Exploration of ESP teacher knowledge and practices at tertiary and applied colleges in Kuwait: Implications for pre- and in-service ESP teacher training

Submitted by

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Dedication

To Maitham and Maryam, my beloved kids, dearest friends, and wise advisors who lovingly and patiently supported and encouraged me throughout this endeavor.

Abstract

Researching teachers' professional knowledge and its impact on classroom decisions and actions is a relatively recent endeavor in language education. A few studies have investigated the links between what teachers think and how they act in teaching English for general purposes (EGP). However, in teaching English for specific purposes (ESP) this kind of study is scarce. Moreover, exploring the effects of teachers' knowledge on action in the classroom, and investigating the practical and professional needs of ESP teachers in the context of this study is lacking from the existing literature on ESP teaching and teacher development.

In an attempt to address this gap in literature, this study embarked to explore teachers' knowledge of ESP at tertiary and practical colleges in Kuwait. It also aimed at observing the links between ESP teachers' knowledge and practices and the potential impacts of contextual factors on teachers' knowledge in action.

In order to capture a holistic understanding of ESP teachers' knowledge and pedagogical underpinnings, eleven ESP teachers from various vocational colleges were interviewed – nine experienced ESP teachers and two relatively younger participants shared their stories about their understanding of ESP and its practices. Three participants from the above sample agreed to be observed in their classrooms and interviewed after each observation session. Moreover, a group discussion session was observed for further information and data triangulation. In collecting data for this study, qualitative interpretive methodology was employed. The data collection techniques were mainly interviews, classroom observations, stimulated recall interviews, and a group discussion.

The results of the study agreed with the existing literature on the impact of context on teachers' knowledge and practices. They suggested that context played a significant role in shaping teachers' knowledge and understanding of the nature of ESP practices in Kuwait, and had a profound influence on their pedagogical and practical choices. The study also indicated a gap between teachers' "knowledge-for-practice" (theoretical knowledge) and their "knowledge-in-practice" (practical knowledge) that has been attributed to the

overwhelming contextual factors. The lack of awareness of some ESP practitioner's roles and responsibilities, and overlooking certain ESP classroom activities seemed to be another factor impeding the implementation of knowledge in practice in the context of this study.

The implications of this study can help improve ESP teachers and specialists' awareness in Kuwait about the significant requirements for successful ESP programmes by addressing questions such as: what constitute ESP teachers' knowledge and what factors influence the implementation of this knowledge in practice? It can also inform ESP course developers to design ESP courses that take into consideration all the factors that escalate the effectiveness of the ESP courses. Finally, this study can be used as a reference for ESP teacher development programmes to get insights into teachers' 'lacks', 'needs' and 'wants', and to focus on significant issues that ESP training courses need to embrace to acquaint humanity-trained language teachers with the knowledge base and the specific pedagogical content knowledge needed in the ESP domain.

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List of Abbreviations

CEC:	Crescent English Course
CLT:	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language
EGP:	English for general purposes
ELT:	English Language Teaching
ELU:	English Language Unit
ESL:	English as a Second Language
ESP:	English for Specific Purposes
GCC:	Gulf Cooperation Council
ICO:	Islamic Countries Organization
L1:	First language
L2:	Second language
LC:	The Language Centre
MOE:	Ministry of Education
OPEK:	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PCK:	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
SCK:	Specific Content Knowledge
SEC:	Social and Emotional Competence
SPCK:	Specific Pedagogical Content Knowledge
TESOL:	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TENOR:	Teaching English for no obvious reasons
TPK:	Teachers' Practical Knowledge

Chapter one: Introduction

1. Preview

In this chapter I introduce the conceptualization of the study of language teacher knowledge and classroom practices, and highlight the significance of such endeavor in understanding and improving the practice of teaching ESP in the context of this study. I illustrate the need for exploring ESP teachers' knowledge and practices in Kuwait, and introduce research questions designed to get insights into the nature of teachers' knowledge about ESP practices at the tertiary and applied colleges of Kuwait (hereafter vocational colleges) and the justifications for their classroom actions and decisions.

1.1 The drive behind this study

When I started my job as a language teacher I was highly motivated to apply what I learnt about language teaching and learning in the classroom and observe learners' joy of learning another language. Through my own experience of language learning as a bilingual, and later as a trilingual, and observing my children's acquisition of three languages simultaneously, I noticed how languages could interfere, and how some errors might occur based on the differences between the language systems and on the connections one makes between the new learnt constructs and the available knowledge. Reflecting on my own language learning, and comparing it to how my children learnt, I realized in practice, the difference between learning and acquisition. I also realized the importance of hands on learning and the use of communicative tasks in promoting language learning. I was keen to implement my 'practical' and theoretical knowledge in my classes in order to facilitate language learning to pre-collegiate students. However, I realized that at government schools, teachers had to follow a strict syllabus leaving little space for teachers' creativity and innovation. Disappointed with all the limitations on my practice, and realizing that getting my Master's degree would pave the way for teaching at the college level, I decided to pursue my graduate education. I was hoping that as a college teacher I would enjoy more freedom and flexibility in implementing knowledge in practice.

After joining one of the vocational colleges in Kuwait, I became eager to use my creativity and the acquired techniques in my ESP classes.

The nature of the ESP classes and the fact that they were geared towards learners' specific language needs seemed interesting. Inasmuch as students needed to replicate the communicative circumstances of their target places, ESP courses required the application of specific methods and techniques, and divergent activities that engage learners in situations as authentic as those that were expected to be encountered in the various target places. Therefore, this type of programme becomes intrinsically motivating not only for the learners who find the course relevant to their future needs and development, but also for teachers who can observe learners' attainment of the course objectives in practice.

However, my experience as an ESP teacher revealed that the above characteristic was at odds with the reality of ESP practices at vocational colleges in Kuwait. My teaching experience revealed that the ESP programmes offered at the various vocational colleges suffered on several bases and did not conform to ESP. The Language Department (now the Language Centre (LC)) seemed to resemble the government school English Language Units – where teachers were provided with readily designed syllabuses and teaching procedures and were expected to abide by them in order to prepare students for examinations. As one of the interviewees in this study commented: "you think here the situation is going to be any different?" Well, it was not. The administration's mentality at the LC was very much similar to those at the intermediate and secondary schools where I used to teach – passing exams was more important than the acquisition of knowledge.

Knowing that this reality is in contrast with what ESP is and how it should be approached, and realizing that the vocational colleges were established to provide the country with a skilled workforce, I was disappointed with our ESP programmes and the ESP teachers' roles.

At the beginning of my career, as a novice teacher, I had to follow the LC's imposed plan and programme. However, later as an experienced member of

the staff I was able to choose approaches I found more effective in attaining the objectives of my courses. I realized that time and experience helped me become a better decision maker and a more flexible teacher. As a result, I started approaching my courses using critical thinking and interactive methods in order to help learners extract, understand, and construct meanings by themselves.

I found that my new approach made a difference both in elevating my students' and my own level of motivation. It encouraged me to become active and more involved in my teaching. I started reflecting more on my practice trying to come up with new ways to improve my teaching skills and the students' learning abilities. This process changed me – I realized my own weaknesses, faced my biases, and learnt to teach more wisely and effectively. That is why I agree with Shulman's saying that if you want to learn something offer to teach it.

Not only did I start to view my students and the teaching/learning processes in a different light, based on my reflections and thinking, but I also realized that our problems were not merely limited to underachieving students. It had a lot to do with how we (teachers) thought about our students and about teaching and learning. This reality intrigued me to read more about language education in general and ESP in particular in order to find insights towards improving my approaches to ESP teaching. Inspired by my readings, I realized that in order to improve any teaching and learning situation, it was important to know why teachers do what they do. Therefore, I decided to embark on this journey to explore ESP teachers' knowledge and practices at vocational colleges in Kuwait in an attempt to increase our understanding of the various factors that influence our practical decisions and actions, to raise our awareness of the nature of ESP practices, improve our ESP programmes, and grow and develop professionally. Like McLaughlin (1991, cited in Guskey, 1994: 118), I believe that "success in any improvement effort always hinges on the smallest unit of the organization and, in education, that is the classroom teacher."

1.2 Rationale of the study

There is no doubt that educational research has always focused on teachers as the most important element in the teaching and learning processes and

acknowledged their significant role in students' learning (Guskey, 1994; Doyle, 1997; Abell, 2007). However, epistemologically, they have focused on the 'knowing that' while overlooking the 'knowing how', or as in the case of language education "between knowing and being able to regurgitate sets of grammatical rules, and being able to deploy this grammatical knowledge to communicate effectively (Nunan, 2006: 164-5)."

Knowledge about teaching has been produced by theoretical or university researchers and delivered to teachers who were expected to act as passive consumers of the goods generated by the experts. The objective nature of the process-product studies seemed to give little credit to the ways teachers synthesized that knowledge and produced their own (Elbaz, 1981, 1983; Clandinin & Connelly, 1987; Connelly & Clandinin, 1997; Golombek, 1994, 1998). As a result, the gap between theory and practice persisted, and the discrepancy among views of teacher knowledge and theories (Shulman, 1986, 1987) caused some teacher researchers such as the above mentioned ones to question "the common assumption that knowledge for teaching should be primarily "outside-in." The outside-in approach proposed the "unproblematic transmission of knowledge from a source to destination (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993: xi)," which was proved to be untrue in practice. Teachers' and teacher-researchers' dissatisfaction with the results of those studies generated a new line of research that gave weight to teachers' justifications for their practical choices (Elbaz, 1983; Clark and Peterson, 1985; Clandinin & Connelly, 1987; Calderhead, 1987; Kagan 1992; Pajares, 1992). Consequently, a shift in focus in research on teaching, from studying and quantifying effective teacher behavior and particular teaching processes that had no guarantee on good teaching, to exploring and understanding teacher knowledge and thought processes and their effects on classroom decisions and practices started. Accordingly, these studies that attempted to explore and explain teacher thoughts and behavior "give prominence to the complex interplay of teachers' content pedagogical knowledge and the ways that these are used in diverse classroom contexts (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, ibid)."

Studying the practical elements of teachers' knowledge stemmed from teacher-researchers' beliefs that teachers understand teachers better than a detached outsider – a university researcher, who is more concerned with the theoretical aspects of teaching than its practical features. These researchers suggested that answers to what might influence teachers' "good" actions and pedagogical decisions could only be conceptualized through listening to teachers' stories and understanding the justifications behind their actions. They pioneered a new way of co-thinking with teachers' reflection on their actions (Schön, 1983) to understand the ways teachers' thinking could influence their practice in order to get insights into more constructive solutions to some persisting teaching and learning problems (Frazer, 1988 cited in Feiman-Nemser, 2003).

This type of research that started in the 80s and was basically qualitative in nature, using mainly interviews and observational techniques in order to understand "what" goes on in the classroom and "why," gained momentum in the 90s and became popular in the field of education ever since. In addition to assisting researchers to make sense of teachers' actions and decisions in the classroom, Pope (2011) stated that this type of research "helps the teachers themselves clarify their thinking to form a foundation that enables them to communicate with other teachers and develop and extend their theories." This type of "inside-out" studies – from teachers and teacher-researchers to university researchers – as Pope (ibid) suggested could ground a theory, if that is the purpose of the endeavor, as opposed to studies that attempt to critically evaluate how teachers think, or to develop conceptual models of teacher thinking that an "outside-in" research does.

Moreover, since effective teaching includes engaging learners in the construction of knowledge by making learning their responsibility, teacher-researchers suggested that teachers needed to possess solid knowledge of the subject matter, content, curriculum, pedagogy and the learner to ensure the effectiveness of teaching. Shulman (ibid) categorized these components as: "Subject Matter Knowledge", "Knowledge of Pedagogy", and "Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)." These elements of knowledge could only be

reachable and understandable by valuing teachers' views about, and justifications for, their actions.

In the case of ESP teaching, teachers' knowledge, in general, and their specific pedagogical content (SPCK), in particular, play a significant role in effective teaching and learning. That is because ESP teachers need a good understanding and awareness of specific genres and the various ways in which language is exploited and utilized to perform particular tasks in different target situations. This knowledge enables ESP teachers to decode concepts into meaningful learning experiences for their students (Feiman-Nesmer, 2003). In other words, SPCK helps transform them from being mere language teachers to becoming effective facilitators and catalysts for learning, using various ways of representing and formulating the subject to make it more comprehensible to their students.

Therefore, studies like the current one are needed to realize what constitutes ESP teachers' knowledge and how that knowledge could be implemented in practice. They can help improve the teaching/learning situation by encouraging teachers to think about their practical actions and decisions in order to realize the factors affecting them. This process helps teachers better understand the reasons behind their classroom problems and find suitable and attainable solutions.

Moreover, studies like this one can play a significant role in providing teacher-training programmes with insights about the essential elements that form ESP teachers' knowledge, and contribute to bridging the gap between theory and practice. This becomes possible by considering teachers' practical choices and their underlying principles, valuing their voices and choices as active members in the critical world of education and as important agents for future development and enlightenment.

1.3 Significance of the study

Educational research, in the last two decades, provided ample evidence to support the reality that teachers' personal pedagogical belief systems determine to a substantial degree their classroom practices (Borg, 1998).

Nevertheless, this area of research has not been given proper attention in Kuwait, especially in the area of ESP teaching and learning. The scarcity of this type of research is not limited to Kuwait. In fact, though researchers in the area of ESP teaching and learning have been actively involved in studying this innovative area of language teaching, they have mostly focused on teaching materials and syllabuses (what should be taught), and occasionally on learners (how learners learn). However, there "has been little commentary on, or research into, the decisions ESP teachers take in the teaching/learning process (Watson, 2003, cited in Wu and Badger, 2009:19)." Apparently, studying teachers' knowledge in the field of ESP has not gained momentum yet, though it is desperately needed. Wu and Badger (2009: 19) justified such a need arguing that:

> "[T]he literature on English for specific purposes (ESP) has largely ignored one of its most distinctive features: many ESP teachers have to teach subject-specific texts from areas outside their primary areas of expertise."

Since in teaching ESP teachers encounter challenges of having to deal with disciplines outside the realm of their expertise, their behaviors and reactions to these challenges become an important subject for research on ESP teacher knowledge. Moreover, in ESP, teachers' subject matter knowledge might not be sufficient to carry out their responsibilities successfully and deal with their challenges wisely. As a result, studying ESP teacher knowledge could shed light on the importance of the specific content knowledge (SCK) as an element in the knowledge base of ESP teachers that many humanity-trained teachers in the ESP domain might lack. In addition to the SCK, studying ESP teachers' behavior and reactions to their everyday challenges enriches researchers' and educators' views about significant pedagogical choices and their effects on the outcomes of the ESP courses. This could inform ESP teacher education programmes to pay attention to the "specific" pedagogical content knowledge (SPCK) as another important element of ESP teacher knowledge if not the most important one.

Therefore, this study attempts to fill the gap in literature on ESP teacher knowledge and practices and draws attention to ESP teachers' voices and

needs at vocational colleges in Kuwait. This is important because ESP teachers in the context of this study are supposed to play a crucial role in the fulfillment of the objectives of providing the country with a skilled workforce.

It is an attempt to understand how ESP teachers in Kuwait understand ESP, and to construe the effects of their knowledge on their practical and pedagogical choices, and on the way they respond to the challenges they encounter in the "uncharted land" of ESP (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study is designed to:

1. explore ESP teachers' knowledge about ESP practices in Kuwait and what knowledge teachers' believe is important to support effective ESP teaching;
2. explore ESP teachers' experience with language learning and teaching (their prior knowledge as learners and their practical knowledge as teachers) and its effect on their understanding of ESP practices;
3. explore how teachers implement their knowledge in practice, and identify potential factors that influence ESP teachers' practical decisions in Kuwait;
4. explore the impacts of challenges encountered in teaching ESP on teachers' practices.

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the above purposes, this study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. How do ESP teachers in Kuwait understand ESP practices?
2. What factors influenced and shaped teachers' knowledge of ESP?
3. How do ESP teachers in Kuwait explain their classroom practice?
4. What challenges do ESP teachers encounter in implementing knowledge in practice?

1.6 The thesis

In this chapter I introduced the reasons for conducting this study, the rationale and significance of the study with reference to a brief background of this type of research, the purpose of this study, and the questions that this research attempts to answer.

Chapter two introduces the context of the study by shedding light on the development of education and language education in Kuwait, and by introducing the factors that influenced the establishment of vocational colleges. It also tackles the nature of ESP teaching at vocational colleges and presents the aims and objectives of ESP teaching at the context of this study. It also sheds light on ESP teachers' and learners' backgrounds, ESP courses and materials, and the assessment system.

Chapter three reviews the literature on both ESP practices, and teachers' knowledge and actions. Therefore, it is divided into two parts. The first part discusses the development of ESP and its methodologies, reviews the elements needed for a successful ESP programme, and sheds light on the changing role of the language teacher in the ESP territory. The second part looks into the development of research on teacher thinking and actions. It reveals how the shift in researchers', and teacher-researchers' views of how research should serve teaching and learning helped in generating new studies that focused on teachers' practical knowledge and decisions and justifies the importance of such research in language teaching in general and ESP in particular.

Chapter four presents the methodology adopted in this study. It discusses the ontological assumption and epistemological stance underpinning the theoretical framework of this research. It also describes the study design, the data collection instruments, the participants, and demonstrates the data collection and analysis procedures. It concludes with an explanation of the ethical considerations.

Chapter five presents a detailed analysis of the qualitative data elicited from the semi-structured interviews, stimulated recall interviews, classroom observations

and group discussion results. It includes interpretation of grouped and categorized data in an attempt to find answers to the research questions.

Chapter six discusses major findings with reference to the literature discussed in chapter three and the study context introduced in chapter two.

Chapter seven presents the conclusion of the study and discusses the limitations. It also summarizes findings in respect to the whole thesis, and introduces implications of the study both at practical and theoretical levels. Finally, the chapter presents suggestions for further study, and a reflection on the researcher's PhD journey.

Chapter two: The context of the study

2. Preview

Teachers' knowledge and practical decisions are believed to be context bound (Borg, 2006). According to Guskey (1993) teaching and learning are complex processes that are embedded in context. Since context impacts language teaching and learning especially in the ESP settings (Holliday and Cooke, 1982; Jordan, 1997; Kaewpet, 2009), a review of language teaching and methodologies adopted in Kuwait's educational system becomes important to understand both students' and teachers' educational backgrounds.

I start this chapter by introducing the development of education in Kuwait in general, and language education in particular. This is followed by a presentation of the elements that called for the development of vocational colleges in Kuwait, and a review of the different components of ESP programmes in the context of the study.

2.1 The development of education in Kuwait

Kuwait is a small country, located on the northwestern coast of the Persian Gulf and is surrounded by Saudi Arabia in the west and south, Iraq in the north, and the Gulf in the east. In 1961, Kuwait ended its status as a protectorate of Great Britain and gained its independence. It joined the Arab league, the Islamic Countries Organization (ICO), and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEK) in the same year. In 1993 it joined the United Nations (UN) becoming the 111th member of the world organization. It also became a founding member in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) since its foundation in 1981.

During the 1800s and early 1900s, Kuwaitis used to travel to India and East Africa for business and trade (Abu-Hakima, 1983). They depended for living on natural resources such as fishery and pearl diving that they skillfully mastered. "This primitive industry resulted in the expansion of other trades such as shipbuilding and maritime transportation which brought the country into direct contact with not only nearby countries like Yemen, Iraq, and Iran, but also India and as far away as Africa (Al-Rubaie, 2010: 21)." A working knowledge of both

the Indian language, mainly Urdu, and the Swahili language as well as some knowledge of mathematics were needed to help them communicate and handle business dealings with Indians and Africans, so they learnt the languages and mastered basic arithmetic and made use of them (Al-Bazzaz, 1994; Al-Rubaie, ibid). This reality indicated that Kuwaitis were keen on Learning foreign languages to improve business, and that they seemed to have realized its significance albeit their poor educational backgrounds.

As Kuwait flourished as a trading port and merchants came in contact with foreign counterparts in India and Africa, as well as with the British during their presence in Iran and Iraq and later as Kuwait's protector, the informal type of education that was available at that time could not fulfill the merchants and their clerk's needs any more. As a result, the demand for a more systematic kind of education that could fulfill the market's needs grew. In 1911 some Kuwaiti merchants founded the Al-Mubarakiyyah school to train skillful clerks, in commerce, arithmetic and writing skills in response to the needs of their growing business and trades. However, as Al-Hatem (2004) argued, the only difference between this school and the informal one was in the building and facilities provided. The subjects and their objectives remained basically the same. In 1921, Al-Ahmadiyah school was established and English language teaching was offered as part of the educational curriculum. Later, a female school was founded that offered Arabic, home economic and Islamic studies.

In aiming to achieve progress and prosperity so as to catch up with the developing world and take part in it, Kuwait has established solid relationships with the outside world. Hence, the use of English as an international language has become a necessity. The demand for this language, especially for political, economic, and educational purposes has been growing ever since. In 1936, as the awareness of the importance of education in general and language education in particular increased, and the inability of the merchants to provide schooling for the growing numbers of students and their educational needs (Al-Rubaie, 2010) became apparent, the government took over the responsibility of providing free education to all Kuwaiti citizens, hence, establishing schools for boys and girls in different areas of the country.

Schooling in Kuwait used to follow a 4-4-4-stage system of elementary, intermediate and secondary, but this was later changed to a 5-3-4-stage system. This schooling ladder is preceded by two years of kindergarten. In 1965, education in Kuwait became compulsory for children between ages 6-14 based on Kuwait's constitution that made education a fundamental right of a citizen.

2.2 The development of English language education in Kuwait

Due to the great demand for English in various important occupations, especially in the oil industries, health, business and trading sectors, the need to acquaint learners with the necessary language skills in order to prepare them for future educational and/or occupational advancements increased. As a result, in 1966/67, the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Kuwait decided to include English as a compulsory subject in the educational curriculum (Al-Nwaiem, 2012).

The overall objectives of teaching English as stated by the MOE is to help learners communicate fluently and accurately in various situations by mastering the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Originally, it was introduced to students at the age of ten at the intermediate stage. In 1994, as the demand for a good command of English in vocational sectors increased, and due to the unsatisfying results of school graduates' competency in English, the MOE decided to introduce the language to students at the elementary stage starting from age six. By extending students' exposure to the language from eight to twelve years, the MOE hoped that the extra years and the earlier contact with the language could facilitate learning and improve students' linguistic abilities.

This certainly has not been the only effort taken to increase learners' competency in English. The MOE has been looking for other ways to improve the English language standards such as adopting the latest approaches and the most popular methods and techniques that promised better language learning outcomes.

In order to understand the approaches and methods adopted by the MOE and applied at local schools in Kuwait, it is reasonable to clarify the differences between the above three terms.

According to Anthony (1963, cited in Richard and Rodgers, 1995, 2001) an *approach* is the level at which assumptions and beliefs about language and language learning are specified, and descriptions about the nature of the subject matter to be taught is offered. A *method* is a procedural plan for the orderly presentation of the language material to be learned that is based upon a selected approach – theories. It is the design level at which theory is put into practice, and at which choices are made about particular skills to be taught. It includes the specifications of the content of instruction – syllabus, learners' roles, teachers' roles, instructional materials and their types and functions (Richard and Rodgers, ibid). *Technique* is a very specific concrete stratagem designed to accomplish immediate objectives. It is the level at which classroom procedures are described and implemented. Thus, it must be consistent with a method, and in harmony with an approach.

Richard and Rodgers (ibid) preferred to use method as an umbrella term to refer to the broader relationship between theory and practice in language teaching. According to them, a method is theoretically related to an approach, organized by the design, and practically realized in procedure. Though the three-tier system proposed by Richards and Rodgers was surely broader and more detailed than Anthony's framework. However, researchers and specialists such as Kumaravadivelu (2006) believed that a careful analysis indicated that their system was equally redundant and overlapping. This view coupled with the insights gained from studies that started from the 1923 onwards convinced language educators that no single method could guarantee successful results. Consequently, teachers were encouraged to adopt an eclectic approach – a mixture of methods and techniques – as a solution to the unsatisfactory outcome of language teaching and learning (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, 2012).

A review of trends in English language teaching in Kuwait reveals that Language teaching education has been keen on improving language learning by following the latest approaches and applying the recommended methods

that promised effective learning. For example, in the fifties of the last century, though the English language programme was structurally based, there was almost no special recommended method for English language teaching (ELT) in Kuwait. In the absence of in-service teacher training programmes, teachers of English (predominantly expatriates from Palestine, Syria and Egypt) were left to apply whatever method(s) they preferred. In the majority of cases, a mixture of such methods as grammar-translation and the direct method were mostly applied through a 'chalk and talk' procedure focusing on language form, reading, and translation, with little use of teaching aids (Hajjaj, 1978, 1981, 1982). As a result, the teacher (the knowledge holder) dominated the language classroom, controlled its pace, and regulated the amount of knowledge poured into students' (knowledge receiver) heads. Mistakes were not tolerated and were corrected on the spot. A good number of learners who were exposed to this type of teaching though were able to read and write in English reasonably, were weak in listening and speaking skills as these two skills were almost neglected in practice. Students' inability to speak fluently after eight years of exposure to the language could have stemmed from the gap in their awareness of how to bridge the knowledge of lexis and structure with language use in oral communication. In other words, students who were able to produce accurate writing clusters mostly failed to speak fluently and/or accurately.

Due to the unsatisfactory outcomes of the language education programme, the decade between 1962 and 1972 witnessed serious attempts by the MOE to improve the situation. This decision coincided with the popularity that the behaviourist theory had gained in the world of ELT. As a result, the grammar-translation and direct methods were replaced by the audio-lingual methods that focused on pattern drills through mechanical repetition of discrete linguistic elements. Although teacher-centeredness continued during this stage, the use of some interactive techniques such as pictures, charts, flashcards, and audiocassettes were encouraged in order to motivate learners, and expose them to authentic language and communication occurrences to facilitate learning. Consequently, listening and speaking were emphasized at the expense of reading and writing. Mistakes were tolerated, and learners were encouraged to acquire the language through drilling and repetition of sentences

and conversation fragments as opposed to learning the language through the memorization of rules of grammar and vocabulary words that the previous stage had focused on. Many language teachers and educators in Kuwait were disappointed with the results of this new approach as learners lost both language accuracy and fluency (Al-Nwaiem, ibid).

The disappointing outcome of ELT in Kuwait generated a feeling of general discontent with structural approaches. This reality combined with the country's rapid development and modernization created an atmosphere that was favorable for change to take place: the change from using structural methodologies to adopting communicative approaches in language teaching. This change did not occur abruptly. The real turning point away from the structural approaches was in 1977, when ELT inspectorate started experimenting with a totally new series, proposed by Oxford University Press, named Crescent English Courses (CEC) written by Terry O'Neil et al. Unlike the 'Living English' series that were in use during the grammar-translation period and were structured on the language rules and grammatical elements, this course was structured on the language functions such as introducing people, greetings, requesting, suggesting, etc. It was also pupil-centered that allowed learners to take the initiative in pair/group work, role-playing, games, etc. Since then, though textbooks have changed, the communicative orientation of the contents remained one of the main criteria in designing or adopting language textbooks. The ultimate goal of adopting and applying communicative approaches at government schools has been: a) to get the pupils to build up their language through time and the employment of various sources; b) to make them communicate effectively not only in the classroom, where lessons are built around certain controlled activities, but eventually in the outside world in real interactions.

The importance of the shift in ELT in the pre-tertiary stages of education from structurally based to communicatively oriented courses lies in the impact that it should have had on the quality of English that the learners bring with them to post-secondary institutions such as the vocational colleges in this study. That is because the ESP courses offered at post-secondary education are based on

the belief that secondary school graduates have learnt the basic skills of the English language required for the interactive nature of the ESP courses.

However, public school graduates' standards in English remain much below the expected entry level. This is revealed in their placement tests scores, and the EGP and ESP tests and examinations' results. It is also manifested in learners' inability to perform interactive classroom activities that require some knowledge of the four language skills. This reality is also supported by recent studies that focused on communicative language teaching in pre-tertiary and college stages (Al-Nouh, 2008), and on language teacher education programmes (Al-Nwaiem, 2012). These studies revealed that in spite of all the efforts taken by the MOE to reform language education programmes – from changing methodologies to offering the language at an early age – it does not seem to solve students' inability to learn the language and to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing. It is likely that teachers' loyalty to the structural approaches as well as the misapplication of the communicative methods, both, play a role in the inefficacy of such reform.

The above demonstration suggests that, though language education has moved past the conventional method period towards the postmethod condition (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, 2012), language teaching authorities and specialists in Kuwait seem to be trapped in the quest for a miraculous approach that could guarantee effective language teaching and successful learning.

