as cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 115). Therefore, this purposeful sampling was adopted "as a way of getting the *best information* by selecting items or people most likely to have the experience or expertise to provide quality information and valuable insights on the research topic" (Denscombe, 2010: 35).

Unlike quantitative research, samples in qualitative studies are usually composed a smaller number of participants and these studies usually explore certain issues in more depth and do not aim to generalise their findings to a larger population (Patton, 2002; Cohen et al., 2007). The size of the sample in qualitative research depends on the decision of the researcher and richness of information obtained. According to Patton (2002: 244), there is no rule for the size of the sample in qualitative studies as it "depends on what you

want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what's at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources". However, I intended to interview twenty teachers from different stages so as to gain diverse views and experiences about the issue of the SDL with regard to teachers' PD in the Saudi context. Ritchie et al. (2003: 85) identify that a too small sample "may easily miss key constituencies within the population or contain too little diversity to explore the varying influences of different factors". In my view, it is the researcher's decision to decide the number of participants based on his/her aims, the data obtained and other factors such as the time constraints and issues of access.

Table 4.1: Demographic Data of the Participants

No	Pseudonym	Qualification	Years of teaching	Stage of teaching
1	Ryan	BA + Diploma in Education	6	Intermediate
2	Samir	BA	6	Intermediate
3	Sami	BA + Diploma in Education	13	Intermediate
4	Ali	MA	10	Intermediate + Secondary
5	Mubark	BA	14	Intermediate + Secondary
6	Ahmad	BA	8	Intermediate + Secondary
7	Bander	BA + Diploma in Education	13	Elementary + Secondary
8	Thamer	BA	11	Intermediate + Secondary
9	Hasan	BA + Diploma in Education	10	Intermediate
10	Saud	BA	9	Intermediate
11	Tariq	BA	13	Intermediate + Secondary
12	Abed	BA	5	Intermediate + Secondary
13	Fahad	BA	9	Intermediate
14	Salem	BA (teachers College)	9	Intermediate + Secondary
15	Naif	MA	14	Intermediate + Secondary
16	Muhna	BA + Diploma in Education	13	Intermediate
17	Yasser	BA + Diploma in Education	11	Intermediate + Secondary
18	Talal	B.Ed. in English language	16	Intermediate
19	Mohsen	B.Ed. in English language	19	Intermediate + Secondary
20	Yousuf	BA	19	Intermediate + Secondary

4.6 Data Collection Procedures

This section provides an outline of the procedures of data collection. These procedures followed three stages: obtaining permission, recruiting research participants and conducting the interviews.

4.6.1 Obtaining Permission

In accordance with the ethics policy and procedures of the University of Exeter to conduct research, and ethics application form (see appendix 2) was completed where I provided a brief description of the study such as its context, research aims and methodology (i.e. design and sampling strategy). Also, I outlined how the data would be safely stored and destroyed once the research was completed. I also contacted the GDE in Makkah city to get the permission to gain access and conduct this study in Makkah city with EFL teachers (see appendix 3). After that, I started recruiting the study participants.

4.6.2 Recruiting Research Participants

After gaining the approval of the University of Exeter and the GDE in the Makkah Region in the KSA to conduct the study, I contacted the Head of the English Language Department in the GDE in Makkah to explain the aims of the study and provide documents illustrating all the information of the study. After that, he invited me to join eight WhatsApp groups of which most English language teachers and supervisors in Makkah City are members. After I joined these WhatsApp groups, he introduced me to the teachers and encouraged them to participate in the study. Then, I introduced myself to all the WhatsApp groups members presenting the aims of the study and its ethical considerations. I also shared a file highlighting the purpose of this study and research ethics issues. I requested whoever was willing to participate to send me a private message

to arrange for a convenient time and place to conduct the interviews. Among around two hundred teachers, only twenty-three showed an interest to participate in the study. Then, I sent to each participant the main interview questions (upon their request) with the consent form and information sheet (see Appendix 4). Having received the consent forms, I arranged with each teacher a suitable time and place to conduct the interview. Each participant preferred to meet him in the evening time due to their busy schedule and workload. Only one participant preferred to meet in his school.

4.6.3 Conducting the Interviews

The interviews were conducted at a convenient place and time for each participant. Prior to each interview, I tried to have a friendly general conversation to "create a good atmosphere in the interview" (Hermanns, 2004: 212). Then, upon their approval, I used two recorders so that I could focus and listen carefully to the participants and make eye contact with them. After that, I begun to ask basic questions such as the years of teaching experience as these questions are "often necessary at the start of an interview and can be good way of getting started or warming up" (Wellington, 2000: 75). I aimed at creating a good atmosphere to establish a rapport with the participants as "the process of establishing rapport is an essential component of the interview" (DiCicco-Bloom, B, F Crabtree, 2006: 316).

To ensure that participants could fully express their opinions and thoughts with confidence, interviews were conducted in Arabic –the participants' and the researcher's first language. My interviews started with a general question asking the participants about their understanding of the term PD and then to speak freely about the history of their SDL to make it as starting point for the interview. After that, I followed the interview schedule,

but in some occasions I did not follow its order because certain teachers raised several issues which required me to ask new questions or change the order of the questions.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

The code of conduct and ethics of research are very important aspects that need to be taken into consideration by researchers as the quality and integrity of any research project rely on these ethical principles. Wellington (2000: 3) affirms that "ethical concerns should be at the forefront of any research project and should continue through to the write-up and dissemination stages". Prior to undertaking the field study, the first step was to read the University of Exeter ethics guidance and have the ethics application form signed. Also, I obtained permission from the GDE to conduct this study with teachers.

Then, I contacted the participants of this study and asked them to sign a consent form and information sheet. They were informed about the aims of the study and its procedures. They were also informed that the interviews would be recorded and that the collected information would be used solely for the purpose of this research. Furthermore, they were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any stage.

With regard to anonymity and confidentiality, the participants were assured that the audio-recordings and the transcripts of the interviews would be saved on my password-protected computer and saved also on my online account on the University of Exeter U-drive that is password-protected. In addition, I assured them that their anonymity would be strictly guaranteed by the use of pseudonyms.

4.8 Data Analysis

The interviews were recorded and then transcribed into Arabic not to lose meaning and quality when analysing the data. To analyse the collected data, thematic analysis was employed, which is a "method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 79). The data was analysed using MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software (see Appendix 6). This software does not analyse or interpret the data but mainly enabled me to store and organise the data due to its many beneficial features that assisted me in the analysis.

Concurrently with the data collection, the process of data analysis started by transcribing the audio recorded interviews into word document files and then uploading them on MAXQDA. The first step consisted of reading the written transcripts several times to immerse myself in the data and gain a general idea about the views and ideas of the participants. Each time I read the transcripts, I developed a "deeper understanding about the information supplied by [my] participants" (Creswell, 2012: 238). During this stage and the subsequent stages, my ideas and thoughts were "noted in *memos,* which complement and explain the codes that were found" (Flick, 2009: 307).

The next step was to code each interview transcript using MAXQDA. Coding in qualitative research is "the process of identifying different segments of the data that describe related phenomena and labeling these parts using broad category names" (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006: 183). The code can be a single word or a sentence or a paragraph. In this step, I read the transcripts again and I coded inductively searching for "patterns of meaning in data so that general statements about phenomena under investigation can be made" (Hatch, 2002: 161). In this stage, I tried to be more open to

code almost each segment of information in order to come with rich descriptions of the topic of this study. In my view, this stage is the most critical stage because the researcher may have preconceptions and predefined themes which may lead him or her to neglect important findings. Therefore, I decided to code inductively in order to gain more in-depth and broad information. After coding all the interviews transcripts, I started to combine the codes which described the "same phenomenon, idea, explanation or activity" (Gibbs, 2007: 39) to form sub-themes and themes. Then, I reviewed the sub-themes and themes to check if they were interrelated with the codes and the extracts. After that, I started to name and define the themes and the sub-themes. The processes of coding and generating themes were conducting in English on the Arabic transcripts. Then, for the final stage, before writing the findings report, only the relevant excerpts were translated into English. As a result of this analytical process, the findings report could be written.

4.9 Ensuring the quality of the research

The discussion about the quality of social research, which relates to "concerns designated with words such as *validity* and *reliability*, developed within the quantitative or scientific tradition" (Seale, 1999: 465). The trustworthiness of qualitative research is disputed by positivists maybe "because their concepts of validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the same way in naturalistic work" (Shenton, 2004: 63) and also because "it fails to adhere to canons of reliability and validity" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982: 31).

However, as a result of the criticism by positivists on interpretive studies and their perceived lack of quality measurements and in order to enhance the rigour of their research, interpretivists have adopted several approaches to establish the trustworthiness of thus research tradition. As a result, "methodologists over the years, trying to give some

guidance to qualitative researchers in improving or judging the quality of qualitative research" (Seale, 1999: 465).

In the literature, many procedures have been suggested to establish the quality of qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). This study followed the well-known criteria proposed by Guba (1981) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) to achieve the trustworthiness of qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These criteria "replace the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity" (Denzin & Lincoln,1994: 24).

4.9.1　Credibility

As mentioned before, reality, or truth, in interpretive studies is viewed as constructed as a result of the interactions and negotiations between the researcher and the participants. Thus, credibility in qualitative studies can be seen as a procedure to assess the "truth value" (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 278). In other words, credibility aims to show "how congruent are one's findings with reality?" (Merriam, 1995: 52). The researchers should "demonstrate that a true picture of the phenomenon under scrutiny is being presented" (Shenton, 2004: 63) to consider that if the constructed truth is credible.

In order to achieve the credibility of a qualitative study, scholars have suggested multiple strategies. The researcher should "determine which of these strategies [he/she] will use, because not all strategies might be suitable" (Korstjens & Moser, 2018: 121). For this study, I used two strategies: member checks and peer debriefing (Guba, 1981, Lincoln & Guba1985).

According to Guba and Lincoln (1989: 239), member checks are "the single most critical technique for establishing credibility". Guba (1981: 85) explains that "the process of

member checks is the single most important action inquirers can take, for it goes to the heart of the credibility criterion". To member check is, therefore, to "determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings through taking the final report or specific description or themes back to the participants and determining whether these participants feel that they are accurate" (Creswell, 2003: 196). Also, as mentioned earlier, as qualitative research is subjective in nature, "researcher bias might be reduced by actively involving the research participant in checking and confirming the results" (Birt et al., 2016: 1802).

Moreover, for Creswell (2009: 191) member checking does not mean sending raw transcripts to the participants to check the accuracy; rather, "the researcher takes back parts of the polished product, such as themes [etc]" to the participants. For the purpose of this study, I sent the raw transcripts soon as I finished the transcription followed later by the abstract of the findings as some scholars indicated that the raw transcripts of the interviews can be sent to the participants to check their accuracy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Birt et al., 2016). The participants of this study replied without making any comments and all of them showed their satisfaction with the transcripts and the abstract.

Another strategy used to increase the credibility of this study was peer debriefing. The idea of peer debriefing is to make "regular meetings with other people who are not involved in the research in order to disclose one's own blind spots and to discuss working hypotheses and results with them" (Flick, 2009: 392). It also helps the researcher "to keep her or his bias out of the study" (Given, 2008: 200).

During this research, I discussed multiple aspects of the study with some colleagues, who were also doctoral students, and their feedback was informative and helpful to amend few certain elements of the study.

4.9.2 Transferability

Transferability is another criterion to establish the trustworthiness or the quality of qualitative studies. It is a parallel criterion to the notion of generalisation used by positivist researchers to establish validity (Guba, 1981; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). However, as mentioned in the sample section, qualitative studies do not aim to generalise their findings; rather, the transferability in qualitative studies is a "process in which the reader of the research uses information about the particular instance that has been studied to arrive at a judgement about how far it would apply to other comparable instances". (Denscombe, 2010: 301). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the researcher to provide sufficient information about the context in which the study is undertaken because "the person who wishes to make a judgement of transferability needs information about *both* contexts to make that judgement well" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 124).

In this study, I tried to present a clear description about the context and the sample to "allow readers to make decisions regarding transferability because the writer describes in detail the participants or setting under study" (Creswell, 2013: 252). Hence, the reader can assess if this study can be transferred to his/her context because "the reader, not [me] makes the transferability judgment because [I] do not know their specific settings" (Korstjens & Moser, 2018: 122).

4.9.3 Dependability

Dependability is the parallel criterion of reliability in positivist inquiry that is "concerned with the stability of the data over time" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989: 242). It is also termed in the literature as "qualitative reliability" (Creswell, 2009; Gibbs, 2018). The notion of dependability "refers to whether one can track the procedures and processes used to collect and interpret the data" (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2006: 172). Therefore,

researchers should "supply adequate and relevant methodological information to enable others to replicate the study" (Given, 2008: 209). Thus, in order to make this qualitative study more dependable, I reported in detail the whole steps of the research design "thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same results" (Shenton, 2004: 71). It is important to systemically report the procedures of the study in detail so that other researchers may follow similar procedures in their contexts.

Chapter One of this study provides a thorough description of the rationale of this study and its purpose. In Chapter Two, the context of this study was described in more detail such as the education system in the KSA where EFL teachers operate, the MoE provision and teachers' working conditions. Chapter Three critically and comprehensively reviews the literature pertaining to SDL. The thesis also explained in detail the steps of searching for related studies about the topic of this study, its conceptual framework and the gap in the literature that this study attempts to address. With regard to the study design, the thesis presented a holistic description of its paradigmatic position, the methods employed, the sampling, and approach to data analysis. As detailing the study steps in an adequate manner can show "how far another researcher would have come up with comparable findings" (Denscombe, 2010: 300), I provided a full description for each stage of this study so that other researchers can track the study's procedures in order to replicate it in their contexts. In addition to this, a code-recode procedure has been undertaken to increase the dependability of the study. According to Krefting (1991: 221), "another means that the researcher can use to increase the dependability of the study is to conduct a code-recode procedure on his or her data during the analysis phase of the study". That is, after coding certain segments of the data, the researcher should wait several days and record the same data again to ensure consistency between the two coding processes. This procedure was helpful to ensure that the coding described the data accurately. During the

coding process, ideas and thoughts were noted in memos, which helped me "remember later what kind of thinking was behind the idea when [I] first developed it" (Gibbs, 2018: 134). Another step undertaken to ensure the dependently was the "transcription checking" (Creswell, 2009; Gibbs, 2018). I made sure that my transcription was accurate by listening again to the audio-recordings of each interviews to ensure there were no mistakes or anything missing from the interviews and took great care to "record exactly what the respondent said" (Gibbs, 2018: 25).

4.9.4   Confirmability

Confirmability is the process of "assuring that data, interpretations, and outcomes of inquiries are rooted in contexts and persons apart from the evaluator and are not simply figments of the evaluator's imagination" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989: 243). Therefore, to achieve confirmability, the researcher should clarify that the findings are the result of the participants' experiences and not the researcher's bias (Shenton, 2004).

As mentioned in the dependability section above, the researcher has to clearly describe the context of the study and the steps of the research process, such as the recruitment of the participants, how the data was analysed and all other aspects. In addition to this, an audit trail must be undertaken to make the study confirmable. The audit trail is a technique used to establish confirmability of qualitative studies (Guba, 1981; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). This involves asking the participants to verify the interpretations of the findings and ensure that they are consistent with their views. Also, a doctoral student was recruited as an independent reviewer to review each stage of this study. In addition, as mentioned before, member checks have been undertaken by sending the interview transcripts as well as the abstract of the findings to the participants.

Chapter Five: Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of this study focusing on SDL as a means for the professional development of Saudi EFL teachers. Based on this, the study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do Saudi EFL teachers perceive SDL as a form of teachers' professional development?

2. To what extent do Saudi EFL teachers view themselves as self-direct learners for their professional development?

3. What is the nature of the sources and activities that Saudi EFL teachers identify as SDL?

4. What factors do Saudi EFL teachers believe impact (positively or negatively) their self-directed learning?

The data of this study were analysed thematically and four main themes emerged (see Figure 5.1). First, the findings showed the participants' perceptions of SDL and highlighted the fact that the majority of the participants believed in the benefit of SDL for PD arguing that it can be a cornerstone of PD. Also, according to the participants' views, SDL is not encouraged institutionally or societally in a wider sense. In addition, the data revealed that the participants usually linked teachers' learning with the MoE that they considered responsible for this aspect. Alos, it revealed that teachers perceived that they needed the help of the MoE in their learning for their PD.

Despite the participants' belief in the benefits of SDL for teachers' PD, the data analysis showed that some teachers do not self-direct their learning for their PD; a number of them self-directed their learning during a particular period of time and discontinued to engage in SDL activities due to several demotivating factors. Furthermore, certain teachers explained that they started to engage in SDL later, after several years of teaching while others expressed the view that they do self-direct their learning, but in an intermittent manner. The common denominator or characteristic of teachers' SDL is that it is unplanned.

As far as the factors impacting positively or negatively on their SDL are concerned, the data suggest that a number of factors encourage teachers to learn while other factors tend to discourage them. Most of these encouraging and discouraging factors are external factors which relate to the workplace or to the MoE policy and few relate to teachers' personal factors. With regard to the SDL sources, the data indicated that most of the sources teachers learn from in a self-directed manner are outside the MoE boundaries and very limited sources are within the schools.
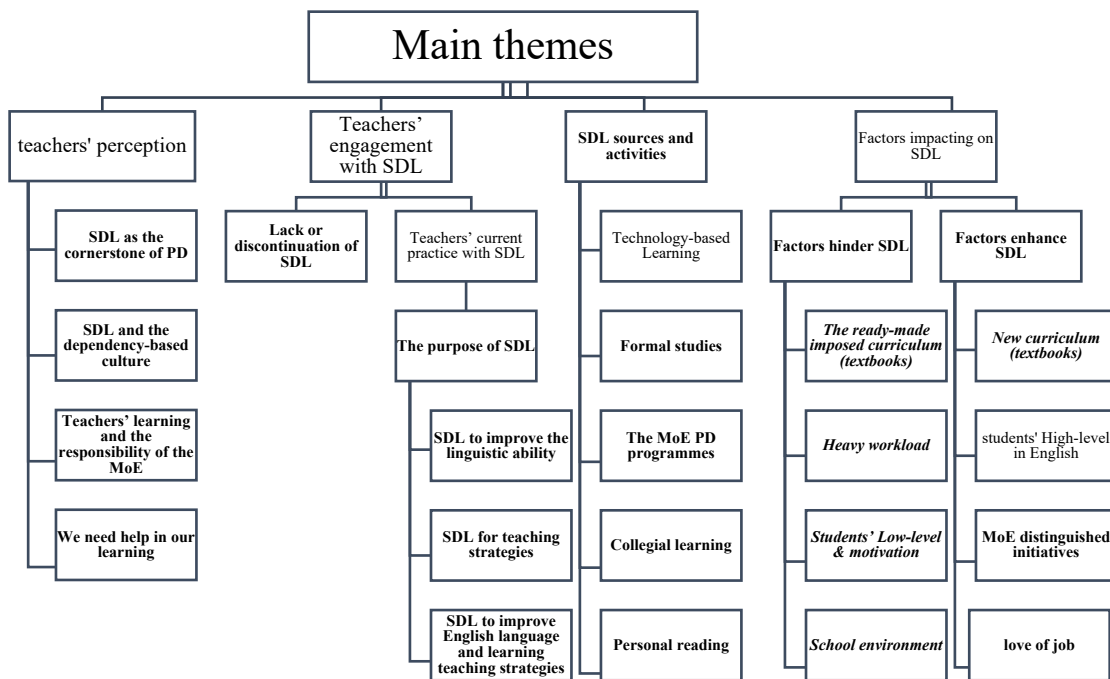
Figure 5.1: Main themes that emerged from the data analysis

5.2   Teachers' perceptions of SDL

This theme relates to the perceptions of teachers on SDL and their points of view about SDL as an approach for teachers' PD. The data analysis revealed that teachers believed that SDL is a very important way to improve them professionally even though certain teachers do not engage in any self-directed activities. In addition, the data showed that teachers associated their learning with the MoE in a way that they considered the MoE as responsible for teachers' learning. The data also demonstrated that some participants said that they need help from the MoE in relation to their learning to facilitate their self-initiatives to learn. Apart from this need for help, several participants identified the need for practical aspects in the MoE activities. Finally, the data also revealed that SDL is a concept that is neither encouraged institutionally by the MoE nor culturally by society in a wider sense.

5.2.1   SDL as the Cornerstone of PD

While there are variations in the extent of teachers' engagement in SDL activities, the data tend to suggest that the participants believed that SDL is an important way for PD and could be the "cornerstone" of PD, as expressed by Saud:

> Self-learning is the corner stone. Through self-learning, you do not wait for others to teach you something or impose some courses on you. It is the secret of success, but who has the determination to continuously learn?

SDL can be the most important way for PD in this era, as stated by Muhna:"I tell you, SDL remains the best way; the best current way now for teachers to develop". In addition, for an utmost benefit, "the teacher needs continuity in self PD" (Bander).