With regards to the application of structural approaches, Kumaravadivelu (ibid) believed that drilling students to memorize endless lists of unusable grammar and vocabulary, that proved insignificant in enabling learners to communicate properly and was a tedious experience for learners, made few demands on the language teacher. As a result, he suggested that this might be one of the factors that justified some teachers' preference of the structural approaches. Similarly, it could justify, to some extent, the prevalence of this approach in language teaching practices in Kuwait (Al-Nwaiem, ibid; Al-Nouh, ibid) and other parts of the world (Richard and Rodgers, 1995; Assalahi, 2013).

Kumaravadivelu criticizes teaching the language based on both structural and communicative approaches that tend to view language teaching as simple, and the relationship between approach, method, and technique as hierarchical. He argues that the above view does not consider the complex contentions between intervening factors such as societal demands, institutional resources and constraints or restrictions, institutional effectiveness and learners' needs. As a result, he proposes postmethod pedagogy and offers some macrostrategies for language teaching that takes the above factors into consideration. He stresses that the postmethod condition "signifies a search for an alternative to method rather than an alternative method. While alternative methods are primarily products of top-down processes, alternative to methods are mainly products of bottom-up processes (2006: 32-33)." He further explains that:

> "In practical terms, this means that […] we need to figure the relationship between the theorizer and the practitioner of language teaching. If the conventional concept of method entitles theorizers to construct professional theories of pedagogy, the postmethod condition empowers practitioners to construct personal theories of practice (ibid)."

This view is especially important in the context of ESP, and corresponds with the rise of the interest in understanding teachers' knowledge and classroom practices that gives prominence to teachers' constructed theories and pedagogical choices. Kumaravadivelu justifies this change quoting Freeman (1991: 35, cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 33) that, while conventional concept of method "overlooks the fund of experience and tacit knowledge about teaching which the teachers already have by virtue of their lives as students," the postmethod condition "recognizes the teachers' potential to know not only how to teach but also how to act autonomously within the academic and administrative constraints imposed by institutions, curricula, and textbooks. It also promotes the ability of teachers to know how to develop a critical approach in order to self-observe, self-analyze, and self-evaluate their own teaching practice with a view to affecting desired change." This proposed condition seems to fit well with the nature of ESP courses and the role of ESP practitioners. It also outweighs the use of eclecticism that became popular,

especially, in teaching ESP in some countries such as Kuwait. The rationale is based on the reality that eclecticism is constrained by the conventional concept of method, in the sense that one is supposed to put together practices from different established methods. However, the principled pragmatist nature of the postmethod condition is based on the relationship between theory and practice, ideas and their actualization, that could only be realized within the domain of application – the immediate activity of teaching (Widdowson, 1990 cited in Kumaravadivelu, ibid).

2.3 Vocational Education and the need for ESP

The discovery of oil in 1938 and the first oil shipment that was exported in 1946 announced a renaissance era for Kuwait and have changed the country radically in every aspect of life. On one hand, the growth in the educational, industrial, as well as health sectors demanded a workforce that was trained specifically to fulfill the needs of the various industries. On the other hand, Kuwait entered the new world market such as Europe, Japan, and the USA. This international relationship, coupled with the universality of the English language, entailed the need for English language to link the country with its new partners, and to be in touch with the latest developments in the fields of science and technology that are conveyed in English. In other words, the need for English language that served the purposes of specific job requirements grew as the demand for middle class native workers to assume responsibilities in serving their country and take part in its advancement increased.

During the fifties of the last century, the lack of skilled Kuwaiti specialists in various fields that the developments necessitated attracted many business executives, scholars, engineers, doctors, teachers, and technicians who found either making business or working in the prosperous Kuwait a golden opportunity. The flow of foreign employees in the country, who soon outnumbered the Kuwaiti citizens, concerned the government and forced it to come up with solutions. In an attempt to balance the population growth and to encourage Kuwaiti citizens to participate in the advancement of their country two important needs surfaced: 1) the need for training Kuwaiti citizens to replace the expatriates in various public and private sectors; 2) the need to

acquaint trainees with a good command of the English language needed to accomplish specific job requirements successfully in various target places (Al-Bazzaz, 1994). Regarding the former need, the government decided to establish higher and vocational education in order to train Kuwaitis to undertake various jobs in the technical and vocational domains. Regarding the latter need, the government decided to introduce English for specific purposes (ESP) as a requirement in post secondary education and more specifically at the various scientific, technical, and vocational colleges.

In 1972, the government established a Higher Consultative Committee on Technical and Vocational Education to revise and reform the technical education provision in Kuwait, which was under MOE's direct supervision. Their efforts led to the establishment of vocational institutions that aimed at supplying the country with its needs of a specially trained workforce. Hence, providing programmes in such areas as industry and technology, administration, commerce and finance, health and medicine, education and teacher training. However, this type of education in Kuwait suffered on two grounds:

1. Kuwaitis, in general, showed a negative attitude towards this type of education.
2. Graduates standards were still below the labour market's expectations.

The reasons behind negative attitudes towards this type of education seemed to be rooted in the reality that general education by virtue of its academic worth and role as a means of gaining access to the university and other higher educational institutes was and is still the most desired type of education in Kuwait. So in order to overcome this problem and to further improve the quality of technical and vocational education this area received special attention by the government, which decided to detach the technical-vocational education from the MOE and give it a separate authority. This Authority oversees two sectors: Applied Education (formerly Technical and Vocational Education) and Training. The Applied Education comprises five – two and four years – vocational colleges of Education, Business and commerce, Technology, Health Sciences, and Nursing.

The objectives of these colleges that were established as part of the strategic plans formulated for the development of Kuwait are as follows (only those that concern this study are presented):

- to enrich, advance, and train the national [workforce], so that it is able to positively affect the economy and development of the country;

- to train the national [workforce] in all fields of services and production, and to increase Kuwaiti participation in professional and technical employment and in the production of handicrafts, as required by the needs of the country;

- to continually upgrade and modernize its programmes so that they will always reflect the very latest technological advances. This should be undertaken in cooperation with the labour market;

- to offer courses to active members of the workforce to upgrade them in their field, so as to increase their level of productivity and to aid in the development of the country;

- to provide the country with a network of fully trained [technicians and specialists], and to provide them with facilities to discuss the latest methods and research in their fields;

2.4 Vocational college admission policy

The admission policy provides for the enrolment of students who have obtained the G.C.E. (Science or Arts Section) with score percentage between 55% to 75% based on students' majors in the various vocational colleges, and 75% to 80% for students from the GCC countries and expatriates' children. The enrollees may be categorized as: 1) recent graduates from the general secondary schools; 2) students who may for one reason or another drop out of their university education whether at home or abroad and may wish to take a short cut and settle for the two-year Diploma at either health, technology or business colleges; 3) Non-Kuwaiti students admitted within a quota of 10% of

the total intake and comprising students from other Gulf countries, students on scholarships granted by the Kuwaiti government to a number of Islamic African countries, and sons and daughters of resident expatriates who meet certain conditions laid down by the Authority.

Such a heterogeneous body of entrants with a wide range of differences in terms of age, cultural background and experience, will expectedly have varying degree of linguistic proficiency in English. Thus, taking a placement test administered by the Language Centre (LC) is required in order to assess their existing level of attainment in English. Those passing the test can register in the first English credit course (101), which is a prerequisite for all the other ESP courses. Students then choose the ESP courses in accordance with their fields of specialization. As for those who fail that placement test a remedial, non-credit, course (099) is offered.

The placement tests that have been used so far are structurally based and consist of multiple-choice, discrete-items with sub-tests on grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension. Oral proficiency and writing skills, however, are not assessed.

2.5 The Language Centre (LC)

The LC manages the work of the five English Language Units (ELUs) that serve the needs of the five vocational colleges. It is a service department offering both general and ESP courses that are designed to serve the students' fields of specialization. As previously mentioned, the ESP courses offered at those colleges are based on the fact that the learners are not beginners. They are expected to have a good command of English and reasonable ability to use the four skills of the language communicatively.

The English courses are obligatory, i.e. they are amongst the graduation requirements. EGP is provided in two forms: one non-credit (remedial) course and one credit course. ESP courses cover various disciplines such as Business and Commerce, Engineering, Science and Technology, Health Sciences, Nutrition, and Nursing. The main aim of the English Language Centre is to bring the learner's proficiency in English to a specific level that qualifies them

for their anticipated language needs in higher education and future employment.

The chain of English courses on the curricula is hierarchically arranged in a progressive order. Thus, passing the first course is a prerequisite for registering in the second one and so on. Such an arrangement in vocational institutions with a short duration of study could be questionable, since the learners are presumably communicatively competent after twelve years of pre-tertiary English instruction. However, with very few exceptions, the Kuwaiti students accounting for 90% of the Institute's total intake are underachievers who have been detoured to Applied Education by the 55%-GCE-average signpost on the road to Kuwait University (Osman, 1996). When it comes to English, the scores in their GCE transcripts give one reason to fear that a common-core resulting from pre-tertiary instruction in English cannot always be taken for granted. The hard reality that must be faced is that the great majority of these students are still false beginners. In such a case, administering a placement test does not make things easier. The test with its lowered cut-off point lets in students whose proficiency in English is far below the standard required for a demanding ESP course. This cut-off point is unfortunately determined by administrative rather than by purely pedagogical considerations.

2.6 ESP courses at the vocational colleges

At post-secondary education and specifically at vocational colleges, students are presented with a totally new situation regarding their learning of English. In contrast to their former learning experience of the language 'as part of a broad education' (Mackay and Mountford, 1978:2) with no immediate or specific requirement to utilize it in any communicative situation, they are now adult learners who are presumably well aware of their purpose in learning English that is usually linked to their future careers. Therefore, the courses they seek are those that are narrowly focused to fulfill the specific requirements of their prospective occupation. As Kennedy and Bolitho (1984:2) stated:

> "Given a group of learners with a specific purpose in learning English, it would seem logical in a learner-centered approach to base a course on that purpose and on the needs of the learner in his situation."

Ideally then, students in the context of this study should find that the English language courses offered at the various colleges are maximally relevant and narrowly specific to their communicative needs with the minimum loss of time and effort. However, with the lack of needs analysis at all vocational colleges in Kuwait and the unfamiliarity with the target culture, ESP courses offered lack authenticity.

The specificity of the content of the ESP courses depends on a lot of factors such as learners' linguistic abilities and awareness, and the language needs of the target place. In addition, the choice of the syllabus and teaching methods should be informed by learners' target needs that are decoded as course objectives. When needs are not assessed ESP course objectives becomes superficial – serving no obvious purpose.

It is important then for ESP educators at the vocational colleges to realize that ESP courses should aim to develop the communicative competence of the students in their identifiable specialist areas, not to impart knowledge of the language for general, ill-defined purposes, as is the case in the pre-tertiary stages.

2.7 ESP Teaching Material

The choice of textbooks and teaching material at the different vocational colleges is based on teachers' hunches and perceptions of what might be adequate in terms of language level for their students. The low language standards of the majority of vocational students seem to impose limitations on the course contents as well. As a result, the English language staff selects books that contain general subjects covering various, slightly, relevant areas under the umbrella of specific fields. The objectives of the ESP courses and syllabus design are usually informed by the choice of the textbooks. This is because language and target needs assessment that could inform the choice of contents and teaching materials are lacking in the various vocational colleges in Kuwait. In addition, designing teaching materials is a complex activity that demands sufficient knowledge and understanding of course objectives, aims of various syllabuses, and purpose of methods and techniques in serving the target language needs. Therefore, depending on readily available books in the

market becomes common in the ESP domain (Sysoyev, 2000; Al-Bazzaz, 1994) due to the complexity of the situation and to teachers' insufficient knowledge for carrying out such an activity.

ESP teachers are not expected to become syllabus and material designers, however, the awareness of learners needs and course objectives is essential in choosing appropriate material from the available ones. In ESP, It is important to realize why the course is offered and what goals it is designed to pursue and achieve. This awareness comes from the knowledge of curriculum objectives, which should be informed by the results of learners' language and target needs assessments, as aforementioned.

Although some vocational colleges in Kuwait use readily available books based on learners' language level and suitable contents, others still lack adequate textbooks. For example, the teaching staff at the college of Health Sciences has compiled and prepared pamphlets containing passages and various types of linguistic exercises for each ESP course offered. Each pamphlet includes comprehension passages presumably relevant to students' specialization, followed by a set of direct/open-ended questions, a list of vocabulary with cloze questions, multiple-choice questions to test the students' knowledge of the language structure, vocabulary and specific terminology, and some language function questions. Those pamphlets were compiled more than two decades ago based on teachers' assumptions of learners' language needs. The chosen passages were extracted from textbooks printed in the USA and Britain and written for American and British paramedical students. Though some terminologies in the health sector remain the same, the targets' cultures and needs may vary. Thus, the above act of material collection and adaption becomes questionable. Moreover, these teaching materials need to be updated, because many concepts and practices are already outdated, and in some cases have changed. Additionally, teaching materials need to be authentic and relevant to the local context. The contents need to reflect authentic tasks and responsibilities that prospective employees are required to perform in target places in Kuwait not in other countries.

2.8 The Assessment System

In general, all the vocational colleges adopt a combination of continuous assessment procedures, midterm and end-of-term examinations, which can be classified as achievement tests. The total mark allotted to an English course is a 100: fifty of which are retained for end-of-term final examination and the other fifty are set aside for the process of continuous assessment during the whole semester. This may be applied in the form of several short undeclared-in-advance drop tests, and various kinds of assignments including a midterm exam. The student is also rewarded for regular attendance in the class. In order to pass a course, a student must get 60% of the total mark. It is worth mentioning that in designing their exams, ESP teachers at all the vocational colleges predominantly follow the same examination outline. This action reveals some misconceptions about assessment in the ESP context and questions its objectives.

2.9 The ESP Learner

The ESP learners, at the context of this study, are adults whose ages range between 18-25, with a small number exceeding 25 years of age. As stated earlier, these students, with very few exceptions, are not communicatively competent in English. As a result, the English Language Unit (ELU) offers a placement test to determine the student's level and the right course(s) to start with.

The problem of proficiency in the English language and the reality of student's weakness in all the language skills are not new. Many studies addressed this issue and tried to provide reasonable solutions. Sawwan (1984), for instance, investigated the reasons for students' poor achievement at both intermediate and secondary school in Kuwait and suggested that misapplication of the communicative approach to language teaching was the main reason. Abdel-Naby (1985) discussed the issue of testing at the college of business studies and pointed out the inadequacy of the tests administered. Al-Bazzaz (1994) attributed this state of affairs to inappropriate syllabuses that were not designed to meet the needs of Kuwaiti learners. Al-Nouh (2008) found that although English language teachers in Kuwait were aware of the communicative

approaches to language teaching and the importance of learner centeredness in facilitating language learning, they failed to implement their knowledge in practice. The study revealed that schoolteachers relied heavily on traditional approaches for two main reasons: textbooks and the assessment system that were structurally based. Al-Nwaiem (2012) suggested that students' persisting problems in learning English was the result of teachers using Arabic language all the time in the classroom, and to the traditional approaches that were predominantly used in teaching English at government schools.

In addition to the above studies and as far as learning is concerned, Kuwaiti students are the end product of an educational system that emphasizes imitation and memorization rather than improving learners' study skills and cognitive abilities that facilitate constructive learning (Al-Hajri, 2014; Al-Nouh, 2008; Al-Nouh et al. 2014). This type of education deprives learners from developing an autonomous characteristic crucial for post-secondary education.

Based on the above discussion, it could be argued that, assuming language learning has been successful at pre-college schooling, learners seem to have been trained to become linguistically rather than communicatively competent.

This problem however is not unique to language teaching in Kuwait. It exists in other countries where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL). For example, Swales and Mustafa (1984:11) stated:

> "of course, it remains true that secondary school leavers will only have achieved a certain degree of linguistic as opposed to communicative competence, but that is largely the case of EFL and FL teaching the world over."

Though the above statement is not recent, it correctly reflects the English teaching situation in the context of this study. Moreover, researchers such as Crawford (2001, cited in Al-Nouh, 2008), reviewed the communicative language teaching (CLT) in countries were English was taught as a foreign language (EFL), such as the context of this study, and found a gap between the national curriculum's language teaching objectives that were based on improving learners' communicative competence, and the language teaching practices at the schools. He suggested that the CLT methods were not applied in actual

classrooms, and that the emphasis of teaching was on linguistic competence following structural approaches. He attributed teachers' choices of traditional methods to the use of inadequate textbooks, and to the structurally oriented assessment system.

2.10 The ESP Teacher

Teachers at the various vocational colleges are predominantly humanity-trained holding either Master's or Doctoral degrees in one of the following fields: Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, TESOL, TESL, Education, Curriculum and Instruction, and Translation, with only a couple of novice teachers who got their Master's degree in ESP (those are not among the sample of the current study). The majority of the ESP teachers lack initial training or orientation towards their new environment, as pre- and in-service ESP training courses are not offered at any of the five vocational colleges.

Training courses are important to prepare teachers for their new environment and familiarize them with the ESP practices including: the ESP course objectives, specific methodologies and techniques that could best serve the purposes of various courses, the knowledge of course and material designing and/or adapting, the different assessment systems for evaluating students' understanding and the efficiency of their programmes, and the knowledge of research methodologies and practices for assessing students' needs and for professional development. Wilkins (1974) believes that training courses are crucial for acquainting teachers with the necessary knowledge that their previous training did not provide them with. This is important because the effectiveness of language learning is closely associated with the nature and quality of the training teachers receive before and after entering the profession. The quality of teacher training programme improves the quality of teaching as it provides teachers with the necessary tools and knowledge to facilitate learning. In this regard Wilkins (1974:53) states that: "his skill and his personality are instrumental in creating the conditions for learning. His skill is dependent on two factors, his own proficiency in the language and his knowledge and expertise in methods and techniques of language teaching."

Although Wilkins referred to language teaching in general, his statement is equally true in the ESP situation. The ESP teacher deals with adult learners who have specific needs and particular purposes for learning the language. Their specific needs are related to their occupations, which in the majority of cases are very technical in nature. Thus, the courses and teaching materials are likely to be specifically focused and highly technical. This demands teachers who are proficient in the language, well trained for the job, aware of language use in particular target places (depending on the fields their courses serve), and familiar with the different methods and techniques used in ESP classes and needed to fulfill various course objectives.

Previous studies indicated that some ESP teachers at vocational colleges in Kuwait were not professionally self-assured and some of them felt rather insecure in a classroom situation, particularly when occasions called for communicative speech acts and appropriate social interactions that demanded a high level of verbal proficiency in the target language (Afifi, 1991; Al- Nouh, 2008; Al-Nwaiem, 2013). As a result, they tend to adopt structural approaches in teaching ESP and rarely deviate from their unified syllabuses. The notions of feasibility, appropriateness, grammaticality and accepted usage, and the components of communicative competence do not seem to take up much of their time in the class (El-Shimy 1982; Abdul-Nabi, 1985; Al-Bazza, 1994; Al-Nouh, ibid; Al-Nwaiem, ibid). The reason behind the tendency towards using structural approaches in teaching ESP, as Afifi (1991) argues, might be that most ESP courses are heavily oriented towards the communicative approach to language teaching that can quickly reveal teaching deficiencies (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, 2012). This reality, that might impose limitations on teachers' pedagogical and interactive choices, could affect the quality of language teaching and learning especially in ESP where teachers' roles as negotiators and catalysts for learning hinge on the way they communicate with learners. In this respect Krashen (1981:110-111) indicates that,

> "The best language lessons may be those in which real communication takes place, in which an acquirer understands what the speaker is trying to say...the teacher-talk that surrounds the exercises may be far more valuable than the

> exercise itself when we use it for what it was designed for: communication."

2.11 Conclusion

In this chapter I introduced the general and the specific contexts of the study. I introduced a brief history of ELT in Kuwait and discussed the factors that paved the way for the development of vocational education. I shed light on the nature of ESP courses offered by the LC to all vocational college learners, and on ESP teaching materials, the assessment system, and the ESP learners and teachers. The following chapter presents the literature review.

Chapter Three
Literature Review: Part one

3. Preview:

In this chapter I present a two-part review of relevant literature in connection with ESP teaching and practices and teachers' knowledge and pedagogical choices. In the first part the emergence of ESP, its development, course characteristics, and the changing role of the ESP practitioner are tackled. In the second part, research on teachers' knowledge and practices, the development of teachers' knowledge, and the role of context in implementing knowledge in practice are discussed.

3.1 The emergence of ESP

ESP specialists and researchers believe that the emergence of ESP has been the result of three crucial factors: the changes in the world geopolitical environment after the Second World War, a revolution in linguistics concepts, and interest and focus on the learner (Gatehouse, 2001). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) suggest that two key historical periods brought ESP to life: the global expansion in scientific, technical and economic activities, after the Second World War, and the oil crisis in the early 1970s. According to them, these two factors boosted the role of English as an international language, and the need and demand for learning this language has been growing ever since. They stated that:

> "For various reasons, most notably the economic power of the United States in post-war world, this role [of international language] fell to English (p. 6)."

This is because in the early 1970s, oil rich countries have earned a lot of revenues from their oil exports. A substantial amount of these financial resources were directed for developmental plans. Therefore, they imported a lot of technology and expertise from the West. In both ways, English has been the language of marketing the oil wealth and providing for the development of technical requirements. One of those oil-producing states that used oil revenues to build and develop the country is Kuwait that realized the importance of learning English for international business as well as science and

technology needed in Oil industries and other institutions. As a result, English language became an important subject on the national curriculum as well as in the higher education programmes, as was discussed in chapter two.

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and Jordan (1997), this growing demand for English exerted pressure on the language teaching profession to deliver the required goods in order to fulfill the growing industries' needs. Hence, design courses that serve the language needs of particular learners in specific target environments. Consequently, language-teaching profession had to shift its attention from focusing on General English to designing more tailored courses based on the wishes, needs and demands of people other than language teachers, as was the case prior to the Second World War.

The other influential factor as Gatehouse (2001) suggested was the revolution in Linguistics. While traditional linguists set out to describe the features of language, revolutionary pioneers in linguistics (e.g. Firth, Halliday, Hymes, Gumpez, and Labov) began to focus on the ways in which language was used in real communication. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) pointed out that one significant discovery was in the way that spoken and written English vary. In other words, given the particular context in which English is used, the variant of English will change. This idea was taken one step further: if language in different situations varies, then tailoring language instruction to meet the needs of learners in specific contexts is also possible. Hence, in the late 1960s and the early 1970s there were many attempts to describe English for Science and Technology (EST). Hutchinson and Waters (ibid) identify Ewer and Latorre, Swales, Selinker and Trimble as a few prominent descriptive EST pioneers.

Another reason that played a significant role in the emergence of ESP had less to do with linguistics and everything to do with psychology. Gatehouse (2001:2) argued that instead of simply focusing on the method of language delivery, more attention was given to the ways in which learners acquire language and the differences in the ways language is acquired. Research suggested that learners employed different learning strategies, used different skills, entered with different learning schemata, and were motivated by different needs and interests. As a result, focus on learners' needs was acknowledged as important

as the employing of different methods to improve learners' linguistics knowledge. In other words, not only learners' occupational language needs were regarded significant for tailoring specific language courses, but also their learning skills and strategies, and motivation and interests.

This awareness arises as an important element of ESP teachers' pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). It promotes effective instructional choices to facilitate learning and enable learners to reach their end targets. As Hutchinson and Waters (1987:72) stated:

> "We must look beyond the competence that enables someone to perform, because what we really want to discover is not the competence itself, but how someone acquires that competence."

The realization that English has become a lingua franca in many fields and that English language competence relevant to such fields or work areas is necessary, regardless of where one is geographically located, resulted in EFL or ESL language programmes, that were once taught as part of a general education programme in some countries, to be often taught in a context-specific or discipline-centered manner, namely ESP context.

3.2 The ESP/EGP Relationship

Although language specialists agree that ESP has branched out of the general English language tree, there have been some arguments on where to put the boundaries between the two varieties of English. According to Kelliny (1994) there is a general agreement that it is not easy to draw a line between *general* and *specific* purposes. Gatehouse (2001:4) agrees that:

> "It is not clear where ESP courses end and general English courses begin. Numerous non-specialist ESL instructors use an ESP approach in that their syllabi are based on analysis of learner needs and their own personal specialist knowledge of using English for real communication."

However, the specialists who give ESP a separate and distinctive identity believe that EGP courses do not prepare learners for more specific situations

that are “technical in nature” because these situations are not common to all users of the language. In this regard Mallikarjun (1983:230) states that:

> "The general second/foreign language course aims at all language skills and develops a general competence in the learner to communicate in routine functional domains. The learner, however, will not be able to communicate in situations which are technical in nature and which are not common to all speakers of the language."

Jordan (1997) uses the term TENOR when referring to EGP, which stands for (the Teaching of English for no obvious reason). However, some critics of ESP, such as Brumfit (1977) suggests, that the separation of ESP from general English courses is inappropriate and that the strategy represents little more than a new focus on the learner and his or her needs rather than on the language itself. As a result, he believes that EGP is more than adequate to provide students with language competency with the addition of specialized, field-specific vocabulary. Carver (1983:132) furthers the argument, and suggests that all English teaching is essentially the teaching of ESP. He stresses that:

> "In reality there is no such a thing as English without a purpose or English for general purposes […] a teaching methodology which includes purpose and specificity in its basic is thereby richer."

In an attempt to clarify this debate, I believe that Widdowson's (1983) definitions of EGP and ESP reasonably reveal the distinction. He believes that EGP:

> "is essentially an educational operation which seeks to provide learners with a general capacity to enable them to cope with <u>undefined</u> eventualities in the future (p. 6)."

While ESP,

> "is generally a training operation which seeks to provide learners with a restricted competence to enable them to cope with certain clearly <u>defined</u> tasks (p. 3)."

The rationale is that students at lower level of learning have no immediate or specific needs for language use, while adults, especially those in occupational settings, have more decisive language needs.

Robinson (1980:6) states that: “The student of ESP is learning English en route to the acquisition of some quite different body of knowledge or set of skills." Therefore, it could be said that ESP courses are those courses designed using specialized language and focusing on specific communicative processes related to learners' academic and/or occupational needs, rather than generalized second (or third) language fluency. This definition conforms to Hutchinson and Waters (1987:19) concept about ESP being,

> "an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner’s reason for learning."

In other words, ESP refers to those language courses, which are based on the learner’s needs and purposes for learning, and where the language is to be used in situations where the command of English relates to a specific job, subject, or purpose.

To sum up, it could be argued that most researchers agree on the concept that ESP courses are goal-oriented and research-based, informed by the results of needs analysis that specify as closely as possible exactly what it is that students have to do through the medium of English (Robinson, 1991; Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998, Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001; Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002; Hyland, 2007; Harwood & Petrić, 2011). It is taught to a homogenous group of largely adult learners in terms of their vocational or professional specialties. Therefore, the methods that are expected to be employed in teaching ESP are different from those regularly employed in teaching EGP. This reality places ESP practitioners in a different position than that of the EGP teachers. While the latter can use the same syllabus and teaching materials over and over again with minimum or no adjustment to the teaching methods and techniques, the former must assess the needs of each and every group of learners and then design courses and choose teaching materials that cater for those needs and purposes (Swales, 1985; Davies,

2006, Flowerdew & Peackock, 2011). Thus, ESP is more dynamic in nature and is an ongoing process of evaluating, interpreting, understanding, designing, implementing, and reevaluating the programme – course, material, methods and techniques, and assessment (see figure 1.3).

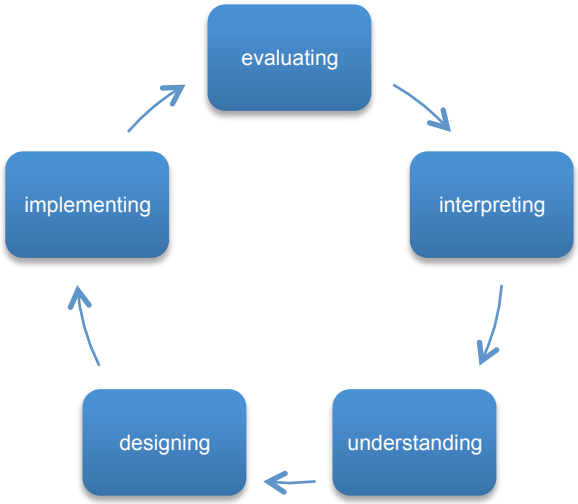

Figure (3.1): The dynamics of ESP

This dynamic nature of ESP distinguishes the multifold roles and responsibilities of the ESP practitioner from the general language teacher as s/he becomes: "needs assessor, specialized syllabus designer, authentic materials developer, and content knowledge instructor, capable of coping with a revolving door of content areas relevant to learners' communities (Belcher 2006: 139, cited in Harwood & Petrić, 2011)."

Based on the above argument, it could be said that although all language courses are geared towards specific purposes, however, the purpose for learning the language in ESP not as an end (as the case in EGP) but as a means distinguishes and defines these two fields. The distinction made by Widdowson between EGP and ESP courses proposes that in EGP, "the actual use of language occasioned by communicative necessity is commonly a vague and distant prospect on the other side of formal assessment". In ESP, however, the prospect of actual language use is brought immediately into foreground and into focus so that it serves both as the immediate objectives and eventual aim

of learning (Widdowson, 1983; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans and St. Johns, 1998).

3.3 Characteristics of ESP

The characteristics of ESP are grouped under absolute or variable categories. Strevens (1988: 1-2), for example, identified four absolute and two variable characteristics as follows:

I. Absolute Characteristics:

ESP consists of English language teaching, which is:

- designed to meet specific needs of the learner;
- related in content (i.e., themes and topics) to particular disciplines, occupations and activities;
- centered on language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, analysis and so forth;
- in direct contrast to "General English" with its unique purposes.

II. Variable Characteristics

ESP may be, but is not necessarily:

- restricted as to the learning skills to be learned (e.g. reading only);
- not taught according to pre-ordained methodology.

Ten years later, theorists Dudley-Evans and St. Johns (1998: 4-5) modified Strevens' original definition of ESP to form their own. The revised definition is as follows:

I. Absolute Characteristics:

- ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learner;
- ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves;
- ESP is centered on the language (grammar, lexis, and register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities.

II. Variable Characteristics

- ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines;
- ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of general English;
- ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution, or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level;
- ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students;
- Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners.

Dudley-Evans and St. Johns (1998) have removed the absolute characteristic that "ESP is in contrast with General English" and added more variable characteristics. They assert that ESP is not necessarily related to a specific discipline. Furthermore, ESP is likely to be used with adult learners although it could be used with young adults in a secondary school setting.

3.4 Varieties of ESP

Reviewing the literature in this concern, it seems that there is no agreement among researchers on how to divide ESP varieties (Gatehouse, 2001, Flowerdew & Peackock, 2001). However, following David Carver (1983), ESP can be divided into three categories:

- English as a restricted language
- English for Academic and Occupational Purposes
- English with specific topics.

With regards to the first category, Mackay and Mountford (1978) introduced the language used by air traffic controllers or by waiters as examples of *English as a restricted language*. That is because international air-traffic control, for example, uses narrowly focused 'special' language. Thus, the repertoire required by the controller is strictly limited and can be accurately determined situationally, as might be the linguistic needs of a dining-room waiter or

airhostess. However, such restricted 'language' would not allow the speaker to communicate effectively in contexts outside the vocational Environment.

As with the second category, in order to differentiate between *English for Academic and Occupational Purposes*, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) in their book 'English for Specific Purposes: A learning-centered approach', illustrate the ELT tree with ESP broken into three branches: a) English for Science and Technology (EST), b) English for Business and Economics (EBE), and c) English for Social Studies (ESS). Further, they regrouped them into two branches: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). However, they stressed that there is not a clear-cut distinction between EAP and EOP as people can work and study simultaneously (Flowerdew & Peackock, 2001; Harwood & Petrić, 2011). Additionally, it is likely that in many cases the language learnt for immediate use in a study environment will be used later when the student takes up, or returns to a job (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987:16). In other words, just as the distinction between EGP and ESP courses seems to be ever and again challenging, the overlap between EAP and EOP is sometimes inevitable due to some shared characteristics of the nature of these ESP courses and their objectives. This may explains why Carver (1983) categorizes EAP and EOP under the same type of ESP. In this regard Gatehouse (2001:5) argues that:

> "It appears that Carver is implying that the end purpose of both EAP and EOP are one in the same employment."

Although Carver's view corresponds to that of Flowerdew and Peacock (ibid), who believe that the distinction between EAP and EOP is not clear, Gatehouse (ibid) explains that: "despite the end purpose [in EAP and EOP] being identical, the means taken to achieve the end is very different indeed." Gatehouse, observes the difference between the two categories in terms of focus on cognitive academic proficiency versus basic interpersonal skills.

As far as the third type of ESP, *English with specific topics* is concerned Carver (ibid) suggests that it is only here where emphasis shifts from purpose to topic. This type of ESP is concerned with anticipated future English needs of, for example, scientists requiring English for postgraduate reading studies,

attending conferences or working in foreign institutions. However, Gatehouse (2001: 5) argues, “This is not a separate type of ESP. Rather it is an integral component of ESP courses or programmes which focus on situational language. This situational language has been determined based on the interpretation of results from needs analysis of authentic language used in target workplace settings.”

I agree with Gatehouse and believe that the importance of needs analysis results become obvious here, because it informs course designers of the aims and objectives needed to be achieved and of the appropriate means that could best help achieve those aims and objectives. For example, an engineer’s need differs from a technician or assistant engineer’s needs for learning the language. The former needs to read engineering textbooks, write assignments (Harwood & Petrić, ibid), consults academic articles and research in the field that require academic knowledge and skills of reading and writing of abstract articles and research paper, or might want to continue higher education. Whereas the latter’s interest and purpose might be narrowly focused on occupational needs such as reading a manual and following instructions, and writing technical reports that require the knowledge of some restricted technical language and skills. As a result, while the engineer’s needs could be fulfilled through an EAP course, a focused EOP course would be more sufficient to attain the technician’s needs.

Based on the above review, and on the goals and objectives for which ESP courses are offered at vocational colleges in Kuwait, on the learners’ and market’s needs that these courses are required to serve, and on the time constraint in most colleges under study, EOP courses seem to be more appropriate to fulfill the required needs of the learners. However, EAP courses could serve teacher college learners better than EOP courses should they decide to pursue higher education. As a result, the term ESP used in the current study to describe the specific courses at vocational colleges is mainly related to EOP.

3.5 Needs Analysis and the development of ESP

ESP went through different stages of development as researchers and language specialists tried to identify learners' specific needs in order to provide quality teaching-material that promoted success in terms of the learning outcomes. As aforementioned, the teaching procedure in ESP like in EGP relies on the same theories of language teaching and learning, however, in practice the choice of ESP activities has been linked to a view of text (Swales 1990; Dudley-Evans and St Johns, 1998). For example **Register Analysis**, which marked the first stage in ESP syllabus design and was associated with the works of Peter Strevens (1964), Jack Ewer (1969), and John Swale (1971) took interest in focusing on the grammar and vocabulary of scientific and technical English communication. At this stage the aim of needs analysis was to identify the grammatical and lexical features of these registers and design the syllabus based on these linguistic features. '*A course in Basic Scientific English'* by Ewer and Latorre (1969) is a good example of such syllabus (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).

The next stage, **Rhetorical or Discourse Analysis**, was a strategy highly influenced by the works of Lackstorm, Selinker, and Trimble (1972) and Widdowson (1979), which shifted attention from language at the sentence level (first stage register analysis) to the whole text that the first stage neglected and looked above the sentence level. Widdowson (1979) argues that the difficulties students experience in learning ESP stem from the unfamiliarity with English 'use' not from inadequate knowledge of the system of English 'usage'. Therefore, a course that is designed to provide more practice in the composition of sentences cannot fulfill the student's needs, but their needs could be met by a course that provides the knowledge of how these sentences are used in the performance of different communicative acts. The attention of analysis "shifted to understand how sentences were combined in discourse to produce meaning (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987: 11)." Both Widdowson (1979) and Hutchinson and Waters (ibid) describe this stage of the ESP development as a focus on identifying the organizational patterns in texts, and specifying their linguistic needs in order to form the syllabus of an ESP course. This resulted in designing textbooks based on the notional/functional approach,

such as the Nucleus (Bates and Dudley-Evans, 1976) and the Focus series (Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993).

The idea of finding particular characteristics in ESP texts was taken further by Swales (1990) who brought together the insights of the above earlier approaches to text analysis (register, and discourse analysis) with a greater sophistication in the examination of the writers' purpose (Dudley-Evans, extracted online in 2014). This gave birth to the **Genre Analysis** stage. In the article: Genre analysis: a key to a theory of ESP? Dudley-Evans (ibid) asserts that:

> "The interest in discourse community and how the expectations and conventions of different discourse communities mold the text that they use has led to this broader view and place ESP research in a position where it can make a meaningful contribution to discussion of how ideas are disseminated and facts created in communities (p.5)."

In other words, Genre analysis inform ESP specialists to analyze discourse samples based on macro (rhetorical, whole text) and micro (lexicogrammatical) level characteristics of the written and spoken genres – routine communicative events represented in memos, conference presentations, job interviews, etc. (Belcher, 2009). Belcher, quoting Bhatia (2004) and Cheng and Mok (2008) explains that:

> "Of interest will be not just these genres in isolation, but the contexts in which they function and interact with other genres: how one genre responds to others (intertextuality or interdiscursivity), such as application letters in response to job ads, and how they, in turn, form large community-specific genre colonies or networks."

Hyland (2007: 148) agrees with the above notion and adds: "genre pedagogies enable teachers to ground their courses in the text that students will have to write in their target contexts, thereby supporting learners to participate effectively in the world outside the ESL classroom." She further asserts that genre-based pedagogies urge "us to go beyond syntactic structures, vocabulary, and composing to incorporate into our teaching the ways language is used in specific contexts (p. 150)".

This reveals the challenges that Genre analysis and pedagogies might create for the humanity-trained ESP teachers who have to deal with students from various specialized disciplines and academic fields. As a result, as ESP experts argue, the success of the ESP programme might very much depend on the flexibility of the teacher and willingness to learn from the various fields.

When this complexity is coupled with having to deal with learners whose language competency is below the expected level, such as the case of the vocational learners in Kuwait, the ESP practitioner might struggle between attempting to raise the learners' standards and to fulfill the course objectives. Hancioglu et al. (2008: 456) argue that:

> "[I]t is likely that learners who have not mastered the general lexico-structural building blocks of the language will struggle with either general or specific academic English courses. In other words, in addition to disciplinary variation, practitioners will equally need to contemplate learner and learning variation."

In some cases, such as in teaching ESP in the context of this study, learners' language problems may lead to the simplification of texts and the amount and use of lexicogrammatical features of the language in such a way that jeopardizes the effectiveness of the syllabus, and questions the authenticity of content and the attainment of objectives.

Returning to the development of ESP, the focus later shifted to learners' **Needs Analysis** or **Target Situation Analysis**. Munby (1978) describes this process, based on his sociolinguistic model of needs assessment, as beginning with the individual learner or group of learners, moving to an investigation of the particular communication needs of the learner, and finally, to the development of an ESP specification that indicates the target communicative competence of the participant. In other words, this stage became concerned with "establishing procedures for relating language analysis more closely to learners' reasons for learning (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987:12)."

A next stage in the development of ESP emphasized **Study Skills Analysis,** described by Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) as based on the idea that underlying all language use are common reasoning and interpreting processes

that, regardless of surface form, enable communicators to extract meaning from discourse. The ESP focus should therefore be on the underlying interpretive strategies with an emphasis on reading and listening strategies that enhance language skills. This brought course designers to a related process in the development of ESP described by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) as the **learner-centered approach**. This approach allows learners to determine what they need or wish to learn and whether or not the ESP course has succeeded or failed in preparing the learner for the target situation.

In carrying out needs using the learner-centered approach, Berwick (1989) and Brindley (1989) suggested that there are two kinds of needs that should be considered: objective or perceived needs (from the perspective of the expert); and subjective or felt needs (from the perspective of the learners). According to Brindley (1989), objective needs are those derived from factual information about learners such as learners' real-life language use situations, their current language proficiency, and their language learning difficulties. Subjective needs, on the other hand, are those derived from information concerning their affective and cognitive factors such as personality, confidence, attitudes, learning wants, learning expectations, cognitive style and learning strategies (Kaewpet, 2009).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987:72) further developed the learner-centered stage and broadened the concept to cover all stakeholders. They argue that:

> "Learning is not just a mental process as the learner-centered approach implies, it is rather a process of negotiation between individuals and society that sets the target, and individuals must do their best to get as close to that target."

This announced the development of the **Learning-centered approach** to need analysis that focused on two aspects of needs: target needs, and learning needs. In other words, the learning-centered approach addressed needs analysis by working out what was needed to enable students to reach the end target, considering students' learning skills, and considering that different students learn in different ways.

The above presentation of the development of ESP suggests that this approach has been generally concerned with procedures and practical outcomes of language courses. As Dudley-Evans and St. Johns (1998:32) put it:

> "ESP has been in the vanguard of the development in ELT, moving from grammatical, functional and notional syllabuses to a more eclectic and task-based approach."

This brought ESP to another stage in its development and advocates such as Long (2005) suggested a **task-based approach** to needs analysis and teaching and learning ESP. He suggested that teaching and learning should not focus on structures of linguistic elements, rather, it should focus on how learners use the language in performing different tasks. He argues that:

> “Learners are far more active and cognitive-independent participants in the acquisition process than is assumed by the erroneous belief that what you teach is what they learn, and when you teach it is when they learn it (p.3)”

As a result, in this type of assessment, tasks become the units of analysis along with the samples of discourse typically involved in performing the target tasks. In the ESP classroom a task-based activity provides authentic training in how to transfer the language skills taught in the class to practical job-related situations (Chen, 2005).

3.6. ESP Courses

Since ESP is a training course that prepares learners for their prospective occupation and acquaints them with the language skills needed to carry out their tasks effectively and efficiently, authenticity, simulation, and freedom become three basic concepts relevant to the design of an ESP course. In Gatehouse’s (2001) words, these features are identified as: a) authentic material, b) purpose-related orientation, and c) self-direction.

3.6.1 Authenticity

Whether texts used for reading, listening and writing exercises should be authentic or not, caused a good deal of controversy in the development of ESP (Dudley-Evans and St. Johns, 1998:27). The exact meaning of authenticity has often been unclear. McDonough (1984) for example, has listed a number of

terms that are used with regards to authenticity – 'genuine', 'authentic', 'real', 'natural', 'scripted', 'contrived', 'semi-authentic', 'semi-scripted', 'simulated, 'simulated-authentic'. This indicates that there are different degrees of authenticity of language. However, as Jordan (1997:113) puts it, "the issue is not simply one of authenticity of language data, but of purpose or task, and from the writer's/speaker's, and from the reader's/listener's point of view." He further suggests that the solution for the authenticity dispute is to view it from at least four angles: authenticity of language input, task, event, and learner experience.

The goal of any ESP course is to enable learners to perform certain life defined roles closely related to what they will encounter in the target situation. In order to stimulate the learner's enthusiasm and sustain motivation and ambition to reach that goal, it is important to approximate real life language that match the target situation. This, in my view, is again based on the course objectives informed by learners' and target's needs – the need to use specific genre, and the ability to exploit the language skillfully for communication purposes in particular job contexts. Any course that takes this view in consideration becomes authentic.

Inauthentic course and material then could become demotivating and boring to ESP learners whose purpose for learning the language is more narrowly focused and specifically linked to academic or job purposes. It could be argued that if the learner sees that the language to which s/he is being exposed does not meet his communicative target needs, s/he will run the risk of becoming de-motivated, which could have a serious negative impact on his language learning. But, to what extent is authenticity justified?

Some ESP specialists suggest that authentic texts should be genuine, that is, they should be presented to the learner in their 'raw state' without being simplified by the teacher. They suggest that texts simplified or specially written by ESP teachers may be misleading models of texts for students as the teacher may write in unnatural and inappropriate language. However, Morrow (1977) was against the blind use of authentic texts in their 'raw state' that are first and mainly used to fit particular situations other than classroom purposes. He

justified his belief on the basis that if some ESP texts are not simplified or pedagogically modified, they can place the learner in a situation in which he has to struggle to grasp the meaning of complex prose, and can make the teacher's task, especially if s/he has little foundation in the specific area of knowledge, much harder to achieve. Moreover, the teacher will be heavily burdened with two simultaneous tasks, the knowledge of the subject, and the knowledge of the language, which could be more than s/he can cope with.

Jordan (1997) as one of the advocators of using such raw materials or what is "written by specialists for specialists" stated:

> "In the most straightforward interpretation, one can say that an authentic text will be that which is normally used in the students' specialist subject area: written by specialists for specialists. It is not written for language teaching purposes (p. 113)."

His statement raises concern regarding authenticity of text (or speech recording) in a classroom. For example, how appropriate will a text written by specialists for specialists be for a language classroom? Thus, Jordan suggests that ESP teachers and educators should discuss and question the appropriateness of the language learning context if the text has been removed from its original context, the appropriateness of the topic purpose and language level, and their relevance to students' needs – whether the use of such a text is necessary, and whether students will gain anything from it. He adds that it might be preferable to use an adapted text or a specially prepared one in earlier stages of learning as long as it is suitable for the students, and concludes that,

> "There is nothing intrinsically wrong with non-authentic texts, especially in the earlier stages of language learning: it depends on the pedagogic purposes in using the texts. However, as soon as students can cope with texts from their own subject area, they should have the opportunity of reading (listening to) them. This presupposes that there is a clearly-defined and appropriate purpose-communicative and pedagogic-combined with a meaningful context that information gap and task-dependency principle can be adhered to (p. 114)."

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) argue that it is more important to ensure that the activities based on the text reflect the learning process than to use genuine texts from the target situation. They further state that it is not the degree of authenticity of the text, but the uses to which it is put in teaching communicative skills. Similarly, Morrow (1977) believes that a text, which is communicatively oriented, can be regarded as authentic in so far as it meets the communicative needs of a particular group of learners who actually have clear insight of why they are learning the language.

Widdowson (1979) agrees with the above argument and believes that if communication fails to take place because of the learner's imperfect knowledge of such original materials, the language in question is not authentic because communicative authenticity is the basic requirement for ESP materials. For him authenticity is derived from the term communicative efficiency. In the same manner, Dudley-Evans and St. Johns (1998:28) believe that:

> "A key aspect of authenticity is the level of the text exploited in the ESP class. An unsimplified text on a science topic designed for school pupils just beginning to study science is a genuine text, but is not an authentic text for university level students, as these students will not be able to use it to confirm or extend their knowledge of the topic they are studying on their course work."

At this point there seems to be confusion between genuineness and authenticity. In order to clarify the difference between these two terms, Widdowson (1979:80) neatly defines them as:

> "Genuineness is a characteristic of the passage itself and is an absolute quality. Authenticity is a characteristic of the relationship between the passage and the reader and it has to do with the appropriate response."

In my opinion, the authentic text becomes meaningless if it does not meet the communicative requirements of the target situation and does not help the learner to communicate effectively in the target situation. However, a point that should be considered here is that ESP is a language course. It uses the specialist text or content to teach the language not the specialist subject.

Moreover, in order for the texts to be effective and promote learning, it is important to consider the learners' and the teachers' language as well as content competencies. Alan Waters (1998:10) argued a couple of decades ago that whether we like it or not,

> "[M]uch that goes on at present under the banner of ESP is really only remedial English, an attempt to make good the gaps created by inadequacies at the secondary school level."

In other words, although there is a need for more advanced content, there is far greater need for less specialized content that, nevertheless, has sufficient face-validity to distinguish it from those associated with general English. He further indicates that such content would relate broadly at least to specialized fields of study or work, but would be of a kind that the averagely educated layperson can take an intelligent interest in it.

One of the advantages of such content especially in the Kuwaiti context is that it keeps with the capabilities of the average ESP teacher of today who is often quite unable to cope with the highly technical content of the conventional ESP materials. Therefore, the content of ESP materials should be "learner-centred" and "teacher-friendly" (Hutchinson quoted by Alan Waters (1998:11). Dudley-Evans and St. Johns (1998:28) argue that:

> "A key question is whether activities based on the text reflect the way in which the text would actually be used by students in their course work. Exercises that ask students to answer comprehension questions by finding relevant sentences in the text are not authentic, but those that ask students to use information from the text in a task or problem-solving activity are."

Authenticity then lies in the nature of the interaction between the reader or hearer and the text. Thus, the ESP teacher is responsible for designing a methodology that will establish conditions whereby this authenticity can be ultimately achieved.

3.6.2 Purpose-Related Orientation

The second key concept, which Gatehouse (2001) termed as purpose-related orientation, refers to the simulation of communicative tasks required of the target setting. Simulation of a conference, for instance, involves the preparation of papers, reading, note taking and writing. As with English for Business courses, Carver (1983) suggests that students might be involved in the design and presentation of a unique business venture, including market research, pamphlets, and logo creations. Gatehouse's (2001) programme for health science students involves them in attending seminars on improving listening skills. Students practice listening skills such as listening with empathy, and then employ their newly acquired skills in field trips to their target places. So simulation activities can be used as a valid indicator or tool whereby the teacher can measure and assess the learner's linguistic output and verbal performance which reveals the learner's weaknesses and strengths, and where they are failing or succeeding.

Simulation is significant because the language almost replicates the target situation in the real world. It is both functional and cohesive. It is the language of action and interaction. Since most simulations have plenty of opportunities for action, interaction, reaction and counteraction, they provide innumerable chances for language skills and consequently for communication. Participants have to communicate because of the need inherent in the simulation activity. They argue, analyze, negotiate, conciliate, agree, denounce, explore problems and reach conclusions not in order to please the controller (the teacher), but because of the duties inherent in their functions. According to Johnson (1982:9),

> "A good simulation is like a nuclear power breeder reactor; it produces its own fuel. Communication leads to more communication, ideas generate ideas, talk leads to thought and thought leads to talk."

Because simulation, by its nature, employs interaction in learning through negotiation, conciliation, mediation, exploration, agreement and denouncement, participants become ultimately closer to each other. Hence, it develops fellow

feeling within groups, “shakes up the pecking order of the class”, and breaks the ice between individuals. In Johnson’s (1982:12) words,

> "A good simulation can break up the frosty silences, allow and encourage well-motivated talk and action."

The stimulating and interesting nature of simulation relieves students from monotonous classroom patterns, thus, raises their motivational levels (Nunan, 1987) and saves teachers from getting trapped in stilted sets of teaching routines that limit the use of creativity and innovation.

3.6.3 Self-Direction

Self-direction, as Gatehouse (2001:5) explains, is a characteristic of ESP courses, since it helps learners to be users. "In order for self-direction to occur, the learners must have a certain degree of freedom to decide when, what and how they will study." Some researchers found out that negotiating the course content and considering learners’ views in ESP course design increases learners’ motivation to participate in the class (Kaur, 2007) and enhances learning possibilities.

However, there is a controversy on whether the ESP course design should help students focus on practicing learning strategies, or learning and mastering skills required to access data. Carver (1983) believes that it is crucial to teach learners how to learn, by teaching them about learning strategies. However, Gatehouse (2001) argues that it is not. She further suggests that what is rather essential for these learners is learning how to access information in a new culture.

In my opinion the two concepts are not contradictory. They can however be employed in accordance with the level of the programme offered. In other words, learners’ language ability and the stage of learning determine whether a programme is designed for younger learners with little knowledge of the language and no previous experience in the target fields. In this case, Carver’s suggestion would be beneficial in designing general language courses that precede ESP programmes in colleges such as the context of this study. At the same time, if the programme is designed for a more mature group of learners

with respect to their knowledge of the language and to their work experience, then Gatehouse's suggestion could be more suitable.

Moreover, in designing the ESP curriculum, it is important to ensure that content experts (who are familiar with the target situation's professional needs), ESP curriculum developers and designers, in addition to teachers (who implement the programme in classroom situation) work closely together (Gatehouse, 2001). Though, in most cases the teacher's role is not limited to teaching ready-made material, it is in fact crucial to decide what material to be used and how it is presented. Therefore, self-directed learning techniques are seen as preferable in ESP, because the students are likely to be involved in a vocational or professional rather than in an academic track. Additionally, part of any adult education programme is to prepare the adult learner for work-oriented functionality and performance efficacy.

Since it is impossible to expect that a curriculum developer will be in a position to identify a perfect balance of abilities for any particular group of learners, a large part of this responsibility accrues to teachers who are in the best position to identify changing learner needs, and to ensure that all students receive a balanced diet of language.

The above argument demonstrates how critical is the role of ESP instructors with regards to ensuring that materials used in learning are directly related to the target setting, and that learners are provided with sufficient opportunities to familiarize themselves with the target situation materials. This clearly has implications on methods that are to be used in an ESP course.

3.7 ESP Teaching Material

ESP teaching materials, in general, are either prepared by teachers, or chosen from a large body of published ESP books that are readily available in the market. However, as Jones (1990) explains, many ESP areas are still not adequately catered for, and Gatehouse (2001) even doubts the availability of ESP materials. Although Jones argument is more than two decades old, unfortunately, it remains true to this day (Hyland, 2006), because most of the readily available books are not written considering specific contexts, nor are

they based on particular learners' needs. Hyland (2006: 5) argues, "textbooks continue too often to depend on the writer's experience and intuition rather than on systematic research." As a result, many teachers end up selecting teaching materials based on their availability (Sysoyev, 2000). Like the case of ESP teaching in Kuwait, Sysoyev (ibid) clarifies that in teaching ESP in Russia the selected materials often determine the contents of the course and serve as a justification and explanation of the use of the same syllabus with different students. In learner-centered instruction, the appropriateness of materials includes learner comfort and familiarity with the material, language level, interest, and relevance. However, in some situations such as the case in Russia (Sysoyev, ibid) and Kuwait (Al-Bazzaz, 1994), teachers are dependent on the materials and are required to use the same textbook over and over again with different groups of learners, and in some cases, for more than one ESP course. In other cases, ESP teachers find themselves more often than ever in a situation where they are expected to produce a course that exactly matches the needs of a group of learners within a very limited preparation time. Therefore, in order to choose from what is available, teachers should constantly track down useful ESP instructional materials. Focusing on this issue, Gatehouse (2001:9) explains:

> "Familiarizing one's self with useful instructional materials is part of growing as a teacher, regardless of the nature of purpose for learning. Given that ESP is an approach and not a subject to be taught, curricular materials will unavoidably be pieced together, some borrowed and others designed specially. Resources will include authentic materials, ESL materials, ESP materials, and teacher-generated materials."

It is worth mentioning here that at vocational colleges in Kuwait, ESP teachers depend mainly on textbooks and use supplementary materials from books and online sources. The use of non-paper materials such as videos, realia, and educational technology are totally neglected due to the unequipped classrooms. The problem of unequipped classroom then could result in the best available textbook that makes use of instructional technology to become ineffective.

3.8 The ESP Practitioner's roles

The distinctive nature of ESP has affected and changed the role of the language teacher in the ESP environment. Swales (1985) suggests that the word "practitioner" is more appropriate than the word "teacher", which reflects the fact that in addition to the normal functions of a classroom teacher the ESP practitioner is expected to assess learners' needs and design courses accordingly – setting course objectives, arranging syllabuses, and choosing material that help in attaining those objectives. They also need to establish positive learning environment (Fiorito, 2005) that promotes learning, and to engage in an ongoing evaluation of course effectiveness and students' learning (Carkin, 2005, cited in Harwood and Pertić, 2011). In addition to all of that, the practitioners who generally dwell in a strange and uncharted land of ESP (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) need to collaborate with specialist teachers for support and guidance in understanding new content imposed on them by their profession. The ESP practitioners' roles will be discussed separately, following Dudley-Evans and St John's model (1998), as follows:

3.8.1 The role of a researcher

The ESP practitioner's role as a researcher involves carrying out needs analysis the core activity in ESP that determine the choice of all the other activities such as course and syllabus designing, material selecting or adapting, and deciding the criteria for assessment and evaluation. Conducting needs analysis is not an easy task. A teacher who decides to carry out needs analysis needs to have a sound background in research methodologies and the philosophical stances underpinning them, and an awareness of the development of needs assessment and their aims and objectives in ESP. Many humanity-trained teachers usually lack the above-mentioned skills. That is why ESP teacher development and training programmes need to take this reality into consideration when they design their courses.

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998: 15) suggest that "ESP teachers need to be aware and in touch with research," because it helps those involved in conducting needs analysis, designing ESP courses, and producing teaching materials "to incorporate the findings of the research" and be aware of "what is

involved in skills such as written communication." Moreover, they suggest that ESP practitioners should take needs analysis a step further, from identifying specific target tasks, skills, and texts, "to observe as far as possible the samples of the identified texts" in order to understand the discourse of the texts that students use. This has been identified as the task-based approach to needs analysis as was stated earlier in this chapter.

In my view, this is an important aspect of the role of a teacher as a researcher. The reason behind this belief is that target situation analysis could be conducted once every few years, because target needs do not vastly change every year. However, learners' needs need to be assessed more often and with each group of students. The analysis of how learners approach a task, how they manipulate the language in performing it, and what informs their choice of language could provide the teacher-researcher with a rich data regarding the strategies and skills learners use to learn a language and the factors that influence them. This provides the ESP practitioners with a wealth of knowledge and insights that can assist them in making informed pedagogical choices that are potentially more effective in fulfilling course objectives.