As a confirmation of the importance of SDL in PD, some participants in the beginning of the interviews declared their admiration for the topic of this study, which they considered

as an important issue. In this regard, Tariq stated: "I congratulate you on this topic. Do you believe? It is the core of the development". Likewise, Ali mentioned that he liked the topic when he read the summary of the study and stated:

> You see, before anything, I read the summary of the study and saw that it was about self-learning; indeed, it is an excellent thing. If everyone uses it, they will develop. But you know that self-learning is an internal conviction within each person whether he is a student or a teacher. This is about learning without being checked and this what encouraged me to participate in this study.

For Fahad, the topic of this study was an additional motive for him as he confirmed: "I like it and I wish it were institutionally implemented systematically. You have frankly motivated me".

Some of the participants identified that the benefits of SDL for the teacher lies in keeping up with the demands of work and following-up the developments to deliver the knowledge to students in the exact form, because the student has the ability to distinguish between the capable teacher and the one who is not. In this regard, Sami believed that:

> teachers' learning is a very, very urgent issue in this time. The student can distinguish between the good and the poor teacher. As I said, self-learning is a must in this time, not like before. The routine teacher will bury himself.

Similarly, to benefit his students, Mubark clarified: "of course I learn for the students; I learn so the students can get the benefit and if I do not learn, they will not get any benefit". In the same vein, to cope with the demands of their work and their students, Bander insisted that SDL is "very important to keep up with the demands of the current generation and we have to learn how to convey ideas".

As will be discussed further in this thesis, the data analysis revealed that teachers learn mainly for two purposes: (1) to improve their English language or/and (2) to learn

teaching strategies. They associated their SDL with these two domains. For example, Fahad emphasised the importance of learning in order to improve his English language skills:

> You have to learn otherwise you will remain at your level or it will drop down. The language dies if you do not learn and practice it. It is difficult to be away from the language. I switch somethings to English like basketball. I like it and I listen to the commentators in English.

As a demonstration to the positive outcome of SDL, some participants reported the experiences of some of their colleagues with SDL and how they reached a very high level in English due to their continuous SDL. For instance, Salem expressed the view that "some people reach a high level through learning form websites". Tariq also recounted the experience of his supervisor with SDL and how his English greatly improved thanks to his engagement in SDL: "my supervisor is amazing; why? This person has never travelled abroad but he is among the most proficient people in English I have ever met and he is highly skilled in English." Tariq added that when he asked his supervisor about the reason behind his high level of proficiency in English, he told him that he "depends on himself and that he keeps listening to the BBC every time, reading newspapers every day and spent hours every day to improve his language ability". Similarly, Muhna reported one of his colleague's personal efforts to improve his English: "he is seen with headphones every time listening to all about English. If I did not know him, maybe I would think he has lived abroad. He is the example of a person who develops himself". Another experience was shared by Muhna about another colleague who self-directed his learning to get high results in the IELTS; she recounted:

> I believe after these years and based on my experience, let me tell you my colleague's experience. He told me that he spent two years learning the IELTS

techniques and improve his language. He said that he got the required score and his English is excellent. He did not wait for the MoE; rather; it was a personal effort.

5.2.2   SDL and the Dependency-Based Culture

Some of the participants believed that SDL is a notion that is not encouraged institutionally or socioculturally as a whole. They argued that the dependence on others in learning is a predominant feature in the Saudi context and urged the MoE to create a culture of self-reliance in learning by training the students and introduce SDL in the curriculum. Some of the participants expressed that they had been raised and accustomed to being under the authority to observe our learning, whether as students or teachers. For instance, Muhna explained: "we got used that a teacher comes in for forty-five minutes and the students just listen and then he goes […]; novice teachers should be taught SDL". In addition, according to Ali:

> here in Saudi, the principle in education is that there is an authority that keeps track of affairs. Self-learning in my view is the first step to get an excellent education. SDL is excellent; if each one develops himself in the curriculum and strategies without someone controlling us or asking us to attend a workshop.

In addition, Muhna suggested to train the students to be self-directed learners and introduce SDL in the curriculum so that the students could be educated to depend on themselves. He made the following suggestion:

> Self-learning should be included in our curricula. From the early stages, we should help the students to depend on themselves and teach them how to use self-learning in a correct way. The usefulness of self-learning lies in how to use it in a correct way.

Ali also suggested that students should be taught how to self-direct their learning and stated:

SDL is important for teachers and for the students as well. You, as a teacher, must cultivate SDL in your students. The student should go home and know how to search and learn by himself.

In addition to the above, Ali suggested to train teachers to help them self-direct their learning, arguing: "even if the teacher is directly or indirectly supported by the supervisor by giving him some hints which help him to develop himself at home, the result will be good".

In addition to the participants' views about SDL and the necessity to be supported by the MoE, one of the participants declared that SDL is not encouraged by society. Sami, for instance, acknowledged that "the issue of the teacher is that he is a victim of the society. Here in Saudi Arabia, the society does not encourage self-learning. You may have gone out to a wider environment [the UK] but others are still living in this shell". Sami added describing the situation more: "the environment here is that the teacher once he finishes his work, he goes home till the next day and he does nothing. 'Here' there is no professional development, no self-development".   The word "society" was also mentioned by another participant, Ahmad, as in the following quote:

with regard to your topic [SDL], you are talking about a very important thing […]. If the current atmosphere does not help […]; If you feel that the school itself is not an attractive environment and society as well, no one ask you to develop".

Ahmad's quote above seems to mean that the general atmosphere of the society and its daily practices or its discourse do not encourage a culture of self-reliance.

Moreover, certain participants may take part in some self-learning initiatives, but they may not be aware that SDL can be an approach for PD or they may not engage in SDL in a systematic manner to develop themselves professionally. This unawareness can be, as mentioned above, a result of the culture of dependency either in the educational landscape

and in the society as a whole or it could be the result of certain personal factors. For instance, Salem, at the end of the interview and after turning off the recorder, raised an important point regarding the dependency on others:

> your questions were a kind of shock when you asked about my self-learning. Your question was a shock to me because I have never thought about why I do not self-direct my learning. Yes, I know we should learn and develop ourselves but not in the way that I do not depend on anyone.

It is worth mentioning that the SD learner does not necessarily learn in isolation from others, rather; he/she may seek others' help in their learning. Hence, there is a dividing line between seeking others' help in learning and between throwing the onus of learning on others to plan it. From the participants' accounts above, it can be understood that they felt that the culture institutionally and socioculturally does not encourage the nature of self-reliance to plan the whole learning process.

Although the data revealed that several participants argued that SDL is not encouraged institutionally and socioculturally, the data also suggest that certain participants claimed that teachers' learning is the responsibility of the MoE. In this regard, the data also showed that the participants need the help of the MoE to facilitate their SDL. The next themes that emerged from the data illustrate these issues.

5.2.3 Teachers' Learning and the Responsibility of the MoE

The focus of this study is mainly to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of Saudi EFL teachers with SDL as a way for their PD; yet, during the interviews, many participants associated teachers' learning with the MoE. The data analysis showed that the notion of responsibility of the MoE in teachers' learning was recurrent in the participants' accounts. Some participants viewed that teachers' learning is not the

responsibility of the teachers but that of the MoE to develop the teachers professionally. For instance, Ahmad voiced that teachers' learning is the responsibility of the MoE only due to the fact that the curriculum is predesigned and that the role of the teachers is to deliver it accordingly, as indicated in the following quote:

> When I read the summary of your research, I thought: 'what should we do then?' Why should I develop myself? This is the responsibility of the MoE. It is not my responsibility. I have this curriculum and my job is to deliver it to the students. Don't ask me to go further. This is the contract between me and the Ministry.

It is worth mentioning here that the word "curriculum" in the above quote and in the words of the participants mainly refers to the textbooks; when I asked the participants about what they meant by this term, they all mentioned the textbooks. Also, Ahmad mentioned that his role to deliver the information of the textbook to the student. According to the data analysis, the notion of fixed curriculum (textbooks) was viewed as a hindrance to teachers' learning, as it will be explained in section (5.5.1.1).

Some teachers, before starting their career, may think that teachers' learning and developing them professionally is the responsibility of the MoE. This notion may be a result of the culture of dependency on others in learning and it might be that the students in the KSA, till the university level, did not learn how to self-direct their learning. Fahad, for instance, was asked about his SDL efforts to develop professionally and he linked his learning with the MoE; he stated: "when I graduated from the university, I was expecting that there is very good [PD]. there is [PD] but it is limited to your performance in the classroom". Fahad added that the reality was different, arguing: "in the beginning of my work I was expecting everything is easy and is facilitated to you […] and then I found if they do not give you, your language will weaken. At the end the ministry that does not help will blame you".

From the participants' accounts, it can be elicited that some participants saw the MoE responsible to provide courses based on teachers' needs so that they may take the initiatives to participate. The data revealed an implicit view that the MoE is responsible or is the co-partner in the aspect of teachers' learning. For instance, Tariq, upon talking about his SDL, identified that no programme provided by the MoE accommodates the teachers to develop themselves professionally:

> I feel that my learning to develop English is not good because I think there is no need for development. The other thing is that there is no programme [from the MoE] that you can engage in. The third thing is that teachers' interests now are on others matters that benefit them financially.

Encouraging the teachers to self-direct their learning by creating an effective environment was seen as the responsibility of the MoE, as reported by Sami:

> If the teacher has the willingness to learn, he will learn […]. Some teachers do not have the ambition. A major part of the issue is from the Ministry. The Ministry is the top of the pyramid. It is necessary that they create the appropriate environment to motivate the teacher to learn.

Similarly, Bander referred implicitly to the fact that the MoE is responsible to provide a good environment so that the teachers may become motivated to engage and learn autonomously. He said: "if teachers' learning is operated by the Ministry, there will be [real] development, encouragement and enthusiasm".

Despite the fact that the MoE is providing PD to teachers, whereby they can engage in and learn from these opportunities, the interviewees above may attribute to provide the teachers with better organised PD than the current provision. They may also mean that teachers' learning is the responsibility of the MoE to plan and guide teachers step by step in their learning.

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Moreover, the data revealed that teachers who self-direct their learning (as illustrated below), mainly learn to improve their English language and/or to learn teaching strategies. As an indication of the responsibility of the MoE, one of the participants affirmed that if the MoE provided convenient English language programme, the teachers would be happy to participate in a self-directed manner. For instance, Naif said:

> Why does not the Ministry have a contract with, for example, Oxford or Cambridge because they are the specialists. If they have a contract with them, you will see how teachers will be eager and enthusiastic to attend without being forced to.

Another participant clarified that his English language level dropped and that the MoE did not provide any English language courses. Rayan made the following reproach to the MoE: "the Ministry did not provide anything. I would like to regain my past level [in English] but the Ministry did not do anything to develop myself."

As mentioned before, the participants agreed on the importance of SDL in PD. Yet, some of them rejected the responsibility of teachers' learning to the MoE. For example, Samir explained:

> SDL is important but PD by the MoE is more important. As I said before, the time factor does not help sometimes. It could be that I do not organise my time well but my time is divided between my job and my family and the weekend for recreation.

Although Samir believed in the importance of SDL, he clearly said that teachers' learning is better provided by the MoE and mentioned:

> [PD] must be provided by the MoE. The working day should be utilised to develop teachers. I mean, conducting morning courses, because at the time of work, the teacher is away from the responsibilities of family and so on.

In the same vein, Talal implicitly mentioned the responsibility of the MoE in teachers' learning by saying:

The Ministry is busy with flash and showing off. There is no real effective PD. Why don't they develop us like other ministries? For example, the Ministry of defence develops its soldiers. Can we ask the solider to learn by himself how to use new weapons?

Talal added: "this show off will not improve our education, why do we blame the teacher for everything?". In the same vein, Thamr stated: "why should the teacher carry the burden? Why is he the one to blame and does everything? As a Ministry what did they do for the teacher?". Thamer further explained this point and said: "look how many years I have worked? I cannot see any development: the same book and the same routine."

In addition, one of the participants, Abed, said that the MoE should facilitate the conditions so that the teachers can learn. He criticised the MoE arguing:

The Ministry should evaluate the results. They have to facilitate everything to the teacher to learn. How do they ask me to develop myself? Ok! Prepare a good environment for me, give the teacher more facilities and then ask me to develop.

In contrast to the participants' views above, from some participants' accounts, it can be elicited that the teacher was viewed as responsible about his learning for his PD, especially in this era where learning is easy and resources are available due the new technology. Saud, for example, asserted that the concept of SDL is an attendant feeling during his career, especially with the new technology and the great amount of learning resources on the internet. Saud described his feeling as follows:

I swear, your topic [SDL] describes me. Indeed, it speaks about me. The feeling to develop myself has been accompanying me all the time. This is my specialisation and this is my language.

According to Saud, "the teacher has no excuse not to learn. Knowledge has become available in front of you and the whole world is right front of your eyes. You can find anything with one click".

Likewise, another participant, Mubarak, explained that if the teacher does not have the attitude to learn, no one can develop him professionally. He also added that new technology facilitates the learning. He illustrated this point by saying:

> if the teacher is not eager to learn, no one can do that. When you feel that you have [shortcomings], you can find a lot of websites and YouTube [channels] that you can learn from. You can find what you need.

Furthermore, one of the participants, Yousuf, clarified that the teacher should adapt to the educational environment with its challenges and have the sense of liability:

> One of the teachers won the Distinguished Teacher Award although his government school is in a rented building. This did not make an excuse for those who argue about the facilities. Correct or not? So, the teacher should not make any excuse. If you want and intend to learn, do not say there are no resources. This idea must be with the teacher every time. Even if there are some issues, try to adapt yourself and this not idealism.

5.2.4 "We Need Help in Our Learning"

As illustrated above, the participants of this study, on many occasions, associated their SDL with the MoE in terms of its responsibility about teachers' learning. In addition to this, the data revealed that some participants expressed the view that they needed the help of the MoE in their SDL. Also, in this regard, the data analysis showed that participants felt they needed practical courses provided by the MoE, as they argued that learning theoretical aspects does not give as good outcomes as learning with practical examples.

One of the recurrent themes that emerged from the data is that participants expressed that they needed the help of the MoE in relation to their learning. One of the participants suggested that the MoE should introduce programmes about SDL to train teachers about this. Muhna, in addition to his view about training students to be self-directed learners, emphasised that: "explicitly, self-learning needs guidance and I see if they [the MoE]

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make it as a subject for teachers". Muhna meant to train teachers to be self-directed learners.

The teacher may encounter some sort of difficulties in any aspect of his teaching work, such as the introduction of new textbooks which was seen as a factor that induces teacher to learn, and to cope with challenges and take initiatives, he may require the MoE's support. One of the participants, Salem, revealed the difficulty he encountered in teaching writing skills to his students and requested the help of the MoE to conduct workshops to improve his competence in this domain; he explained: "there is a difficulty in the new curriculum of the secondary stage [….]. I find it difficult to teach writing skills". To improve his ability in teaching writing skills, Salem clarified:

> I know how to write but to teach the student how, this is the difficulty […]. I asked the supervisor to conduct a course about it [teaching writing skills] and he told me that they put a schedule for courses in the website and search for it. I searched but unfortunately, I did not find a course about writing.

It can be understood from Salem's quote above that he had a specific goal (learning how to teach writing) and that he tried to self-direct his learning to solve this issue by seeking the help of the MoE. Another participant, Mohsen, identified the need to improve his linguistic ability and encouraged the MoE to implement courses in English language; he stated: "I prefer that the Ministry starts developing our language because this thing does not exist at all until now. There is no PD that focuses on language, but only strategies at the moment." English language, as an example, can be learned from any sources and the self-directed learner may learn in isolation or he/she may learn with others or asking the help of others. Hence, for Mohsen, as stated in his previous quote, it can be understood that he would like to improve his English language and preferred the MoE to provide English language courses that he can learn from.

Some participants seem to have a similar experience to mine as they started their career as unqualified teachers without going through the pre-service training and the Diploma in Education, which causes a certain confusion and bewilderment about how to teach and how to tackle different situations in our profession, especially during the first year. In this regard, Saud said:

> I did not take [the Diploma in Education] and I do not have the basics or methods of teaching which pre-service teachers are taught. I do not have this at all. The Ministry courses are theoretical; there is nothing practical. […]. For example, it would be better if the supervisor visits me at school and does practical things, because learning by application sticks in the mind.

Salem insisted on the importance of helping teachers, especially novice teachers, by providing practical help and stated:

> What exists on the internet is theoretical without practical application; and without application, I do not feel it is useful. When the teacher is assigned, I suggest that they [the MoE] should give the teachers three months to visit other schools to see the practice of other teachers.

In addition to the need of help from the MoE, as in the last two quotes, the participants mentioned the necessity of providing teachers with courses and workshops with practical elements, not only theoretical ones. Hence, linked to the teachers' need of the help of the MoE, the need for learning practical elements was a recurrent theme that emerged from the participants' accounts.

One of the participants, Talal, indicated that the years of experience in teaching contribute gradually to the knowledge of the teachers by learning from experience, which takes a long time, whereas an intensive practical programme can reduce this time, as in the following quote:

These years of experiences, the person can shorten them by intensive practical courses from the Ministry to develop the profession […]. For example, during six months of the year, they can give practical lessons on any aspect of the profession. I think it is better than ten years of experience. Practical applications, no data shows and presentations and nonsense like this.

As mentioned before, the participants referred to the MoE in their interview as a channel of development. Some participants took the initiative to attend the MoE courses and criticised the fact that these courses were only theoretical. Naif, for instance, stated: "I took many courses with the Ministry […], but I did not implement any of these things I learned from the Ministry. All what I do in the classroom is from my self-learning". The reason why he did not apply what he learned from the MoE was that according to him, "their courses are always theoretical […]; there is no practical side in their courses, ever. All they offer is known, and they offer nothing new".

5.3   Teachers' Engagement with SDL

This section presents the extent to which the participants, in their views, self-direct their learning to develop themselves professionally. According to the data, certain participants believed that they did not engage in any SDL during their career due to several factors. Also, the data revealed that several participants were engaged in SDL but discontinued their learning. In contrast, a number of participants began their SDL after several years in their career. Furthermore, certain participants self-direct their learning but their learning is intermittent in nature. The common denominator between teachers' SDL activities is that their learning is not based on a certain plan. Therefore, the following sections present the sub themes in relation to the extent of teachers' engagement in SDL.

5.3.1 Lack or Discontinuation of SDL

The data revealed that a number of participants expressed the view that they did not engage in any SDL for their PD during their career. In addition, they revealed that they attended the MoE courses. However, it can be said that their attendance is not self-directed in nature; rather, it is either because the MoE courses are sometimes compulsory or because these teachers want to break the routine of their daily work at their schools. For instance, Thamer, who has been working as a teacher for eleven years, explained: "in fact, I have never learned for my professional development ever. I have never bought books or used the [internet] to learn the language, there is nothing that pushes me to develop the language".

As mentioned before, this study generally perceives SDL as any kind of learning based on the learner self-initiative to learn from any sources, either inside the MoE or outside. In this regard, as far as teachers' engagement in the MoE provision is concerned, Thamer declared:

> I have not been involved in any development outside the Ministry in eleven years of teaching. I attended the Ministry courses as a self-initiative only around three times. As for the rest of the courses, I attended them just to change from the atmosphere of the school and break the routine. With the heavy workload, I wanted to take some rest and the solution was to attend the Ministry courses.

Similarly, Abed declared: "I have not ever done anything except attending the Ministry courses". In fact, Abed identified that his attendance to the MoE PD was because he was asked to come. He said: "if the office of the supervision sends a letter to our school, I attend but honestly I do not apply". Just like Thamer, Abed attended the MoE course for the same reason, that is, to break the daily routine of the school; he stated: "I attend the Ministry courses because it is a chance to go away from students' pressure and work

pressure". In addition, Samir clearly stated that he did not have any SDL and he clarified that his English language level had regressed. Samir reported: "honestly, I did not learn for my development. On the contrary, my [English] level dropped down". Samir, who has been working for six years as a teacher, added: "I blame myself every time, but I did nothing. I just attend the ministry courses especially the last two years. In the past, they sent requests to me to attend but I do not go". However, as the other participants, Samir explained that he attended these courses to "change from the atmosphere of the school". Although Samir stated that he did not have any SDL activity, he mentioned in the interview that when he moved to another school, the good level of the students in English impelled him to search the internet for information that relate to the curriculum.

Likewise, Ryan said that he attended the MoE courses to "leave the atmosphere of the work, especially if the number of classes are high; and the second thing is that I would like to get some benefit".

As illustrated above, some teachers do not self-direct their learning. The data also revealed that another participant, Ahmad, does engage in SDL but very rarely; he reported:

> I think my learning is superficial. Not deep. Sometimes, I come across a new grammatical point in the textbook and I directly check it on the internet. I am rarely looking for teaching strategies.