3.8.2 The role of course designer and material provider

As a course designer and material provider the ESP practitioner needs to first establish what is it that the learners need to accomplish by the end of the course or the programme. Thus, s/he needs to be aware of the results of the target and language needs of the learners. Once the aims are determined, the ESP practitioner could either choose from published material or adapt when the published material is not suitable. In occasional cases when suitable material does not exist, s/he needs to write material with the help of some experts if possible. Although this might seem as an overwhelming role for humanity-trained or novice ESP teachers, however, Dudley-Evans and St. John (ibid) "believe that such demands make ESP teaching interesting."

3.8.3 The role of course and material evaluator

As an evaluator, the ESP practitioner needs to assess learners' understanding of the nature of language use in target settings and their mastering of the skills needed to exploit the language and perform certain required tasks. In other

words, s/he needs to evaluate the level of competency achieved. The practitioner also needs to assess the effectiveness of the course and material in providing students with the necessary knowledge, and whether the course objectives have been accomplished. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998: 17) assert that evaluation should be done "while the course is being taught, at the end of the course and after the course has finished." They further argue that it is important that ESP teachers "follow up with students some time after the course in order to assess whether the learners have been able to make use of what they learned and to find out what they were not prepared for." This kind of ongoing evaluation that extends after the end of the course helps teachers modify their syllabus to improve the outcome of their courses.

In ESP, evaluating teaching material is important in order to realize the theoretical view underpinning it – whether it is based on the traditional "empty vessel's" view of learning, or whether it is based on a more active approach that provides cognitive development. The use of different approaches could be justified by the appropriateness of the chosen approach or approaches and their effectiveness in fulfilling course objectives. Thus, effective decisions about what material is appropriate for teaching a specific course and for promoting learners' awareness and understanding in ESP becomes possible only when the ESP practitioner has adequate knowledge and understanding of the teaching and learning theories, and the nature of ESP teaching and practices (Burns, 1992; Smith, 1996). In other words, ESP practitioners need to use their knowledge to make sure that teaching materials conform to the course objectives, and choose ESP activities such as simulations, problem-solving, and specific tasks that encourage learners to negotiate and interpret meaning and challenge them cognitively as well as linguistically (Nunan, 1995).

3.8.4 The role of a teacher

As was stated earlier in this chapter, there have been some debates among language specialist about the changing role of the language teacher in the ESP classroom. While some might still argue that the humanity-trained teachers' knowledge is adequate for teaching ESP, ESP advocates who disagree, base their argument for the differences perceived between the EGP and ESP

teachers on the types of methods, authentic materials, realistic classroom activities and tasks, and on the learners' specialist content knowledge that might be foreign to the ESP teacher. In this regard Dudley-Evans and St John (1998: 13) stress that:

> "[T]he teacher is not in the position of being the 'primary knower' of carrier content of the material. The students in many cases know more about the content than the teacher."

In such situations, rather than functioning as a model, a facilitator, or an organizer, this key individual becomes a catalyst, a negotiator and a consultant on how best to exploit the communication practices to meet learners' needs and purposes. This entails teachers who are flexible and "willing to listen to learners, and take interest in their disciplines and professional activities (p. 14)." In addition, they need to think and respond swiftly to unanticipated classroom events and be willing to take risks, which Dudley-Evans and St John (ibid) consider as "one of the keys to success in ESP teaching."

3.8.5 The role of a collaborator

Many linguists and ESP specialists such as Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), Crandall (1998), Bynom (2000), and others discuss the important role of the ESP teacher in collaboration and team-teaching with subject teachers or field specialists. The subject teacher could be consulted as the 'carrier content' to comment on the teaching materials that the ESP teacher has prepared. Additionally, the subject specialist teacher could join the language teacher to team-teach the class. Dudley-Evans and St Johns (1998: 16) call this kind of cooperation in teaching "the fullest collaboration." They further stress that collaboration and team-teaching enhance classroom interaction and improve students' motivation and self-confidence. Bynom (2000) agrees and proves that team-teaching has successfully improved the written and oral communication skills of most students in a study he conducted in the engineering department of the United Arab Emirates University (UAE). In this regard, Bynom (2000:40) states:

> "Team teaching approach enabled us to build a bottom up ESP curriculum based on the students' actual needs. This approach improved their English language skills and addressed their

> problems related to oral presentations and report writing. Regardless of their overall use of English, students display more confidence in using the language."

Language and subject teachers may also work together on curriculum and materials development that provides an ongoing professional development, hence, deepens the understanding of what is involved in integrated instruction. Even when collaboration is limited to two or more English language teachers engaged in addressing common concerns, the opportunities for inspection, reflection, and the impact on one's practice can be profound (Crandall, 1998:7).

Anderson (2002) takes collaboration a step further and asserts that collaborative working relationships among teachers provide a very important context for the re-assessment of educational values and beliefs. Teachers could cross-examine their values, and those of their colleagues, against their learners. This kind of teamwork and collaboration, as Anderson suggests, could have a powerful influence on reforming context. This is especially important in the ESP context, because its interactive nature requires learners who are willing to engage in various communicative tasks, and a context that promotes such engagement.

Another relevant issue that researchers recommend for a successful ESP programme, including teachers' professional development, is classroom observation. Crandall (1998) argues that peer observation can be a powerful source of insight discovery and development. He states that:

> "Observation can help experienced teachers develop new strategies and experience a kind of renewal, since most will not have had the opportunity of observing different teaching strategies or classrooms in many years, if at all (Crandall, 1998:5)."

He further adds that: "if it is not possible to engage in classroom observation, it may be possible to have classes videotaped. Individual teachers or groups can then engage in discussion and reflection."

Unfortunately at academic levels, and particularly at vocational colleges in Kuwait, language teachers resist classroom observation not only for research

purposes, but also for educational and professional development. In fact, during data collection for the current study, one of the interviewees' responses to classroom observation was that she would not even let her own mother observe her classroom. This hostility towards classroom observation could stem from the application of the traditional scientific approaches in educational research. Educational researchers used to observe and analyze teaching to distinguish between good and bad teaching habits in order to quantify good actions (causes) that produced good results (effects). In doing so, finding errors in teachers' behaviours and actions was inevitable. Therefore, offering training courses and workshops that could raise teachers' awareness regarding qualitative and quantitative approaches and the different objectives that they are designed to serve can minimize this problem. They can also illuminate the benefits of research and classroom observation and their role in broadening teachers' knowledge and promoting professional growth.

3.9 ESP Teacher Training Programme

EGP teachers who are assigned to take up the ESP practitioner's role with no or limited orientation towards ESP activities and with the lack of orthodoxy to provide a ready-made guide (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 158), such as the case of language teachers in the context of this study, and in some other parts of the world (Harwood & Pertić, 2011), might find it difficult to cope with learners whose professional interests are non-linguistic and whose English skills centre upon scientific or technological vocabularies. In addition, their new and demanding environment could trigger some challenging situations for teachers as they try to perform some imposed activities that their previous training did not prepare them for.

Unfortunately, the ESP profession in the context of this study lacks teacher-training programmes that prepare teachers for their new environment and enable them to undertake their responsibilities more efficiently. The lack of teacher training programmes is not unique to the Kuwaiti context, for example, T.Y. Chen (2000: 389) argues that: "the main difficulty against provision of ESP courses in Taiwanese universities is lack of ESP background among general English teachers." Harwood and Pertić (2011: 252) agree with Chen's view and

argue, “[a] discussion of the nature of such training has largely been neglected to date.” Consequently, institutions that offer ESP programmes need to provide training courses to acquaint humanity-trained teachers with a sound knowledge of both theoretical and practical developments in ESP, and familiarize them with the various ESP activities and processes in order to enable them to make the range of decisions they are called upon to make (Swales, 1971; Hutchinson & Waters 1987). In addition to the familiarity with their roles and the nature of ESP teaching, ESP teachers are required to be aware of the nature of language use in the target places in order to make good pedagogical choices. As a result, specialists such as Jackson (1998, cited in Harwood & Pertić, ibid), argues for the use of case studies in ESP teacher training, and Chen (2000) suggests self-training and action research.

3.10 Motivation and the ESP learner

In general, motivation is considered a key factor influencing the learning process in a language classroom. The significance of this factor is reflected by a great number of writers who discussed the effects of motivation on learning a foreign language (Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Kennedy, 1980). In ESP, experts believe that since the courses are geared towards learners’ needs and learning aims, ESP learners reveal higher motivational levels compared with EGP learners (Robinson, 1980; Swales, 1985; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Brown, 2007). However, this could only be true when the learners already know why they are learning the language and believe that the ESP programme will assist in reaching their goals. Thus, ESP teachers and course designers need to consider ESP learners’ characteristics such as age, language proficiencies, preferred learning styles and strategies, background, interest and purpose for learning that are proved to be essential for effective ESP course design (Chen, 2005; Hyland, 2006) and influential in enhancing motivation and promoting learning.

The benefits of tailoring courses considering all the above elements, in some ESP experts’ (Hutchison & Waters, 1987) and researchers’ (Chen, 2006; Davies, 2006; Kaur, 2007, Hyland, 2006; Harwood & Pertić, 2011) views, become more constructive if it also includes the learner’s views as one of the

stakeholders. That is why Benesch (2001, cited in Harwood & Pertić, 2011: 247) "prefers to speak of *rights analysis* rather than needs analysis, emphasizing the importance of giving the learners a say about what they are taught."

The rationale is, that since ESP is focused around learners' needs for learning, their views about the 'what' and 'how' of teaching becomes central to ESP course and materials design. Therefore, overlooking learners' perceptions might result in learners' losing interest and motivation.

However, involving learners in pedagogical choices might be problematic in countries such as Kuwait where pre-college education does not foster learner-centeredness, autonomy (Al-Nouh, 2008; Al-Rubaie, 2010; Al-Nwaiem, 2012), critical thinking and analytical skills that are central to ESP and its task- and content-based approaches. Therefore, their views about what should or should not be included in the syllabus become questionable. Moreover, their prior experiences as learners might influence their views and contradict the interactive nature of the ESP practices. According to Nunan (2006: 274),

> "learning outcomes will be influenced by learners' perceptions about what constitutes legitimate classroom activity. If the learners have been conditioned by years of instruction through a synthetic [traditional] approach […] they may question the legitimacy of a program based on an analytical [cognitive/communicative] view of language learning."

One of the effects of such a gap between students' traditional learning backgrounds and the communicative nature of ESP is the disparity between what teachers intend as the outcome of a task-based activity, and what the learners actually derive from it. Nunan (2006: 275), whose studies revealed that while we as teachers might be focusing on one thing, learners could be focusing on other things, suggests that "we cannot be sure, then, that learners will not look for grammatical patterns when taking part in activities designed to focus them on meaning, and look for meaning in tasks designed to focus them on grammatical form." In order to minimize such a problem, Davies (2006) suggests that ESP teachers could use a class-specific questionnaire that he proved to be valuable in course planning as it provides some distinctive and

personal understanding of learners' needs. The narrowly focused structure of such survey that reflects classroom content and events is believed to reduce learners' misinterpretations of the teachers' intentions.

Therefore, in addition to the knowledge of ESP content and pedagogy, and the understanding of ESP practitioners' various roles, ESP teachers' knowledge should include the awareness of learners' educational backgrounds, language needs, attitudes, abilities and learning styles. This is important in order to maintain learners' motivational levels and ensure successful learning outcomes. The above elements then become important constructs that form ESP teachers' knowledge.

3.11 Conclusion

In this chapter I introduced and discussed the emergence and development of ESP as a practical approach to language teaching that is geared towards learners' specific target needs. I also discussed the elements needed for the success of an ESP programme, along with the various roles that are imposed on humanity-trained language teachers in the ESP domain. Motivation, a key factor in learning accomplishment, was also tackled for its association with ESP as a course relevant to learners' purposes for learning.

The next chapter presents part two of the Literature Review: teachers' knowledge and classroom practices.

Literature Review: Part two

3.12 Preview:

In this part of the Literature Review I introduce literature related to teacher knowledge and classroom practices – both historical and current literature, as well as theoretical and empirical studies, will be considered herein to provide an overview of the thinking and practice relevant to the teaching of ESP.

3.13 Research on teacher knowledge and practice

The past three decades witnessed a shift of perspectives in psychological and educational studies from focusing on the cause and effects of a phenomenon in order to control the outcome, to trying to cognitively understand and consciously construct knowledge about it in order to improve it. In the field of education in general and language education in particular the focus of research has been on teachers' subject matter knowledge and on quantifying a set of characteristics that enabled teachers to put their knowledge effectively into practice to ensure students' learning. The synthesized characteristics of good teaching behavior that resulted from the process-product (behavioral) research were introduced to prospective teachers in initial teacher education programmes and/or as part of professional development. Expecting teachers to "acknowledge the value of researchers' work for their own professional practice and to accept its validity for their day-to-day decisions (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993: 1)", teacher education programmes were "organized to disseminate a knowledge base constructed almost exclusively by outside experts (ibid)." This, as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) suggested, meant that teachers were expected to learn about their own profession, throughout their career, by studying research findings of those who were not themselves school-based researchers, at the expense of their own experience, judgment, and understanding of 'how' various classroom realities could result in students' learning.

In the field of language education, behavioural researchers, influenced by Skinner's theory of stimuli and response, applied scientific methods to investigate the relationship between input and output – teachers' performance

and students' competence – in an attempt to recognize "good" stimuli that ensured successful outcome – learning (Freeman, 1996; Richards, 1998; Shulman, 1987). Consequently, teachers were encouraged to follow the theorists' suggestions and focus on mechanical skill learning and building (Berliner, 1990; Shulman, 1987). Kumaravadivelu (2006) maintains that a teacher's role, during the behaviorist's period, was perceived as passive technicians that needed to transfer the goods – teacher-proof packages – suggested by experts to their students. Teachers and their teaching methods, however, were not considered very important, as it was hard to empirically prove their effectiveness. As a result, "teacher education programs of that time focused on the *education* part than the *teacher* part (p.8)."

The dissatisfaction with the mechanical and impractical nature of the suggested inputs and practices (Roberts, 1998) compelled teacher researchers to question the efficacy of the behaviorists suggested theory and criticize their application of scientific approaches in pursuit of effective teaching behaviours that proved ineffective in a lot of cases. Prominent teacher-researchers such as Elbaz (1981, 1983), Clandinin (1989), Clandinin and Connolly (1987) Golombek (1998), Shulman (1987), and Kagan (1992) believed that a big gap existed between theory and practice, because researchers who followed objective scientific methods have disregarded the complexity and interdependency of teacher behaviour. The rationale, as stated above, was that scientific or process-product research perceived teachers as passive recipients of their products (effective teaching characteristics and behaviour) overlooking the significant role of teachers' decisions in implementing the theoretical products – the suggested stimuli, and in reproducing their own knowledge in the process – whether they found the stimuli to be effective in promoting learning. Shulman (1987) used the above argument to justify his view that behaviorist's teaching theories that excluded teachers' views, theories, and practical decisions were partial and incomplete. In the same vein, Elbaz (ibid) believed that teachers who come to their classes with accumulated prior and practical knowledge, and who are aware more than anyone else with the reality of their classroom environment can be more reliable sources of data on what goes on in the classroom and why, and how that affected learning. This realization surfaced

parallel to the shift in research perspectives in both psychology and psychoanalysis activities that recognized the importance of how people synthesized their experience and constructed knowledge about their realities based on some cognitive processes. It encouraged researchers to explore and understand how teachers' conceptualized what they know and how that knowledge was utilized in their classroom practices.

At the same time, the development of the constructivist epistemology, which gives credibility to people's knowledge based on experience – that knowledge is constructed on previous learning – encouraged researchers to apply qualitative methods such as interviews and classroom observations followed by stimulated recall interviews, to explore the nature of teachers' knowledge based on a holistic perspective: where it comes from, how it informs their practices, and how it encourages future development.

Fenstermacher (1994: 3) suggested that the interest in exploring and understanding "knowledge that teachers generate as a result of their experience as teachers, in contrast to the knowledge of teaching that is generated by those who specialize in research on teaching" resulted in a growing body of research in this domain. He reviewed studies on teachers' knowledge and grouped them under different categories based on their epistemological stances as follows:

1. ***What is known about effective teaching?***

Researchers who attempted to answer this question looked for keys to effective teaching. Fenstermacher (1994: 7) states that, "researchers in this category do not see themselves as studying teacher knowledge so much as they perceive themselves producing knowledge about teaching […] they seek the determinants of good (successful or effective) teaching." A good example of this category is the process-product studies mentioned above.

The drive behind this type of research could be found in educational researchers attempts to establish scientific basis for teaching in order to give it a professional status such as the case in medicine and law. One of the prominent names in this type of work is Gage (1978, cited in Fenstermacher,

1994: 7) who believed that teaching was an art based on a science. As a result, his work focused on grounding a scientific base for teaching, consisting of "truly specialized knowledge" (Berliner, 1994: 8, cited in Fenstermacher) that was developed scientifically based on the relationship between variables. Such knowledge in his belief was achieved "from studies that use conventional scientific methods, quantitative and qualitative [...] [that] intended to yield a commonly accepted degree of significance, validity, generalizability, and intersubjectivity."

However, critics to this type of research such as Golombek and Freeman argued that the scientific approaches to studying teacher knowledge have failed to recognize that teaching is behavioural, contextual and non-personal. Moreover, they have taken for granted the reality that teachers' knowledge is, paradoxically, given to teachers by outside authorities, as aforementioned. In this regard, Golombek (1994) stated that following a positivist approach in conceptualizing and researching teachers' knowledge could have negative implications due to its decontextualized nature that may deny the experience of the individual and/or groups involved in the teaching situation studied. She further argued that:

> "What gets defined as teachers' knowledge may not only be ineffectual in practical terms for the teacher but may marginalize the status of teachers whose knowledge lies outside of the status knowledge domain (p. 405)."

2. *What do teachers know?*

In contrast to the first category of research, which aimed at producing knowledge for teachers to use, the second question "What do teachers know?" sought to explore what teachers already know. Because researchers undertaking this type of study didn't view teachers as "empty vessels", rather they believed that teachers have accumulated a great deal of knowledge through training and experience, and that this knowledge inspires teachers' practices. Clandinin (1986: 8-9) one of the prominent pioneers in this type of research asserted that:

> "Teachers are commonly acknowledged as having had experiences but they are credited with little knowledge gained from experience. The omission is due in part to the fact that we have not had ways of thinking about this practical knowledge and in part because we fail to recognize more practically oriented knowledge."

Richards (1994) agreed with this view and that of Goodson (1992 cited in Richards, ibid), emphasizing that:

> "Teachers do not separate their lives from their actions in the classroom, and it is our life experiences which help make us what we are, both personally and professionally (p. 403)."

In an attempt to understand what and how teachers know, two strands of research appeared under this category:

1. Those that focused on teachers' practical knowledge, and include the works of Elbaz, Freeman, and Clandinin and Connelly.
2. Those that focused on reflective knowledge, and include the works of Schön, Munby, and Russell.

Since this study attempts to explore teachers' knowledge and practices and their justification for their decisions and actions, both teachers' practical and reflective knowledge will be further discussed later in this chapter.

3. What knowledge is essential for teaching?

Dissatisfied with the influence of the process-product research on studies related to teaching and teacher thinking, Shulman (1986, 1987, 1989, and 1992) argued that the above line of research has been narrowly focused and unproductive for teaching and teacher education (Calderhead, 1993:12). His works on teachers' knowledge proposed that teachers needed both formal (theory-based) knowledge, and practical knowledge (knowledge constructed through experience). Later, as his work developed, he distinguished three types of knowledge: propositional, case, and strategic. He suggested that propositional and case knowledge though appearing to be a blend of formal and practical knowledge represents ways of holding knowledge. While strategic knowledge, which constitutes professional judgment, is what teachers do to

resolve conflicts when principles of practice clash. In other words, strategic knowledge is the skilled settlement of conflicts between the rules of principle (developed out of propositional knowledge) and specific instances encountered in practice (cases or case knowledge). As a result, strategic knowledge is well situated within the boundaries of practical knowledge. In contrast to Elbaz's, and Clandinin and Connelly's works that took a more descriptive stance, Shulman's work was normatively oriented and focused on what he called pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), which will be tackled further in this chapter.

4. Who produces knowledge about teaching?

As interest in researching teachers' knowledge and practices in order to develop knowledge base for teaching expanded, researchers such as Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan Lytle (1990, 1993) started what they called the "teacher-researcher movement". Questioning who should produce knowledge for teachers and teaching, they argued that teachers are not mechanical or passive consumers of other people's knowledge (University-based research), but play a professional role in generating their own knowledge and utilizing both self-produced knowledge as well as those produced by others in the field. Influenced by Schön's (1983, 1987, 1991) notion of knowledge-in-action and reflective practice (Dewey, 1933), as well as the concept of action research (Bailey, 2001, Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993) these researchers called for a "systematic, intentional inquiry by teacher", which takes the form of journals, essays, oral discussions and analysis, and more structured studies of classroom activities. Advocates of action research believed that by involving themselves in this type of inquiry, teachers develop theories to "interpret, understand, and eventually transform the social life of schools (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993: 88)." In other words, the above movement of who should produce knowledge about teaching was based on the principle that though academic research is valuable in its own right, it has little practical implications for teachers, and on the conviction that teachers are valuable resources about their own classroom situations and contextual realities. Their observation, data collection, interpretation, and reflection were believed to produce more credible

results and generate practical implications that fulfill their actual needs (Troudi, 2003).

Fenstermacher (1994) argues that in addition to the importance of practical knowledge that Shulman and Cochran-Smith & Lytle share with the aforementioned researchers, they draw attention to the importance of regarding both formal and practical knowledge in establishing the knowledge base required for teaching. In other words, the identification of the two types of knowledge that Bernstein (2000) referred to as 'horizontal' and 'vertical' became important elements of teacher knowledge that the new movement in research on teacher knowledge acknowledged and supported.

Based on the above review, it could be argued that the current study is informed by the second and third types of research on teacher knowledge, which aims to explore what teachers know and believe is important to know about teaching their subject, how that knowledge impacts their classroom practices, and the role of context in the implementation of knowledge in practice. Thus, it draws on the works of Elbaz, Clandinin and Connolly, Golomek, Shulman, and Schön, focusing on the practical and pedagogical knowledge of ESP teachers at the context of this study.

3.14 Knowledge and Belief

Reviewing literature on teacher knowledge reveals that the terms "knowledge" and "belief" are used interchangeably in some studies to reflect the same concept. In such studies, knowledge is belief and belief is knowledge. In other studies belief is used to reflect the unconscious knowledge that works as a filtering device during the construction of the conscious knowledge. Other researchers define knowledge as justified belief. In this regard Zheng (2009: 74) asserts:

> "In literature, knowledge is either taken as different from beliefs by nature, or used as a grouping term without distinguishing between what we know and what we believe."

To avoid the problem of separating these two seemingly twin concepts, Borg (2003) uses teachers' cognition to refer to teachers' knowledge, beliefs and

values. Others, such as Grimmett and Mackinnon (1991) define knowledge in relation to practice and use the term craft knowledge, which is similar in concept to Elbaz's term "practical knowledge." That is because these researchers were more interested in understanding the practical dimension of teacher knowledge or what teachers actually do with their knowledge in their everyday classroom encounters. Connelly and Clandinin use the term "personal practical knowledge" to give it a personal dimension, because this type of knowledge is 'local' (Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1991) and context bound.

It seems that the complexity of separating 'knowledge' from 'belief' stems from the conceptual overlap, because they have more similarities than differences. It might also result from the different perspectives and approaches that researchers use to focus on a particular concept, or from defining identical concepts using different names (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986). According to Pajaris (1992: 2), the concept of knowledge or belief is "a messy construct [that] travels in disguise and often under alias," such as "implicit theories" (Clark & Peterson, 1986), "images" (Golombek, 1988), "conceptions" (Ekeblad & Bon 1994), "maxims" (Richards 1996), "personal theories" (Borg, 1999), and "perception" (Schulz, 2001). Pajaris agrees with other scholars and specialists that the most confounding attempts are those trying to draw distinctions between the terms belief and knowledge (Pajaris, 1992; Richardson, 1996; Calderhead, 1996; Woods, 1996), and admits that a straightforward distinction between these two constructs has always been blurry and difficult to achieve (Zheng, 2009). However, Kagan (1992) argues that much of teachers' professional knowledge can be regarded as mere belief. Kagan asserts that teachers' knowledge grows richer as a result of their professional experience, which results in forming a highly personalized pedagogical or belief system that constrains teachers' perception, judgment, and behavior. Richards and Lockhart (1994) agree that teachers' beliefs are constructed gradually overtime. They maintain that beliefs consist of both subjective and objective dimensions, and inform much of teachers' decision-makings and classroom actions. Pajares (1992: 311) agrees with the above argument, and adds that beliefs are more influential than knowledge in "determining how individuals organize and

define problems and are stronger predictors of behavior." Nespor (1987), on the other hand, views belief as a form of knowledge. He argues that while knowledge is conscious and often changes, beliefs may be unconsciously held and are often tacit and resistant to change. Moreover, Clark and Peterson (1986) point out that, teachers' theories and beliefs represent a richly accumulated body of knowledge, and suggest that teachers make sense of their world and respond to it by forming a complex system of personal and professional knowledge. As far as Connelly and Clandinin (1988: 25) are concerned, teachers' knowledge is reflected and found in their practices. "It is, for any teacher, a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation." Thus, to sum up, it could be argued that teachers' knowledge is considered as the general knowledge, belief, and thinking (Borg 2003) that are reflected in their practices (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) and are shaped by their background experience (Borg, 2003). The term teachers' knowledge used in this study is based on the above definition.

3.15 Practical Knowledge

Bringing teachers to the centre of attention in the educational endeavor generated a more holistic and subjective type of research that aimed at listening to teachers' stories as they unfolded their roles in constructing their knowledge and "shaping curricula" (Elbaz, 1981: 43). In addition, it attempted to understand how this knowledge is interpreted through teachers active decision-making processes in their classrooms (Clandinin and Connelly, ibid). Hence, marking the birth of what came to be known as "Teachers' Practical Knowledge".

A renowned example of exploring teachers' practical knowledge is that of Elbaz (1983, 1981), who studied a teacher called Sara for two years by listening to her stories of how she made sense of her teaching. Her study was based on her argument that the teacher is the single factor that seems to have the greatest power to carry forward our understanding of the teacher's role in the phenomenon of teacher's knowledge (Borg, 2006). She concluded her study by proposing that teachers' practical knowledge encompasses five areas:

knowledge of self, milieu, subject matter, curriculum development, and instruction. These are represented in practice in three ways: (a) as rules of practice – what to do and how to do it in a particular situation; (b) as practical principles – teachers' purposes; (c) as images – perception of self, of teaching, of subject matter, and of organization of knowledge in relevant areas. Elbaz pioneered studies that attempted to understand teachers' knowledge of their working world without imposing theory or established methods on the form of inquiry and without structuring the subject's responses within an existing tradition of academic research. The structure of her endeavor was based on her realization that "what Sarah knows is not theory or empirical propositions" but some sort of understanding of how to carry out instructional tasks, resolves conflict, adjudicate competing considerations, and connect aspirations to plans and then to instructional performance that made up her practical knowledge (Fenstermacher, 1994: 10). Following Elbaz's steps, Clandinin and Connelly (1987, 1991) proposed that teachers' prior knowledge affects and shapes up their present experience and forms the base upon which their future plans and actions are designed. Clandinin (1992: 125) stated that:

> "It is knowledge that reflects the individual's prior knowledge and acknowledges the contextual nature of that teacher's knowledge. It is a kind of knowledge carved out of, and shaped by, situations; knowledge that is constructed and reconstructed as we live out our stories and retell and relive them through processes of reflection."

Clandinin and Connelly's (1991) approach to understanding what teachers know was similar to Elbaz's story-telling/narrative approach. They were concerned with teachers' stories and used narrative explanations to understand why teachers behaved in certain ways. Akin to Elbaz's theoretical framework, Clandinin and Connelly's rationale behind using narrative and story telling techniques was to avoid the imposition of external theories and constructs on the personal practical knowledge of teachers. They stress that exploring teachers' personal practical knowledge cannot be achieved "using methods that distort, destroy, or reconstruct this knowledge. "Rather it requires an approach that is "soft" or "gentle", to promote story-telling, and maintain trust between teachers and those who seek to understand what they know

(Fenstermacher, 1994: 11).” This makes interviewing one of the main tools to collect data in studies that attempt to understand teachers’ stories about their teaching that is manifested in the way they see, understand, and justify their professional experiences.

Following those pioneers’ steps in exploring and understanding teachers’ personal practical knowledge, researchers’ endeavors in education “has provided ample support for the assertion that teachers’ classroom practices are determined to a substantial degree by their personal pedagogical belief systems (Borg, 1998).” Thus, exploring teachers’ practical knowledge and beliefs becomes the cornerstone for any effort to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

3.16 Reflective Knowledge

McNmara (1990, cited in Calderhead, 1993:12) criticized research on teacher thinking asserting that it has failed to generate “a corpus of findings, which student educators can incorporate into their teaching so as to foster student teachers’ capacity to reflect critically upon their practice and thereby improve their teaching.” In other words, researchers who were interested in implementing the findings of those studies that focused on teachers’ practical knowledge proposed that practical knowledge is improved and continuously reconstructed by teachers’ reflection. Schön’s (1983, 1987, and 1991) work on reflective knowledge is considered a major contribution in this area. His attempt was to find better ways of understanding how professionals work in action. He opposed the application of conventional theories, or what he calls “Technical Rationality”, to the problems of everyday professional practice, because technical rationality, in his view, rests on a fundamental misconception of what professionals do, thus, it is impractical and unrealistic. He argues that teachers’ knowledge is not the knowledge of science as research-based theories imply, rather, it is the knowledge of practice found in the “swampy lowland where situations are confusing ‘messes’ incapable of technical solutions (Schön, 1983: 42);” it is knowing-in-action, and reflecting-in-action; it is the framing and reframing of knowledge when teachers decide to do what they do in the classroom; therefore, epistemologically, it is different from theoretical or formal

knowledge. He believes that probing teachers' reflective knowledge – their informed involvement in the principles, practices, and processes of classroom instruction – is important because it can bring fresh and fruitful perspectives to the complexities of teaching that cannot be matched by experts who are far removed from classroom realities (Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 10).

Munby & Russel (1992, cited in Fenstermacher, 1994:13) believe that "Schön's (1983) distinction between technical rationality and the knowledge of practice has drawn our attention to the significance of the knowledge that teachers acquire from their own experience." As a result, these researchers developed an interest in understanding how knowledge arises in the context of action and the effects of this knowledge on practice. In their endeavor they sought to understand teachers' practical knowledge in response to contextual factors that influence and shape teachers' decisions, sometimes, unexpectedly and as a reaction to specific factors. These studies aimed to raise educators' and teachers' awareness of this important element of teacher knowledge and to inform teacher-training programmes to provide opportunities for teachers and teacher-learners to learn through reflection.

The significance of the above researchers' views, in my opinion, rests on the fact that their works were informed and influenced by Dewey's distinction between the perceptions of teaching as routine or reflective action. Routine action, as Kumaravadivelu (2006:10) explains, "is guided primarily by an uncritical belief in tradition, and an unfailing obedience to authority, whereas reflective action is promoted by a conscious and cautious 'consideration of any belief or practice in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads'".

The awareness of this distinction becomes an important element in teachers' knowledge and an important factor influencing their classroom decisions. When teachers are treated and perceived by researchers and employers as passive technicians, and when they see themselves likewise, then, it is not surprising to discover that teachers identify their profession as a routine job of following "predetermined and pre-sequenced procedures." It is only when they realize

their roles as reflective practitioners that they could perceive teaching as a context-sensitive action grounded in intellectual thought.

This type of knowledge is important for ESP teachers, who are expected to act as problem-solvers possessing "the ability to look back critically and imaginatively, to do cause-effect thinking, to derive explanatory principles, to do task analysis, also to look forward, and to do anticipatory planning (ibid)."

In ESP, for example, reflection on action is part of the evaluation process of the course and programme that not only reveals the courses' shortcomings, but also teachers' lacks and needs. Reflection in action if done mindfully and with the awareness of what circumstances resulted in what actions, combined with practical knowledge, can turn into a valuable tool for improving and expanding teachers' PCK and the course's effectiveness. "Reflective teaching then, is a holistic approach that emphasizes creativity, artistry, and context-sensitivity (ibid)" required in the ESP domain.

3.17 Prior Knowledge and Experience

Research in the field of teachers' knowledge revealed that background experiences play a crucial role in shaping teachers' knowledge (Freeman, 2002). Referring to Clandinin's (1985, cited in Freeman, 2002) work, Freeman stated: "if Clandinin had said, teachers' knowledge encompassed the sum total of their personal and professional experiences, then clearly that background must somehow interact with and potentially shape any new learning teachers might do (p. 6)." This paved the way to include teachers' prior knowledge as a potential factor influencing teachers' knowledge and practical decisions. Borg (2003: 88) argues that teachers' prior knowledge plays an influential role in shaping teachers' learning and teaching cognition. He indicates that:

> "Teachers' prior language learning experiences establish cognitions about learning and language learning which form basis of their initial conceptualization of L2 teaching during teacher education, and which may continue to be influential throughout their professional lives."

In addition to this important factor, Borg (1998; 1999) investigated teachers' pedagogical systems and teacher cognition and grammar teaching in the field

of second and foreign language teaching and found that teachers' instructional decision-making was influenced by their knowledge of context, educational experience, and teaching experience.

Researchers such as Freeman (1996), Richards (1994), and Lortie (1975), suggest that teachers' experience as learners, which Lortie (ibid) refers to as "apprenticeships of observation", could have an impact on their experience as teacher learners in the education programme as well as on their teaching practice. Richards and Lockhart (1994) maintain that teachers' knowledge is not derived solely from past experience as learners or teachers, it may also include established practice, teachers' personality factors, educational principle, research-based evidence, and principles derived from an approach or method.

Teachers' experience both as learners and teachers seems to have been influenced by, and built upon, one of the two prevailing theories about teaching and learning: The behaviorists' view which claims that learning occurs as a result of stimuli and response – students passively repeat what teachers teach until they master pieces of knowledge, and the cognitive theory or constructivist view which regards learning as the active construction of meaning and knowledge as cumulative – new knowledge is built on previous learning.

However, this does not mean that teachers are always loyal to one paradigm or the other. Studies such as Klein's (1996) and Collinson's (1996) revealed that teachers adopt both behaviorism and constructivism principles, however, one paradigm is always more dominant. For example, while some teachers are more concerned about the need to "cover the curriculum", others are more interested in "integrating the curriculum" and "finding the kid's level (Collinson: 11)." Such views about teaching and learning are in part related to the shared values and beliefs of the culture that the teachers belong to (Kennedy and Kennedy, 1998). Kennedy and Kennedy (1998) demonstrate how national cultures and behaviors can affect beliefs and classroom cultures. They distinguish two types of countries: those with large power distance measure (where power is concentrated in the hands of a few) and small power distance measures (where power is less hierarchical and more decentralized). They

stress that in cultures with large power distance, a transmission view of education (Barnes, 1976; Lindblom-Ylänne et al., 2006) is most likely to be upheld with beliefs that the teacher should be in authority, in control of the classroom interactions, and in control of the knowledge. In contrast, in cultures with small power distance, the power in the classroom is more equally distributed between the teacher and the learners. The teacher in this type of culture plays a facilitative rather than authoritative role, because teaching is perceived as "facilitating student learning or students' knowledge-construction processes or as supporting students' conceptual change (p. 286)."

3.18 The knowledge base of Language teachers

ESP teachers share a common, core knowledge about language with humanity-trained EGP teachers. Their knowledge base includes the understanding of language as a system, and the awareness of theories of teaching and learning. The latter is important for the implementation of knowledge in practice; however, this knowledge might be insufficient to make effective pedagogical choices in certain classroom situations and/or to carry out responsibilities as facilitators and negotiators in the context of ESP teaching. The knowledge base of the ESP teacher must include another component that links it to the specific and focused nature of the ESP courses that are linked to specialized disciplines beyond the expertise of a humanity-trained language teacher, and the problem-solving and task-based nature of these courses that are linked to the language needs at various target places, as will be further discussed.

Researchers such as Shulman (1987) realized that a teacher might have a reasonable understanding about the language, however, whether such knowledge was used appropriately to ensure student learning depended on other elements that were considered crucial in forming the knowledge base of a teacher. These significant elements that Shulman (1986) and his colleagues (1987) identified were: subject matter knowledge – knowledge of the subject being taught; general pedagogical knowledge – knowledge of pedagogical principles and skills; pedagogical content knowledge – specific knowledge of how to teach a particular topic or content; curriculum knowledge – knowledge

about the particular materials used by the teacher; knowledge of educational aims, goals and purposes; knowledge of learners – awareness about the students and familiarity with their learning styles, learning problems, and individual differences; knowledge of learning – theoretical knowledge of learning.

Richards (1996) examined L2 teachers' knowledge base and suggested that two domains influence teachers' practice: subject matter and curriculum, and teachers' philosophy of teaching. The latter, according to scholars such as Eraut (1994) and Calderhead (1987) is a kind of tacit knowledge that influences teachers' professional judgments, when an immediate reaction to an unpredictable situation is needed.

Teacher educators and researchers argue that some teachers might be unaware of their instructional behavior that stems from their tacit beliefs of language teaching and learning. Thus, they emphasize the importance of making the implicit knowledge explicit through research in order to promote teachers' awareness of their own practices and their personal theories underpinning them. Argyris and Schön (1974: 6-7) argue that one of the reasons why teachers became unaware of their instructional behavior is the difference between teachers' espoused theories and theories in use. They explain how these two types of theories coexist regardless of teachers' awareness of them. They state that:

> "When someone is asked how he would behave under certain circumstances, the answer he usually gives is his espoused theory of action for that situation. This is the theory of action to which he gives allegiance, and which, upon request, he communicates to others. However the theory that actually governs his actions is his theory-in-use, which may or may not be compatible with his espoused theory; furthermore, the individual may or may not be aware of the incompatibility of the two theories."

This incompatibility, I assume, could be more evident in teaching ESP, because it is theoretically and methodically communicatively oriented. That is because a lot of ESP teachers who are humanity-trained might still be loyal to the traditional approaches to language teaching as the case of language teaching

in countries such as China (Hu, 2002), and Kuwait (Al-Nwaiem, 2012; Al-Nouh, 2008). This reality might cause a kind of conflict between what teachers know and what they do in the classroom. For example, whether to teach grammar explicitly or implicitly might be based on teachers view of the language: those who believe that learning a language means the acquisition of conscious knowledge about the language are more prone to use grammar-translation techniques, and those who believe that language is acquired through the give and take of communication would lean more towards using communicative methods in teaching the language (Cook, 1996). However, whether teachers follow what they believe or decide to use methods that contradict their beliefs might also depend on some external contextual factors. Andrews (1999) believes that the dispute of whether grammar should be taught explicitly or implicitly in the language classroom adds to teachers' insecurity about their pedagogical choices. He argues that:

> "Among teachers who are themselves products of an education system in which formal teaching of grammar was anathema, this uncertainty often accompanied by considerable worry and doubt about their own [knowledge about language] KAL […], and about the impact it might have in the teaching/learning process (p.162)."

Therefore, revealing teachers implicit theories through research that seeks to explore and understand teachers' justifications for their actions, such as the current one, helps unveil teachers' tacit knowledge and bring it up to the surface of their consciousness. This kind of reflection on action and extraction of meaning out of teachers' experiences not only helps raise teachers' awareness of why they do what they do, but also improves their practice as they evolve as mindful practitioners.

3.18.1 Content Knowledge

In ESP, content knowledge goes beyond the knowledge of subject matter and how to teach it to include the content knowledge of various specialized subjects that ESP serves. This type of knowledge distinguishes the ESP practitioner from a mere language teacher who does not have to deal with concepts outside the realm of their expertise. It also requires that the ESP practitioner uses

particular pedagogical activities based on knowledge of learners' target necessities that the EGP teacher need not to worry about due to the indefinite aims of their general language programmes as was discussed in part one of this chapter.

In order for the ESP teacher to effectively put their content and pedagogical knowledge in practice they need to understand what ESP is and what it is designed to serve. They also need to know the nature of language use in various disciplines and target situations, because it is difficult for teachers to teach content that they are unfamiliar with or have not fully mastered (Hegarty, 2000). There is no doubt that the acquisition of specific content knowledge becomes a challenging endeavor for humanity-trained language teachers who have to deal with content foreign to them and lacking in their existing knowledge base. This reality resulted in questioning whether ESP or specialist teachers should teach ESP – teaching content through language or language through content (Mohammad, 2012). It also generated controversies about the level of authenticity of teaching materials and teachers' familiarity with authentic target tasks as was previously discussed.

In ESP, content knowledge implies the familiarity with particular and specialized genres that are used in specific job environments, and could range from general to very technical communicative modes. Therefore, ESP practitioners need some specific types of content and pedagogical knowledge that could infom practical decisions to promote student understanding and learning, attain the objectives of the courses, and serve the needs of the target market. The lack of the specific content knowledge might lure humanity-trained teachers to simplify content to a level that fails to serve ESP course objectives.

3.18.2 Knowledge of Pedagogy

As was discussed in the first part of this chapter, teaching the language in ESP is not an end as the case of EGP, but a means to understand specific communicative occurrences and genres and the awareness of language use in particular contexts. Thus, ESP practitioners are not only faced with the challenge of bridging knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy to enhance practice, as in teaching EGP, but also of 're-contextualization' (Bernstein, 2000)

of the above knowledge with the specific content and pedagogical knowledge of ESP.

Shulman (1987,1986) distinguishes between two types of pedagogy: general pedagogy and content pedagogy. The former includes broad principles and strategies of teaching in general, and the latter includes the way subject knowledge is formulated and represented to become understandable to others – the knowledge of how to teach a subject. This type of knowledge that Shulman named pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), as aforementioned, became the subject of many studies due to its significance for effective instruction. That is because this type of knowledge is grounded in the beliefs and practices of the teacher and includes a repertoire of approaches and activities that the teacher uses for particular teaching. This includes a range of examples, analogies, and representations that teachers can use to raise learners' awareness of how to use prior knowledge to facilitate the construction of new knowledge, and to promote the understanding of the ways the acquired knowledge can be utilized. Additionally, it includes knowledge of assessment in language instruction that informs teachers in designing reliable tests that assess learners' understanding and achievement and measure their awareness of language use in different situations.

Although studying teachers' PCK in language education is still limited, some researchers such as Gatbonton (1999), Mullock (2006), Meijer et al. (1999) and Golombeck (1998) attempted to explore what constitutes language teacher pedagogical content knowledge. While the frequency of domains of knowledge varied in these studies, however, they seemed to agree upon knowledge of the learner to be the key element of teacher knowledge (Abdelhafez, 2010). Mullock (ibid) found that institutional policy and the teaching/learning environment was another element of teacher pedagogical knowledge. Golombeck's studies revealed that four overlapping categories shape teachers' personal practical knowledge and are used in a holistic manner. Those were identified as: knowledge of self, of subject matter, of context, and of instruction. As a result, when teachers justify their actions different categories of

knowledge may overlap in their stories, because these elements of knowledge are interconnected.

Literature on teachers' pedagogical knowledge, in support with the above findings, "has identified a range of issues teachers have complex, interacting beliefs about. These issues include beliefs about students, themselves (i.e., teachers' self-perceptions), the subject matter being taught, teaching and learning, curricula, schools, the teachers' role, materials, classroom management, and instructional activities (Borg, 1998: 28)." In sharing their knowledge about their pedagogical choices teachers might refer to surfacing issues, like the tip of the iceberg, but it is in their actions and justifications for their actions that some deeper intertwined beliefs could be detected.

Since exploring teachers' knowledge in the ESP domain is scarce, the current study becomes significant in finding out similarities and differences between the various categories of ESP pedagogical content knowledge. Unlike EGP teachers who can follow pedagogical choices and procedures suggested in the teacher book and abide by the school syllabus, ESP teachers need to design their own syllabus, adapt teaching materials and adopt the most appropriate methods and techniques to train particular learners and attain specific purposes. For example, while some activities such as group-work is used in EGP to enhance learning through interaction, teachers' focus may be on the language learnt not on how it was used to interact and communicate. In ESP it is not the amount of words and grammar learnt that is significant, but how these words and rules (language) are used and exploited to fulfill particular tasks. Thus, group-work or simulations are not used in ESP to learn concepts but to put learnt concepts into practice. This makes interactive learning the cornerstone of almost all ESP activities that conform to the content- and task-based nature of the ESP courses. As a result, this understanding becomes an important element of the ESP practitioner's specific pedagogical content knowledge (SPCK). Additionally, the need to assess the communicative target requirements of the ESP learners in order to choose appropriate pedagogical and practical techniques that facilitate target language use becomes another important element of ESP teachers' SPCK. This entails knowledge of research

– of conducting needs analysis (at least at a micro level), and evaluating learners' language and target needs. It also includes knowledge of curriculum objectives and the various types of syllabuses that could serve certain objectives. Since the ESP practitioner needs to design syllabuses based on the target needs of each group of learners, this knowledge should also include: the familiarity with evaluation, interpretation, reflection, and synthesis in order to design constructive courses based on informed decisions of how to implement knowledge in practice. As a result, it could be argued that ESP teachers' unfamiliarity with the above elements could affect practice and jeopardize the attainment of ESP programme objectives.

3.18. 3 Knowledge of curriculum

Knowledge of curriculum is a significant element in teachers' knowledge. It is the foundation for course and material design and/or adaptation. Planning ESP curriculum entails the identification of goals and objectives of the programme, an understanding of the target as well as the teaching contexts, and an awareness of course expectations. In addition, learners' backgrounds, needs, wants, and expectations, as well as a familiarity with assessment systems and the aims they are expected to serve must be taken into account. Therefore, knowledge of curriculum works as a device that informs and facilitates appropriate pedagogical decision-making.

Curriculum and syllabus are sometimes confused or used synonymously in different contexts (Nunan, 2006). Bodegas (2007: 277) quotes Allen in defining curriculum stating that it "is a very general concept which involves consideration of the whole complex of philosophical, social and administrative factors which contribute to the planning of an educational program." On the other hand, syllabus is "essentially a statement of what should be taught year by year – through language," including methods of teaching and time constraints. In other words, "syllabus is a more detailed and operational statement of teaching and learning elements which translates the philosophy of the curriculum into a series of planned steps leading towards more narrowly defined objectives at each level (Dublin & Olshtain, 1997: 28 quoted in Bodegas, ibid)." Nunan uses a tripartite division, based on Stenhouse's (1975

cited in Nunan, 150) definition for curriculum, to draw a distinction between curriculum as a plan, as action, and as outcome. The plan includes the processes and products that are decided upon prior to instructions processes and includes the types of syllabuses and textbooks and materials to be used, and the assessment instruments. The action is the moment-by-moment classroom realities enacting the curriculum. The outcome is what the students learn as a result of the instructional process.

In ESP, it is important that the practitioner be aware of curriculum objectives and the various syllabuses that help achieve them. This knowledge enables them to choose a syllabus that translates particular objectives into units comprising appropriate content and pedagogy that serve specific purposes. Therefore, in addition to their views of the language, the learner, the teaching environment, and self, agency and flexibility become two important characteristics of the ESP practitioner in deciding what and how to teach.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) suggest a list of different syllabuses that ESP practitioners could design their courses around. These are: notional/functional, content-based, task-based, learner-centered, and learning-centered. Other syllabuses that are also available depending on learners' needs and course objectives are: procedural, skill-based, structural or formal, cultural, and situational.

3.19 Knowledge of classroom practices

Researchers such as Johnson (1994) emphasized the importance of exploring language teachers' knowledge and classroom practices, because "such exploration is necessary to understand how second language (L2) teachers' thinking, decisions, and planning affect their classroom practices. It is also essential if L2 teacher education programmes are to integrate information about cognitive dimensions of L2 teaching into the content of teacher education programmes."

Research on L2 teacher cognition and practices started to appear in the 1990s and has been growing ever since. According to Borg (2003), between 1976 and 2002, 64 studies on language cognition have been published in the field of

language education. As Borg reviewed these studies, that varied epistemologically and methodologically, three main themes emerged:

1) Teachers' knowledge and belief in relation to classroom practice;
2) Teachers' knowledge and belief in relation to teacher education;
3) Teachers' knowledge and belief in relation to the teaching and learning of grammar.

The first theme seems to be widely explored in L2 focusing on teachers' decision making. Among the studies that reflect the divergent nature of teachers' instructional or practical decisions are Nunan's (1992) and Gatbonton's (1999). While the results of Nunan's study reveals that teachers' interactive decisions were based on classroom management such as pacing and timing lessons, the amount of teachers' talk and the quality of instruction, Gatbonton's study reveals that teachers' thoughts and decisions are largely related to language concerns, such as explaining vocabulary. Other studies focused on the psychological and environmental factors such as school requirements and societal expectations, language policy, mandated curriculum, etc. Those factors have emerged in Burn's (1996) study that focused on the practices of three novice ESL teachers in Canada, and were seen to have an impact on their decisions, planning and instructional content.

Basturkmen et al. (2004) spot evidence of incongruence between L2 teachers' stated beliefs and their classroom practices. The inconsistency related mainly to when it was appropriate to focus on form during a meaning-focused lesson and the type of error correction techniques to be employed. They suggest that perhaps it is better to view teachers' stated beliefs as "potentially conflicting rather than inherently inconsistent (p. 268).

Farrell and Kun (2007) who investigated teachers' beliefs and classroom practices in Singapore, found that the various complex beliefs that teachers hold about teaching can sometimes conflict with each other and can exert different degrees of power and influence on the teachers' final classroom practices.

Breen et al. (2001) investigated the relationship between language teachers' actions and justifications and identified the ways their teaching principles influenced the construction of pedagogy. They stressed that their study strongly suggests that, "within the framework of a certain broader collective pedagogy, experience generates individual variation in pedagogy (p. 497)," and that this diversity is significant for teachers' professional development.

In some cases researchers found discrepancy between teachers' beliefs about teaching and their actions in the classroom (Argyris & Schön 1974, Argyris, 1987). This discrepancy is believed to stem from teachers unawareness of their implicit theories and beliefs that affect their pedagogical choices. Although some researchers such as Thanasoulas (2002) argues that beliefs are culturally bound and tend to be resistant to change, one of the ways that can improve teachers' and education specialists' awareness of the impact of belief on practical decisions is observation and reflection on action. This activity can help teachers access their underlying beliefs and realize the role it plays in their teaching, thus, raise the chances to change or improve them.

Troudi (2005:4) agrees that teachers' knowledge and beliefs are shaped and influenced by their cultural backgrounds. He adds that teachers' knowledge, according to Freeman and Johnson (1998), "is based on the premise that teachers develop their teaching skills and refine them by being involved in a dynamic sociocultural process framed by the institutional forms and contexts where their teaching is done." As a result, he draws our attention to the importance of familiarizing TESOL teachers not only with the culture of the institutions they work in, but also with cultural backgrounds of their students. He argues that:

> "Cultural knowledge needs to be informed by a deep sense of commitment on the part of the TESOL teacher to understand his/her students' social and cultural contexts and how these shape their approach to learning and attitudes to English as a second or foreign language (p. 1)."

This signifies two more constructs that influence teachers' knowledge and classroom practices: Knowledge of the learner, and knowledge of the learning environment.

3.20 Knowledge of the Learner

Many researchers and language specialists emphasize the importance of teachers' awareness of their students' schemata – backgrounds, learning styles, and attitude to learning (Hyland, 2006). Students come to their classes with different views and beliefs about language learning (Horwitz, 1987) that they have constructed since they started language learning (Cook, 1996). Those beliefs, as research has suggested, affect learners' level of motivation and attitude towards language learning (Cook, ibid). For example, some see learning another language, in this case English, "as extending the repertoire of what they can do, others see it as a threat to their very identities (p.3)." According to Putcha (1999) those beliefs act as guiding principles for students' behavior, and as strong perceptual filters that influence both their experiences and actions as language learners. That is why Stevick (1980) believes that success depends less on materials and techniques, but more on what goes inside the learner's mind. He, like other researchers who focused on language learning, believes that in order for learning to take place teachers need to be aware of, and understand students' contribution to learning. In this regard Cook (1996: 1) asserts that:

> "Most teachers have been trained to teach, not to think about second language learning. Yet everything that is achieved in the classroom depends eventually upon what goes on in the students' mind."

In other words, teachers need to be aware of the different ways that learners tackle learning, because, as Cook reminds us, learners do not start from scratch, they base what they do on previous experience of learning and using of language. This becomes even more important in the context of ESP, because in ESP the power commonly leans towards the learner and her/his purpose for learning. In this case ESP teachers who are still loyal to traditional approaches and teacher-centeredness need to understand that, in most ESP classrooms, giving more power to learners becomes a moral obligation. Giving

responsibility of learning to learners, in terms of enjoying more freedom of choice and the power of negotiation, not only boosts learners' motivational levels, but also trains them to become autonomous learners, which is a characteristic of the ESP learner.

Orton (1996) argues that teacher beliefs are related to students learning through some events or sequence of events that teachers mediate in the classroom to facilitate learning (Wilkins, 1974). That is why he thinks that, "the teacher is responsible – if not in an efficient sense at least in a moral sense – for creating the lion's share of those classroom events that lead to student learning (p. 2)." In this case, and in order to create both 'moral' and 'effective' events that promote learning, other factors such as political and cultural ones should be considered. Troudi (2005: 10) suggests that a crucial area of knowledge of learners that has been neglected by TESOL researchers and language specialist, especially in the Gulf Arab states, is the political factor. He argues that: "the most recent political events in the region have had some negative effects on the people's attitude toward the West, mainly the USA and UK." Thus, he emphasizes the importance of teachers' awareness of their students' linguistic as well as sociocultural backgrounds in making productive practical decisions, and asserts that:

> "What is needed is more than just cultural sensitivity and respect for other cultures. Teachers need to be very aware of modes of learning and sociolinguistic patterns of communication in the cultures of their students that affect their approaches to learning English."

Based on the above discussion, it could be argued that how teachers view their students could have a great impact on the way their classrooms are approached, their teaching materials and methods are chosen, their syllabuses are designed, their students are treated, and how all these elements interplay and take part in shaping the outcome of language learning. However, as important as the understanding of whom the learners are is the understanding of the effects of their attitudes and behavior on teachers' pedagogical choices. The results of Johnson's (1992) case study of six ESL teachers revealed that students' unexpected behaviour affected teachers' instructional activities. This

makes the classroom environment another important issue to consider when studying teachers' knowledge and classroom practices.

3.21 Knowledge of the learning environment

Studies about students' learning and academic achievement revealed that the quality of the educational environment has a profound impact on students' learning. In this regard Earthman (2004:18) states that:

> There is sufficient research to state without equivocation that the building in which students spend a good deal of their time learning does in fact influence how well they learn'

Most of the studies that tackled the effects of the educational environment on learners focused on buildings and classroom arrangements of schools. However, since the teaching environments of most of these studies seemed to resemble the teaching milieu at some vocational colleges in this study, it is deemed relevant to discuss them.

Some researchers focused on the effects of the appearance of school buildings, and how welcoming and friendly they looked, on students' attitudes. For example, Fisher (2000) and McGregor (2004) found that pleasant entrances and hall areas as well as private places for students promoted a sense of community. Other studies revealed that an appealing building promoted positive attitudes among students and teachers alike (Bunting, 2004; Siegel, 1999). For example, Siegel discovered that there was a direct link between school's architecture and teachers' collaboration. He suggested that:

> "The arrangement of space has immediate and far reaching consequences for teacher's ability to effectively and efficiently accomplish daily activities, the formation of social and professional relationships, and the sharing of information and knowledge (p.4)."

The significance of the space where teachers meet their colleagues, or where students interact with each other and with the teacher in and outside the classroom does not only lie in its structure, but also in the social aspects within it. The structure of the space and the arrangements of furniture reflect to both teachers and learners the expectations of the institution. Furthermore, they

suggest to the learners the expectations of teachers and the power hierarchy (McGregor, 2007).

Seating arrangement is also believed to impact learning. Therefore, teachers' knowledge of their students facilitates the choice of appropriate arrangements to maximize learning (Higgins, et al, 2005). This knowledge is important in ESP where teachers need to choose between functional or horseshoe-seating arrangements based on the objectives of different activities. Other aspects of the classroom and the learning environment that could affect the learning outcomes are: room temperature, which Earthman (2004) believes to be the most important in students' achievement, and noise, which could impair cognitive functioning (Higgins et al, ibid).

The use of educational technology is another important element that is believed to encourage student interaction and participation. In teaching ESP, for example, the use of video could enhance simulation activities and bring the target language culture and communicative occurrences to the heart of the classroom, and provide opportunities to get engaged with authentic language and skills needed in the target places.

All the above characteristics make the educational environment an active place where knowledge is valued, effectively constructed, and efficiently retrieved and used. The lack of professionally constructed buildings and fully equipped classes carry the risk of turning the educational environment into a passive place where information is passed from the giver to the receiver with minimum manipulation and understanding and inefficient recovery of learnt information and skills for potential future practices.

3.22 Conclusion

Since the current study focuses on ESP teachers' knowledge and practices, I reviewed the literature on these two areas. As a result, I divided this chapter into two parts. In part one I reviewed literature on the emergence and development of ESP, and the changing roles of language teachers in the world of ESP, and how their new responsibilities change them into becoming ESP practitioners who are at the heart of designing their own courses and

sometimes their teaching materials, and evaluating courses, materials, and the outcome of their programmes.