Although Ahmad rarely engages in SDL, the data showed that he participated in a self-directed manner in the MoE courses, as he clarified: "I attend many courses of the Ministry. I may attend and I do not benefit but at least, I knew new teachers and I may come with one or two benefits". In fact, Ahmad's attendance to the MoE courses does not

necessary relate to the two aspects found in this study (learning to improve English language or teaching strategies); rather, according to him:

> Here in Makkah, there is a website where you can see some courses. I took some courses in thinking skills and not necessarily about the English language. I apply to them autonomously because I feel the courses in thinking benefit me in my life, but not necessarily in the school. This is in addition to the compulsory courses that they ask you to attend.

Furthermore, the data revealed that certain participants blame themselves for their poor SDL. For instance, Tariq mentioned how he felt embarrassed about his poor SDL:

> I feel embarrassed about my self-learning and I blame myself. Why couldn't I read something? Even the teaching strategies, we do not update them. In fact, the teachers are between the need for [PD] and the question 'why they do not learn?'.

In addition, with regards the MoE PD, the data showed that Tariq did not take the initiative to attend; he mentioned: "the Ministry courses are a waste of time so I ignore them; I do not attend as I think there is no real benefit in them". In fact, the data revealed that the main SDL source for Tariq are the university books he used when he was a student and that he has kept now after twelve years in teaching:

> The only thing I do is revise the university books. This is the only thing I do. You know, one day I decided to take some books, but believe it or not, I just took them but I did not open them at all for six months.

In this study, SDL is understood as when the teacher takes the primary responsibility to learn. This learning can be from any sources including from the MoE provision. Some of the MoE courses can be compulsory and the teacher has to attend these courses. However, he/she may inwardly feel no interest to learn and his/her attendance to these courses is due to the fact that he/she must attend. For instance, the data analysis revealed that Yasser does not engage in any SDL to develop himself professionally and clarified: "this year I

did not attend any course but last year I attended once; honestly, I was attending the Ministry coursers the past years". Although Yasser did not explicitly mention that he did not self-direct his learning, the data analysis revealed that he could not learn from any other source except from the MoE courses which he attended because his name was "chosen" and his presence was "mandatory". In addition, the date showed that Yasser obtained the Diploma in Education which can be described as SDL caused by an external motivator. Yasser has been working as a teacher for ten years and he obtained this diploma after the second year in teaching. He clarified that this diploma enriched his theoretical knowledge about education but the main reason to enrol in this programme was to "increase the salary".

The data revealed that a number of participants were self-directing their learning and discontinued to learn. One of the participants, Salem, who has been working as a teacher for nine years and was engaged in SDL during the first few years of his career, stopped learning in a self-directed manner, as he reported:

> I was learning and developing myself the first four years and after that I became a routine person. In one routine. I do not see anything new; because between you and me, there are no teachers' clubs where we can share new things and learn new things from the colleagues.

Salem added: "I have reached the level that I do not do anything for my [PD] and I stopped to develop myself".

As mentioned before, some participants link their learning with the MoE and consider that teachers' learning is the responsibility of the MoE. For example, at the beginning of the interview, Talal explained the role of the MoE in teachers' PD, although the topic is about SDL. He clarified that he was attending the MoE courses but has now stopped attending unless the attendance is compulsory. Talal has been working as a teacher for

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sixteen years and mentioned: "when I graduated and started my work, I was enthusiastic to attend the Ministry's courses even if the courses were optional; after that, I stopped attending the Ministry's courses". In fact, the data showed that Talal was relying only on the MoE courses and he did not take any initiatives outside the MoE boundaries. Similarly, Bander stated that during the first two years of his career he was trying to self-direct his learning; he enrolled in English language courses in the UK and was attending the MoE courses in a self-directed manner, but he discontinued to develop himself because, according to him, he "did not feel the benefit" of the MoE courses and due to other factors illustrated in these findings. Although this study is about teachers' SDL, Bander believed that teachers' PD is the responsibility of the MoE, as mentioned above.

In the above quotes, the participants explicitly clarified that they did not take the initiative to learn for their PD. In fact, a number of them, from the start of the interview, mentioned in a straightforward way that they had never engaged in any kind of learning in a self-directed manner. For instance, Thamer, as explained before, at the start of his interview, quite frankly stated that he did not learn anything for his PD. I tried to probe more to get in-depth information and inquire about his personal experience with SDL and PD and he mentioned that during his career, he attended only three courses as a self-initiative. He explained to me how the general atmosphere at work and how several factors as stated in (5.5.1) demotivated him to make efforts to learn in a self-directed manner and develop himself professionally.

Furthermore, some participants explained more the current practice of some teachers with regards to SDL for their PD and stated that many teachers in their point of view do not do anything for their professional growth and they only work for the purpose of the salary. Sami censured some teachers' current practices and stated that "it is shameful that some

teachers reach the level that they work only for the sake of the income and do not do anything".

5.3.2   Teachers' Current Practice with SDL

In the previous section, the data showed that some participants do not have any SDL for PD and some of them discontinued their SDL due to certain discouraging factors. In contrast, the data also revealed that several teachers take some initiatives for PD and learning for mainly two purposes.

5.3.2.1   The purpose of SDL

For teachers who are self-directing their learning for their PD, the data revealed that some teachers learn only to improve their English language or to learn only teaching strategies or they learn to improve both English language and teaching strategies. The following sub themes explain teachers' self-initiatives and the purpose of their learning in details.

5.3.2.1.1   *SDL to Improve the Linguistic Ability*

The data revealed that a number of participants only self-directed their learning to improve their English language but not to develop professionally in other aspects. One of the participants, Saud, identified that SDL requires consistency and organizing and that he lacked the sense of learning organizing. He said that his initiatives were "not steady but intermittent". He added:

> sometimes a strong impulse comes to me to learn and you find me read […] secondly, I do not have a specific programme I stick to […] the morale goes and comes. You may find me learn for a week or two and then I go to sleeping mode [laugh]. The determination comes and goes. Even your personal commitments, you need to be strict with yourself or I swear you will not achieve.

For Saud, as illustrated above in Section 5.2.3, the concept of SDL has always been an attendant feeling during his career and despite his initiatives to improve his linguistic ability in English, he clarified that his English language level was not as he wished it to be, which prevents him to teach in English only fluently. He said: "if my English is strong, I will do wonderful things [in the school]. I cannot implement typical lesson and I speak in English the whole time". In fact, Saud in different occasions during the interview showed his dissatisfaction about his level of English. Although the data revealed that Saud has sense of responsibility to self-direct his learning, it also revealed that he took the initiative to improve his English level. Yet, in his view, his English level is still below the level that would allow him to speak in English only in the class. It seems from Saud's accounts that not every SDL can generate a satisfactory result. Hence, this led me to ask which kind of SDL could generate satisfactory results despite the fact that Saud has ten years of teaching experience.

As reported in section 5.3.1, Salem was engaged in SDL and discontinued his self-initiatives. In relation to this theme, Salem stated that his learning was mainly only to improve his English language, stating: "the first four years I tried to develop the language because I was feeling that I have weakness in certain aspects so I worked to improve it in order to be able to explain to the students". Salem added later that "I only tried to improve the language".

5.3.2.1.2 SDL for teaching strategies

The data revealed that several teachers self-directed their learning to learn about teaching strategies. Yousuf, who has been working as a teacher for nineteen years, reported: "to be an English language teacher was my dream. In my university, I did not take educational preparation but I found a real educator inside me and my love for teaching". Although

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Yousuf showed his love for his job, according to him, he was not self-directing his learning during the first five years of his teaching career, as he clarified: "in the first five years I did not learn but I was working based on the experiment. Just go and teach. After that I began to attend the ministry courses such as teaching strategies. They were new to me but they are good for novice teachers and they should have taught us them in the university". Yousuf explained that the last four years, he decided to do something new with his students in terms of teaching strategies and the new initiatives he applies in his school. He mentioned: "I learn from the internet and from some website such as *engVid* and *BusyTeacher* many creative ideas. I really love my job". The data showed that Yousuf mainly learn from the internet, as mentioned in the previous quote, and that he is not eager to attend the MoE courses like before because their courses are repetitive and on-size-fits-all. He argued: "I feel they are not beneficial" (Yousuf).

Moreover, the data revealed that a number of participants self-directed their learning by only attending the MoE courses, not through taking initiatives outside the ministry boundaries. These teachers mainly attended in a self-directed manner to learn teaching strategies. For instance, Muhna reported that he began his SDL after the two years of teaching and that his SDL sources were mainly the MoE provision: "I was teaching the first two years in small towns and after that, I moved to Makkah; I attended many courses in Education Administration in Makkah". Normally, the MoE courses are held in the morning during the working days but Muhna also attends in self-directed manner the courses that are held in the evening outside the working hours. Muhna mentioned that "in the Educational Training Centre, every term they offer some courses in the evening and I like to attend them. I have around 300 hours from these courses". Muhna stated that "I like face to face courses. I do not prefer the internet. I got bored but sometimes a take few minutes revising some teaching strategies on the internet". Similarly, Mohsen explained

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that he likes to develop himself; he mainly learns about new teaching strategies and due to the nature of the curriculum and students' level, he did not improve his English language level. He said: "I am by myself seeking for development. I attend courses that target strategies but I do not improve my language because, as I said, the curriculum and the students' level had a significant impact". He also searches on YouTube for lectures about new teaching strategies. Mohsen said: "I am always using YouTube to see new strategies and benefit from others' experiences".

Furthermore, the self-directed learner maybe restrained by some factors which impede his/her habitual learning. Although Muhna attended many courses in a self-directed manner, according to him, "the self [PD] needs time […] and the responsibilities increasing. Recently I am just doing my teaching and I do not attend any courses. I am always courage my students to self-direct their learning since they do not have any responsibilities like us". Muhna, due to several factors that were mentioned above, is currently only browsing the internet to revise teaching strategies.

In spite of the fact that Muhna attended many courses in a self-directed manner to learn about teaching strategies, the data revealed that Muhna had a learning aim but he did not take the initiative to learn to achieve this aim. Muhna clarified that he wanted to improve his English language and that he has the desire to learn more. The data revealed that Muhna sought the help of the MoE to provide courses in English language or to send teachers abroad to improve their proficiency in the English language. He said: "I know how to deal with this and how to apply this thing but there is one thing we lack and to this day I wish to develop it […] I am eager to develop my language [English] and I sent a letter to the minster […] my letter was about language development". It can be perceived

that Muhna has this particular SDL goal (improving his linguistic ability) and that he needed the help of the MoE to address this need.

Similar to Muhna, Mubark self-directed his learning to learn mainly about teaching strategies. He said: "after the second year I registered in a lot of courses [of the MoE] and most of them were in evening time". In addition to the MoE courses, Mubark learn from other sources in interment manner if there is a chance. He declared: "I do not learn every time. I learn once there is a chance".

In the same vein, Hasan participate, in a self-directed manner, in the MoE courses based on his needs; he mentioned: "I am working from ten years and I draw a table that contains all of the courses I attended". Hasan further explained: "I attend the ministry courses every year but I do not attend any course. First I read the topic of this workshop and I attend if I like it". The data also revealed that Hasan took the initiatives to attend certain courses and obtained diplomas beyond the MoE boundaries in the Community Service Centres which, according to him, built his personality from different aspects and impacted positively on his professional practice. Hassan added: "you need them [these courses] in your life whether with your children at home or with your students at school".

5.3.2.1.3 SDL to improve English language and learning teaching strategies

The data showed that some participants self-direct their learning to improve their linguistic ability in English and also to learn teaching strategies and new ideas they can apply in their classrooms. Fahad at many occasions in the interview mentioned the importance of improving his English language level and explained his self-initiatives to improve it, but at the same time, the data showed that he self-directs his learning to learn new strategies by observing his colleagues or attending the MoE course. Fahad explained:

"we have to be proficient in English to explain well in front of the students […]. I am reading in English and watching movies and some documentaries. I mean it is continuous". In addition, Fahad self-directs his PD to learn about teaching strategies in the MoE courses but not as much as improving his English. He clarified: "sometimes some of the Ministry's courses attract me and I attend". In the same way, Naif believed that improving English is the most important thing for teachers, stating: "in addition to the language, I learn strategies and every year I try to change".

It appears from Sami's account that he mainly focuses on teaching strategies, but at the same time, he takes some initiatives to improve his English level. He stated: "the English language teacher should improve his language and his practice". He added that he tries to listen every day to a visual or audible English content to keep up with the language. Also, he said: "I tried and fought when I started my work to learn a lot of teaching strategies because I felt that I have the language but I do not have the way to teach". In his interview, Sami explained his own initiative and the sources that he learns from to improve his practice till this time because he likes teaching.

5.4   SDL sources and activities

As mentioned before, certain teachers are self-directing their learning for their PD and the data analysis showed the sources teachers tend to learn from. In fact, most of these sources are outside their workplaces and only two activities occur inside the workplace. These sources can be divided into five categories (Technology-based Learning - Formal studies - The MoE PD programmes - Collegial learning - Personal reading), as shown in the following table.

Technology-based Learning	Formal studies	The MoE PD programmes	Collegial learning	Personal reading
web-based learning.	postgraduate studies.	The MoE courses	Peer observation	Books
social networking	Private courses		discussion with other teachers	
TV				
mobile apps				

Figure 5.2: SDL sources and activities teachers learn from

Technology-based learning is the most popular source which teachers are using to self-direct their learning. Using the internet was found the main source which teachers use for their PD because it is an easier tool which gives teachers an access to a massive amount of resources. Sami emphasised on the importance of the internet which provides affordable access to any information the teacher needs. He said: "after that a new massive world came: the internet. It is a big world. Anything in your mind can be found easily". Mohsen mentioned that the internet (YouTube) is "the main source" for him in addition to "the Ministry's programmes". The participants seem to use it to search for new teaching strategies and ideas or to improve their English language. The participants mainly use the rest of the sources in the technology-based learning category to improve their linguistic ability.

Moreover, formal studies such as postgraduate studies and private courses were found as another SDL source for PD. Formal studies such as a Master's degree can be a form of SDL as reported by Naif. He mentioned: "I am now studying a Master's Degree in English literature and this is one of the means of development". The Diploma in Education was

another formal study reported by some participants. For instance, the data showed that Yasser was one of the participants who was not engaging in SDL activities, but obtained the Diploma in Education in his second year of teaching to increase his salary. He said that this diploma made him aware of "many things in education such as educational objectives" but that the main reason to enrol in this programme, according to him, was "to increase the salary". The data also showed that certain teachers attended private paid/free courses outside the MoE boundaries. For instance, Bander reported that he travelled to the UK "for one month to study an English language course" and improve his English level. Hassan attended some free courses in the Community Service Centres which helped him deal with students and in his life in general. He added:

> I attended free educational courses at [a certain centre] for Educational Training, which belongs to the third sector of charity sector. These courses benefit you as a teacher. I attended some courses such as 'the successful educator', 'educational evaluation', and 'problem solving and decision-making'. In fact, they were wonderful. Also, the 'emotions control' course and this has informed me a lot. The field of education needs a patient person and such courses are useful.

Furthermore, the MoE provision was found as another SDL source in which teachers participate for their PD. As explained before, certain teachers were attending the MoE courses because they were mandatory or because they wanted to break the routine of their workplace. However, the MoE also offers optional courses and the data showed that several teachers attended these courses in a self-directed manner for their PD. For instance, from Mubarak's account, it can be perceived that the MoE courses are his main source of PD. As mentioned before, the self-directed learner may self-direct his or her learning to participate in formal courses provided by institutions. The data analysis showed that Mubarak participated in a self-directed manner in the MoE courses. He stated that he "enrolled in many optional courses in the evening time".

The third main SDL source for teachers is the collegial learning which tends to take place in the teachers' schools. Only two types of collegial learning were revealed in the data: discussions with other teachers and peer observations. In fact, the data showed that few teachers participated in SDL activities inside their school. It could be attributed to the heavy workload or to the absence of the culture of professional collegiality inside the schools, which does not encourage this kind of learning. With regards discussions with other teachers, the data showed that this kind of activity can be described as incidental learning as several participants clarified that there was no real outcome to this kind of learning while other teachers stated that this kind of discussions have some benefits. For instance, Salem reported: "sometimes we share experiences in the teachers' room as a friendly conversation. Did we actually get benefit from this? I do not think so". Fahad, on the other hand, stated that this kind of discussion was beneficial. He said: "once, I had a chat with a colleague and he told me about the *zipgrade* app. Frankly, I benefited a lot from him. In teaching, I try to see other teachers' experiences". The other SDL activity happening inside the school is peer observations among teachers. Despite the fact this kind of learning is sometimes mandatory, as revealed in the data, few teachers take the initiatives to observe other teachers to benefit from their experiences. Saud, for instance, reported the experience of one of his colleagues and his hard work in the school, stating: "one of the things that helps you strongly in self-development is attending to a specialist". Then, Saud started to talk about his colleague and how he constantly tries to develop himself especially in teaching strategies and other extracurricular activities. He added: "he is a great person. I attended his class many times. He is happy about this and welcomes us. Sometimes, he conducts typical lessons and I benefit a lot. I swear, the collegiality with owners of inspiration is a way of development".

The fourth SDL category where teachers learn form was the personal reading; the data showed that reading was the less important SDL source for teachers as few teachers read for their PD. Reading was only used to improve teachers' English language, as Saud clarified that he sometimes read books specialised in English to improve his grammar for example. He said: "one of the ways I think it is possible to develop us is reading books […]. I bought some books in English and you find me enthusiastic to read and answer the exercises and then I got bored". Despite his view that he takes no initiatives to develop himself professionally, Traiq clarified:

> The only thing I do is revise the university books. This is the only thing I do. You know, one day I decided to take some books, but believe it or not, I just took them but I did not open them at all for six months.

5.5   Factors Impacting on SDL

The data analysis showed multiple factors that enhance or hinder teachers' self-directed learning. Based on the data, it seems that the factors that hinder teachers' learning prevail over the factors that enhance it. The majority of the factors that enhance or hinder SDL are institutional factors that relate to the teachers' school environment and to the MoE in general. The following themes and subthemes highlight the factors that enhance and hinder teachers' SDL.

5.5.1   Hindering Factors

This subtheme highlights the factors that hinder SDL according to the teachers' perceptions. Based on the data, it appears that the external factors are more than the internal ones. While most of the hindrances are institutional factors, the data also revealed several personal factors.

"Many things frustrate the teachers, so I do what is required only". In this quote, Salem was recounting the history of his self-initiatives to learn for his PD. In fact, the data analysis showed a general atmosphere of frustration which can be perceived from the participants accounts. It seems that this frustration is a result of multiple factors that hinder teachers to self-direct their learning for their PD. The word frustration was repeated multiple times in the interviews. For instance, Sami said that "the environment frustrates the teachers. There are good examples but the majority are frustrated". This sense of frustration may cause teachers to become unwilling to teach. Muhna, for instance, stated: "teaching is not a likeable job for teachers and with the pressure they will not be motivated to develop themselves". Similarly, another participant, Mohsen, explained that he knows many teachers who are showing apathy or are not enthusiastic about their job and that may have discouraged him. He expressed the following view: "also, I'll be frank with you, there were some colleagues who were apathetic. The important thing is to wait the salary at the end of the month. This was affecting because there was no a competition with others".

The data analysis uncovered several demotivating factors that, in the participants views, dishearten them to take the primary responsibility to self-direct their learning for their PD. The following themes illustrate these factors.

5.5.1.1 The ready-made curriculum (textbooks)

The data analysis revealed that the ready-made curriculum could be one of the most important factors that hinder teachers' SDL. Without exception, all the participants asserted that the nature of the curriculum does not motivate teachers to self-direct their learning for their PD. For instance, Abed stated: "it is the same. Work, routine, curriculum. That's it! You will follow the same curriculum". This quote summarises the

current situation where the ready-made curriculum can be a hindering factor that discourages teachers to participate in SDL. In fact, the interviews begun with a general question about the history of teachers' SDL for their PD and many participants from the very beginning of the interviews clarified that the curriculum is a factor that demoralise them to self-direct their learning. It was found as a recurrent issue that negatively impacts on teachers will to learn for their PD.

Several participants demonstrated that the curriculum is a sort of routine and that they do not need to learn beyond its framework because they got used to it. This kind of curriculum can hinder teachers learning because, as expressed by Yasser, it is "monotonous. Every year the same curriculum. Every year". Likewise, Ahmad claimed:

> I have this curriculum and my job is to deliver it to the students. Don't ask me to go further. This is the contract between me and the ministry […]. Our work is a routine and if I teach this textbook for one year, then the following years will be the same. So, the desire to develop professionally will be less. […] currently, I go to the class without preparation.

In the same vein, Samir posited the same view about the monotony of the curriculum and the unnecessity to prepare for the lessons. He mentioned: "there are many lessons I have explained the past years. There is no need to prepare the lesson. I just see the title and I remember". Thamer also reported a similar view and said: "we adhere to a textbook and we are compelled to deliver it and there are no windows for development". Thamer added a very important point: "whether you develop yourself or not. Since you can deliver the information and ideas either by strategy or by a traditional way. I am competent with the new curriculum, so I do not see any need for development"

Moreover, the data revealed that the ready-made curriculum (textbooks) which is taught every year led the teachers to stick to its content without increasing their knowledge or

specifically improve their linguistics ability, as reported by many participants. For instance, Yousuf illustrated that it was not necessary for him to learn more English since the teacher can deal with textbooks. He said:

> Our work does not need significant development. I reached the point that I can speak, listen and write. Let's assume I took some courses in English language. I think I do not need them unless if I want to study for a Master or [PhD] and in this case, I need to. I think what I have now is enough.

Another participant explained that the curriculum is not only a sort of routine that does not need preparation or encourages the teacher to improve his language, but it is also a reason to regress in one's English language level. Mohsen described:

> you know, the old curriculum was simple and it did not require you to prepare. While I was going to the class, I just take a look to the textbook and I quickly prepare mentally. these five years were enough for my language to decline because the past curriculum was simple for my level at that time. I was not preparing the lessons and I was confined with the information in this curriculum.

This ready-made curriculum not only may prevent teachers from self-directing their learning for their PD, but it may also restrict them to be creative in their work and limit the students in their search for new knowledge, as stated by Sami:

> as a teacher, I am restricted inside the classroom by the curriculum. We do not have a space to create or search for this or that or develop yourself and transfer this experience to the students. The curriculum is restricted between one tow three. Honestly, it is not positive for the teachers and the students. If we repeat the curriculum one or two years, it's over. there will not be an inner feeling to go home for example to search or learn for something.

In fact, there is a very important point with regard to this kind of curriculum: it may not only discourage teachers to self-direct their learning for their PD, but also may restrict teachers' learning within the framework of the curriculum. The above data showed that teachers learn mainly to improve their English and/or to learn new teaching strategies and

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ideas. It can be elicited that their learning is only to serve the purpose of the textbooks without going beyond that. For instance, the data showed that Sami took initiatives for his PD which revolve around the curriculum. He said: "I know my curriculum and its main aims. So, I know what I want, but I want something more than this".

5.5.1.2   Heavy workload

According to the data analysis, it has been found that the heavy workload and the other responsibilities inside the school can hinder the teachers to learn for their PD. Many participants reported that the number of classes they have to teach every day and their additional responsibilities inside the school can prevent teachers from engaging in SDL in their school due to the lack of time or because they prefer to spend their free time to take a break. Also, it may not only be an obstacle to teachers' learning in their schools, but also have consequences that affect teachers' will to learn outside the working hours.

The findings showed that the heavy workload can prevent the teachers from using their time inside the school to learn for their PD. Many participants identified that the heavy workload can prevented them from learning individually or with other colleagues due to the lack of time inside the school. Also, this heavy workload led to the work-related fatigue, which also has a negative impact on the teachers' participation in SDL activities because they spend their remaining time to take a break. Talal said that he has many classes every day and to be burdened with extra tasks causes fatigue. He said: "I have five classes a day and only one free session. It is not possible to do other things or visit my colleagues in their classes. It is fatiguing. You see work pressure as today I have only one free session". Similarly, Mohsen explained the feeling of being marginalised from the MoE despite of the pressure of the work. He said: "we feel that we are marginalised and

despite that, the number of classes are fatiguing. I had before 24 classes with teaching more than one curriculum. I mean it is fatiguing and depressing".

Talal not only indicated that the heavy-work load may hinder teachers' SDL, but also mentioned that teachers try to get other positions in their school, such as school principal or student counsellor or supervisor. Talal said "if there are incentives. The incentives are important not only financial incentives, but also reducing the workload. The teachers now are trying to be school principal or student counsellor".

The heavy workload may prevent teachers from self-directing their learning outside their schools. According to Yasser, "sometimes, I wish to end the day quick due the pressure of the work. Yes, it is our work but it is an exhausting work. I would like to go home to relax and to gather my strength for the work of next day".

5.5.1.3 Low-level students and students' lack of motivation

The data revealed that the students can be a fundamental factor that hinders teachers' SDL. Their English level or their motivation to learn can discourage teachers' SDL for their PD.

Although all the interviewed teachers are teaching in middle and secondary schools, some participants stated that the majority of their students have a low level of English. According to them, their level does not push them as teachers to improve their English. Yasser encountered this issue as a secondary school teacher where the students' level in English was low; he said: "it could be a boredom. Every year the same curriculum. Sometimes, students' level does not help you to develop. I mean if the students in [secondary stage] cannot read and they do not know the meaning of the vocabulary". In contrast, high-level student can motive teachers' PD. According to Yasser, "if the

students are excellent, they learn well; therefore, the teacher will develop himself, search and do some effort to not to be in an embarrassing position in front of his students". Similarly, one of the participants explained that some students, despite their years of learning English, still do not know the basics; which can affect teacher's will to learn. Abed, for instance, reported that he taught "some students who do not know the very basics of English, so how can I teach them writing or reading? They cannot form very simple sentences. Only two or three students are good. So, I use Arabic a lot in my teaching". Abed added that "even if you develop yourself, the reality shocks you".

In addition to the students' level and its impact on teachers' SDL, students' motivation plays a role in teachers' will to learn. The data revealed the dissatisfaction of teachers about students' motivation to learn English, which may discourage teachers for their PD. For example, Talal clarified: "the assiduous students are few". Also, teachers may not learn new teaching strategies because of the lack of students' motivation to learn. In this regard, Samir expressed: "I did not search for new teaching strategies in the internet because the students are not willing to learn. If the students are active even if their level is low, it will encourage you to develop professionally". In addition, if the students are not motivated to learn, it can frustrate teachers in terms of SDL. Ahamd said: "again, when I learned about the aim of your research, I said 'what should I do?'. Frankly, sometimes I reach the point of frustration because of the students. They are not interested. Their lack of interest is what causes me frustration."

5.5.1.4 School environment

The data also revealed that the school environment has a noticeable negative impact on teachers' SDL. The data showed multiple school environment aspects that can discourage teachers to learn for their PD. The absence of culture of professional collegiality inside

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the school, ill-equipped schools, schools' administrations and students discipline, according to the participants accounts, affect teachers' desire to learn for their PD.

As revealed in the data, teachers engage in only two SDL activities inside the schools: discussions with other teachers and peer observation. In addition to other hindrances mentioned earlier, such as the heavy workload, one of the main school environment hindrances is the absence of a culture of professional collegiality inside the school. Although the teachers did not explicitly mention that the culture of professional collegial learning does not exist in their school, from their account, it can be perceived that this kind of learning is uncommon. For instance, Traiq identified that inside the school "there are no courses or group discussion". He added that some teachers are not open about being observed by other teachers. Mohsen clarified that he asks other teachers to visit him in his classroom and evaluate his teaching because he believes that this kind of activity is beneficial. However, Mohsen found that his colleagues were not willing to be observed by other teachers. He said: "I asked some of my colleagues to visit me and evaluate my teaching and I proposed mutual visits between us, but I found them not interested". Also, Hassan stated that "some teachers feel embarrassed to comment in his colleague's teaching and giving him the comment. Supposed to not be so because it is a way for development". In fact, with regard to peer observations, a number of participants identified that this activity is sometimes imposed by the MoE. Some participants clarified that they visited their colleagues just because it was compulsory.

The data revealed that ill-equipped school can hinder teachers' will to learn. Ill-equipped schools do not only refer to the lack of equipment, but also the design of the classroom and the high number of students, which can have a potential negative impact of teachers' SDL. Indeed, many participants denounced that many schools lack essential equipment

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that aid them in their teaching. As a result, this can discourage them to learn new teaching strategies, and apply new methods in their teaching. This issue was illustrated by Tariq who mentioned that he established and equipped a new classroom at his own expense to improve his teaching. However, according to him, this classroom was cancelled from the school's administration. Tariq clarified here the importance of well-equipped classrooms:

> I can apply teaching strategies. I have a lot of students in the classroom and the traditional classroom does not help me to use different teaching strategies. I equipped this classroom with everything. Data show, smart board, U table. I did my best to convince the school administration to keep it but it was cancelled. Without this classroom I can not develop myself.

In the previous quote, Tariq illustrated the importance of well-equipped classrooms and also mentioned the school administration as a potential obstacle to teachers' SDL. According to the data, schools' administrations can sometimes be an obstacle to teachers' SDL. Some participants denounced that the school principals sometimes do not allow teachers to attend the MoE courses or may not inform them about the courses they have been selected by the MoE to attend. One of the participants, Abed, reported that due to the number of classes that he has to teach, the school principal sometimes does not allow him to attend the MoE courses in the working hours. Abed mentioned: "if I want to register in the MoE courses in the morning, the principal may not allow me to attend. I have every week twenty-four classes, who will stay with the students? And if [the MoE] chooses me to attend, the principal may call them to cancel the workshop". In the same way, Samir explained that some principals do not inform teachers about the courses they have been selected by the Educational department to attend because the principal "wants the working day to proceed without absence of the teacher from the classes". Although he did not attend the optional MoE courses, one of the participants clarified that schools'

principals do not want teachers to attend the MoE morning optional courses unless if the teacher has been chosen "by name to attend" (Saud).

In addition, Schools' administrations sometimes may not be supportive to teachers inside the school which may demotivate them and, in turn, adversely affect their will to learn for their PD. In his report about the history of his SDL, Salem stated that he created an English club in one of the classrooms of the school but the following year, the principal cancelled this club because, according to him, it was not from the MoE activities. Salem added: "I did good things in this club and that really discouraged me and after that, I just did what I was required to do". In contrast, Salem explained: "for this year, a new principal came to our school and he did something good and equipped the school with some equipment. I felt that I have regained my enthusiasm but seriously I have no desire to learn professionally due to previous frustrations". Thamer reported the same issue as Salem whereby he set up a new classroom and supplied it with different equipment and teaching aids, but according to Thamer, "they cancelled it and I lost money in this classroom. I do not want thanks, but the praise gives us energy".

In terms of the design of the classroom and the sizable number of students in the classroom, many participants suggested that these two aspects have a negative impact on the will to learn. For instance, Mohsen believed that applying new teaching strategies with a large number of students with the current design of classroom is "useless"; he added: "for example, the number of the students in the classroom is 46 [and] sometimes, they ask us to attend some teaching strategies course, but the reality of the classroom and the school is not suitable to apply them". Mohsen recalled that he used to have a special classroom where the students' desks where set in groups, which allowed him to apply different teaching strategies, such as cooperative learning. He said: "now I do not have a

special classroom and I cannot divide the student into groups. Applying teaching strategies requires equipped classrooms with fewer number of students". In the same vein, Tariq stated: "the environment is important for learning. If there is no good environment, the teacher will say: 'developing myself?'. Our environment is not good. The overcrowded schools in Makkah make the issue worse".

5.5.1.5   Indiscriminate job-related rewards

Job-related rewards refer to the lack of incentives or the lack of appreciation by the MoE as the data revealed that teachers censure the MoE due the lack of significant recognition of their personal efforts. Job-related rewards also refer to the lack of distinction between the hardworking teachers and the less hardworking ones. With regards teachers' rewards and incentives, the data revealed that lack of incentives for teachers may hinder their engagement in SDL. For instance, Saud said that he did his best and represented his city and its Education Administration in extracurricular activities in the Islamic Education branch but he did not receive the expected praise. Saud mentioned:

> The Education Administration do not encourage you frankly. In contrast, it discourages you. I give you an example. I am a successful person in extracurricular activities in Islamic Education. We achieved the second place in the Kingdom's ranking. Although they sent me a certificate of thanks and appreciation, they did not support me with all of the needs I requested before.

According to some of the participants, teaching as a job lacks some privileges such as a promotion system. For instance, Thamer clarified: "the teaching profession from the first year till the retirement is the same routine. No promotion or other positions we assign to". Also, according to some of the participant, the incentives do not necessarily need to be financial; rather, it can be, for instance, a reduced workload. Talal stated: "there is no time. If there are specific incentives. The incentives are very important; you see, not only

financial incentives. There are other incentives like reducing the workload of the teachers".

According to the data, many participants illustrated that teachers are equal in terms of the privileges and the annual bonus. The participants clarified that equality between teachers in terms of privileges is a source of discouragement for self-initiative PD. According to Naif, "some teachers say that there is no difference whether they work hard or not. No difference. This is the view of some, especially those with no ambition". In the same way, Thamer said: "whoever works a lot and hard is the same as the one who does not. It is not fair. […] the same salary and benefits".

Interestingly, whereas job security can be a motivating factor, it can be a demotivating one according to the participants' view. For instance, Mohsen identified that Job security can be a factor that disheartens teachers to pursue their learning for their PD. According to him, "Job security makes the teacher not improve and take initiatives. The teacher bonus is fixed and the job security is granted. So, the teacher may say: 'why I develop myself?' […] Job security is what created a kind of disinterest".

5.5.1.6 Responsibilities and commitments

According to the data analysis, teachers are curbed with responsibilities and commitments which hinder their engagement in SDL, especially outside their schools. The responsibility of the family is a recurrent reason which may give an ample time for teachers to self-direct their learning. In addition to the family responsibilities, the data revealed that the financial factor led the teachers to spend their time to find other sources of income to cope with living requirements.

The majority of the participants illustrated that their families' responsibilities leave no time for them for SDL. Samir stated that "life concerns, family responsibility, children and others make the time tight. When I go out of the school, I do want to think about the work again and our children requirements take the time". Muhna identified that the married teacher is different from the unmarried one in terms of his responsibilities, arguing: "with age, the responsibilities become more and more. The married teacher is different from the unmarried. With time, the responsibilities increase more and more and we do not have time for self [PD]".

Family responsibilities and priorities were found to come before teachers' willingness for SDL. For instance, one of the participants, Tariq, proposed that the MoE should provide teachers compulsory PD hours because the evening time is for other commitments and not for PD. He expressed the following view: "[What if the MoE] give the teacher specific training hours during the teacher's day? In the evening time, I am not willing to spend the time in learning. It is not a waste of time, indeed, there is a benefit but in the evening, I have other commitments, family for example".

Although several some factors may hinder teachers' participation in SDL activities, SDL, according to some participants, is a matter of motivation and management of the daily schedule by setting out a specific time for learning. According to Sami, "each week for three days, I go to a hospital in [another city] in the evening because of my son's medical condition. The rest of the week, I have other tasks and the learning does not take time. It just needs concentration. For example, you have one hour free and you have motivation, you can do it".

In addition to family responsibilities, there is another main factor which hinders teachers' engagement in SDL activities outside the MoE boundaries. As I asked Salem why he had stopped to self-direct his learning, he answered: "because I just do the work and frankly, I started to work privately and I became busy. And my teaching became a routine and the students are not motivated to learn. Nothing encourages to develop". Similarly, because of his own private work in the evening, Ali mentioned: "I do not enrol in the MoE courses in the evening because I have my own business".

As illustrated in the previous quotes, evening part-time work is one of the factors which may hinder SDL. It is not a hindrance per se, it takes teachers times after the school time. Also, the data revealed that many participants, for financial reasons, try to work in the evening to cope with their living costs. As a result, they do not have an ample time for SDL in order to develop professionally.

Tariq described the current situation of teachers regarding their engagement in PD in general as follows: "currently, teachers' interests became beyond their work scope which benefit them economically. Of course, this is not generally but there are many teachers who are working outside the ministry domain". In this regard, Tariq explained what aspect in his teaching he was trying to improve and how his part-time work in the press left him no time to develop professionally:

> I need the language more than teaching strategies because how can I interact with my students if we suppose that I am experienced in teaching strategies? How can you communicate with the students if you do not have the language? Regardless of this, my work in the press takes me at least three hours. It requires me to concentrate my efforts and the rest of my energy in it.

5.5.2 Factors encouraging SDL

This subtheme highlights the factors that encourage teachers to self-direct their learning. The factors that contribute to teachers' SDL can be external, such as rewarding teachers, and internal or personal ones, such as teachers' love for their job.

5.5.2.1 New curriculum (textbooks)

The data revealed that the introduction of new textbooks to replace those that had been taught for years, pushed the teachers to keep up with this change and try improving their English. One of the participants, Salem, explained that his practice in English is low and as a result, his language ability may decline gradually "especially with the old curricula but with the new curricula the situation is better a little bit".

The old textbooks as mentioned before were found as a factor that can reduce teachers' will to learn due their simplicity. In contrast, the new ones gave new avenue to teachers to develop themselves, especially in the English language. According to Tariq, "the new curricula […] gave new revival and let the teacher seeks out and they gave new way". He meant by "new way" that the new textbooks can be an additional way for PD. He said: "I am happy with the new curricula. I see them as an excellent tool for PD. Traveller curricula are six books. If they are memorised fully, I affirm that you will not need any further training".

In same way, Naif referred to the new textbooks as a source for PD; he said: "the new curricula are a distinctive shift. Honestly, when they adopted the new textbooks, I studied them at home. They are better than the old ones. They are full of new vocabulary and grammar".

The new textbooks, according to the participants, push the teachers to keep up with this change or to be confidant in front of their students. Naif, for instance, said that the new textbooks drove the teachers to develop themselves "because the teacher knows that he is in self-proving. There is no a longer simplicity as in the old books. The situation differs. This has made me to improve the language". Also, in addition to the fact that the new textbooks push the teachers to improve their language to keep up with these textbooks, the replacement of the new textbooks with old ones is in itself a kind of an enhancement for PD, as reported by Mohsen:

> That time was the year of introducing the new curricula and their level were high […]. At that time, I represented teachers with the supervisors. I was writing reports about the new curricula. In this period, I returned to my previous level and better because the curricula has been changed and the students […] in this way the self-development begun to keep up with new curricula and with high-level students. You know, the teacher should go to the classroom confidently.

5.5.2.2   High-level students

One of the most recurrent factors that induces teachers to learn is the high-level of the students and also their vitality in the classroom in their learning. Some participants reported how their will to learn has changed when they moved to another school due to the nature of the students whose level and aspiration in learning were high. For instance, Samir mentioned:

> when I moved to another school and the quality of the students changed and their level of English was good, I had to use the internet for the things that relate to the curriculum. I mean, for example, I used the internet to understand a certain grammar point so that I could be prepared to explain it to the students. Because I knew that they were good students and I possibly put myself in an embarrassing situation if I did not know something specific in the curriculum. So, to avoid this kind of embarrassments, I prepare the lesson in advance to enter the classroom with confidence with also additional information to give the students an impression that I am competent. In the current school I speak English around 70% of the time.

It can be perceived form Samir's quote above that his learning is restricted to transferring the information of the textbooks to the students.

In his first year in teaching, Salem was working in a rural area where, according to him, the level of the students in English was poor and he was using very simple English. He said: "when I moved to Makkah, I found students who love the course and this motivated me a lot, so I tried to develop myself when I saw the impact".

Although Salem, as reported above, discontinued his own initiatives to learn due to some factors after the first few years in teaching, the high-level of the students was a stimulating factor to purse his SDL in the first two years.

5.5.2.3 MoE distinguished initiatives

The data revealed teachers' criticism of the MoE PD and their resentment about their activities and their disinterest in participating in these activities. Teachers' criticism of the MoE PD revolved around three issues: (1) the provision is sometimes far from teachers' needs, (2) they provide one size fits all courses and (3) habitual routine courses.

Although the focus of this study is not to discuss MoE PD in detail, the data revealed that the MoE distinguish initiatives (as perceived by the participants) can attract teachers and encourage them to participate in PD programs in a self-directed manner. For instance, the MoE recently launched a new project called *khebrat* to develop teachers professionally. As indicated before, Ryan clarified that he firstly attended the MoE workshops to change from the atmosphere of the school, but the data revealed Ryan's keenness to enrol in *khebrat*. He said: "I registered in *khebrat* for the second year. I was not nominated […] I wish to go. I will benefit". Likewise, Muhna stated: "we rejoiced with *khebrat* programme. I am one among those who contacted the Minster to develop English

language teachers". In addition, Ahmad, who argued about the responsibility of teachers learning, mentioned:

> it is important that the Ministry of Education motivate us, not oblige, but motivate us to develop ourselves. There is a great step now carried out by the Ministry of Education. It is khebrat programme. Have you heard about it? When they announced it and I read about it, I said 'wow'. It started to resort my exhilaration and sprightliness and I directly registered in the programme. If I am accepted, I will be so happy with this opportunity.

The majority of the participants showed their admiration for the *khebrat* programme, which can be explained by the fact that it is not the habitual or conventional course, such as class management, provided by the MoE. On the contrary, it gives teachers the opportunity to travel abroad to learn from international educational experiences.

In addition to the unusual initiatives provided for teachers, inviting teachers to attend or participate in conferences can enhance their will to engage in such activities autonomously. For example, Talal stated: "before sometime there was a conference in Jeddah. The university sent an invitation to [Education Administration] and a group of teachers participated. That conference was ingeniousness". Another participant, Ali, clarified that the MoE PD provision, to some extent, had no real positive outcome, except the same conference mentioned above:

> No real benefits from the training programmes […] I recall in the beginning of the year there was a conference in Jeddah and I was one of the nominees to attend. […] There was a real benefit. Many professors from across the world presented lectures. Some attended to change the atmosphere of the school but if you go to develop yourself, you will get benefits. […] It was a wonderful day. I say it is the only activity that I benefited from. The other courses seriously are a sort of routine, something repetitive […] nothing new, just PowerPoint and projector, just to say we have done a workshop.