In part two, I reviewed literature on teacher's knowledge and practices, and the development of research based on various epistemological stances. Teachers' practical and pedagogical content knowledge were given a special emphasis since this study attempts to explore ESP teachers' knowledge and its impact on their practice in Kuwait. Other important constructs related to teachers' practical knowledge, such as knowledge of curriculum, learners, and classroom environment were also tackled.

Chapter four: Methodology

4. Preview

To explore ESP teachers' knowledge and practical choices in Kuwait I decided to use qualitative methods in data collection and analysis based on the constructive/interpretive theoretical framework. In this chapter, I demonstrate the philosophical assumptions underlying research in language education and how they inform the choice of methodology and methods for different study purposes. I also present justifications for the choice of methods applied in this study based on the philosophical assumptions that were deemed to best serve current research purposes.

I start by presenting the research purpose and explaining and discussing terms such as: ontology, epistemology, and methodology. I also discuss the theoretical framework as well as the choice of methods, data collection and data analysis. Finally, I tackle the ethical considerations and process, and end with the conclusion.

4.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore ESP teachers' knowledge and practices in Kuwait. Babbie (1998) states that exploratory studies are typically done for three purposes:

1. To satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for better understanding,
2. To test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study,
3. To develop methods to be employed in any subsequent study.

It is worth mentioning that the above three categories could sometimes be found in one study, but the emphasis would usually be on one. The attempt to explore ESP teachers' practical knowledge at tertiary institutions in Kuwait stems from my curiosity and desire to understand how and why teachers decide to do what they do, which lies within Babbie's first category. This kind of research is valuable because it yields new insights into the area of research (Randor 2001).

While social and educational research may not reveal ultimate truth, due to the complexity of such research, it does help us understand and make sense of our worlds (Babbie, 1998). It sheds lights on why individuals or teachers in social and educational domains act a certain way. It also helps predict actions in specific contexts realizing that as individuals in a society we learn to function and follow a 'script' of reasoned behavior. This is important in studying teachers' practical knowledge, because it could help identify elements of behavior that are shaped by cultural norms and values, and predict the cultural and contextual factors that might trigger some actions. As a result, focusing on the triggers and their effects on a particular situation could help improve or change behavior, as Lowyck (1990: 86, cited in Pope, ibid) asks: "Can we really be interested in teaching as it is, without any perspective on improvement?"

In addition, studying what teachers know and do may not be complete without a look at the context in which it takes place. However, exploring the effects of context on teachers' behavior becomes more significant if a researcher looks at the two sides of the coin. The contextual conditions that impact individual actions, and the activities of individuals that produce the "community of practice" (Lave and Wenger, 1991) or the context, and therefore the social system that makes it (Randor, 2002).

Marx (cited in Crotty, 2003: 61) insists that "it is not the consciousness of men that determines their beings, but on the contrary their social being determines their consciousness." As a result, similarities in teachers' actions, both in what they do and what they don't do, could be examined against their shared consciousness to understand the reasons behind them. This understanding increases our awareness of the important elements that constitute teachers' knowledge and the ways these elements could be linked to teachers' reasons for accepting or rejecting instructional behavior. The results could then help teachers realize the effects of their behavior as members of the 'community of practice' in the construction of their reality. It could also play a significant role in informing teacher training and teacher development programmes to acquaint teachers with proper knowledge and realistic approaches to improve classroom practices. This is important because "education has become a central feature

of social change, dealing as it does with knowledge and the development of skills (Randor, ibid)."

4.2 Research Questions

The aim of exploring ESP teachers' knowledge and practices at vocational colleges in Kuwait is to obtain deep insights, from ESP teachers' viewpoints, about what English language teachers need to know to perform their duties successfully in the "uncharted" world of ESP; and to find connections between teachers' existing knowledge of teaching and learning and how this knowledge informs their actions in ESP classes.

The contextual factors and the challenges that might influence language teachers' behavior are also tackled to get as close as possible to the realities of ESP teachers' educational world in Kuwait, and how the mutual relationship between teachers and context shape and determine their practical lives.

In order to fulfill the objectives of this study I designed research questions following a thorough investigation of literature concerning teachers' knowledge and practices in language education and ESP, in an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. How do ESP teachers in Kuwait understand ESP?
2. What factors influenced and shaped teachers' knowledge of ESP?
3. How do ESP teachers in Kuwait explain their classroom practices?
4. What challenges do ESP teachers in Kuwait encounter in implementing knowledge in practice?

I decided to conduct this research following the interpretivist/constructivist approach, because vocational colleges are educational entities that fall within the social sciences that have been increasingly adopting qualitative approaches to research. Moreover, interpretative approach in research on teacher thinking is fundamentally based on understanding the complexity of a situation and taking a more holistic stance towards what is being researched (Pope, ibid) for richer insights on explored issues.

The choice of methodology is influenced by the researcher's ontological and epistemological stances, which inform her/his theoretical perspective and the choice of methods. In an attempt to justify the choice of the methods I used in this study a brief review of methodology in educational research along with the philosophical views underpinning them are introduced.

4.3 Methodological justifications

Methodology in educational Research has been influenced by the development of research in the fields of physical and social sciences. Within the latter domain, the development of psychological research played a significant role in directing educational inquiries. For example, when the scientific/positivist approach dominated psychological investigations, researchers attempted to quantify the cause and effect of human behavior in order to control the outcome. Subsequently, they generalized and transferred the findings into other situations. However, the rise of cognitive psychology that attempted to understand a problem by exploring the thought processes that guided it and resulted in an undesirable outcome in order to control or change it appealed to educational researchers. As a result, a whole new perspective of approaching educational research that moved away from applying objective scientific methods to adopting more subjective stances that give value to human interpretation, construction, and application of knowledge in different situations emerged. The new approach valued human experiences and their interpretations, and making sense of their mutual interactions with others in their particular context and in the world around them. This is reflected in Hamilton's (1983, cited in Shulman, ibid) four criteria for ecological (qualitative/interpretive) research: (a) attention to the interaction between persons and their environment, especially in reciprocal terms rather than terms of simple directional causality from teachers to students; (b) treating teaching and learning as continuously interactive processes rather than isolating a few factors in the system and labeling them as "cause" and effects; (c) seeing the classroom context as nested within other contexts – the school, the community, the family, the culture – all of which influence what can be observed in the classroom itself; and (d) treating unobservable processes, such as thoughts, attitudes, feelings, or perceptions of the participants, as important sources of

data. Therefore, qualitative research within constructivist/interpretivist paradigm became popular in social and educational domains, and was deemed more suitable for studying the social world of teachers and making sense of their everyday interactions and experiences.

4.4 Philosophical Assumptions

The philosophical assumptions underpinning the choice of methodology and methods of data collection and analysis are guided by two philosophical justifications: ontology and epistemology. These two viewpoints then influence researchers' theoretical framework of the study and ensure the validity and reliability of data. Thus, in justifying the choice of methods, it is necessary to demonstrate the philosophical stances of the researcher.

4.4.1. Ontology

The question of whether the world is real, independent of our awareness of its existence, or whether it's the construction of our minds and relative to our interpretation and understanding of it, is an ontological question. It divides the philosophical stances about the nature of reality and distinguishes between the two known views of realism and relativism. Crotty (2003: 10) defines Ontology as "the study of being" that "is concerned with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such." In social sciences, ontology is concerned with the nature of the social reality being investigated. Social reality is either perceived as "external to individuals – imposing itself on their consciousness from without" – thus, has an objective nature, or as "the product of individual consciousness," which is perceived and constructed as the result of individual cognition (Cohen et. al, 2007: 7), thus, has a subjective nature. For example, on an ontological level, the positivist/scientific researcher views the world as "an ordered universe made up of atomistic, discrete and observable events (Crotty, 2003:11)." Therefore, the scientific researcher approaches the item of study objectively to understand the cause and effect of the various factors on the item, event, or phenomenon in order to control, develop, or change it. As a result, advocates of scientific approaches to data collection and analysis, observe the social world using an ontological lens that perceives "human behavior [to be] governed by general, universal laws, and characterized by

underlying regularities (Cohen et.al, 2007:19)." In the world of education, especially language education, this ontological view gave birth to behaviorism, which adopted methods based on the 'stimuli and response' theories of learning.

On the other hand, the qualitative/interpretive researcher who embraces an ontological stance in which "social reality is regarded as the product of processes by which social actors together negotiate the meanings for actions and situations (Crotty, ibid)," follows a constructive/interpretive theoretical framework. In other words, the ontology that constructivist/interpretivist inquiry rests upon, assumes that the social world is constantly being constructed through individuals' interactions. Therefore, social reality can be better understood through the perspectives of social members involved in the construction of meaning and knowledge about their realities. This makes individuals' voices a crucial factor in understanding social phenomena.

Making sense of what teachers know and how this knowledge is realized in their practices requires an ontological belief that takes into account the particularity of each situation, and the uniqueness of individuals and contexts – constructive/interpretive. This view values teacher's interpretations and conceptualization of the world around them, and the subjective meanings they allot their everyday interactions that come from the inside, not the outside (Cohen et.al, 2007).

Cohen et al. (2007:19), justifies the use of such ontology in social science inquiries arguing that research in this domain,

> "is seen as a subjective rather than objective undertaking, as a means of dealing with the direct experience of people in specific context, and where social scientists understand, explain and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants; the participants themselves define social reality."

This means that a social or educational researcher has to deal with their participants' 'multiple realities', because people interpret, understand, and construct their reality according to their own framework of reference that is

shaped by their experience, society, and culture. However, this does not imply that individuals who belong to the same society, or to a specific context, such as teaching at vocational colleges, for example, will all share the same understanding of a reality per se. The conceptualization of a reality passes through each individual's internal filtering of the inputs, which is shaped by their own unique subjective experience (their framework of reference). As a result, their outputs though might share some similarities due to their shared contexts, are influenced, conditioned, and shaped by their own distinctive experiences.

4.4.2. Epistemology

To claim that our perception of reality is true we should be able to define that truth or the knowledge about it and demonstrate how we acquired it – to explain how we know what we know. This is identified as epistemology. Maynard (1994: 10, cited in Crotty, 2003:8) explains that: "Epistemology is concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate." In other words, epistemology is "the study of the nature and validity of human knowledge (Wellington, 2000: 196)."

As was previously explained, researchers may interpret meaning or 'meaningful reality' from a realist or relativist ontological point of view. Thus, realists who believe that meaning exists apart from the operation of any consciousness, (whether we are aware of it or not) fundamentally follow an objectivist epistemology. Their argument is based on the notion that values are objectified in people being studied, and if the searchers go about it the right way, they can discover the objective truth (Crotty, 2003:8). On the other hand, relativists who believe that truth or meaning comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world and that there is no meaning without a mind that discovers and constructs it follow an epistemology of constructivism that Crotty (2003: 42) defines as:

> "the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context."

This epistemological assumption is sometimes confused with subjectivism, because the underlying philosophy of both the subjective and constructivist epistemologies is relativism. Although both give value to people's subjective experiences and understanding of their realities, however, "in subjectivism meaning does not come out of [the] interplay between subject and object but it is imposed on the object by the subject (ibid)." Thus, the object per se makes no contribution to the generation of meaning. In a way, it could be said that, while in constructionism meaning is constructed out of something (the object), in subjectivism meaning is created out of nothing. The meaning ascribed to the object may come from our dreams, or some prehistoric or religious beliefs (Crotty, 2003: 9). Thus, while subjectivism is inconsistent and irreconcilable with realism, constructivist epistemology may be compatible with both realism and idealism depending on the phenomenon or reality being examined. Crotty (2003: 45) argues that:

> "Because of the essential relationship that human experience bears to its objects, no object can be adequately described in isolation from the conscious being experiencing it, nor can any experience be adequately described in isolation from its object."

He further argues that "experiences do not constitute a sphere of subjective reality separate from and in contrast to the objective realm of the external world," and stresses that in constructivism objectivity and subjectivity are inseparable. This argument gave ground to the emergence of the concept of intentionality. Crotty (2003: 44) reminds us that intentionality has nothing to do with purpose or deliberation; it means preferentiality, relatedness, directedness, 'aboutness'. He clarifies that "intentionality posits a quite intimate and very active relationship between the conscious subject and the object of the subject's consciousness." In other words, conscious is directed towards the object, and the object is shaped by consciousness. He further asserts that due to "the essential relationship that human experience bears to its object, no object can be adequately described in isolation from the conscious being experiencing it, nor can any experience be adequately described in isolation from its object (Crotty, 2003: 45)." In focusing on the interaction between subject and object, intentionality, rejects both objectivism and subjectivism.

“The image evoked is that of humans engaging with their human world. It is in and out of this interplay that meaning is born (ibid).” It is worth mentioning that this interplay does not occur in a vacuum because “we depend on culture to direct our behaviour and organize our experience (Crotty, 2003:53).” This idea denoted constructionism its social characteristic when dealing with human beings. The rationale behind this is that studying human beings’ interaction with their world of meanings and constructing knowledge about it will not make sense if it is not set in historical and social perspectives. Therefore, getting deep inside individuals to understand realities from within would be inadequate if the researcher is not familiar or unable to see their realities through the same lenses that are imparted upon them by their culture. Following the above argument, the interest in exploring teachers’ knowledge and its effect on their practical decisions should be directed at the intentional and creative insights that teachers share about their experiences that are influenced and shaped by the educational culture that they work in. This is important because as Randor (2001: 19) argues: “Proactive, creative individuals are not only altering our perceptions of society but also transforming the structures that make up our social worlds.”

4.4.3. Theoretical Perspective

The above discussion reveals that exploring and making sense of teachers’ knowledge and practices demands a relativist ontology and a constructivist epistemology. In order to understand, interpret, and reconstruct the meaning teachers give to their realities, the interpretive theoretical perspective seems to be most compatible with the relativist/constructivist philosophical viewpoint.

Interpretive inquiry “is characterized by a concern for the individual.” It aims at understanding the subjective world of human experience by getting inside the person and understanding from within (Cohen et.al, 2007:21). It focuses on human action or what Cohen et al. termed as “behavior-with-meaning”. The interpretive researcher recognizes that the social world of human interaction is fundamentally different from the natural world. “[I]n the social world, people have their own intentions, their feelings and emotions impacted by each other as well as the context in which they live (Randor, 2001:17).”

In other words, people interpret experiences through the filters of existing knowledge and beliefs, which are the products of constructing meaning in their contexts.

The interpretivist/constructivist theoretical framework then fits very well with the aims of the current study, which attempts to understand the world of teachers' experiences that are socially constructed (Cohen & Manion, 1994), and tries to recognize teachers' views of the situation being studied (Creswell, 2003). In other words, the aim is to understand teachers' practical experiences through the meanings that they share and the reasoning that they bestow upon their intentional actions in the educational context of their work. Cohen et al. (ibid) argued that: "[a]ctions are meaningful to us in so far as we are able to ascertain the intentions of actors to share their experiences."

Moreover, since teachers form a "community of practice", and function in a cultural web that they spin through interpretation and experience, the understanding and construction of meaning becomes attainable when the cultural web is taken into consideration. Greetz (1993: 5 cited in Randor, 2001: 21) argued that:

> 'Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of a law but an interpretive one in search of meaning."

Interpretive researchers, then, start with individuals that they pursue to understand the social world around them from their perspectives. In studying teachers, the interpretive/constructive approach gives access to their implicit knowledge and reveals the cognitive processes that inform their practical choices. It reveals their intentions and motives through the subjective meanings they give to their actions. The result of making the implicit explicit is crucial in enhancing teachers' awareness of their decisions and in promoting reflection in and on practice. Reflecting on actions and decisions helps teachers realize various factors that shape knowledge and influence actions. It also enhances awareness of why certain situations or problems persist, or why change becomes difficult or is resisted. As a result of this gained knowledge, finding

solutions to persisting problems becomes more achievable. Unlike positivist/scientific researchers who aim for establishing a universal theory that accounts for human behavior, theory in interpretive research emerges from particular situations and is grounded in data generated by the research act. In this type of endeavor theory does not precede research but follows it. This, however, does not imply that every interpretive inquiry attempts to ground theory. Grounding theory might result from one study or multiple studies sharing the same objectives, which "gives way to multifaceted images of human behavior as varied as the situations and contexts supporting them (Cohen et.al, 2007:22)."

Since the aim of this study is to improve our practical understanding – the application of knowledge, the theoretical wisdom – the production of knowledge becomes out of scope of this study. In other words, the aim is to improve practical arguments, not to impose performance deduced from findings of research (Doyle, 1986). I attempt to understand how ESP teachers in Kuwait understand ESP, how they justify their practices through reflection on their actions, and how they describe the impact of contextual factors on the implementation of knowledge in practice. This is hoped to raise teachers' awareness of the various factors that influence their conceptualization of teaching and learning and their choice of actions. Moreover, this realization is believed to facilitate change in teachers' behavior, beliefs, hence teaching. Doyles (1986: 43) argues that:

> "[T]he value of educational research for educational practice is the help it provides in identifying what is required to change the trust value of the premises of practical argument in the mind of the [teacher], or to complete or modify those premises or to introduce an altogether new premise into the practical argument in the mind of the [teacher]."

The theoretical framework of this study is also influenced by the works of researchers' such as Clark and Peterson (1985), Shulman (1986, 1987), Clandinin & Connelly (1987), Elbaz (1981, 1983), Golombeck (1994, 1998), Connelly & Clandinin (1997), and Borg (2006) among others who moved beyond the purpose of being simply curious about teachers thoughts and actions (Clark, 1986 cited in Pope, 2011), to enabling "participants in such

research to gain from the experience of reflection and clarification of their thinking in anticipation of further actions (Pope, 2011: 24)."

4.5 Research Design

Wellington (2000: 198) defines Methodology as "the study of the methods, design, and procedures used in research." In qualitative studies it is difficult, sometimes, to find a specific set of rules that guides the choice of methods and procedures because of the diversity of research aims and conditions. As Cohen et al. (1998: 78) put it "[t]here is no single blueprint for planning research;" design follows "the notion of 'fitness for purpose'."

Since the current study does not attempt to make predictions or generalizations, but aims at exploring and understanding ESP teachers' views and justifications for their practical decisions and classroom actions (Troudi and Jendli, 2011; Pope, 2011), and since it hopes to inform teacher training and professional development programmes with insights to design courses that promote ESP teachers' awareness about their practices hence improve ESP programmes, therefore, I adopted an exploratory methodology to serve these purposes.

As the interpretive approach to research emphasizes the importance of personal perspective and interpretation, it generally uses inductive qualitative methods such as comprehensive observations, interviews, and discussions in order to gather profound information and meaning and represent it from the participants' perspectives. In order to uncover meaning that teachers allot to their interactions and practical decisions, I chose the interview as one of the tools to access teachers' "mental images" about their realities. To understand the reasons for their actions, I chose classroom observation and stimulated recall interviews. To get additional insights from other teachers who were not able to participate in the interviews, but were willing to contribute to the study by sharing their views about the situation in a discussion session, I chose to hold a group discussion. The importance of group discussion in this study does not only rest on the amount of data it generated, but also in using it in what is called 'triangulation of data' with the interview and classroom observation results for validity.

4.5.1 Interviews

Eric Drever (1995) declares that interviewing is one of the most common methods used in small-scale educational research, because when someone tries to get information, know about or find out opinion, or exchange ideas, s/he naturally would talk to people. However, as Talja (1999) explains, interview talk in qualitative studies is approached with very different expectations from how we have acquired, as members of a culture, to interpret people's everyday talk. The qualitative interviewer does not treat participants' accounts or verbal expressions as descriptions of actual processes, behavior, or mental events. It provides the interviewer and the participants a chance to discuss, negotiate, and interpret the world in which they live in, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view. In this regard Cohen et al. (1998: 349) states that:

> "In these senses the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable."

Babbie (1998) describes qualitative interview as an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent in which the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry but not a specific set of questions that must be asked in particular words and in certain order. It is more like a conversation that is directed by the interviewer to pursue specific issues raised by the respondent. Consequently, the respondent does most of the talking. In other words, the interview is interpretation work concerning the topic in question. Thus, it is reflexive, theoretical, contextual and textual (Talja, ibid).

Kavale (1996:14) digs deeper into the definition of the interview to get as close as possible to its essence and calls it inter-view. It reflects the fact that it is an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, that observes "the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes the social situatedness of research data." He further distinguishes between two types of interviewers: the interviewer as a "miner", and as a "traveler". The former assumes that the subject possesses specific information about the topic, thus s/he's job is to dig it out. The latter, however,

“wanders through the landscape and enters into conversations with the people encountered. The traveler explores the many domains of the country, as unknown territory or with maps, roaming freely around the territory […] The interviewer wanders along with local inhabitants, asks questions that lead the subjects to tell their own stories of their lived world (Kavale, 1996:3-5).” Nevertheless, in both types, knowledge is constructed between the interviewer and the participants. Therefore, the interview is not entirely subjective or objective, it is inter-subjective.

One of the main strength of interviewing is its flexibility. The questions generate answers that could shape subsequent questions. The researcher maintains the order of the interview, but allows space for spontaneity. This way the researcher not only receives comprehensive answers, but also gets insights into complex and deep issues (Cohen et al., 2007).

Kinwood (1997, cited in Cohen et al, 2007:349) argues that “if the interviewer does his job well (establishes rapport, asks questions in an acceptable manner, etc.) and if the respondent is sincere and well-motivated, accurate data may be obtained.” He further suggests that “all kinds of bias are liable to creep in, but with skill these can largely be eliminated,” In the same token, Oppenheim (1992: 81-2), comparing interviews with questionnaires as data collection tools, explains that interviews have a higher response rate than questionnaires for several reasons. First of all, because interviews are done face to face, they enable more to be said about the research than is usually mentioned in a cover letter to a questionnaire. This value gives the researcher a good chance to explain the aims and objectives of the interview, and reassures the interviewee by removing any threatening doubts and uncertainty about research purposes. Second, they are better than questionnaires for handling more difficult and open-ended questions and clarifying potential ambiguity in the process. Third, due to the give-and-take nature of interviews, respondents become more involved, hence, motivated to share their views and exchange interpretations of the situation explored.

In qualitative research, interviewing becomes an integral part of the whole research process, where the researcher needs to review her/his questions to

find out if s/he should have asked a question but didn't. Additionally, s/he needs to review notes and transcripts to make sense of data, better understand the issues tackled, and find out if other issues need to be given more attention. As a result, in this type of inquiry, research design evolves through the process of data collection as new insights emerge. That is why a number of qualitative researchers and experts "emphasize the need for flexibility in research design." Maxwell (cited in Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 47) stressed, "that the overall design will need to be modified in interaction with research setting." He further indicated that "[s]ocial research will always involve an element of the unknown." In discussing and reporting data, the researcher uses her/his skills and insights based on the negotiations between her/him and the researched to construct knowledge about issues of study (Ball, 1993: 45, cited in Randor, 2002: 36).

Three types of interviews are used in qualitative data collection: 1) structured interview that attempts to seek specific information using predetermined set of sequential questions, 2) a more flexible semi-structured interview that uses predetermined questions, but gives the interviewer the freedom to explore participants' responses, and ask for clarifications and further information when necessary – therefore, the content and sequence of questions are entirely in the researcher's hands, 3) unstructured interview that provides more freedom and flexibility that takes a form of a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee (Chen et al., 2007).

Based on the aims and objectives of this study, I decided that the semi-structured interview would best serve its purposes. The unstructured interview, though might yield further insights into social phenomena, was unsuitable for this study, mainly, due to the fact that it takes more time and longer interview sessions. This makes it inappropriate for small-scale studies like this one that needed to approach busy teachers with heavy schedules and lots of responsibilities. The semi-structured interview, thus, was contextually and culturally more acceptable, appropriate, and potentially conducive to collecting rich data in the context of this study. In addition, based on experience, I assumed that Arab teachers were more likely to prefer it to the open situation of the unstructured interview. However, my approach was flexible and, depending

on the interview's situation, I followed a more relaxed and open approach similar to the unstructured interview. For example, when I noticed that a teacher wanted to share more information because it seemed important to her/him, I tried not to interrupt the flow of her/his story. Moreover, when the respondent shared an interesting information that encouraged prompts to get more insights into the issue, or when the respondent's answer required the use of a question on the bottom of the list of the interview questions, I did not follow the sequence of the questions on the list, but went back and forth following the interview's direction, at the same time, making sure not to miss any question on my list.

4.5.2 Observation

Human beings are natural observers, because observational skills such as "watching and listening are part of our everyday life and are two basic ways in which we learn about our fellow beings (Randor, 2002: 48)." We observe people's actions and behavior in both our personal and professional lives. Every day we observe, analyze, make sense, judge, criticize, and come up with conclusions, understandings, and explanations for different situations. However, in everyday life our understanding of situations is often biased and very subjective. The awareness of biases is significant for the observer in order to minimize them and reach as neutral of a stance as possible and avoid seeing what one wants to see. That is why Morris (1973: 906, cited in Randor, 2002: 48) believed that utilizing our natural skills "with a specific purpose and extra concentration, and recording what we see is observation for research purposes." Thus, in order to be focused and control our biases we need to be aware of their existence. The next step is to strengthen our skills through practice. One of the tools that could help researchers strengthen their observation skills is the use of electronically recorded observation, which provides the researcher with the opportunity to access data repeatedly examining them from different perspectives and with growing awareness.

Observation offers the qualitative educational researcher the opportunity to gather "live" data from naturally occurring interactions. It gives the researcher an opportunity to look directly into what is happening than simply hearing about

it; and since “what people do [might] differ from what they say they do (Robson, 2002: 310, cited in Cohen et.al., 2007: 396),” observation provides a “reality check” against interview results when it is used in combination with observation as data collection tools. It also allows the “researcher to look afresh at everyday behavior that otherwise might be taken for granted, or expected to go unnoticed (Cohen et al., ibid).” Moreover, observation has the ability to yield more valid or authentic data, which gives it its unique and valuable characteristic.

However, merely interviewing teachers about their teaching methods might not always yield accurate data (Drever, 1995), because teachers are inclined to talk about the application of good teaching practices based on their beliefs as opposed to actual classroom occurrences. Thus, a semi-structured or unstructured observation could provide a better possibility to find out whether teachers actually applied what they knew. If not, it provides the opportunity to understand reasons behind the contradictions in teachers’ knowledge and actions. This makes stimulated recall interviews an important part of the qualitative observation that is recorded or videotaped. The teacher would be given a chance to hear or watch the teaching session and comment on it, and/or justify actions. By using stimulated recall classroom observation, qualitative researchers have been able to gain richer information about how teachers think and what they do.

The tape and video recording have other advantages such as exposing teachers’ nonverbal behavior that could reflect emotions such as: frustration, satisfaction, anger, enthusiasm, etc. These emotional aspects of teachers’ lives, that reflect embedded reasons, could inform the type of questions the researcher decides to ask in the stimulated recall interview to gain deeper access to teachers’ implicit knowledge when they try to justify their feelings.

Based on the above rationale, and guided by previous studies on teachers’ knowledge and practices that used stimulated recall observation as a tool for data gathering (Golombek, 1998; Gatbonton, 1999; Mullock, 2006, Abdelhafez 2010), I decided to use this type of observation to collect data related to ESP teachers’ practices and the knowledge underpinning them.

In studies about teacher knowledge and classroom practices, Farrell and Kun (2007) proposed two observation approaches. In the first one, the researcher and the teacher monitor classroom activities to find evidence that supports teachers' previously stated beliefs about teaching and learning. In other words, they use a deductive approach to make sense of actual practices and their underpinning knowledge. In the second one, teachers look at their teaching first, and then they try to realize what views are revealed in actual classroom practices. In this type of classroom observation an inductive approach is used to make sense of data. I used the latter type in observing ESP teachers' classroom interactions in Kuwait, because it was more appropriate for the purpose of the study.

4.5.3 Group discussion

Group discussion or focused groups as some experts refer to it (Ritchie and Lewis, 2006: 170) is now "well established as a mainstream method across the field of social research, where they are widely used and are an extremely valuable research approach (ibid)." This method differs in many ways from an in-depth interview. For example, in group discussion the interviewer's role become more of a listener to the interactions between group's participants, who assume the interviewer's role in asking each other questions as they listen to each other and reflect on what has been said. In other words, while participants present their own views, they also hear from other members. As a result, the participants' perspective is less influenced by the interaction with the researcher as in the case of one-to-one interview. This valuable feature of group interaction helps participants consider their own viewpoint further. At the same time, probing on what others said creates more data that enriches a study. Therefore, it could be said that group discussion is not a collection of individual interviews responding to the researcher's comments and questions, instead, it is synergistic (Stewart and Shamadasi, 1990, cited in Ritchie and Lewis, 2003) in a sense that the group works together, and the explicit interaction is used to generate data and insights about the focus of a study. Another important feature of group discussion as Ritchie and Lewis (2006: 171) put it, "is the spontaneity that arises from their stronger social context." They explain that:

> "In responding to each other, participants reveal more of their own frame of references on the subject of study. The language they use, the emphasis they give and their general framework of understanding is more spontaneously on display."