5.5.2.4 "I love my job"

The data showed that despite some hindrances and the general environment of teachers' workplaces, certain participants stated that their love for their job enhances them to learn and constantly update their way of teaching. One of the participants, at the beginning of the interview, described that his love for teaching motivates him. Yousuf said: "*do what you love to love what you do*. This saying is what represents me and it is the lens through which I look". Although Yousuf did not take any pre-service training, according to him, his love for teaching pushes him to learn to improve his practice despite the fact that he started to self-direct his learning to improve his teaching after the fifth year in teaching. He said:

> To be an English language teacher was my dream. In my university, I did not take educational preparation, but I found a real educator inside me and my love for teaching. My love for teaching as a profession was the biggest motivation for me, the love of the job for the job itself. I have self-appreciation for my job.

Sami, in the same way, clarified that his love of teaching as a profession motivates him to improve his way of teaching and his English. He expressed the following view: "I entered this field [teaching] as an aspiration. I try to be better than yesterday". Sami reported that he was chosen to be a supervisor but refused because he loves teaching:

> one of the supervisors told me that I am qualified to be a supervisor and that they would recommend me to be a supervisor. I liked that idea, I applied for the position, took the exam and I passed. But then, I changed my mind. I am in love with something called teaching and school.

In addition to the high level of the students, having active students who show willingness to learn can be stimulating for the teachers. Sami, for example, explained: "one of the years I was teaching in a secondary school and luckily, the students in that year were

active. In the class they asked and asked". Ali added that those students asked questions that pushed him to search and learn at the same time.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reported the findings of this study conducted to explore Saudi EFL teachers' views and experience about SDL as a form of professional development. This study utilised semi-structured interviews, the data were thematically analysed and four main themes were revealed. The first theme relates to the teachers' perceptions of SDL as a means of PD. The participants believed that SDL can be a cornerstone of PD. Also, they argued that SDL is a notion that is not encouraged by the society and by the MoE. Moreover, many participants emphasised on the responsibility of the MoE. They believed that teachers' learning was the responsibility of the MoE and stated that they needed the help of the MoE in their PD. The second theme relates to the teachers' engagement with SDL for their professional growth. The data showed that some participants do not take SDL initiatives while some of them discontinued to learn for their PD after several years of teaching. On the other hand, the data showed that certain participants take some SDL initiatives and that their learning was mainly to improve their English language level and/or to acquire new teaching strategies and ideas. The third theme outlined the SDL sources teachers learn from while the fourth theme relates to the factors impacting positively or negatively on teachers' engagement in SDL for their PD.

Chapter Six: Discussion

6.1   Introduction

This study was undertaken to explore Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions and experiences with SDL as a means of professional development. I believe that the findings of this study have informed more our understanding about the topic of SDL and its implication for teachers' PD. SDL is a kind of learning that occurs when learners take the initiative to learn in order to address their learning needs. However, "self-direction in learning does not exist in a vacuum; rather it takes place within a larger social context that influences both the learner and the teaching-learning process" (Hiemstra & Brockett, 2012: 156). The data revealed that teachers' perceptions and experiences are significantly shaped by the context, the society and by the policy of the MoE. This chapter aims to discuss the main findings in light of the literature and based on my experience as an EFL teacher in the KSA. In doing so, this chapter discusses the cultural dimension of society and its impact on individuals' SDL. Also, it discusses the professional culture within the MoE boundaries and its major impact on teachers' SDL. Moreover, it discusses one of the notable findings which is the imposed curriculum and its significant influence on teachers' disengagement in SDL. Also, the chapter discusses the SDL sources that teachers learn from and the activities they engage in. In addition, certain contextual factors and their effect on teachers' will to learn are discussed.

6.2   SDL and Cultural Considerations

One of the main findings which has a fundamental influence on teachers' SDL is the cultural dimension in the KSA, institutionally and in the society as a whole. The data revealed that participants of this study asserted that the culture in the Saudi landscape

does not foster the concept of self-reliance in learning. SDL as an individual attitude can be affected by the surrounding environment. Indeed, the self-directed learner and the motivation to learn can be impacted by multiple factors and the cultural and social dimensions are critical factors that shape the individual's conception toward SDL. Factors such as "subject matter; the social, cultural and educational setting; past experiences; self-concept; and relevant study skills all influence the extent to which self-directedness is possible or likely" (Greveson & Spencer, 2005: 349). Therefore, SDL can be impacted positively or negatively by the context of the learning and the culture of the society and some social cultural habits may enrich or impoverish the concept toward self-direction in learning. Guglielmino, (2011: 30) suggests that "some cultural values may support self-directed learning while others discourage it". Therefore, it can be said that "different learning modes exist in different cultures and they shape learning" (Wang & Cranton: 2014: 1017). Also, SDL may be underestimated by certain societies or at least it may not be given an important value. According to Cheng-Im (2011: 326),"many educators, employers, policy-makers, and average citizens find it difficult to place high value on what is learned outside the formal system as formal education and schooling remain highly valued in most societies". Therefore, the following two sections discuss the impact of cultural aspects within society and the professional culture within the MoE on teachers' SDL. According to Opfer & Pedder (2011: 379) "to explain teacher professional learning, one must consider what sort of local knowledge, problems, routines, and aspirations shape and are shaped by individual practices and beliefs".

6.2.1 SDL and the Cultural Aspect in the KSA

In the KSA, where the current study took place, the concept of reliance on one's own self rather than those of others to learn in a self-directed manner is not a predominant mode or attitude among individuals. It is clear from the participants' perceptions of the

sociocultural norms that manifest themselves in Saudi context that the discourse of self-direction in learning is not well formed. The society, according to them, does not encourage the culture of independency that fosters the individual to address his/her learning needs. In fact, in the KSA, the sociocultural aspect, on the one hand, does not explicitly prevent the *concept* of SDL, but the argument here is that in the context of this study, the discourse and people's attitude towards SDL can be described as unformed or immature, which in turn causes a kind of lack of awareness about the usefulness of SDL. On the other hand, some people may hold the *concept* of SDL but the society, especially the education system or the workplace, may prevent the *process* of SDL due multiple factors such as a top-down policy or the lack of variety of learning sources which facilities learning to teachers.

Therefore, two manifestations can be elicited from the participants' accounts. First, the society does not encourage nor it prevents the *concept* of SDL and participants blame the MoE and its absent role to educate the generations on SDL. Second, the participants referred on many occasions that the general ambience of the MoE in general and their school in particular prevent the *process* of SDL.

Although this study aimed to explore teachers' perceptions on SDL as a way for PD and why/why not, how and what teachers learn in a self-directed manner for their PD, I was not expecting that they would refer to the culture or the society as a critical factor which may foster or prevent the concept of SDL. It seemed from this that the teachers might alluded to the fact that they are a victim of the culture that does not raise individuals' awareness to take the primary responsibility to self-direct their learning. As I explained, I was expecting teachers to discuss only the issue of SDL within the boundaries of the MoE and their workplace, but they referred to the source of the issue of SDL in the context

where the dominant mode of the society does not foster SDL. Also, they explained that the source of the issue is that the education system does not educate and raise the students to be self-directed learners.

6.2.2 SDL And the Professional Culture in The MoE

As they referred to the source of the issue, some participants of this study urged the MoE to insert the SDL into the curriculum as a skill the students should acquire. They argued that the education system in the KSA is authoritative, that the teacher is the dominant element who controls the learning process, that the role of students is passive and that they are directed by the teacher. As a result, the students will be raised as dependant learners and may not be aware about the concept of self-direction in learning. Indeed, in the KSA "we have adopted what might be described as a manufacturing model of education designed to produce uniform results through promotion of conformity, obedience, and memorization of content dictated by others, leading to the transformation of self-directed learners into other directed learners". (Guglielmino, 2008: 2). Whereas Guglielmino contends that the educational or learning system in the context of the USA that dictated by others can change the habit of the self-directed learner to less or other directedness in learning, learners in the context of this study were raised within a top-down education system which does not foster and enrich the concept of SDL. This can in turn generate passive dependent learners. Brockett and Hiemstra, (1991: 14) argue that the "authority-based approaches frequently force individuals into learning modes that may not be conducive maximum learning". The participants referred to this issue during their interviews and talked about their SDL experiences with regard to PD and they linked their SDL experiences with the reality of the way of teaching and learning in their schools. It seemed, as explained before, that their current practices are the result of the environment where they were raised, especially in the schools where the teaching

methods are conventional and the teacher is the centre of the learning process. According to Bullock (2013: 103), "schools are cultural institutions" and teachers may replicate what they have been exposed to when they were students. Hence, teacher-centred approaches may remain dominant in our schools.

In fact, the teacher-centred approach is dominant in the KSA and "teachers are considered content experts, authority figures in the classroom settings" (Wang & Cranton: 2014: 1018). The relationship between the teacher and the students revolves around the textbook where the teacher strives to transmit the information of the textbook and the student's role is to store this information till the day of the exam. According to Khan (2018: 247), in the KSA "the examination process encourages students to focus solely on their grades, inhibiting them from learning information outside of the set curricula". Therefore, it can be argued that this kind of teaching and learning has a negative impact on the students' autonomy and they may not conceptualise that SDL is a way of learning they can utilise to progress in their studies or in their life in general. According to Steinke (2012: 54), "many learners are not self-directed because they are accustomed to being explicitly taught everything that they need to know". The students who learn under the authority of the teacher who directs the learning process can become acclimatised to this kind of learning and they may believe that this is the typical way of learning. In Lithuania for instance, Daciulyte and Pinciuk, (2010: 1 cited in Jucevičienė, 2007) clarify that SDL "is rather frequently not considered as an educational activity because there are misconceptions that people learn only when they are taught". Frambach, Driessen, Chan and van der Vleuten (2012) found in their study that in medical school "Middle Eastern students expressed more feelings of uncertainty as a cultural factor" when they are exposed to SDL courses. They indicated that the reason for this uncertainty was related to the students' experiences with the teacher-centred approach. Also, Leatemia, Susilo

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and van Berkel (2016: 390) found in their study that it was difficult to increase the students' SDL due some cultural factors and due to the nature of the curriculum and teachers' way of teaching. They report that in Indonesia:

> curriculum system and teacher's experiences still emphasize a teacher-centered approach. This system also still focuses on summative assessment and memorizing facts. Student's background and cultural factors also contribute to a decrease in the student's motivation to conduct SDL.

Moreover, the pressure and the accountability imposed on teachers to measure their performance can also contribute to the issue of authoritarian teaching. In the KSA, "the most widely understood strand of performativity is, in common parlance, the 'audit/target culture', [to measure] the work of teachers and schools" (Wilkins, 2011: 391). According to Albedaiwi, (2014: 220), in the KSA, the role of the supervisors who "represent the MoE in schools, made the teachers feel that their work or teaching methods was being criticised. This resulted in the teachers being more directive and authoritarian with their students". Therefore, this kind of learning environment may reduce learners' self-direction capacity. As Guglielmino (2008: 2), posits "schools with their increasing structure and emphasis on teacher-directed instruction did much to weaken the idea of learner responsibility".

For the situation explained above, the participants of this study seemed to indicate to the source of the issue and gave grounds for the fact that they might be victims of the culture and the education system that do not enhance the *concept* of SDL. As a result, they suggested the MoE to instil SDL "in the minds of learners" (Wang & Cranton, 2012: 21) in order not to "perpetuate dependency than to create self-direction" (Grow, 1991: 127).

In fact, the teachers did not only refer to the ways of teaching and learning as factors that do not foster SDL in the KSA and impact on students' learning, but also alluded to the

atmosphere of professional culture within the MoE boundaries as an additional factor that does not create a culture of independency in learning for their PD. Some of them clarified that the MoE does not encourage teachers to self-direct their learning for their PD and mentioned that the MoE should train teachers on SDL as they believe it can be the corner stone of PD. SDL is a kind of learning that can be prompted and trained on (Guglielmino, 2008; Frambach et al.,2012; Wang & Cranton: 2014). In addition, with the advent of the notion of SDL by Knowles, the main goal of adult education should facilitate it and, as a result, the individuals "would be well equipped to live in the Information Age where technological development meant most people would spend their working lives continually retraining for new careers (Brookfield (2009: 2615). Moreover, Cheng-Im, (2011: 327) suggests that "if self-directed learning skills are found to be lacking, it is necessary to develop instruction, which is specifically aimed to counteract this deficiency by assessing the learners' readiness from a particular instructional intervention".

In fact, as an example, my respondents and I as a teacher did not take any course about SDL provided by the MoE and regardless of the fact that there is no any workshop or course about SDL, the attention of teachers and researchers with regard to teachers' PD is mainly paid to the MoE provision and the prevailing discourse is mainly about it with neglecting SDL as a form of PD (see 1.2) . Moreover, "the training Model" (Kennedy, 2005: 237) to PD is dominant in the KSA where the PD activities are "'delivered' to the teacher by an 'expert', with the agenda determined by the deliverer, and the participant placed in a passive role" (ibid: 237). In the KSA where this kind of 'delivery model' which concentrates on the provision of courses, workshops and other events (Knight, 2002: 229), teachers do not have a voice to choose or design the activities they need.

As a result of the MoE's control over teachers' PD and what/where/how should they learn? And in addition to the fact that the concept of SDL as an additional way for teachers' PD within the MoE boundaries is almost absent, the culture of independency may not grow within this particular system. In fact, one of the participants, as illustrated in the findings, stated that my questions about SDL were a kind of shock to him (see 5.2.2). He said that he believed in the fact that teachers should develop themselves but not in the way that not relying in the MoE. Smith, (2017: 94) argues that teachers may find it "difficult to understand different approaches to professional learning because they did not see more traditional PD approaches as problematic in terms of their own learning". Steinke (2012: 62) views that the "lack of self-direction in learners may occur for two reasons: the workers may be new to the workplace environment or they may be accustomed to an environment in which they are not required to take responsibility for their own learning". As showed in the findings of this study, several participants asserted that teachers learning is the responsibility of the MoE. This could be attributed to the reasons clarified above and because they may "still equate learning with formal education and training, and assume that working and learning are two quite separate activities that never overlap" (Eraut, 2004: 249). Also, they asserted that teachers learning is the responsibility of the MoE due the imposed curricula, as explained in (5.5.1.1).

As mentioned before, regardless of training teachers to be self-directed learners for their PD and the fact that "accreditation standards for many professions now also examine preparation programs for evidence that they prepare their learners for continued, self-directed lifelong learning" (Guglielmino, (2008: 5), the absence of teachers' voice in designing the MoE PD activities contradicts the notion of SDL where the learner has the primary control over his/her learning. According to Brookfield (1993:), the main element in most definitions of SDL is the importance of the learner control over his/her learning.

SDL is based on the premise to give teachers more control over what/how/when/where to learn for their PD and to "move from an authoritarian organizational structure in schools toward more democratic and participatory forms of teacher development" (Richards & Farrell, 2005: 13-14).

In fact, the MoE's control over teachers' PD programmes is only one manifestation of its top-down polices knowing that in the KSA, "nearly all plans and strategies pertaining to the field of education are enforced in a top-down approach" (Alnefaie: 2016: 2). Guglielmino and Guglielmino (2011: 38) argue:

> It appears logical that if large portions of the population see themselves as having less power or status than others and either accept this unequal balance of power as the natural order of things that will never change or believe that they are unable to change it, regardless of the effort expended; their independent thought, initiative, and the drive for independent learning would be lessened.

Therefore, this top-down policy with the reasons clarified above can boost the dependency-based culture and it may lead teachers to adhere to the MoE guidelines without advancing their PD.

6.3   Factors impacting teachers' SDL

Although SDL is a kind of learning where the learner takes the primary responsibility to learn and merely arises from the learner's initiative, SDL may be impacted by several factors which can promote it and number of factors can dampen it. As explained before (see 3.4.3) the personal attribute is an essential aspect in SDL that determines whether an SDL activity will take place or not. Nevertheless, several scholars have argued that the context has a remarkable impact on SDL. For instance, Candy (1991: 155) emphasises that self-directed learners are not shaped by the personal "attribute such as 'self-directness readiness' but by their construction of the particular situation and circumstances". The

findings of this study showed that multiple factors promote and dishearten teachers to self-direct their learning for their professional growth and the majority of the factors that enhance or hinder SDL are institutional factors that relate to the teachers' school environment and to the MoE in general.

In fact, the data showed some motivated factors which enhance teachers' will to learn but the word frustration was mentioned many times in the teachers' accounts as a result of multiple factors that impact on them negatively and in turn discourage them to self-direct their learning for their PD. Multiple disheartening factors demotivated teachers and made them less eager to participate in SDL activities to grow professionally. According to Day (1999: 71), "teachers with low self-efficacy are likely to exhibit low motivation in class and school settings, more likely to prefer routine rather than experiment and be less receptive to new teaching practices".

It can be derived from the data that the most demotivating factors are related to the workplace or to the policy of the MoE. The heavy workload, the students' low motivation and achievement, the indiscriminate job-related rewards, the ill-equipped schools in terms of their design, the lack of sufficient resources and the top-down curriculum were found to discourage teachers to engage in SDL. Also, a number of hindrances do not relate to their work but limit their time to participate in SDL activities such as responsibilities and commitments. In my view, as a matter of example, the source of the issue of the lack of time available to teachers within their workplace is due to the lack of a clear PD policy by the MoE. All these demotivating factors are the result of the way the MoE operates the education system.

Although this section did not discuss all the factors that impact positively and negatively on teachers' SDL, in my view, one of the noticeable findings of this study was the ready-made imposed curriculum and its impact on teachers' SDL, as explained further in the next subsection.

6.3.1 SDL And the Imposed Curricula

The data showed that the pre-prescribed imposed curriculum had a negative impact on teachers' will to learn for their PD. I asked the participants about what they meant by "curriculum" and they reported that they meant "the textbooks", which can be a fundamental factor that dampens teachers' motivation to self-direct their learning or in other words it can restrain teachers within its limits.

The findings showed that this kind of curriculum, or textbooks, where the role of the teacher is only to deliver it to the students, may restricts teachers within its boundaries which can dishearten their eagerness to learn for their PD. Some participants clearly said that the contract between them and the MoE is to deliver the information of this curriculum to the students. Hence, they legitimated the fact that going beyond the curriculum outlines and advancing their professional experiences and knowledge is not their responsibility. Some of the participants described the curriculum as monotonous and as a kind of routine arguing that they had become familiar with its content. As a result of this, they feel there is no necessity to grow professionally. That is to say, the textbooks had been taught for many years by teachers and as a result, they became familiar with them. Therefore, the participants justified that there is no need to learn for their PD since they are familiar with the textbooks. For instance, a number of participants argued that there is no need to increase their English language level because the textbooks are simple

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and they could teach them to the students. In fact, certain participants identified that the old textbooks were the reason to regress in terms of their English level.

Owing to this, it can be elicited that the educational scene in the KSA can be described as a product (textbooks) imposed by the MoE and that the teachers' role is to deliver it to the students, as illustrated in the following diagram. These kinds of top-down policies may "reduce the role of teaching to that of a technical deliverer of pre-set pedagogies" (Brain, Reid & Comerford Boyes, 2006: 412). As a result of this rigid managerial leadership, teachers in the KSA believe that the MoE "considers teachers as a tool to convey what the MOE had already designed, which affects teachers' identity as professional agents in the educational landscape" (Alnefaie, 2016: 8).

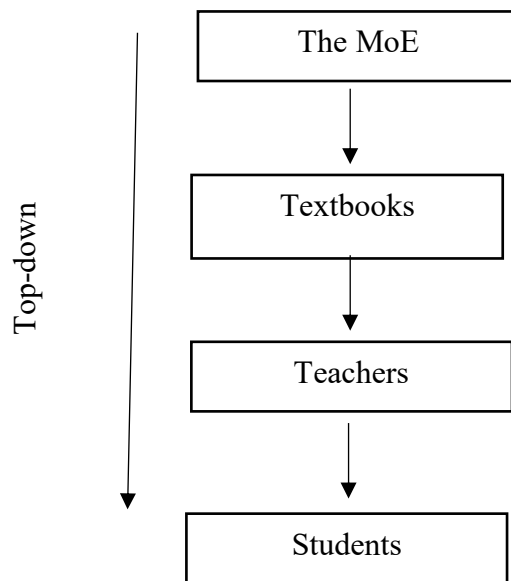*Figure 6.1:The process of decision making (imposed curricula).*

In fact, in the KSA, almost all the policies related to the educational field are dictated in a top-down manner. This unilateralism in decision making by the MoE, where teachers must adhere to its guidelines without exercising any sort of autonomy in decision making, may drive teachers to act as mere implementers of these guidelines. As a result, and as

evident in the findings, teachers may not self-direct their learning for PD. Day (1999: 8) suggests that "externally imposed curriculum and management innovations have often been poorly implemented without consultation, and they have resulted in periods of destabilization, increased workload and crises of professional identity for many teachers".

As mentioned above, the MoE nearly decides of all the plans in the educational landscape including in-service training programmes in which teachers do not have a voice in terms of their design. As explained before, these programmes are the source of criticism due to their compulsory nature, their lack of variety and choice, their lack of teachers' involvement and their over emphasis on theory rather than practice. As a result, according to Villegas-Reimers (2003: 124), teachers who "have received limited training and education, [will] complete their work in a mechanical manner, following the textbooks and the national curriculum without giving any personal input". Therefore, the ineffective PD programmes with dictated curricula, as highlighted in the findings, can drive teachers to act as mere implementers rather than being creative and innovative in their work.

Therefore, it can be said that these textbooks are imposed by the MoE and due to the culture of audit and accountability, teachers have to schedule the units and the lessons of these textbooks and teach each lesson based on this schedule. Therefore, instead of creating a culture of collaboration between the MoE and teachers to design a curriculum where teachers can exercise their creativity in a way which may lead them to self-direct their learning for PD, "teachers are being given a script that tightly binds them to a narrow curriculum that may or may not fit the needs of the teachers or their particular classrooms" (Lieberman and Pointer Mace, 2008: 227). Thus, based on the findings, teachers argued that this kind of curriculum is like a contract between them and the MoE and that their

job is to deliver it. As a result of this, advancing their professional knowledge was thought to be unnecessary.

Moreover, another aspect can be elicited with respect to the issue of the imposed fixed curriculum or textbooks. In the KSA, the textbooks had been taught by teachers for many years till the MoE replaced them with different ones. Therefore, with time, these books became a sort of routine whereby, according to teachers, there was no need to prepare the lessons or advance their PD since they could easily convey the information of these textbooks to students. Consequently, this kind of textbooks, as evident in the findings, seems to be a reason contributing to the regression of certain teachers' level of English and to not self-direct their PD.

Interestingly, the findings showed that several teachers were self-directing their learning for their professional growth and that they learned only to improve their English level and/or to acquire new teaching strategies. It can be elicited form this that their learning is shaped and restricted by the way the curriculum is applied and it seems that their learning revolves around the textbooks and how to deliver it. Other aspects, such as students' psychological and social needs, or other skills which are expected from teachers as professionals to possess did not appear in the teachers' accounts. Thus, this raises fundamental questions which are: "how is teaching conceptualised as a profession?" and "does the MoE aim to work with teachers whose role is only to deliver the content?".

Another interesting point is that the findings revealed that as a result of the replacement of the old textbooks with new ones, a number of teachers reported that this replacement motivated them to improve their English level to cope with the textbooks' level. Therefore, it can be said that fixed textbooks that taught for many years can dishearten

teachers to engage in PD because with time, it becomes a sort of routine whereby teachers feel that there is no need to grow professionally since the task is only to deliver the information contained in books in addition to the fact that teachers in the KSA should only adhere to teach textbooks and their inability to "modify the course beyond a small degree" (Albedaiwi, 2014: 231).. As a result, "instead of building a culture of professional learning, teachers are faced with a culture of compliance" (Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008: 227) where they are accountable to *tick-all-the-boxes* required by the MoE which may lead them to work in a mechanical way without taking any self-initiative for their PD. Hence, involving the teacher in decision making and in the curriculum reform may enhance the teacher's identity as a professional and as a result of exercising some sort of autonomy in his or her profession, the teacher can grow professionally to cope with the demands of the profession.

In sum, the issue of ready-made curriculum and its impact on teachers' SDL manifests what has been explained before respecting the managerial authoritative approach by the MoE where it plans all the affairs of the educational landscape. Even in the PD programmes of the MoE and its responsible bodies, such as educational training centres, the teachers do not have a voice in terms of design and their needs are not taken into consideration. As explained before, self-directed learners can take the initiatives to learn in an informal setting and they can learn in formal settings such as workshops. Although this study aimed to explore the views and experiences of Saudi EFL teachers on SDL as a form of their PD, the MoE have to make a significant reform for their PD programmes to attract teachers to attend in a self-directed manner and also involving them in the process of curriculum design. One of the important steps towards teachers' partnership in decision-making is to take into account teachers' voice and needs. The MoE should work "*with* teachers rather than *on* teachers" (Smith, 2017: 6). That is to say, to change its

philosophy as a centre of decision making to a multilateral decision making where teachers can collaborate with the MoE to reform the curriculum and PD programmes. The current conceptualisation of teaching as a profession in the KSA seems "not based on a 'teacher-as-person' perspective but on a systems, managerial perspective of 'teacher-as-employee" (Day, 1999: 68). Thus, in order to shape "teacher professionalism effectively", the MoE "requires an understanding of what teachers may—either immediately or over time—recognise and accept, on balance, as a 'better' professionalism. It involves appealing to their perceptions of a professionalism that works for them" (Evans, 2011: 866). If the MoE effectively supports teachers "to play a different role in their own professional growth and development, they have the opportunity to experience, recognise and construct learning that is both personally and professionally rewarding" (Smith, 2017: 7).

6.4   The Nature of SDL Sources and Activities

The data showed that most teachers' SDL activities are taking place outside their school and very limited activities occur inside the workplace. The data also indicated the multiple sources teachers learn from and that internet is the most used source for teachers' SDL. Indeed, "the proliferation of e-learning platforms, and the explosion of competing offerings in the marketplace" give the learners more control in their learning than in the past (Bouchard, 2009: 16). As highlighted in the findings, there is no doubt that technology-based learning, such as web-based learning, mobile apps and social networking, is an effective and affordable (sometimes) source teachers can learn form for their PD. According to one of the participants, there is no excuse for teachers to not self-direct their learning for PD given the ease of access to knowledge on the internet. Teachers in the past might operate within a top-down policy in which what, how, when and where to learn for their PD was dictated by others (e.g., the MoE) with maybe limited

or costly sources outside their institutions, but with the technological revolution, teachers can decide what, how, when and where to learn for their PD individually or collaboratively. According to Bouchard (2009), with the rapid increase of e-learning sources, more control in the process of learning is granted to people.

Although the internet may be described as the most effective and easiest source teachers can learn form, the data showed that certain teachers do not take self-initiatives for their PD despite the fact that the internet can provide teachers with more control on when, what and how to learn given the easy access to a tremendous number of free sources. This reminds us of the discussion about the learner's personal attributes which determines if the learning activity will take place regardless of the surrounding environment. Nonetheless, the surrounding environment was found in this study as a critical factor that impacts teachers' SDL.

In fact, it does not seem very important, in my view, to know the sources teachers learn from for their PD, but the most important issue is to explore the perceptions and experiences of teachers of SDL as means for PD. In other words, it is essential to present the conclusion that can be drawn from their perceptions and experiences although it is not explicitly stated. For instance, the data showed that most SDL sources are outside the workplace while very few sources are inside the schools. Therefore, it is important to discuss the reasons behind the dearth of SDL activities inside the school but not which sources per se, although the data showed that few teachers have some initiatives inside the workplace. Therefore, among the SDL sources and activities that have been revealed in this study, I will focus more on the activities and sources inside their schools the given the importance of workplace learning.

6.4.1   SDL Inside the Workplace

Although many participants clarified that they did not have any kind of SDL activities inside their workplace, the data revealed only two kinds of SDL activities in which few teachers participate, though they are infrequent. Also, the data did not reveal any kind of learning in an individual manner but all of them are collaborative in nature. These are peer observation and informal discussion with other teachers in staff rooms. A number of ***obvious*** reasons led to this such as a heavy workload or the nature of the schools' environment or the impact of imposed curriculum as illustrated in findings chapter. As shown in the findings, inside the schools, teachers participate in two kinds of SDL that are collaborative in nature, but some participants reported that many teachers are not happy to participate in this kind of activities which disheartened them. The most important ***implicit*** reason that can be attributed to this is a lack of culture of professional collegiality where teachers learn collaboratively in a self-directed manner for their professional growth. In fact, the participants did not state explicitly that the culture of professional collegiality does not exist, but it seemed from their account that the culture of collaborative or individual learning is not inherent to their schools. It is not inherent to the way that firstly, the data collection revealed only two kinds of SDL activities inside the workplace: peer observation and discussion with other teachers. Secondly, the culture of workplace learning is not inherent to the way that it is not acknowledged and systematically organized by the MoE.

In fact, based on my experience as a teacher, there is a lack of organised PD in schools in the KSA whether it is organised by teachers in a self-directed manner or by the MoE. Aghamdi (2015) has extensively analysed the MoE PD programmes and concluded that the MoE offers two types of PD: (1) educational training programmes (e.g workshops, courses) which take place at four sites none of which is inside the school, and (2)

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educational rehabilitation programmes (e.g., Diploma in Education). According to my experience, workplace PD programmes are not in the agenda of the MoE either imposed or optional. Even teachers' discussion, as revealed in the findings, can be described as an incidental learning or as Eraut (2004: 59) names it "reactive learning". Reactive learning is when the teacher "learns something but did not engage in the activity with the intention to learn. An example is when a teacher learns something new during a casual conversation with a colleague" (McCarthy & James, 2017: 60). The only form of PD dictated by the MoE in the school is peer observation. Therefore, it seems that the majority of the MoE PD programmes are conventional in nature. It can be said that in the KSA "most of the current PD activities can be characterized as traditional forms of PD [...] which were not situated at the workplace, in which teachers played a passive role". (Van Veen & Meirink, 2012: 23).

It can be argued that this study is about teachers' SDL and teachers can take the initiatives inside their schools to improve themselves professionally. Although this is the core concept of SDL when the learners take the control of their learning but the role of the MoE is important to create the conditions for teachers to motivate them to learn inside their workplaces. According to Lieberman & Pointer Mace, (2008: 227), "there is now a great deal of evidence that teachers learn best when they are members of a learning community". When teachers learn collaboratively it is "assumed to create a learning culture and helps to build a community in which further learning is supported and stimulated" (Kwakman, 2003 :152). In fact, rather than creating the conditions and building a conducive learning environment to allow teachers to exercise some sort of autonomy in their PD, the findings showed that some forms of learning are imposed by the headteachers who are being held accountable by the GDE to enforce the policy. As explained above, the findings revealed few activities take place inside the participants'

workplace where teachers take the initiatives to learn for their PD. For instance, few teachers observe each other's class and they take the initiatives to visit other teachers to share with them new strategies. In contrast, some of them observe other teachers because it is an obliged requirement. Interestingly, while the participants who take initiatives to observe other teachers for their PD explained the benefit of this kind of learning, the participants who exercise this kind of activity, as a result of its compulsory nature, argue that it is not useful. This kind of collegial learning is what Hargreaves (1994) names "contrived collegiality" where the time and place for teacher to work together is mandated by the administration. Kennedy (2005: 245) states that to gain a favourable outcome of professional learning within a community of practice in the schools, "it should be neither a form of accountability nor of performance management". Beatty (2000) conducted an intervention research to allow eight teachers to lead their professional growth collaboratively in a self-directed manner for over five months to share their views and their professional interests. The study was conducted as a result of the fact that "leadership and professional development models continue to be characterised by a 'top down' directionality". Therefore, her study examined "the possibilities for 'bottom up' directionality via a grass roots entry point for individual professional growth and organisational learning" (ibid: 74). In this mixed-methods study, where interviews and measurement scales such as the SDLL were used, Beatty (2000) found notable changes in teachers' perceptions of themselves and their work. Beatty (2000: 74) reported that the participating teachers:

> felt more motivated and satisfied, more in control, more confident about their ability to self-direct professional learning, more confident about their effectiveness and their ability to reflect on their effectiveness in the classroom, and more likely to experience 'flow' in connection with their work.

Moreover, the lack of a professional collegial culture inside the schools can have unfavourable implications for novice teachers as a community of practice inside the school is very important for those teachers to be guided by expert teachers. As mentioned in the context chapter, there is a lack of induction programme for novice teachers to support them in our context, so if the professional collegial learning culture is absent, it may increase their challenges. In this regard, Louws, Meirink, van Veen & van Driel (2017: 174) explain that several "studies suggest that beginning teachers are more in favor of observing colleagues, interaction with experienced colleague". Therefore, novice teachers in the context of this study may face some challenges to build professional networks inside the schools with senior teachers who are already busy with their workload or they may have no interest to collaborate due the reasons explained in this chapter.

6.5   SDL and the characteristics of learners

The findings of this study showed that few participants do not engage in SDL for their PD, and some of them tended to discontinue their SDL after few years. The data analysis showed a general atmosphere of frustration which can be perceived from the participants' accounts. Therefore, the data suggest a kind of disinterest among some teachers to self-direct their learning for PD. One of the important characteristics of self-directed learners is motivation (Tough, 1971; Knowles, 1993; Garrison, 1997; Hiemstra and Brockett, 2012; Boyer et al., 2014). According to Van Eekelen, Vermunt & Boshuizen (2006), both motivation and interest are important concepts in teachers' will to learn. Boyer et al. (2014) argue that individuals with a higher level of self-motivation spend more time on SDL activities. In addition, individuals' responsibility to self-direct their learning is an important element or characteristic of SDL. Brockett & Hiemstra (1991: 27) describe "personal responsibility as the cornerstone of self-direction in learning". Self-direction in learning is the learner's preference or desire for assuming responsibility for learning

(ibid). The data of this study showed that some teachers viewed that teachers' learning is not the responsibility of the teachers but that of the MoE to develop the teachers professionally. The data seem to suggest that the rejection of the responsibility of learning is a result of their professional environment, especially for teachers who discontinued taking personal initiatives for their professional growth.

Although personal characteristics play a major role whether SDL will take place in certain situations (Guglielmino, 2008), the context has a critical impact on individuals' self-direction in learning. For instance, some participants rejected the responsibility of their learning because the role of teachers is to deliver the content of the curriculum to students. In addition, few teachers affirmed that the MoE is responsible for creating an effective, conducive environment for learning so that they can learn in a self-directed manner. Moreover, before starting their career, some teachers may think that teachers' learning and PD is the responsibility of the MoE. It seems that the poor SDL culture is due to the fact that teachers are accustomed to being observed by the authority while engaging in learning, whether as students or teachers. Hence, SDL is not perceived as a personal characteristic only; rather, the ideal conception of SDL to be most effective is when the individual is highly self-directed, the process of learning is well organised, and when the context (e.g. the MoE and the socio-political milieu) supports SDL (Brockett and Hiemstra,1991; Hiemstra and Brockett. 2012).

The data tend to indicate that the impact of the context, especially the MoE ambience, is disadvantageous and not conducive to learning, as teachers cannot self-direct their learning for PD. Van Eekelen et al. (2006: 409) state that "teacher learning and also 'not learning' are influenced by aspects of the work context". Therefore, as explained earlier, the ideal balance between the elements of SDL in the PPC model is overwhelmed by the

negative impact of the context. According to Candy (1991: 8), "people's willingness to participate in self-directed learning activities is shaped not by some abstract attribute such as 'self-directed learning readiness' but by their construction of the particular situation and circumstances". The data showed that few participants discontinued their SDL due to several factors mainly related to their workplace. Therefore, this shows how the context affects teachers' tendency to self-direct their learning for PD even though they were engaging in SDL before. Owing to the demotivating factors mentioned in this study, some participants opted to convey the curriculum to their students without taking any initiative to improve themselves professionally. Allmnakrah & Evers (2020: 30) claim that teachers in the KSA are "merely empty and passive vessels" directed by decision makers to implement their policy.

Therefore, the MoE should create the conditions for a more conducive learning environment so that teachers may participate more in SDL to improve themselves professionally. One of the important conditions is listening to teachers' voice and meeting their needs. According to Allmnakrah & Evers (2020), previous reforms did not achieve the desired outcomes for many reasons. One of the important reasons is the marginalisation of teachers in the reform process. They suggest that "an essential component for implementing these reforms should be the inclusion of teachers, as many scholars agree that there is no single factor more effective in the school setting than the teacher" (ibid: 30). As a result, listening to teachers and meeting their needs along with creating a conducive learning environment may lead teachers to engage in SDL activities.

However, there are variations between people in accepting the responsibility of learning due to several internal and external factors. Brockett and Hiemstra (1991: 27) argue: "we believe that each individual assumes some degree of personal responsibility. It is not an

either/or characteristic. Thus, adult learners will possess different degrees of willingness to accept responsibility for themselves as learners". Many scholars claim that SDL is a skill that can be acquired and trained (Brockett and Hiemstra,1991; Guglielmino, 2008; Frambach et al.,2012; Wang & Cranton: 2014). According to Guglielmino (2008: 10), "some individuals will overcome all obstacles to continue their self-directed learning; others need assistance in accepting the responsibility and developing the skills and attitudes for lifelong self-directed learning". Therefore, the MoE, as mentioned above, can create a conducive learning environment and provide SDL courses so that the sense of responsibility can be promoted among teachers, especially those who are unwilling to self-direct their learning for PD.

6.6   Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, the main findings were discussed in the light of the literature review and my experience as a teacher in the KSA. It highlights the impact of the culture of the society and the professional culture in the MoE boundaries on teachers' self-direction towards learning. It also, discussed briefly some main factors which impact positively or negatively on teachers' SDL with main focus of the issue of imposed curricula and its significant unfavourable impact on teachers' professional identify. In addition, it discussed the nature of SDL activities and sources that teachers learn from with further discussion about workplace learning.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This chapter presents an overview of the study and a summary of its findings. Also, it highlights the limitations of this study and presents the implications and the recommendations to the MoE. Finally, it concludes with a personal reflection on my doctoral journey.

7.1 Overview and Contribution of the Study

This study was undertaken to explore Saudi EFL teachers' views and experiences of SDL as form of their professional development. The rationale behind this study was my interest in the issue of teachers' self-learning and self-initiatives to develop themselves professionally due to the limited PD activities provided by the MoE when I started my work as a teacher and because of my bewilderment regarding how to address teaching issues since I commenced my career as a teacher without prior training or theoretical knowledge about teaching. Hence, I came to believe, at that time, that SDL for teachers is essential to develop themselves professionally especially if their institutions do not address properly their PD needs. The other motive to undertake this study was the lack of research on the issue of teachers' SDL in the KSA. Therefore, this study aimed to explore teachers' views and experiences with SDL in order to contribute to the context of the study and provide insights into a new potential way to address teachers' PD.

The study revealed important findings on the issue of teachers' SDL in the KSA. Amongst the important findings, in my view, is the impact of the culture of the society and the culture within the confines of the MoE. The participants perceived that the culture in the Saudi society does not promote a culture of self-reliance in learning. Also, they believed that the education system in the KSA gives a ground to students and teachers to be

dependant learners. They argued that the education system is authoritative where the teacher is at the centre of the learning process and guides students in each step while the students' role is passive. As a result, the students grow up as dependant learner on others. Another relevant finding was that certain teachers viewed that teachers' learning is the responsibility of the MoE. Although the study aimed to reveal teachers' views and experiences of SDL, the data revealed that teachers associated their learning with the MoE and many of them argued that learning for professional growth is the responsibility of the MoE. Furthermore, the data revealed that teachers perceived that they needed the help of the MoE in their learning for their PD.

As far as teachers' practice with SDL is concerned, based on the participants' views, the findings suggest variations in terms of teachers' engagement with SDL. Some teachers, according to the data analysis, were not engaging in SDL activities for their PD. Moreover, several teachers were self-directing their learning but discontinued their learning after some years in teaching. Also, the data revealed that certain teachers take self-initiatives for their PD but in an intermittent manner. Moreover, teachers' self-initiatives, according to the data, aimed to improve their English language level only or update their teaching strategies only or both improve their English language and their teaching strategies.

Finally, the data revealed multiple factors which, according to teachers' views, hinder or enhance their SDL. The data showed that most of these factors, especially the hindrances, are related to the MoE.

This study contributed to our understating of the field of SDL in relation to teachers' PD. This study revealed important findings related to Saudi EFL teachers' views on and

experiences with SDL as a way for their PD. Before embarking on this study, there was a gap in the literature in the issue of teachers' PD in the KSA as, to best of my knowledge, no studies have investigated the issue of teachers' SDL to PD in the KA. As illustrated before, studies that have been conducted in the KSA about the issue of teachers' learning in PD always focused on the central PD provided by the MoE, whether pre-service training and in-service training. As a result, the study informed our understanding more about the issue of EFL teachers' PD in the KSA and provided important insights for all of stakeholders in the Saudi educational landscape and worldwide.

7.2   Limitations of the Study

I believe this study presented a deep understanding of the issue of SDL as a form of Saudi EFL teachers' PD, through exploring the perceptions of the participants' lived experiences, though it was not without a number of limitations, as illustrated hereunder.

First, whereas there is a lack of literature (e.g., research or education policy documents) on the topic of teachers' SDL for PD in the KSA which may deem as a noticeable contribution for this study, examining related papers might provide an in-depth analysis to the study.