Additionally, this "stronger social context offers an opportunity to see how ideas and language emerges in a more naturalistic setting than an in-depth interview, how they are shaped through conversation with others." It reflects the social construction of reality, and how members of a specific context or culture perceive, experience and understand the world around them through "individual self-identity, and shared meanings (ibid)."

Discussion groups might involve six to eight participants who meet for a period of one hour usually one time unless the researcher deems it necessary for the research purpose to meet another time to clarify shared issues. This usually occurs when the study "addresses issues that are intangible or unfamiliar to respondents (ibid)." Thus, the type of group discussion and its frequency depend on the focus of the study and the participants' familiarity with the topic.

For the purpose of this study, I found meeting once to be adequate, and following a relaxed and flexible approach to be more appropriate. This allowed the participants to shape the discussion's agenda and the flow of their interactions under the umbrella of the research topic.

4.6 The role of the researcher

To ensure the credibility of data and the trustworthiness of results, qualitative researchers need to state why a particular topic was chosen, what significance the topic represented for the researcher, the type of relationship between the researcher and the participants, and the ways the samples were approached and data gathered.

My experience, as a teacher of English both for general and for specific purposes at one of the tertiary colleges under study, was an important factor in choosing the focus of this research. Dealing with problems and challenges that I have been facing in my profession, and observing some persisting problems that occurred year after year motivated me to try and explore what teachers think about their profession, how they deal with the challenges in teaching ESP,

why some problems appear to be static and resistant to change, and how all that affect teachers' professional growth and fulfillment. In an attempt to improve our ESP programmes' outcomes and to promote ESP teacher development, I decided to delve deep into the world of ESP teaching at vocational colleges in Kuwait hoping to find some answers to our persisting problems and clues to influential elements that shaped our understanding and fostered our behavior.

I was aware that being an insider both as a researcher and a member of staff at the LC and being familiar with the context of the study, though beneficial in many ways, might to some extent influence my interpretations of teachers' knowledge and practices. However, being aware of my potential biases worked as a device to control the degree of any biased view and interpretation.

4.7 Populations and Sampling

Two types of sampling are used for research purposes: probability and non-probability. In quantitative studies the former is believed to be the most rigorous approach for statistical research, however, it is deemed inappropriate for qualitative research. Ritchie and Lewis (2006: 78) argued that "[i]n a non-probability sample, units are deliberately selected to reflect particular features of groups within the sampled population." Thus, samples are selected based on the characteristics of the population and the methods used (Babbie, 1998; Ritchie and Lewis, 2006). According to Ritchie and Lewis (ibid), this feature of qualitative sampling makes them well suited to small-scale, in-depth studies. Cohen et al. (2007:100) stated that the quality of a research is not only based on the appropriateness of the methodology and methods, but also on the suitability of sampling strategy. They further argued that research style determines the size of the sample, which is usually small in ethnographic and qualitative studies. Expense, time, and accessibility prevent a qualitative researcher from collecting data from a large population, "[t]herefore they often need to be able to obtain data from a smaller group or subset of the total population in such a way that the knowledge gained is representative of the total population under study (ibid)." As a result, the qualitative researcher needs to assure that the sample is representative of the whole population. For

example, the focus of this study was to explore ESP teachers professional lives, thus, EGP teachers who did not have any experience in teaching ESP would not be a good representative sample of the ESP population. For the purpose of this study I decided to interview nine experienced ESP teachers with at least fifteen years of experience. I agree with some experts who believe that years of experience do not guarantee expertise, however, this was one of the factors in selecting the sample. This is because experience is the most important prerequisite for the development of expertise (Gage and Berliner, 1991, cited in Abdelhafez, 2010), and plays an important role in shaping teachers' knowledge. Additionally, in order to fulfill the purpose of this study I found interviewing and observing experienced teachers to be more adequate than novice teachers. Reynolds (1995: 214, cited in Abdelhafiz, 2010: 105) emphasized that, "expert teachers have established procedural knowledge for solving discipline problems than do novices, experts can divert more of their attention to problem definition, representation and strategy evaluation."

Two more teachers with minimum five years of experience were also included in the sample. The reason behind this decision was to compare similarities and differences between the two younger teachers and their more experienced counterparts to gain further insights into teachers' interactions with each other and with their professional world. In addition, I believed that including a couple of less experienced teachers could "yield a balanced picture of the situation under study (Babbie, 1998: 109)." It is worth mentioning that in order for expertise to develop, some experts such as Westerman (1991) believed that five years was a benchmark for such development to occur. This brought the total number of ESP teachers who participated in this study to eleven teachers from the various vocational colleges.

The participants for this study were selected based on my knowledge of the ESP teachers' population at the different colleges and the research aims and purposes. As a result, the sample included: one ESP teacher, out of a group of three, from the college of nursing; one out of a group of five form the teacher training college; one out of a group of four from the college of health sciences; two out of a group of five from the college of technology; and six out of a group

of seventeen from the college of business and commerce. Out of the latter population three participants were chosen to be interviewed. The reason behind the relatively large number of the sample from the business college was that this college had the largest ESP population. In addition, being a member of staff at the college provided accessibility. This feature was significant, because during qualitative data collection it is normal for the researcher to find out that more information or clarification was needed about an issue that might have gone unnoticed during the interview. As with the stimulated recall observation, choosing teachers from the above college helped make classroom observation planning easier and the stimulated recall interviews more convenient.

4.8 Data Collection Procedure

In qualitative data collection the procedure's phases might overlap. For example, while the researcher codifies and categorizes the results of one interview, s/he might get engaged in the second one and so on. In addition, the interview might be still going on when the researcher starts classroom observations, and/or group discussions. In other words, data collection and preliminary data analysis are done simultaneously. This, in my opinion, is one of the strength of qualitative data collection methods, because researchers get the chance to refine their tools and modify their questions as they move on. This helps improve the quality of methods and their ability to elicit more accurate data using better question wordings and observation techniques. It also helps researchers notice their biases thus control or, if possible, eliminate them. According to Merriam (1998: 162) this approach to data analysis, in qualitative research, is "the right way."

This research proceeded in four phases. During the first phase, I designed an interview list of questions and examined it against the research questions. I chose two teachers for the pilot study. During and after the administration of the interview, I asked the teachers if they found any question to be ambiguous or leading. I also asked if they had any suggestion for improving the sequence of the questions, and the wordings. Those teachers had administrative positions besides their teaching practices. This fact proved to be helpful in getting informative and professional insights about the questions and the time of the

interview, which was more or less an hour. I noticed that the interview took more than an hour with both teachers. I decided to linger a little more as the interviewees seemed keen at sharing their stories. As a result, I decided to allocate an extra half hour to the interview in case the teacher was willing to share more information.

Having approached the ESP teachers and chosen the sample that voluntarily agreed to participate in this study, the second phase of the research procedure started by focusing on the interview timetable arrangements. I decided to allow one week between each interview to get a chance to listen to the first one, reflect on my techniques, and get a general insight into the data. This helped to enhance my technique for the following interview, and informed me to elicit more data regarding issues that has been raised.

Being an insider made it easier for me to approach the head of the LC for permission on conducting the interviews and classroom observations as well as the group discussion. Then I approached the ESP teachers once more to remind them of the purpose of my study and to explain the nature of qualitative research that looks for the meanings that teachers assign to various issues in their professional world.

After receiving the consent of the participants the second phase started. At this phase, I contacted teachers according to the table that I arranged for the interviews and they were all interviewed in their offices for their comfort and convenience. I recorded the interview sessions using a small digital recorder that was unnoticeable, thus, less distracting. Then I transferred the recordings to my laptop, and from my laptop to another portable hard drive to ensure safety and accessibility at anytime and anywhere. Furthermore, as aforementioned, though the interview was designed for one hour, I did not interrupt the flow of the interviewee's response, but made sure that the main issues of the study were covered.

Five out of eleven interviews were conducted in English, but the interviewees code-switched using some words and terms in Arabic especially when they deemed it easier to convey the intended meaning in Arabic. I tried as best as I

could to capture the essence of the words when I translated them to English and put them between brackets whenever I quoted them. The other six interviews were conducted in Arabic because the participants believed it was easier for them to express themselves using their mother tongue. As a result, I needed to translate the interviews when I started transcribing them. In the same manner that I translated the Arabic words that their counterparts used in the English interviews, I tried not to lose the meaning and essence of their talk. While I was listening to the interviewees' talk I noticed the change in their emotions, and the use of some emotional expressions or idioms to describe a situation. This encouraged me to dig deeper into their world and try to understand the causes of their problems. I asked for elaboration and clarification to elicit more data regarding a problematic issue, and sometimes to ensure that I was able to grasp the meaning that they intended to deliver.

The third phase of the study – the observation sessions – overlapped with the second phase. During this phase, three experienced ESP teachers from the business college were observed in their classrooms. Their interviews were coded and categorized, during the second phase, to realize in what ways their knowledge informed their practices, and to understand the principles underlying their pedagogical choices. The teachers refused to be videotaped but accepted tape recording of their classroom sessions. I tried to make myself as invisible as possible by setting in a corner at the back of the classroom. In the first observation session, I put the digital recorder on a desk in front of me, because the device was powerful enough to record from that distance. However, when I listened to the tape, I did not like the quality of the sound, so on the following sessions I asked the teachers' permission to put it on their desks. The small size of the device helped it go unnoticed and be less intimidating. The teachers were observed one hour a week for three weeks. That came up to nine observation sessions, one hour each. The sessions were followed by stimulated recall interviews on the same day that the teacher did not have other classes to teach. After each observation the stimulated recall interview took place to listen to the participant's justification for their actions and classroom occurrences that were still fresh in the interviewee's minds.

The fourth phase of group discussion also overlapped with the second and third phases, since the interviewing was still going on in the other colleges, and additional emerging categories were being added and/or identical ones unified. My approach to the group discussion was unstructured to give the participants a chance to freely express themselves as they unfolded their professional life stories. As with the other recordings, I transferred the group discussion's recording to my laptop and to another hard drive. The data generated from each research method was used for data triangulation to support findings or discover any discrepancies. Table (4.1) illustrates the phases of the field study.

4.9 Data Analysis procedures

I analyzed the verbatim transcripts of the interviews, observations, and discussion qualitatively. Due to the interpretive nature of this study, and following my supervisor's advice, I decided to analyze the data manually. This decision corresponds to Richard's (2009) view to avoid automating data because reading and thinking about data while coding them was central to interpretive analysis. Another reason to take advantage of engaging physically with data was that the participants' number was relatively small, and managing the data myself would provide me with the opportunity to see connections and relations between different elements in data related to certain topics. Moreover, manual analysis increases the level of familiarity with data through reading transcripts repeatedly and reflecting on them, paying attention not only to what has been explicitly said, but also to the implicit information hidden 'between the lines'. This kind of engagement makes it easier to decide which themes and concepts could be used to label data (Ritchie and Lewis, 2006). Richards (2009: 85) argues:

> "Reading and reflecting on data records, you see your project document by document. But your project requires you to see *across* the data, and *above* the individual documents, to theme and ideas. Usually it also requires you to gather all the data on a topic, to think about it and rethink it. To gather everything on a topic you need to code."

He then reminds us that qualitative coding is not about data reduction as is the case of quantitative data analysis, though it could be applicable in descriptive data such as: gender, age, and ethnicity. However, qualitative coding is about

retention. It aims at learning from data by revisiting it until patterns and explanations are understood. It is about bringing and organizing parts of data about a topic under one category to make reviewing, reflecting on and understanding the data more feasible. This, then, would help develop our knowledge about the topic and help come up with informed and reliable discussions and conclusions.

However, one of the disadvantages of analyzing data manually is the fact that when a question arises during the analysis process about an emerging issue, information would not be as accessible as those sorted and stored by a computer.

Richards (ibid) distinguishes between three types of coding: 'descriptive' (see table (5.1)), 'topic', and 'analytical' (see appendix 3, also see tables: (5.2), (5.3), and (5.4)). I used the three to code data and organize them under different categories. First, I used the descriptive coding to sort information about the participants, such as: gender, years of experience, and age. Then, I used topic analysis to organize the topics that the participants talked about and discussed. In other words, I tried to put data where they belonged. Therefore, interpretation was not needed at this stage. However, as Richards (2009) stated, it was a first step to more interpretive work. Finally, I used the analytical coding to get a deeper insight into what the statements revealed to me about teachers' knowledge and its influence on their practices. At this stage true interpretation started. In fact, Richards (ibid) named this stage "analytical coding" because it referred to coding that came from interpretation and reflection on meaning. This stage was longer than the descriptive and topic coding. At this stage I reviewed the transcripts again and tried to conceptualize a framework from the identified themes and concepts. Then I organized and grouped them thematically under four topics representing the themes and sub-themes. As interviews went on and more transcripts became available and more categories and themes emerged, I did some modification for overlapping themes by sorting those with the same idea under an existing category as themes or sub-themes.

4.9.1 Interview data analysis

As aforementioned, I transcribed, then analyzed, the interviews qualitatively through three coding processes: descriptive, topic, and analytical. Due to the nature of this kind of study the data collected was voluminous. Thus, during codification and categorization processes I had to reduce data to a manageable size. As I proceeded to the conceptualizing and explaining stage, I had to reduce more data, especially the repetitive and irrelevant ones.

In analyzing the semi-structured interviews, I started with topics and themes that I formed using existing concepts from the research and interview questions. More topics and themes were constructed and added during the analysis. Whenever a piece of information emerged that did not fit under an existing topic and category I added a new one.

Throughout the analysis process, I wrote analytical memos that helped me stay focused and pay attention to the emerging concepts (Emerson et al., 1995; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). I organized the topics, themes and sub-themes, thematically, under categories, and coded them. I started with the first interview, then, I used the coding for all the other interviews. More topics and codes were added as new information emerged from the subsequent interviews. Modifications to some codes and/or replacing themes under more suitable categories happened as the coding progressed. Then I sorted data by cutting the pieces of information that belonged to a particular topic and theme and put them in a box that I already labeled with the category title. This way I was able to keep them safe and was able to easily access them. In support of such action, Ritchie and Lewis (2003:237) argue that: "[i]t is … important that there is always access back to the original material for cases where earlier interpretations come under question as the analysis become more refined." On the back of each piece of data I wrote the name of the interviewee and the page number on the original transcript. I divided the category box into two parts: one for the similarities in teachers' knowledge, and one for the differences. I tried to find what Seidman (1998: 110) referred to as "connective threads." Analyzing connections between data gathered from different participants is important in studies like the current one, because one of the

aims of this study is to understand why teachers take or do not take certain actions. I also tried to pay attention to hidden messages 'between the lines' of respondents' conversations, and/or in their body language and emotional expressions, and wrote analytical memos about them and stored them with the segments they came from. This step, I think, was important because teachers' knowledge is not always directly accessible. Besides, teachers sometimes share some information indirectly, or tend not to tell the whole story, but the body language, idioms, and the way information is shared could expose those hidden data. In this type of study, eliciting some data based on inference is inevitable, but constructing findings carefully based on the 'connective threads' and data triangulation holds the advantage of revealing an ampler picture of reality. Ritchie et al. (2003: 237) maintained that:

> "As each piece of data is inspected, the analysts will be deciding what is being said and what the content is conveying. Thus the construction and assignment of labels, the bringing together of similar material, the summarizing of original text all require an interpretation of what has been said or observed."

The last stage was to synthesize the data to ensure that all the content has been considered. The collection of coded data included those gained from the observations and the discussion. This assessed me, as part of data triangulation, to examine each interviewee's responses to the data I gathered from both the discussion and the observations to ensure trustworthiness.

4.9.2 Stimulated recall observation data analysis

I analyzed the stimulated recall observations using the analytical framework reached from analyzing the interviews. Therefore, to organize the data generated from this method I used the same coding that was already assigned to different topics and themes that emerged from the interviews. The findings from interview analysis informed the questions I used in the stimulated recall interviews when teachers were asked to justify or explain a classroom action. It also guided me in looking for classroom practices that reflected teachers' beliefs about ESP teaching that they shared in their interviews. During the stimulated recall interview, I played the tape recorder and prepared my notebook containing some predetermined questions and probes that I wrote

down during the observation session. I listened to classroom observation tape with the observed participant and probed her thinking and justification for decisions and/or actions in particular parts of the session. The data from interviews, which revealed their accounts on classroom practices, was used to find similarities and differences in teachers' classroom behavior.

4.9.3 Group discussion data analysis

As with the interviews and stimulated recall classroom observation, I analyzed the verbatim transcript of the group discussion qualitatively using the same procedure I used to analyze the interview transcripts. However, in analyzing the group discussion's data, I first examined the transcript as a whole to realize what topics were more important for the participants to tackle. Then, I studied the transcript once more, paying attention to what was said and how it was delivered in order to capture the group dynamics (Ritchie et al., 2006). Next, I focused on the interactions between the participants and took notes about the agreements and disagreements or conflicts in ideas that they discussed. I also observed the participants who dominated a part of the discussion and tried to understand the factors that influenced the length of a participant's talk. For example, having worked with those colleagues for more than twenty-four years, I was able to realize whether the length of speech on a certain subject reflected the participant's attribute (e.g. dominating a conversation), or whether it depended on the salience of the subject to them. While taking the analytical notes on the transcribed data, I also paid attention to different and opposing opinions and the way the participants' modified, refined, and extended them as a result of the influence of others' views (Finch and Lewis, 2006). I used the results of group discussion analysis for data triangulation with the findings from the interviews and stimulated recall classroom observation to ensure accuracy and trustworthiness.

Table (4.1) Phases of the field study

Phases in months and years	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
December, 2010	Piloting the interview questions (2 interviews) Modifying questions and style			
Jan. – April 2011 **January** **February** **March** **April**		Conducting interviews 3 3 3 2 Transcripting, amending, codifying and categorizing	Classroom observation (March – April 2011) Transcripting, codifying and categorizing	
May – Dec. 2011				Group discussion (May 2011) Transcripting, codifying and categorizing

4.10 Validity of Qualitative Research

Validity in research reflects its worthiness. Cohen et al. (2007: 133) stress: "If a piece of research is invalid then it is worthless." In positivist studies validity was checked based on the belief that "scientific knowledge could ultimately be reduced to a logical system that was securely grounded in irrefutable sense data (Maxwell, 1996: 86)." Many philosophers and methodologists abandoned this view, which suggested that methods could guarantee validity of results by following some prescribed procedure. The justification is that "[v]alidity is not a commodity that can be purchased with techniques (Brinberg and McGrath, 1985: 13, cited in Maxwell, ibid)." It depends on the relationship between the study's conclusions with the real world, and research methods cannot assure researchers that they have adequately grasped those aspects of the world they were studying. Moreover, Maxwell argues that: "[v]alidity is a goal rather than a product; it is never something that can be proven or taken for granted (ibid)." He further asserts that validity is relative, thus, has to be assessed in connection to the purposes and conditions of the research, not as a context-independent property of methods and conclusions (Maxwell, 1992). Therefore, "in qualitative data validity might be addressed through honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher (Winter, 2000 cited in Cohen et al. ibid)." Maxwell (1992) suggests that in qualitative research, 'understanding' is a more suitable term than 'validity'. Inasmuch as the researchers are part of the world they are researching, it is not possible to be totally objective. Additionally, in uncovering their mutually constructed realities, participants' points of view are equally as valid as those of the researcher's. Thus, in qualitative research, validity "attaches to accounts, not to data or methods. It is the meaning that subjects give to data that are important (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, cited in Cohen et al. ibid)." Maxwell (1992) presents five kinds of validity, which reflect his notion of 'understanding':

Descriptive validity reflects the factuality of data – it is not made up, selective or distorted – it is a true account of what actually happened.

Interpretive Validity is the ability of the study to grasp the meaning, interpretations, intentions that data have for the participants.

Theoretical validity is the theoretical construction that the researcher brings to the research. In other words, it is the extent to which the research explains phenomena.

Generalizability, which means the theory generated from a study, may be useful in understanding other similar situations.

Evaluative validity is the application of an evaluative judgment of what is being researched.

This study tried to establish the interpretive validity by trying to make sense of the meanings ESP teachers gave to various aspects of their professional world, and to understand the intentions of their actions and practical decisions. Moreover, subjects' consensuses on mutual understandings of data as well as data triangulation were used to ensure that the interpretation and construction of knowledge gained from data analysis is as authentic and as accurate as possible.

4.11 Reliability of Qualitative Research

Reliability refers to the extent that "a particular technique, repeatedly applied to the same object would yield the same result each time (Babbie, 1998:129)." In qualitative studies, it is not only time consuming to see behaviors occur over and over again, but replicating the same situation is also not possible. Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Ritchie and Lewis, 2006: 270) emphasize, "the concept of 'replication' in qualitative research is naïve given the likely complexity of the phenomena being studied and the inevitable impact of context." Some experts perceive this characteristic of qualitative research that advocates of quantitative methods criticize as its strength. For example, Cohen et al. (2007:148) argue that:

> "Indeed the premises of naturalistic studies include the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of situations, such that the study cannot be replicated – that is their strength rather than weakness."

That is why "the idea of seeking reliability in qualitative data is often avoided (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 270). In qualitative research, other terms and concepts such as: 'conformability', 'trustworthiness' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), 'consistency' (Hammersley, 1992; Robson, 2002), 'credibility', 'applicability', 'transferability', and most importantly 'dependability' of evidence (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) are used instead of reliability. This is where Snape and Spencer's (2003) suggestions about the amount of data collected and its depth become an important tool to ensure the reliability of the qualitative data. In other words, qualitative researchers suggest that dependability, which is the degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of coverage, is needed for qualitative data to be reliable. Seale (1999) believes that the problem of reliability in qualitative research could be solved through an aspect of 'flexibility.' That is, "showing the audience of research studies as much as possible of the procedures that have led to a particular set of conclusions (cited in Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 271)."

It is important to realize that reliability in qualitative data does not mean accuracy, because other factors could influence the data, such as researcher's biases. For example, sometimes, it is not clear for sure how much of what a qualitative researcher reports is actually originated in the situation observed and how much in the researcher. In other words, the possibility that a researcher might select data that fit her/his existing theory becomes a threat to the qualitative researcher. However, it is unrealistic to eliminate researchers' theories, perceptions and values, which Hammersley and Atkins (1983, cited in Maxwell, 1996: 91) called the inherent reflexivity. In this regard, Maxwell neatly explains that,

> "qualitative research is not primarily concerned with eliminating variance between researchers in the values and expectations they bring to the study, but with understanding how a particular researcher's values influence the conduct and conclusions of the study."

As a result, it was important as a qualitative researcher to understand my biases and try as much as possible to control their influences on data. I tried to be attentive to the effects of my own views on the interpretation and the realization of the evidence during the data collection, data analysis, discussion

of results, and the conclusion processes of the study. In qualitative research this act becomes a matter of integrity (Fred Hess, cited in Maxwell, ibid).

4.12 Strengths and Weaknesses of Qualitative Research

In contrast to the quantitative research that is considered universal and value-free, qualitative research has been criticized for being value-laden and context sensitive. That is because the qualitative researcher assumes a central role in expressing, in detail, the findings and synthesizing the participants' stories to achieve the aims of the study. In other words, when qualitative researcher makes sense of data her/his knowledge and experience become influential. However, advocates of this type of inquiry believe that, in social and educational domains, the inter-subjectivity of the qualitative research gives this type of inquiry its value. Solutes (1990, cited in Hara, 1995) states that the qualitative research approach in education is able to encompass interpersonal, social, and cultural contexts of education more fully than the quantitative research approach. The researcher's viewpoint is clearly placed on the research, and the researcher is able to provide richer, wider, and deeper description than in the quantitative research approach. In addition, qualitative approaches in education have other values that quantitative methods fail to provide. For example, "it is able to explain the psychological dimensions of human beings which are impossible to represent numerically in a quantitative way. Educational research weaves a complex web and some issues are difficult to solve in a quantitative statistical way (Hara, 1995)." In other words, the numerical presentation fall short of explaining the complexity of human behavior often investigated in educational research. The quantitative research approach often has limitations and difficulties in expressing problems, particularly, if the researcher deals with the psychological dimensions in human beings. The quantitative approach, in social sciences and education, not only rejects the researcher's involvement in constructing the findings, but also neglects the individual differences of the subjects. Carr and Kemmis (1986:78) argue that in educational research, "the relationship between means and ends that the positivist view of theory and practice assumes fails to recognize how in education aims, policies, and methods are all intrinsically related." Since societies and cultures vary in their beliefs and values and in their understanding

and making sense of the world, and each society changes over time, their values and knowledge also change. This complexity of human beings and societies and culture makes it impossible for educational research to be neutral or value free. In some cases, due to the fact that qualitative research is context specific and value-laden, it is not possible to generalize findings.

Some qualitative research experts such as Snape and Spencer (2003) suggested that qualitative research weaknesses, such as researcher's biases and influences on data could be controlled and minimized if the researcher tries to be as objective and neutral as possible in the collection, interpretation, and presentation of qualitative data. This could be achieved when researchers are "trained to use open, non-leading questioning techniques." Moreover, researchers are required to withhold their own contrasting views on some of the issues studied, or when they arise during interviews and group discussions.

Another tactic that they suggest is reflexivity. Qualitative researchers could reflect on the various ways that their biases could creep into their practices and acknowledge it. Therefore, as Snape and Spencer (2003:20) argue, it is "important that researchers provide as much information as possible, in terms of both technical details of conduct and potential bias, so that others can scrutinize the 'objectivity' of the investigation."

4.13 Ethical consideration

The word ethics is commonly associated with morality. It is about what is considered right and wrong. In research, it means agreeing on a code of conduct (Babbie, 1998). A prerequisite for conducting this study I had to read and sign a code of conduct provided by the University of Exeter. Following the ethical consideration for conducting this research, I was aware that I needed to get permission from the LC for interviewing and observing teachers and for the group discussion. The head of the LC granted me permission to interview the staff and observe the sample verbally believing that as an insider (a teaching staff at the LC) I did not need a written document. I also was aware that I needed to ask teachers' permission to be interviewed, observed, and to participate in discussion. I started by informing them that they had the right to decide whether they wanted to participate or not. In an attempt to make sure

that they did not feel any sort of pressure to participate or think that they needed to do this as a favour, I assured them that their decision was not going to affect our relationship as colleagues in any way. I also assured them that if they decided to participate they had the right to withdraw anytime during the study. I explained the purpose of the study and the nature of qualitative research that cares for listening to what they want to share and understand their world through their lenses. Realizing that quantitative methods might intimidate some teachers, I explained the differences between qualitative and quantitative research. I assured them that by using qualitative methods I was not trying to test their knowledge or judge their performances, but was aiming at understanding why they do what they do from their own perspectives. I also made it clear from the beginning that I was going to protect their confidentiality and anonymity by giving them pseudonyms. I also got their permission to use the data for the study purposes and for future references. The parts of data that could reveal the participants' identity to other colleagues who might read this research in the future were discussed with the participant and only used with their permission. Only teachers who agreed voluntarily to participate were chosen as a sample for this study.

4.14 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the philosophical views underpinning this study to justify the choice of methodology and methods used in data collection and analysis. I explained why qualitative/interpretive methodology was deemed appropriate for this study and presented the strengths and weaknesses of this type of inquiry. I also discussed methods of data collection and analysis and provided justifications for the selection of the sample. Finally, I provided a detailed description of data gathering and analysis processes, the ethical consideration, and the conclusion.

Chapter Five
Findings of the Study: Part one

5. Preview:

In this chapter I present a detailed exploration of issues related to teachers' knowledge and understanding of ESP at vocational colleges of Kuwait. I explain the sources and possible factors that contributed to the construction of their knowledge, and report on the potential influence of teachers' personal knowledge and the role of contextual factors on teachers' practical and pedagogical knowledge.

It is worth mentioning that some themes, such as the ESP teacher and the learner, the pedagogy, and the teaching context might appear under different topics, but are tackled using different focal points that are informed by each topic. This repetition is sometimes unavoidable due to the complex nature of teaching and its various elements that are interwoven in such a way that separating them becomes a difficult task. Referring to the content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and knowledge of students, Johnston and Goettsch (2000, cited in Borg, 2006:127) "acknowledge[s] that, while this discreteness is analytically convenient, in reality, these categories are melded together in complex and indeed inextricable ways."