Second, the participants of this study were teachers with five years of experience and more. Notwithstanding the fact that the education system in the KSA is highly centralised where pre-service and in-service teachers operate within frameworks and decrees dictated by the MoE, the yielded findings may not be applicable to novice teachers. For instance, the environment of the workplace may change the attuited of the teacher towards SDL over the years either negatively or positively, which may not be applicable to novice teachers.

Third, the study aimed to explore teachers' SDL, which might be viewed as an issue particularly related to the teachers in view of the fact that SDL is a kind of learning directed by the learner. However, in the light of the findings, the participants raised important issues with regard to the role and the responsibility of the MoE in teachers' learning. At its core, SDL is a self-driven learning process and the individual takes the primary responsibility for it. Nonetheless, the self-directed learner may rely on or seek others' help. The self-directed learner may also need facilities and resources he/she may be unable to access due to, for example, financial reason. Therefore, involving officials and policy makers in in this study to provide a richer understanding of the current practice of SDL in the KSA might yield significant findings. However, I was unable to involve policy makers due to the time constraints and the geographical distance.

7.3   Implications of the Study

In light of the findings, the study has several noteworthy implications and recommendations which can be considered by the MoE.

7.3.1   Implications for the MoE

Although the study aimed to explore teachers' views about and experiences with SDL as a form of PD, in light of the findings, the MoE was found an important agent in teachers' SDL. As mentioned before, the participants oftentimes mentioned the MoE during their accounts about their SDL. For instance, the findings showed the censure of the participants on the MoE's role with regard to the culture of self-direction in learning and how the education system nurtures the students and the teachers to be passive dependant learners. As explained before, while presenting their experiences and views about SDL, the participants referred to the education system and its impact to generate dependant learners who became acclimatised to be controlled by others in the learning process.

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Therefore, the MoE is recommended to educate the students in SDL skills. In this competitive world, the MoE should equip their students with innovative learning approaches such as SDL which is evident in the literature as an advantageous approach. Therefore, the MoE is responsible to create a culture of independency towards more self-directedness in learning in view of the idea that "cultures with values that support and encourage self-directed learning may realize benefits in terms of productivity and individual income, impacting the living standards of their people" (Guglielmino & Guglielmino, 2011: 39). The purpose of education is not only to transmit knowledge to students; it also should aim to help students gain the "ability to go on acquiring new knowledge easily and skilfully the rest of [their] life". (Knowles, 1975: 15–16). Furthermore, Candy (1991: 15) suggests that one of the main goals of lifelong learning is to equip individuals with the skills and competencies they need to pursue their self-education after completing formal instruction in schools, which implies that is considered as both as a "means and an end of lifelong education".

The education system in the KSA tends to be hierarchical in the way it transmits knowledge whereby the teacher-centred approach is dominant. The MoE should create new learning environments towards more student-centred approaches where the students can participate more in the learning process. As a result, they may be able to self-direct their learning in the future when they pursue their higher education or self-direct their learning for their PD in their professions. Bolhuis (2003: 328) suggests that "students on the lower school levels (elementary and secondary school) should be prepared for the next educational levels (vocational and/or higher and adult education), where they need to study more independently".

This is not to underestimate the role of the teacher, but I recommend that the role of the teacher in this learning process is not to transmit or provide the knowledge in a top-down mechanism; rather, the teacher's role is to be a facilitator and guide the students who have to share some responsibilities in the learning process. Nah, (1999: 18) states that "the objective of conducting self-directed learning is to help learners become skillful in those processes independent of teachers.". Also, in addition to giving the students a more active role in their learning process in order to create a culture of independency in learning, the MoE is recommended to train the students to be self-directed learners by introducing into the curricula courses in SDL. Therefore, I argue that in order to enhance the culture of self-direction in learning, the MoE should substitute dictated learning approaches with more student-centred ones.

The above recommendations with respect to enhancing the culture of self-direction in learning among the students is a result of teachers' views about their SDL and the link between their current practice with the reality of the education system that generates passive learners. On the other hand, with regard to the recommendations to the MoE pertaining to teachers and SDL, this study has some recommendations in light of the findings.

First, the participants did not only recommend training the students in SDL skills, but also believed that the MoE should train teachers in SDL. The participants believed that SDL can be a corner stone of teachers' PD and they suggested the MoE to provide teachers with courses in SDL, especially for novice teachers to help them cope with their teaching challenges. SDL is a skill that can be acquired through training and as mentioned in (3.4.2), "the SDL literature offers several models that can be used to guide SDL practice in more formalized settings, such as academic classrooms and within formal training

programs" (Ellinger, 2004: 167). The culture of self-direction in professional learning should be promoted as an additional way for teachers' professional growth. It should be promoted by, for instance, raising teachers' awareness about SDL as a way for their PD, conducting workshops about it, training teachers to master SDL skills and introducing SDL course in teachers' pre-service training.

Second, as evident in the findings, the fixed, ready-made curriculum and textbooks which have been taught for several years and in which teachers do not play a role in terms of design led teachers to adhere to the official guidelines and act as channels to transmit the information without advancing their PD. This is because they believed that it is the role that the MoE required them to do. Therefore, the MoE should grant teachers a chance to participate in decision making. For instance, the MoE can design general outlines of the curriculum and give the schools and teachers the freedom to design the syllabus and choose the materials. In addition, this has clear implications for the content of initial teacher education programmes. Teachers need to know how to be curriculum developers.

Interestingly, as suggested by the findings, the teachers who have some self-initiatives in PD focus on two domains: to improve their English language and/or to learn teaching strategies. It seems from this that their learning is shaped by the curriculum policy as the teachers are accountable to deliver the content of the textbooks as designated in the timetable. The MoE PD policy should be "changed from external expertise to empowerment. By empowering teachers, professional developers encourage them to take the initiative in identifying and acting on their individual needs" (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009: 375). The MoE should invite teachers to design PD programmes or at least it should allow them to voice their needs and try to address them. As mentioned in the introduction, it can be argued that no PD programme in any institution can provide teachers with all of

the preferences, but instead of providing their courses in a top-down manner, it is recommended that the MoE provide their courses after collecting teachers' needs to address most or some of their needs. Thus, the MoE should invite teachers and "other stakeholders in order to clearly define a set of compatible aims for their programmes and to draw up a programme which they feel best meets those aims". (Friedman & Phillips, 2004: 372).

In the same vein, and in the light of the findings, the participants clarified that the school environment sometimes demotivates them to learn. Factors such as ill-equipped schools, sizable number of students in the classroom and a heavy workload can frustrate teachers to engage in SDL. For instance, some of the participants clarified that applying what they learn, such as teaching strategies, is obstructed by the sizable number of students in the class. Also, as another example is the heavy workload which prevents them to engage in learning activities such as peer observations. Therefore, it can be said that our schools are not shaped, in terms of policy and design, to enhance teachers' learning for their PD and "instead of creating the conditions for teachers to teach each other, support their peers, and deepen their knowledge about their students, teachers are being given a "one size fits all" set of professional development workshops that deny the variability of how teachers teach, and how they and their students learn" (Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008: 227). Moreover, according to Guglielmino & Guglielmino (1994: 41), in order to promote workplace learning, "the logical first step is to provide resources for self-directed learning at the job site". Lohman (2005) advocates that, in order to enhance teachers' motivation and encourage them to learn, it is essential to engage them in informal learning activities and provide them with adequate facilities in their workplace. Moreover, In de Wal et al., (2014) emphasises on the importance to give teachers more flexibility in terms of

timetables in order to foster their autonomy and take part in various workplace learning activities.

Therefore, the MoE have to create a conducive learning environment in the schools by preparing the schools in terms of the needed resources and design or by reducing the workload of the teachers to engage in SDL activities in isolation or within professional learning communities if those are available.

7.3.2   Implications for teachers

This study stresses the importance of SDL for EFL teachers in the KSA as an effective approach for PD. Knowledge and information are rapidly spreading, and educational institutions may not be able to provide teachers with all the needed activities to bridge the gap with the rapid emergence of new knowledge; therefore, SDL can be a beneficial approach for teachers to develop themselves in order to cope with the growing demands of their profession (Brown, Ferrill, Hinton & Shek, 2001; Ellinger, 2004; Minott, 2010). In this regard, drawing upon the results of two case studies conducted in Syria and Pakistan, Dayoub & Bashiruddin (2012) investigated the PD of two teachers in these respective countries. The study concluded that due to an inadequate formal PD provided by their institutions, these teachers could be described as self-directed learners who learned from a variety of sources, including their work environment, in-service experiences or home support. This implies that one of the main benefits of SDL is that it is an effective PD approach for teachers who do not benefit from adequate PD opportunities in their context and for those who did not have prior training before starting to work as teachers. According to Edmondson, Boyer & Artis (2012), a large body of research suggests that SDL positively impacts academic performance, future aspiration, creativity, curiosity and life satisfaction. Indisputably teachers are "the backbone of any

educational institution" (Troudi, 2006: 278); therefore, "teachers must take an active role in order to learn" (Van Eekelen et al., 2006: 409). Hence, they should be aware of the benefits of SDL and try to self-direct their learning to improve themselves professionally, for the betterment of themselves, their students, and society as a whole.

One of the important ways for teachers' SDL is through new technology. On a personal level, I found that using the Internet for SDL was useful for my professional growth. Sullivan et al. (2013) suggest that the importance of new technology and searching for information on the Internet for self-directed learners should be emphasised. Numerous technological learning sources can be used by teachers for SDL, allowing them to learn from anywhere at any time. Teachers could be marginalised, and their voice is not heard as "control is an issue for teachers today" (Beatty, 2000: 88); yet, modern learning sources can give teachers more control over their learning either individually or collaboratively. Teachers may create virtual communities of practice via WhatsApp groups (see Alzahrani, 2020) or any social media. In the KSA, teachers do not have much time to learn collaboratively in their workplace settings due to their heavy workload and additional responsibilities. Therefore, teachers can take advantage of the new technology to improve themselves and create their own communities of practice.

In the same vein, for teachers who need access to academic journals, the MoE recently provided school teachers access to the Saudi Digital Library, which grants free access to many electronic databases worldwide. This is particularly welcome as the financial aspect might have hindered many teachers from subscribing to academic journals or reading academic articles. Teachers may now take advantage of this free online library to improve themselves, especially teachers interested in conducting research, as "research can only contribute to one's professional growth and empowerment if it reflects the genuine

interest of the researcher" (Troudi, 2006: 277). EFL Teachers should attend workshops, conferences, conduct research and take part in many other forms of effective learning; by attending such activities, they can get more experience and extend their professional network. Thereby, they should "demonstrate their ability to be creative bodies, not merely passive individuals so that they can convince policy-makers that they can participate actively in [educational landscape]". (Alnefaie, 2016: 12).

7.4   Final Reflection

This research journey and the stages that accompanied it have extended my knowledge in the field of SDL and its relation to teachers' PD and this experience has also extended my skills as researcher. Given the rationale to undertake this study, before embarking on this research project, I was eager to explore an overarching question: do Saudi EFL teachers self-direct their learning for their PD? And if so, why or why not? At that time, Saudi EFL teachers' practices with SDL were unclear to me due to the lack of research in this domain. I was asking myself: "do they only rely on the MoE PD programmes?", "is their attendance in these programmes self-driven or the consequence of an obliged requirement?". It was also not clear whether they self-directed their learning outside the confines of the MoE.

These uncertainties were attributed to my observation and questions were recurrent in my mind: "why the conception of teachers' PD in the KSA was only perceived as other-directed PD not also as self-directed PD" or "why the focus of PD research in the KSA is only paid to the institution PD?". Hence, I asked myself about the role of the teachers in their professional growth and I started to immerse myself in the literature pertaining to self-directed learning and teachers' professional development. As a result, I opted to research the issue of SDL in relation to EFL teachers' PD in the KSA.

In fact, this study expanded my knowledge about the complexity of the concept of SDL, how the scholars theorised it and researched it from different approaches and how the context can shape people's attitudes towards SDL. Undertaking this study allowed me to understand different approaches to PD and how SDL can be a fundamental approach for teachers' growth, especially if the institution provision is limited or inadequate to address teachers' PD needs.

The doctoral Journey did not only enrich my knowledge about the issue of SDL, but also extended my knowledge and skills about social research and its different components such as for example research paradigms or research methodologies. After completed this study, I feel confident to conduct further research due to the experience I gained in this journey. One of my aims now is to make the most of this experience to pursue my research on SDL in particular and educational issues in general and apply what I have learned for the benefit of the Saudi context in relation to the issue of teachers' PD and also to contribute to the overall body of knowledge.

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Appendix One: Interview protocol

Interview questions	Prompts
1. How do you understand the concept of PD? 2. Could you please tell me a general outline of your history with regard to PD? 3. how do you understand the concept of SDL? 4. Do you think that SDL is an effective way for teachers' PD? Why? 5. Are you familiar with SDL as a tool for a professional development?	• Have you heard about SDL before or other related synonyms? • What is the relation between SDL and PD? • Do you think that teachers should self-direct their learning to improve themselves professionally?
6. In order to develop professionally, what do you do? 7. Do you have a learning plan to develop yourself professionally? Why? 8. If a particular professional need is not provided by the MoE, what do you do in this case? Do you take the initiative to address this need? Why? Do you ignore it because it is not provided by the MoE? Why? 9. Do you see yourself as a self-directed learner for your professional development? why? 10. At the moment, do you think you have identified some aspects in your teaching that need to be developed? Why? What are they?	• What is your role in your PD? • How often do you engage in professional development in a self-directed manner? Why? • Do you wait for MoE provision to address your professional needs or do you take the initiative without waiting for MoE? Why?
11. How and where *if any* do you develop yourself professionally? 12. By what means do you learn for your PD?	• what are the activities and sources you engage in? • why these activities and sources (justification) • for what reason do you use these sources or engage in these activities • What areas do you try to improve? • where these activities take place
13. Please explain what makes you to learn or motivates you to learn for you PD. 14. Please explain if anything discourages you to learn for you PD. 15. Have you experienced any challenges when engaging in SDL activities?	• What motivates you to learn? • What hinders on your SDL?

Appendix Two: Ethics form

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER   Ref (for office use only)

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

When completing this form please remember that the purpose of the document is to clearly explain the ethical considerations of the research being undertaken. As a generic form it has been constructed to cover a wide-range of different projects so some sections may not seem relevant to you. Please include the information which addresses any ethical considerations for your particular project which will be needed by the SSIS Ethics Committee to approve your proposal.

Guidance on all aspects of the SSIS Ethics application process can be found on the SSIS intranet:
Staff: https://intranet.exeter.ac.uk/socialsciences/staff/research/researchenvironmentandpolicies/ethics/
Students:http://intranet.exeter.ac.uk/socialsciences/student/postgraduateresearch/ethicsapprovalforyourresearch/

All staff and students within SSIS should use this form to apply for ethical approval and then send it to one of the following email addresses:

ssis-ethics@exeter.ac.uk   This email should be used by staff and students in Egenis, the Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies, Law, Politics, the Strategy & Security Institute, and Sociology, Philosophy, Anthropology.

ssis-gseethics@exeter.ac.uk   This email should be used by staff and students in the Graduate School of Education.

Applicant details	
Name	Sultan Alnefaie
Department	Graduate School of Education
UoE email address	skda201@exeter.ac.uk

Duration for which permission is required
You should request approval for the entire period of your research activity. The start date should be at least one month from the date that you submit this form. Students should use the anticipated date of completion of their course as the end date of their work. Please note that retrospective ethical approval will never be given.

Start date:15/03/2017	End date:15/06/2017	Date submitted:26/01/2017

Students only
All students must discuss their research intentions with their supervisor/tutor prior to submitting an application for ethical approval. The discussion may be face to face or via email.
Prior to submitting your application in its final form to the SSIS Ethics Committee it should be approved by your first and second supervisor / dissertation supervisor/tutor. You should submit evidence of their approval with your application, e.g. a copy of their email approval.

Student number	620034429
Programme of study	Doctor of Education in Tesol
Name of Supervisor(s)/tutors or Dissertation Tutor	Prof. Vivienne Marie Baumfield and Dr. Karen Walshe

Have you attended any ethics training that is available to students?	I completed an online course "Research Ethics and Governance - eLearning Course" at http://vle.exeter.ac.uk/mod/imscp/view.php?id=101057 and I read about Ethics and good practice at http://www.exeter.ac.uk/research/toolkit/throughout/ethics/ In addition, I have an experience about ethical issues by conducting some research in my Med in TESOL from University of Exeter and in the pre-thesis phase in EdD TESOL

Certification for all submissions

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given in this application and that I undertake in my research to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research. I confirm that if my research should change radically I will complete a further ethics proposal form.

Sultan Alnefaie

Double click this box to confirm certification ☒

Submission of this ethics proposal form confirms your acceptance of the above.

TITLE OF YOUR PROJECT

Self-Directed learning as a tool for teachers' professional development: An exploratory research into Saudi EFL teachers' self-directed learning.

ETHICAL REVIEW BY AN EXTERNAL COMMITTEE

No, my research is not funded by, or doesn't use data from, either the NHS or Ministry of Defence.

MENTAL CAPACITY ACT 2005

No, my project does not involve participants aged 16 or over who are unable to give informed consent (e.g. people with learning disabilities

SYNOPSIS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Maximum of 750 words.

As in any other profession, teachers need to engage in continuous professional learning activities and update their knowledge to cope with the demands of their professions and to enhance the quality of their teaching. To pursue lifelong professional development (PD), teachers can rely on PD programmes that maybe provided by their educational institutions, whether they are compulsory or optional, or they may also develop themselves in a self-directed manner. According to Kolenc Kolnik (2010: 54), "during their career teachers face strong demands to update their knowledge and skills continuously due to the introduction of new curricula, changes in technology, and changes in learning needs of students". Likewise, for Lohman & Woolf (2001: 59), more than in the past, teachers now have to cope with new demands in terms of subject knowledge, content and students' academic and social needs. Based on the many benefits mentioned in the literature and according to my own experience, it can be argued that self-directed learning (SDL), which has been broadly defined by Mushayikwa & Lubben (2009: 376) as "the professional development arising from the teachers' own initiative", seems to be an effective approach teachers can adopt for their own professional development. In this regard, when the central PD is not adequate or ineffective, "teachers therefore have to invest in their own professional development and in some cases this means that they have to use their own resources to ensure that their students do well" (Mushayikwa, 2013: 227).

The Purpose of the study

The study aims to identify how, why and to what extent do Saudi EFL teachers direct their own learning for their professional development. It also aims to explore what activities they engage in to enhance their teaching knowledge and skills. In addition, it will examine teacher reflections on how these activities translate into their classroom practice. Finally, it seeks to reveal the factors that impact on their self-directed learning as perceived by teachers. For the sake of this study, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with fifteen to twenty EFL Saudi male teachers.

Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, the following research questions can be formulated as follows:

1. To what extent do Saudi EFL teachers self-direct their learning for their professional development?
2. What is the nature of the SDL activities that Saudi EFL teachers participate in, and why do they engage in these activities?
3. To what extent do Saudi EFL teachers believe that these activities have an impact on their classroom practice?
4. What factors do Saudi EFL teachers believe impact (positively or negatively) their self-directed learning?

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

In order to get a permission from Saudi Ministry of Education to conduct this study, I contacted The General Department of Education in Makkah Region on 25/01 /2017 to get the permission to conduct this study in Makkah city. The requested permission is being processed in The General Department of Education in Makkah Region and it should be issued before the start date of data collection.

The following sections require an assessment of possible ethical consideration in your research project. If particular sections do not seem relevant to your project please indicate this and clarify why.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study is broadly informed by the tenets of interpretive research and it will utilise semi-structure interviews. The interview will be conducted in Arabic with fifteen to twenty EFL Saudi male teachers working in public schools in Saudi Arabia.

The interviews will be recorded and transcribed and they will be saved in my password-protected computer and in my account in the University of Exeter U-drive that is password-protected. The data will be analysed thematically using a computer software. The interviews meetings will take place at participants' schools at the time that suites each participant. The interview will last between 45 minutes and an hour. Prior to the interview, I will explain to each participant the purpose of this study. Each participant will be assured that he has the right to withdraw from the interview at any time and he will be assured also that he has the right to not answer any particular question. Also, Confidently and anonymity will be granted to the participants.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants of this study will be fifteen to twenty EFL Saudi male teachers working in public schools in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. After gaining the permission from The General Department of Education in Makkah Region to conduct this research, a request will be sent to English language

supervisors to email EFL teachers in Makkah city with the relevant information of my study with my contact details so that who is willing to participate in this study can contact me. In addition, I may visit schools in Makkah city and provide the head teachers with hardcopies of the purpose of the study with my contact details to distribute them to EFL teachers. Then, who is willing to participate in the study can contact me.

THE VOLUNTARY NATURE OF PARTICIPATION

A consent form will be distributed to all participants and they will be informed of the aims of this research and that their participations are not compulsory. In addition, they will be informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any reason. Also, they will be assured that their anonymity would be strictly guaranteed their real identities would not be revealed to anyone.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

No special arrangements are required.

THE INFORMED NATURE OF PARTICIPATION

The participants will be given an information sheet about this study. It outlines the purpose of the study with ensuring confidently and anonymity to the participants. My contact details will be included in the information sheet so that the participants can contact me to ask me about any information of the study and about their participation.

ASSESSMENT OF POSSIBLE HARM

The study will not cause any possible harm to the participants. The study will research EFL teachers self-directed learning for their professional development. No sensitive information will be discussed in this study and no political issue will be investigated as well. In addition, confidentiality and anonymity are granted for the participants and their identities will not be revealed at all.

DATA PROTECTION AND STORAGE

The data of this study will be kept in a safe and secured place. The transcripts and the audio recordings of the interviews will be kept in my computer that is password-protected. The computer is protected by an up-date anti-virus software. The data will be saved also in my account in the University of Exeter U-drive that is password-protected. The participants will be informed how the data will be stored and they will be assured that their anonymity would be strictly guaranteed by the use of pseudonyms and that their real identities would not be revealed to anyone.
The data of this study will be destroyed safely once the research is completed and after the submission of my thesis. All data will be handled in a strict manner following the Data Protection Act (1998) and will not be linked to any real name of the participants.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The participants will be given a consent form and information sheet about all the information of this study and how it is funded. This study is funded by Saudi Arabian Cultural Bureau in London

as apart of my study for the award of the EdD TESOL. The participants will be informed that the results of this study will be used solely for the purposes of this research project.

USER ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK

The participants will be informed that they can, if they wish, review and edit the audio recordings and the transcripts of the interviews and they can withdraw from the study at any stage. They will be informed that they can contact me if they you want to discuss with me about anything related to their transcripts and audio recordings.

INFORMATION SHEET

The information sheet has been submitted with this form.

CONSENT FORM

The consent form has been submitted with this form.

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

Staff and students should follow the procedure below.

Post Graduate Taught Students (Graduate School of Education): Please submit your completed application to your first supervisor. Please see the submission flowchart for further information on the process.

All other students should discuss their application with their supervisor(s) / dissertation tutor / tutor and gain their approval prior to submission. Students should submit evidence of approval with their application, e.g. a copy of the supervisors email approval.

All staff should submit their application to the appropriate email address below.

This application form and examples of your consent form, information sheet and translations of any documents which are not written in English should be submitted by email to the SSIS Ethics Secretary via one of the following email addresses:

ssis-ethics@exeter.ac.uk   This email should be used by staff and students in Egenis, the Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies, Law, Politics, the Strategy & Security Institute, and Sociology, Philosophy, Anthropology.

ssis-gseethics@exeter.ac.uk   This email should be used by staff and students in the Graduate School of Education.

Please note that applicants will be required to submit a new application if ethics approval has not been granted within 1 year of first submission.

Appendix Three: Permission letter from GDE

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
(٢٨٠)
الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بمنطقة مكة المكرمة
إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

سعادة الملحق الثقافي بسفارة المملكة العربية السعودية بلندن   وفقه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته....وبعد :

إشارة إلى الاستدعاء المقدم من المبتعث لديكم لمرحلة الدكتوراه الطالب / سلطان بن كليب بن ضاوي النفيعي سجل مدني رقم ▮▮▮▮▮▮ ويرغب بإجراء بحث ميداني(مقابلات) مع معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في مدارس التعليم العام (بنين) بمكة المكرمة معنوناً بـ :

((التعلم الذاتي كوسيلة للتطوير المهني لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في المملكة العربية السعودية))

عليه نفيدكم أنه لا مانع لدينا من قيام الطالب بالبحث المشار إليه في مدارسنا من تاريخ ١٤٣٨/٦/١٧هـ الموافق ٢٠١٧/٣/١٥م إلى تاريخ ١٤٣٨/٩/٢١هـ الموافق ٢٠١٧/٦/١٥م، على أن يتم تزويدنا بنسخة من نتائج البحث للاستفادة منه ما أمكن . وتقبلوا تحياتنا و تقديرنا .

و الله يحفظكم و يرعاكم ،،،،،،

مدير عام التعليم بمنطقة
مكة المكرمة

محمد بن مهدي الحارثي

Appendix Four: information sheet and consent form

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH

Title of Research Project
Self-directed learning as a tool for teachers' professional development: An exploratory research into Saudi EFL teachers' self-directed learning.

Details of Project
I am a Doctoral student doing an EdD in TESOL at the University of Exeter, the UK. As part of my study, I am conducting research on Saudi EFL teachers' self-directed learning as a tool for their professional development. The research aims to identify how and to what extent Saudi EFL teachers direct their own learning for their professional development. It also aims to explore what activities they engage in to enhance their teaching knowledge and skills. In addition, it will examine teacher reflections on how these activities translate into their classroom practice. Finally, it seeks to reveal the factors that impact on their self-directed learning as perceived by teachers. Semi-structured interviews will be used for the purpose of this research and it will last between 45 minutes and an hour. The interview will be recorded and the collected information will be used solely for the purpose of this research. Please note that your contribution will be kept confidential as the study considers ethical issues so that anonymity is guaranteed.

Contact Details
For further information about the research /interview data, please contact:

Name: *Sultan Alnefaie.*
Postal address: *Graduate School of Education, St Luke's Campus, Heavitree Road, Exeter, Devon, EX1 2LU, United Kingdom.*
Telephone: UK: 00 44 (0) 7593▮▮▮▮▮ KSA: 00966▮▮▮▮▮
Email: *skda201@exeter.ac.uk*

If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact:
Prof. Vivienne Marie Baumfield . Email: V.Baumfield@exeter.ac.uk

Confidentiality
Interview tapes and transcripts will be held in confidence. They will not be used other than for the purposes described above and third parties will not be allowed access to them (except as may be required by the law). However, if you request it, you will be supplied with a copy of your interview transcript so that you can comment on and edit it as you see fit (please give your email below so that I am able to contact you at a later date). Your data will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Data Protection Notice

The collected data will be kept in safe and secure place. The audio-recordings and the transcripts of the interviews will be saved on my password-protected computer and they will be saved also on my account in the University of Exeter U-drive that is password-protected. As participant, anonymity will be strictly guaranteed by the use of pseudonyms. After submission of this study, all the data collected will be destroyed safely. This study is funded by Saudi Arabian Cultural Bureau in London. The results of this study will be used solely for the purposes of this research project.

Anonymity
Interview data will be held and used on an anonymous basis, with no mention of your name, but we will refer to the group of which you are a member.

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT
FORM FOR RESEARCH

Consent

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

- there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may withdraw at any stage;
- I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me;
- any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications or academic conference or seminar presentations;
- If applicable, the information, which I give, may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project in an anonymised form;
- all information I give will be treated as confidential;
- the researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

....
(Signature of participant)

....
(Date)

....
(Printed name of participant)

....
(Email address of participant if they have requested to view a copy of the interview transcript.)

....
(Signature of researcher)

....
(Printed name of researcher)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s). Your contact details are kept separately from your interview data.

Appendix Five: part of an interview

Researcher: As mentioned before in the consent form and information sheet, my study in general is about self-directed learning as a means of English language teachers' PD. How do you think can the teacher develop himself?

Ahmad: With regard to your topic 'self-learning', you are talking about a very important thing and sensitive. If the teacher doesn't develop himself, this is a problem. I myself sometimes feel embarrassed because some points in the lesson need an expansion and more explanation and I may face some questions from students knowing that our job is a routine.

Researcher: what do you mean by your work is a routine?

Ahmad: okay. I mean that our work is a routine and if I teach this textbook for one year, then the following years will be the same. So, the desire to develop professionally will be less. This is what I mean by routine. Currently, I go to the class without preparation. This is natural. If it is the same system, your desire to develop becomes weaker. Especially, if the current atmosphere does not help. If you notice that your students have no motivation or acceptance of knowledge, this also weakens your desire to develop. If you feel that the school itself is not an attractive environment and society as well. No one ask you to develop. This is other than the psychological motivation, because it already died because there is nothing around you to help you.

Researcher: Interesting. So, how can this situation be improved?

Ahmad: It is important that the Ministry of Education motivate us, not oblige, but motivate us to develop ourselves. There is a great step now carried out by the Ministry of Education. It is khebrat programme. Have you heard about it? When they announced it and I read about it, I said 'wow'. It started to resort my exhilaration and sprightliness and I directly registered in the programme. If I am accepted, I will be so happy with this opportunity. It is a one-year opportunity to recover myself, develop myself, to see the experiences of the other world and mixing with other teachers. This is a strong opportunity for me.

Researcher: In fact, you raised important points and I have some question. Let us start with how do you understand the concept of professional development?

Ahmad: I think your topic is the relation of the self-learning with our professional development. Frankly, when I read the summary of your research, I thought: 'what should we do then?' Why should I develop myself? This is the responsibility of the MoE. It is not my responsibility. I have this curriculum and my job is to deliver it to the students.

Don't ask me to go further. This is the contract between me and the Ministry. Frankly, I sometimes get frustrated because of the students. I do not say that they are unintelligent, but they are not interested. It is their lack of interest that makes me frustrated.

Researcher: Do you mean that the students' disinterest hinders you to self-directed your learning for your professional development?

Ahmad: Yes, some distinguished students make you and encourage you to develop. Sometimes, some students ask me some questions and I don't know their answers, and this makes me search. Sometimes, I have a distinguished student and asks questions that lead me to research. I say if I have many models like this student, maybe my level is better than now.

Appendix Six: Screen shot for MAXQDA data analysis

Appendix seven: data analysis

Step 1	Step 1	Step 1	Step 1	Step 1
One quote as an example	Codes	Category	Sub-theme	Theme
Self-learning is the corner stone. Through self-learning, you do not wait for others to teach you something or impose some courses on you. It is the secret of success, but who has the determination to continuously learn?	- my colleague got the required marks in ielts due to SDL. - my colleague is excellent in E due to SDL. - SDL is important to develop English. - some people reach high level by SDL. - SDL is important, we should have knowledge. - **SDL is the cornerstone of PD but needs continuous effort.** - SDL is the best tool to develop in this era. - SDL is important to cope with teaching responsibilities. - SDL is important for teachers and their students. - SDL is important to be good teachers. - you will not improve if you don' learn in SD. - SDL is essential because students know good and weak teachers - this the first time I hear a study about SDL in Saudi. - I like the idea of you study. SDL is excellent tool for development. - when I read the aims of your study, it is great to be SD learner. - teachers should know the benefit of SDL.		SDL as the Cornerstone of PD	Teachers' perceptions of SDL

	- MOE did not provide us with SDL notion. - SDL is a factor to succeed			
the issue of the teacher is that he is a victim of the society. Here in Saudi Arabia, **the society** does not encourage self-learning.	- because the centrality we are not raised as SD learners. - The environment / the society are not attractive. - **our society does not encourage SDL.**	The society generates passive dependant learners.	SDL and the Dependency-Based Culture	Teachers' perceptions of SDL
	- SDL should be trained from very beginning in our schools. - The teacher is the centre. - SDL is important for teachers and students should be rained - SDL should be taught at universities. - SDL should be a subject in our curriculum - I encourage my students to be SD learners. - The MoE doesn't develop us very well. - this the first time I hear a study about SDL in Saudi - I did not think before that I should learn alone without MOE help.	The educational system generates passive dependant learners		

When I read the summary of your research, I thought: 'what should we do then?' Why should I develop myself? This is the **responsibility of the MoE**. It is not my responsibility.	- I blame MOE because they did not develop us well in English. - MOE is also responsible about teachers PD. - in the first year, I did not how to learn and I depend on MOE. - no pre-services educational preparation. - teachers were not trained well at universities. - SDL is important but MOE PD is more important. - it should be better to know these strategies in the uni not now. - I was expecting MOE PD after graduation. - MOE is the responsible about teachers PD. - the teachers are not responsible for his PD.	The resobnsiblity of the MoE	Teachers' Learning and the Responsibility of the MoE	
	- teachers are most responsible about their learning. - both MOE and teachers are responsible about PD. - teacher is more responsible about his L because of new technology. - I have always felt the responsibility of SD.	Mutual responsibilities		

I prefer that the Ministry starts developing our language because this thing does not exist at all until now. There is **no PD that focuses on language**, but only strategies at the moment	- I sent a fax to the minster asking for English PD. - the best way to learn is to learn from specialist person. - needing formal PD. - help from my supervisor for teaching writing. - need for specific courses. - I can learn with others not alone. - The first MOE workshop made me aware about many things in teaching. - I did not think before that I should learn alone without MOE help. - PD should be practical not theoretical. - I hear about some teaching strategies but I don't know how to use them. - **Needing English language courses by the MOE.** - we need practical side. - I used Role Play Strategy because a supervisor applied it for me. - teachers need help for PD. - I want to learn E with help of others.		We Need Help in Our Learning"	

in fact, I have **never learned** for my professional development ever. I have never bought books or used the [internet] to learn the language, there is nothing that pushes me to develop the language".	- **no SDL at all.** - no planned SDL. - no initiatives. - I did not take the initiatives from very beginning of my work. - I did not improve my English. - I invest most of my time to learn other things not English. - SDL for other matters not teaching. - not satisfied of my PD level. - I use the easy sources and don't go to courses in another city. - attending MOE PD to break the routine not for PD itself. - my motivation to learn comes and goes. - no need for SDL initiatives because I am satisfied of my level. - me and many teachers do not develop themselves. - holiday for rest not for PD. - I didn't attend MOEPD this year and last year because of monotony. - In my first years, I had a well to learn and attended many courses. - I'm not learning very well. Rarely I do. - at recent days, I do not learn . - Last few years, I do not learn more due to the responsibilities. - I took many courses when I started teaching, recently I rarely learn. - intention for PD without action. - I would like to improve my E but I don't do anything. - I want to develop this but still no action to develop it. - I want to develop my E but I need real action to do so.		Lack or Discontinuation of SDL	Teachers' Engagement with SDL

	- no current plan but I have aims. - some teachers follow the routine without PD, some want but ... - apply only what I have learn from UNI. - no initiatives. - I did not learn anything for my PD. - attend 3 courses only as SDL. - I tried to develop myself the first 4 years and I stopped. - teachers do not have a desire to learn. - teachers do not attend MOE PD. - I feel shy of my SDL effort. - I want to develop listening skill but I didn't take the initiative. - I was attending MOE courses before and then I demotivated.			
I only tried to improve the language.	- developing English more important than developing other aspects. - developing English is important. - to write English professionally. - learning new vocabulary. - **develop E only.** - I depend on cooperative learning, so I don't learn teaching methods. - EL development is more important than teaching strategies. - I do not develop strategies because my English is very good.	SDL to Improve the Linguistic Ability	Teachers' Current Practice with SDL	Teachers' Engagement with SDL

I attend courses that **target strategies** but I do not improve my language because, as I said, the curriculum and the students' level had a significant impact.	- PD is my aim. I have 300 hours PD in the MoE. - something new in terms of teaching strategies. - The MoE teachings strategies workshops - I learn sometimes and get bored and learn again. - gathering new teaching strategies to use them for long time. - continuous update - **I attend courses that target strategies.** - I registered in a lot of courses.	SDL for teaching strategies		Teachers' Engagement with SDL
in addition to the language, I learn strategies and every year I try to change	- **both English and teaching strategies**. - teachers should develop both English and TS. - attending MOE PD to refresh my knowledge in TS. - I observe my colleagues' ways of teaching. - at least 15 minutes every day I should listen to English. - both English and teaching strategies. - teachers should develop both English and TS.	SDL to improve English language and learning teaching strategies		

after that a new massive world came: the **internet**. It is a big world. Anything in your mind can be found easily	- iPad games. - mobile apps. - social media. - WhatsApp groups. - TV. - social media. - **Internet.**		Web-based learning	SDL sources and activities
enrolled in many optional courses in the evening time	- **MoE evening courses**. - I attend MOE PD based on the topic of the workshop. - I learn from MoE mostly. - I attended MOE courses to gain benefits. - sometimes I attend MOE courses for the purpose of learning. - most of my SDL was from MOE courses - I learned many TS in MOE courses. - attending MOE courses for benefits. - I learn strategies from MOE PD only.		MOE courses	

I am now studying a **Master's Degree** in English literature and this is one of the means of development.	- English language courses. - private or public centres. - **Master's degree.** - Diploma of Educational		formal studies	SDL sources and activities
he is a great person. **I attended his class** many times.	- **Peer observation**. - discussion with other teachers. - Hard working colleague is an excellent source to learn from.		Collegial learning	
I bought some **books** in English and you find me enthusiastic to read and answer the exercises and then I got bored	- **Books**. - Newspapers		Personal reading	

I have this **curriculum** and **my job is to deliver it to the students**. Don't ask me to go further. This is the contract between me and the ministry [...]. Our work is a routine and if I teach this textbook for one year, then the following years will be the same. So, the desire to develop professionally will be less. [...] currently, I go to the class without preparation.	- the environment led us to deliver the curriculum & follow routine. - Every year the same curriculum. - We are stick to the textbooks. Nor windows for PD. - Since I can convey what is in the textbooks, no need for PD. - Minimum level of E to teach the old textbooks. - I taught the same thing last years. Why SDL. - The topics in the textbooks are simple. - The old green book, you can teach it without any much efforts. - Just prepare the lesson and teach. - I just read the lesson before going to class. The curriculum is simple. - **my job is to deliver it to the students.** - The curriculum was simple. - E is restricted in the curriculum. - The curriculum restricts us. - My E low. The curricula are memorized. - Why develop E since the textbooks are simple. - As a teacher, I am restricted in the class.	The ready-made curriculum (textbooks)	Hindering Factors	Factors Impacting on SDL

I have five classes a day and only one free session. It is not possible to do other things or visit my colleagues in their classes. It is fatiguing. You see **work pressure** as today I have only one free session.	- Busy time. - **Work pressure.** - No SDL after workday. Exhaustion. - Many tasks at school. - 22 to 24 classes a week. - classes should be reduced. - Many classes and many textbooks.	Heavy workload		
Frankly, sometimes I reach the point of frustration because of the students. They are not interested. **Their lack of interest is what causes me frustration**.	- Students' achievement is weak. - Teach in Arabic due to students' low level. - Most students are low level. - Their level is frustrating. - **Their disinterest is frustrating** - Even if I work hard, many students discourage me.	Low-level students and students' lack of motivation		

for example, the number of the students in the classroom is 46 [and] sometimes, they ask us to attend some teaching strategies course, **but the reality of the classroom and the school is not suitable to apply them**	- applying new strategies require good school environment. - good school environment is important for SDL. - school administration may hinder SDL. - I can't apply my L some time because school environment. - **I cannot apply some strategies due to the reality of the school.** - The classrooms are narrow. - Narrow classrooms with high number of students. - Some colleagues refuse observation. - Teachers are not interested in mutual visits. - Classrooms are not well equipped. - Schools' principals. - the principal cancelled my private classroom.	School environment		

the teaching profession from the first year till the retirement is the same routine. **No promotion** or other positions we assign to.	- lack of incentive or lack of appreciation. - Equality between teachers hinders development. - even the Excellence Award, we don't know what his achievement is. - No obligation to develop ourselves. - The Education Administration do not courage you. - **No promotions.** - Teachers' equality. - Job security.	Indiscriminate job-related rewards		
life concerns, **family responsibility**, children and others make the time tight. When I go out of the school, I do want to think about the work again and our children requirements take the time	- looking for other financial sources. - part time job takes my time. - Developing part time aspects. - **family responsibilities.** - I didn't develop myself the first 5 years due to family responsibilities. - Spent time with my children. - Many tasks after daywork. - My private business takes my time. - the responsibilities become more and more.	Responsibilities and commitments		

There is no a longer simplicity as in the **old books. The situation differs**. This has made me to improve the language.	- new curriculum pushes teachers to prepare. - the new curricula need capable teachers. - The new textbooks gave new revival. - **With the new curricula the situation is changed.** - Because of new curricula.	New curriculum (textbooks)	Factors encouraging SDL	
when I moved to Makkah, I found **students who love the course** and this motivated me a lot, so I tried to develop myself when I saw the impact.	- the quality of the students changed. - **Students love the subject**. - The curricula changed and the students changed. - Avoid embarrassment in front of good students. - students ambitious. - Active students.	High-level students		

it is important that the Ministry of Education motivate us, not oblige, but motivate us to develop ourselves. There is a great step now carried out by the Ministry of Education. It is **khebrat** programme. Have you heard about it? When they announced it and I read about it, I said 'wow'. It started to resort my exhilaration and sprightliness and I directly registered in the programme. If I am accepted, I will be so happy with this opportunity.	- registered in khebrat. - great step now. Khebrat - conference. - educational communities project. - I was happy because of Khebrat.	MoE distinguished initiatives		
To be an English language teacher was my dream. In my university, I did not take educational preparation, but I found a real educator inside me and my love for teaching. My love for teaching as a profession was the biggest motivation for me**, the love of the job** for the job itself. I have self-appreciation for my job.	- **the love of the job.** - I am in love.	I love my job		