Moreover, due to the amount of data generated in this study, this chapter is divided into two sections. In this first section I attempt to answer the first two research questions by exploring the various themes related to teachers' knowledge of ESP and their prior knowledge as learners and teacher-learners and their possible impact on their classroom practices. In the second section, I attempt to answer research questions three and four, by exploring teachers' knowledge in action and the challenges that they might have encountered in implementing their knowledge in practice.

The two research questions that this section attempted to answer are:

1. How do ESP teachers in Kuwait understand ESP?
2. What factors influenced and shaped teachers' knowledge of ESP?

5.1 Teacher's Knowledge of ESP

In order to realize how ESP teachers' in Kuwait understand ESP, I asked the participants to share their understanding of ESP and its practices (for a sample of the interview questions see Appendix 1).

The following analysis is based on the data elicited from the participants' responses to the interview questions, stimulated recall interview questions, and the group discussion. Table (5.1) displays teachers' qualifications and EGP and ESP teaching experiences.

Table (5.1) ESP teachers' qualification and Experience

Participants	Qualifications	TEGP Experience	TESP Experience	Gender
Amira	MA in Linguistics	25	25	F
Bader	MA in ESL	30	22	M
Dina	MA in TESL	7	7	F
Fahad	MA in Applied Linguistics	4	2	M
Huda	MA in Education	35	35	F
Jinan	MA in TESL	30	30	F
Latifa	MA in Linguistics	30	30	F
Manar	MA in Education	30	30	F
Rasha	MA in TESOL	25	25	F
Saad	PhD in TESOL	35	35	M
Nabeel	MA in Curriculum and Instruction	14	14	M

5.1.1 Tailored courses

The data in this study indicated that the majority of the participants (seven out of eleven) recognized that ESP courses were focused English language courses tailored to fit specific learners. For example, Dina stated that:

> "ESP is more focused. I remember when I did my Master's degree they taught us about needs analysis. You have to know why the students are learning English. Why do they need English?"

In the same vein, Latifa talked about how she was amazed by the idea that ESP courses were tailored to students' needs:

> "That was back in 1987. I mean I have heard about ESP when I was doing my Masters degree. I thought it was amazing because it was… I mean we talked about tailor made courses and curriculum. This is fantastic. This is giving you the language skills that you need for your job for example, for your studies."

However, as the evidence further implied, this realization seemed to contradict the reality of ESP teaching at their colleges. This was apparent in the majority's comments on the nature of ESP courses and practices at their colleges. For example, Bader maintained that: "ESP is teaching the students the useful language that they need in their jobs not what we are teaching them." This view is also indicated in Amira's disagreement with the distinction made between ESP and EGP. She argued that:

> "The only difference between the general English and the ESP English let me be perfectly honest with you, OK, I'm sorry to say it's just that in the *EeeeeSP* O.K. the comprehension pieces have some technical words, that's it. And it's still the simple present, the simple past and it's all English. Come on, I mean do they speak differently in the banking world? They have a few terms that are different, may be a few expressions that are exclusive to them."

Amira's comment steers some concerns regarding teachers' understanding about pedagogy in ESP and may point at some deficiencies in their specific pedagogical content knowledge (SPCK). Her view that English as a means of communication shares a lot of similarities in various job contexts is true and conforms to ESP specialists who believe that in theory there is no difference between teaching EGP and ESP. However, it contradicts the notion that in practice there are a lot of differences between the two approaches (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, Widdowson, 1983; Robinson, 1980; Gatehouse, 2001). Her comment seems to reveal a hidden misconception, and/or lack of awareness about the practical aspects of ESP courses that aim to train learners to exploit job related language that are specifically used in different occupations to perform particular tasks. Such objective certainly demands the application of methods and techniques that are not essential for teaching EGP.

5.1.2 Language and target needs

In an attempt to define ESP, three participants linked it to needs analysis. They believed that ESP courses are designed based on needs analysis results. Two out of the three, believed that visiting the target places and being exposed to the actual target culture help in designing more authentic courses. In this regard Dina stated that:

> "We need to visit banks, for example, and see how they correspond. This is good for our corresponding courses. We have to be involved with the job market outside our colleges, so our programmes become more authentic. Yes, we need to be exposed to the business sector."

These participants' views are valid and reveal some awareness about ESP courses being needs driven. The distinctive nature of ESP means that every course is unique, which entails a different syllabus and certain teaching materials to cater for specific learners' needs.

Although some participants believed that teachers' awareness about learners' target language needs is important for making better pedagogical choices, they did not seem to take any effort to realize and specify these needs through any kind of needs assessment activity. Analyzing learners' needs seemed to be missing in all the five vocational colleges under the study. In answering a prompt on whether ESP teachers in Kuwait are involved in conducting target or language needs analysis, Dina replied:

> "I really don't know, but through my experience, I really didn't see anyone do any needs analysis or visit any work place. And I really don't know why? I don't know the reasons behind not doing it."

This reality that was shared and agreed upon by all the other participants, questioned teachers' pedagogical choices and approaches to their ESP courses and suggested a gap in their SPCK that the results of needs assessment could have fulfilled. It also implied that the participants did not perceive a need for conducting such an activity in their context as none of them questioned the absence of this core activity in the ESP practice at their colleges.

Latifa believed that teachers certainly needed to be aware of their students' need for the language upon graduation, and to realize whether the learners needed the language for occupational or academic purposes. She argued that they needed to distinguish "between ESP and EAP, or even English for the workplace (EWP)." She maintained:

> "We need to go to the employers; go to the banks and companies, and even government organizations that are hiring [their] graduates and ask them what kind of language tasks, what kind of tasks these graduates need to do on the job that require English and take it from there."

However, the majority of participants (seven out of eleven) agreed with Saad who believed that this activity was beyond their capacity and responsibility as teachers, and asserted that it was the institutions' duty to conduct such a "huge project." As an alternative, they suggested that the LC should form a research committee to take up this responsibility. For example, Dina stated: "we must have a committee that does that kind of work."

5.1.3 Perceptions of the ESP learner

In sharing their knowledge about ESP, participants also referred to the ESP learners. Their descriptions of ESP learners' qualities and characteristics contradicted that of the vocational college learners. They all believed that ESP learners needed to have some basic understanding of the language in order to commence with the ESP programme and get engaged in its interactive courses. However, they seemed to be disappointed to find out that their students' knowledge of English was very poor. For example, Bader who taught at the male's business college, said:

> "Our students are very poor in English. Their level is even worse than the girls' level. It is difficult to teach ESP courses to our [linguistically] weak students. We have to improve their English first."

Participants also believed that ESP learners should be motivated to learn the language because it is relevant to their target needs, which concurred with researchers' views about ESP being motivating for learners (Schempp et al., 1998; Brown, 2007). However, this reality seemed to be in odds with a large

number of their students who lacked motivation. In this regard Jinan stressed: “our students are not motivated at all. They don’t want to learn.”

Some participants believed that ESP learners needed to take their courses seriously, and take the initiative and be responsible for their own learning. In other words, ESP learners needed to be autonomous and dedicated to learn. However, the majority (nine out of eleven) of the participants asserted that their students did not fit in the above image. In this regard, Manar said:

> “I encourage my students to participate in the class but they don’t want to. They just don’t want to study. They day dream; they sometimes sleep in the class, you know. They are not really not interested, I mean except for a few, but the majority are not interested.”

Amira believed that ESP learners should be ambitious and pursue a professional goal. However, once more, the participants asserted that the above characteristics did not define their students. They believed that a large number of their students were “lazy”, “uninterested”, “unmotivated”, “irresponsible”, “careless”, and lacked study and academic skills. The participant from the college of nursing was the only one to believe that the students, at her college, had reasonable knowledge of the language and were motivated to learn.

Amira believed that in order for students to learn they must want to learn and that the desire for learning would be reflected in their attitudes and determination. She explained that in order for learning to become successful learners,

> “have to be motivated, there has to be this crave for learning: I want to learn, I want to be better, I want to be successful, I think they have to know what they want to learn for their future and to go after it. Not just [*let’s*] have a [*certificate to get a job*] you know?”

This view corresponds with Fenstermacher’s (1986) view that, “it seems unlikely that students will acquire the characteristics of learners unless they want to (p. 40).” It also agrees with his argument that “learning follows directly from studenting, not teaching.”

All the other participants agreed with the above view, and believed that the educational system in Kuwait nurtured dependent students that lacked interest in learning. The ESP learners' attitudes at the vocational colleges in this study will be further discussed under the fourth topic of challenges in teaching ESP.

5.1.4 ESP activities

As the participants shared their views of what ESP is and should be, they referred to some ESP activities such as the choice of syllabus and teaching material, and the assessment system. Course, materials, and programme evaluation were only discussed in their answers to prompts regarding these fundamental activities in ESP. The following is a presentation of ESP activities and the participants' views regarding them.

5.1.4.1 Syllabus and material design

A small number of the participants (four out of eleven) believed that providing the ESP teacher a chance to get involved in some ESP activities such as course and material design and/or adaptation was an essential element of the ESP programme. However, they claimed that they have been deprived of such rights at the vocational colleges where they worked. For example, Rasha complained about the limits that the Language Centre (LC) imposed on them in choosing their own syllabus and teaching materials that resulted in teachers' disappointment and learners' indifference towards their education. This attitude, as Rasha explained, stemmed from the fact that the contents were usually irrelevant to learners' needs, and some textbooks in use were outdated. She stressed that:

> "We don't have the freedom to decide on what we want to teach. They [the LC] force us to follow a strict syllabus and to use textbooks we really don't like. I have to have freedom in choosing my syllabus and the methods of teaching. Here they want to control everything even your teaching. I'm not saying that there shouldn't be some kind of supervision, but teachers have to have some sayings in their teaching, they have to have a choice."

Jinan agreed and commented that: "our books are outdated and we've asked for new ones, but they (the LC) said we have to use and finish the books in stock, you know, the ones they've ordered before."

Rasha's argument above, which some participants agreed with is valid because in ESP teachers need to adapt their course and syllabus to fit different groups of learners (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans and St Johns, 1998; Gatehouse, 2001). ESP classes vary in their aims and objectives that target different learners and their specific needs. This variety alters the ESP classroom's atmosphere as the procedures and activities keep changing. Therefore, ESP demands a teacher who can adapt teaching methods and materials almost every time to fit new groups of learners and their needs. Fixed and imposed syllabuses, materials, and exams might reflect the LC or the administration's unawareness of the nature of the ESP teaching.

The other majority (seven out of eleven), though, agreed that their syllabuses and materials were inadequate, however, they did not perceive designing courses and materials as their responsibility. In the absence of needs analysis, the choice of syllabuses and teaching materials was not based on actual information, but on teachers' perceptions and hunches about their learners' specific language needs. This conforms to the study of teaching ESP to health students in Bahrain by Kelliny (1996) who found that learners' needs were determined based on teachers' perceptions not on actual data. Amira believed that their courses were inadequate and did not serve learners' needs,

> "Because nobody has done a proper needs analysis and nobody has done a proper programme evaluation, and it's [the LC] just moving from one person to the other, and they all are following the same path."

She attributed their persisting problems and the absence of needs assessment and programme evaluation to the administrators' mentality and the lack of professionalism and practicality that are required to perceive deficiencies and act upon them.

Realizing that the participants were not involved in any systematic course and material design and/or adaptation, I tried to understand the knowledge or criteria that guided their personal choice of ESP syllabuses and materials. They were all unable to identify and/or provide any theoretical or practical measures for choosing their syllabuses and materials.

The participants who thought the activity of choosing course syllabus and teaching materials should not be left in the hands of ESP teachers justified their beliefs based on the fact that ESP teachers at the various vocational colleges were not trained to embark on such a complex activity. For example, Latifa who was also one of the LC administrators commented on ESP teachers' role in choosing syllabus and material saying:

> "I think this shouldn't be left to the descriptions of the teachers, because we teachers are not the same in terms of motivation, commitments, seriousness, honesty, consciousness even you know, so yeah this should be laid out by the Centre, you know, by the whatever organization that is offering this course."

Latifa believed that ESP teachers at vocational colleges in Kuwait lacked the necessary knowledge required for the activity. In her view, teachers who seemed to confuse syllabus and curriculum were unqualified for designing their ESP courses and choosing adequate material. She argued that:

> "What I realized is that there is confusion. We tend to confuse the syllabus and the curriculum with the book, because often what happens is that when we change the book somehow the curriculum changes and it inflicts the new book. So we change maybe, because our syllabus changes according to the book, and I think that is horrible, you know. I think the objectives should be one. The curriculum should be one and approved by all the stakeholders…and the book should be the easiest thing to change, you know. What's going on now is the opposite you know. Now it's the book and everything changes according to the book."

In answering a prompt about who defined and determined the ESP curriculum objectives: "Does this mean that people from other countries decided for you what you should be teaching at your colleges?" she replied:

> "May be I don't know. Or maybe it was designed by people who were working, you know, for the English department I think fifteen years ago you know when Internet was not in the picture, when email was unheard of, you know, when e-commerce and all that were not there. So that was all, you know. So most of them (curriculum/syllabus) were inherited."

The confusion about ESP curriculum and syllabus, and the gap between curriculum objectives that usually inform the choice of syllabus based on

learners' needs, were manifested in the participants' responses. Moreover, their stories seemed to expose their unawareness of how, when, and on what bases their curriculum was planned. Their syllabus and course objectives seemed to alter following the change in a textbook not on any systematic assessment of the learners' and markets' needs. To all of them, syllabus meant the chapters to be covered in the textbooks and the time frame for completing them.

Saad agreed with Latifa's view and commented on this unrealistic situation emphasizing that the course objectives must inform the choice of teaching material not the textbook. He argued:

> "Well the book changes need to also be grounded in the course description and the objectives. We don't want the books guiding the syllabus and the curriculum. We will use the books to serve our goals and objectives."

The participants' responses revealed their awareness that students' specific needs upon which objectives are decided and courses are designed must inform the choice of material not vice versa. Nevertheless, they have seemingly accepted their reality that was in contrast with the aims and objectives of the ESP programme. Their justifications for not being involved in the above activity and the subsequent ones such as course and material evaluation hovered around reasons such as: "no one cares! You think they care? (Amira)", "they don't listen to us (Rasha)," "I don't know (Bader)," "because I don't have time. I have kids that I need to take care for (Dina)," "We don't have time. We are overloaded with teaching hours (Jinan)," and the last but not least: "it is a very complicated issue (Saad)," and "I'm not the expert (Amira)."

Consequently, teachers seemed to rely on the LC as being the expert, and accepted what it imposed on them. This issue was also reflected in Amira's justification for her dependence on the LC's choice of syllabus and material, and her inactive and submissive attitude towards syllabus design:

> "Supposedly these are the people who are the experts and you know, they are the ones who are into syllabus design. I'm not a syllabus design person. This is the optimum syllabus so the Language Centre tells me."

In other words, because the LC decided that a syllabus was appropriate the participants accepted and applied it. Realizing that Amira attributed a lot of their problems to the reality that some unprofessional people have been assigned to take up managerial and decision-making positions at the vocational colleges, her above comment seemed to be contradictory. However, by examining her comment as well as her colleagues' regarding their professional contributions and the LC's role in supporting the ESP staff's agency, a shared attitude of passiveness seemed to emerge. They seemed to depend on the LC for all the activities that ESP experts regarded as the ESP practitioners' role and responsibility (Swale, 1985; Robinson, 1980; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Gatehouse, 2001; Dudley-Evans and St. Johns, 1998).

The above attitude of passiveness and minimum involvement in ESP activities, I suggest, could be noticed in societies such as Kuwait that follow a top-down, centralized system especially in the educational institutions. Moreover, in Kuwait, the government takes upon its shoulder the responsibility of providing the citizens all the necessities with the lack of a systematic plan or strategy to train citizens to be effective agents in the development of their society. This could be one of the factors that contributed to participants' submissive attitudes. It could also indicate a degree of mistrust between the administrators at the LC and the teaching staff's knowledge, ability, and intentions, which was indicated in Latifa's earlier comment on the issue.

The participants' shared belief that the above challenging task was beyond their expertise was also reflected in Saad's justifications. He believed that their knowledge lacked the necessary skills needed for course and syllabus designing, and that planning curriculum and syllabus objectives were demanding activities that needed to be regularly modified and improved. He argued:

> "It is a very complicated issue to sit down and write competences for a course, and trying to do justice to the students and to the labour market and their needs and to the college and so on. And always it's not perfect science. There is always room for improvement. You know curriculum writing is a very dynamic process.

5.1.4.2 Programme evaluation

The data in this study indicated that the ESP teachers were not involved in any kind of systematic programme evaluation. The absence of this activity in the ESP context at vocational colleges in Kuwait might indicate the lack of expertise necessary for conducting such action, or that the participants did not perceive it as their responsibility. Participants talked about two types of evaluation: 1) teaching material, 2) and learners' achievement tests. As with the former type of evaluation, the participants revealed that their choice of adequate textbooks to fulfill the ESP course objectives was based on their subjective beliefs and on a quick glimpse at a textbook sent by the LC with a three-columned cover letter – one for teachers' names, and the other two for their views on the textbook suitability. All they had to do was to write their names and write 'yes' or tick the 'suitable' column if they thought the material was adequate, or write 'no' or tick the "unsuitable' column if they believed otherwise. The cover letter lacked a space for teachers' detailed opinions, and/or a short survey (informed by evaluation criteria) to elicit teachers' opinions. Amira explained that:

> "The only thing I think that we have, at the moment, is that there is a committee that chooses the books and then they give it a quick flip around [with a cover letter for our signature for receiving the book and reviewing it.] We then take a quick look at the book's content and we say yes or no. I think that's the only input we have in that, as far as I know, as far as I've been involved in."

It seemed like the ESP teachers' evaluation of the adequacy of their textbooks followed what McGrath (2002: 25) called the "impressionistic method", which is concerned with obtaining a general impression of the material. The participants revealed their dissatisfaction with the way their views were inquired, which reflected the fact that the LC was more concerned with following a procedure than identifying teachers' justifications for their opinions.

With respect to course evaluation, the data also indicated that there was no course evaluation activity per se. Teachers' perception of the outcome of their courses was linked to their students' satisfaction. For example, Bader stated:

> "I evaluate my courses by the results of my students. If they don't do well, I think may be my questions were too difficult for them."

Bader's action corresponded with Dina, Jinan, and Amira's procedures in modifying their teaching materials and exam questions based on their students' performances. This seemed to be the only element used to evaluate the efficacy of their courses, as the participants did not share any other criteria.

With regards to the second type of evaluation that the participants shared, the data suggested that assessing the learning outcome was based on the process-product view of effective teaching and learning (Shulman, 1986). In this type of assessment that is predominantly structurally based, achievement is measured by end-of-term standardized achievement tests or end-of-unit quizzes (p.19). Therefore, it falls short of evaluating the learners' communicative ability and capability in exploiting the language to perform job-related tasks. Moreover, it may allure teachers to focus on familiarizing students with the exam's style and preparing them for it.

Evaluation is one of the pillars of ESP and serves its dynamic nature. The success and development of ESP programmes are based on the ongoing assessments of its courses and materials and their practical outcomes. The absence of such an important element of ESP in the context of this study could suggest that ESP might not be taken seriously, and might indicate a gap in ESP teachers' knowledge regarding this activity.

5.1.5 Sources of ESP knowledge

The data analysis revealed that the humanity-trained ESP teachers at the vocational colleges in Kuwait did not have formal training in ESP. The participants declared that their knowledge about ESP and its practices developed mainly through their teaching experience. This corresponds with experts' views, such as McMeniman et al. (2003 cited in Mann 2005), Freeman and Johnson (1998), Turner-Bisset (2001), and Tsui (2003) about the development of teachers' knowledge over time that Mann (2005) has reviewed and agreed with.

A couple of participants stated that after being exposed to ESP teaching at their colleges, they tried to improve their knowledge by attending conferences and reading the ESP Journal. In this regard Saad stated:

> "First I got in contact with it [ESP] here at [the college], OK, then, I got interested. There are journals like: English for Specific Purposes, now it became LSP, Language for Specific Purposes, and I got interested."

In addition to consulting journals and learning in action, other participants used Internet as a source for understanding and expanding knowledge about teaching their specific courses and handling authentic material. For example, Dina maintained:

> "ESP motivates me to read more about my students' specialization. I read online about things related to Banking, about telephoning. Yes, I like to do that."

Similarly, Huda stated that she relied on the Internet and other textbooks as sources of ESP knowledge. She stated:

> "I use the Internet. Internet has become an important tool for teachers to find different resources; also books are important."

Other participants relied on their textbooks as a source along with specialized dictionaries.

5.1.6 ESP and language teachers' identity

Some participants revealed that, at the beginning of their career, they experienced confusion about their role in the ESP classroom and the handling of the specific content they were required to teach. The similarities in their stories about whether they were supposed to teach language or content revealed that some ESP teachers at the context of this study experienced what could be named as 'identity conflict'. Teaching ESP with no prior experience, training, or orientation resulted in their confusion about their roles in the ESP classroom. They were not sure whether they needed to act as language teachers, thus, teach the language, or act as subject teachers, who suddenly had to learn and teach concepts beyond their knowledge and expertise. In other words, they were not sure what was it that they needed to teach:

language through content or content through language. Apparently, at the beginning they focused on teaching content and examining learners' understanding of the content not the language knowledge and the awareness of the specific genres and their use. However, they were able to realize, through experience, that it was language that they needed to teach not content – that they needed to use the specific content to teach the language skills required in the target places. This realization agrees with Bell and McDiarmid's (1990) argument "that teachers' understandings are shaped significantly through their experiences," and Feiman-Nesmer's (1983, cited in Bell and McDiarmid, ibid) suggestion that teachers continue to learn years after their teacher preparation programme is over. It also conformed to the role of expertise on teachers' knowledge and understanding of content and its impact on their practices (Berliner, 1986, 1988, 1994). In this regard, Huda explained how time and experience helped her realize that she was a language, not a specialized, teacher:

> "At the beginning, not only me but all teachers that were teaching here, we focused on the content, which we took from their specialized courses. We used to test them about the content, now we don't. I mean we used to teach them the content of their specific field, we were more like their specialized teachers not language teachers. And that was wrong. So, I started telling my students I'm a language teacher not a content teacher. I wanted them to know from the beginning that I will focus on the language not the content; that I will teach them the language in the context they need."

ESP teachers at vocational colleges in Kuwait were against teaching the specific content of various disciplines, because they were against carrying upon their shoulders the burden of studying subject matter beyond their capabilities and/or interests. For instance, Dina regarded 'Teaching English for Computing' as a very demanding course due to the amount of the specific genres and vocabulary items that the textbook included. Similarly, Latifa and Huda found English for engineering, technology and science to be very challenging. Latifa stated:

> "When I went to college of technology, because in technology we have different faculties, like English for… I mean we have mechanical engineer, electronic engineering, and electrical

> engineering, and petroleum, and we had so many ESPs, you know, and they were so hard, because I had to use dictionary and look up so many new words you know. But words that the students know very well, that I had to study, so I ended up doing more work than the students, you know, because I had to learn you know. When after words, I realized that this is not right. It was very frustrating for me and for the students because I wasn't teaching them anything they didn't know, and the things that they really needed to know I was not teaching them, and I was struggling with the science, you know, the scientific part; very, very frustrating, you know."

In responding to whether they believed a language or a specialist teacher was more capable of teaching ESP classes, all the participants believed that a language teacher was more capable of teaching ESP, because the specialist teacher lacked knowledge about the language. This view corresponded with ESP teachers and specialists' views about who should teach ESP (Mohammed, 2012; Lowe, 2010; Rajabi et al., 2011).

The tension that the participants experienced between their formal and tacit knowledge about language and language teaching, and their practical understanding about teaching ESP corresponded with Freeman's (1992, 1993 cited in Borg, 2006: 96) study about the process of change that teachers go through in practice. She realized that teachers' tacit knowledge of teaching surfaces in the form of tensions in the teachers' work. Those are defined as 'divergence among different forces of elements in the teachers' understanding of school context, the subject, or the students.' These confusions interfere with teachers' translating intentions into actions.

The ESP practitioner is first and foremost a teacher. However, in ESP s/he is not "the 'primary knower' of the carrier content of the material (Dudley-Evans and St Johns, 1998: 13)." In the ESP classes, teachers build on their knowledge about the language and its communicative features and evolve into negotiators. They mediate with learners on how best the language could be utilized in the target places as they get engaged in performing authentic tasks and simulations activities. This entails teachers who are flexible and willing to listen, share, and exchange ideas and procedures with learners. In addition to flexibility, the ESP practitioner needs to develop awareness of their students'

disciplines as well as some interest in the professional activities that students are involved in. This interest motivates teachers to learn about learners' specialization and the role of English in various target situations. It helps teachers become more responsive to learners' needs and swiftly change tactics in the classroom to account for unanticipated events during classroom activities and interactions. In other words, it helps teachers take risks in their pedagogical decisions, which is common in some ESP situations.

5.1.7 Requirements for teaching ESP

5.1.7.1 Teachers' needs

The data regarding what qualifies a language teacher to teach ESP revealed that ESP teachers in the context of this study focused more on personality traits than on knowledge of content and pedagogy. This agrees with Nunan's (1992) study reporting that teachers' comments on their teaching did not reveal a concern for language teaching and management.

As was previously stated, the participants believed that the general language teacher's background was more than adequate to carry out the responsibilities of an ESP practitioner. However, in terms of character and personality, they thought that the ESP teacher also needed to possess some significant characteristics to ensure the success of the ESP programmes.

Motivation was the predominant attitudinal factor that all participants believed an ESP teacher needed to have, followed by ambition and resilience. Amira, for example, argued that what they needed was:

> "Number one motivation. That's what I see here, number one motivation. I think we all need classes for motivation, teachers and students alike because we get a big fat salary check at the end of the month, whether we have done it or not [to be frank with you]. [I mean] you know, what's gonna motivate you to actually want to teach those kids, apart from your conscious that you know you can appease very easily and say no it's OK everybody else is doing it for heaven's sake, you know."

In addition to the aforementioned traits, fluency and proficiency in the English language were indicated as fundamental elements of the ESP teachers'

knowledge. In this regard Saad suggested that to become a proficient ESP teacher,

> "you need a lot of things. First of all, you need to have conversational ability in English so you can stand up and talk fluently, with no hesitations and with good, smooth, fluent pronunciation to students, to come through as a convincing speaker."

He also believed that teachers needed to be very strict especially at males' colleges, otherwise they might lose control over their classes. His view stemmed from his embedded belief that following a democratic procedure with learners who have been the end product of an authoritarian educational system was doomed to failure. This view seemed to be in odds with pedagogy in ESP that is based on negotiation that provide learners as much authority in the classroom as their teachers.

In contrast to Saad's belief, Bader and Dina thought that a lenient teacher could positively affect her/his students. However, they agreed that students might take advantage of lenient teachers believing that they were not in full control of their classes. Moreover, according to the participants, the students who were accustomed to boundaries being set between them and their teachers were not used to share equal authority with teachers in the classroom without causing some kind of chaos.

Another significant quality that ESP teachers needed in Huda's view was charisma. According to her, this element was so important that the staff recruiting committee that she was a member of embraced it as one of the main criteria for recruiting teachers. She further explained that ESP teachers in Kuwait needed:

> "a lot! I think a lot! They need to see the latest in research read different research and to check journals and periodicals and take what is suitable in their situation and try to apply the results. Personally, I find it very useful."

This view is valid and corresponds to ESP experts' views that ESP teachers should at least be in touch with what research says about effective ESP teaching (Dudley-Evans and St. Johns, 1998). In the case of ESP teaching at vocational colleges in Kuwait, where the majority of teachers were not involved

in research, consulting research articles and findings could fill the gap in their SPCK and increase their awareness of the specific nature of the ESP practice.

In addition to the above traits, Latifa thought that ESP teachers needed to be familiar with their students' fields. She believed that teachers needed to take their job seriously to set an example for their students. She thought that many members of the staff did not fit in the above category, and that teaching ESP was not taken seriously at the context of this study. Latifa was the only participant, who, in addition to the attitudinal qualities, referred to what could be categorized as 'content knowledge' as an important element in the ESP teacher knowledge. The other aspects of knowledge were totally ignored. This could either indicate teachers' unfamiliarity (at least on some explicit level) with the different categories of teacher knowledge, or that they perceived the emotional and attitudinal factors to be more important.

The above suggested requirements and characteristics that the participants believed a language teacher needed in the ESP context are not unique to ESP teachers, but common to all language teachers as well as teachers in education in general. It could be said that here ESP shares a common ground with general teacher education. However, due to the different roles that the ESP practitioner needs to assume, motivation, interest, dedication and flexibility become important elements of the ESP practitioners' characteristics.

5.1.7.2 Teaching needs

The participants shared their opinions about contextual requirements for successful ESP practices. Four participants believed novice teachers needed some kind of orientation towards ESP practices. They believed that a pre-service training was necessary to familiarize them with the ESP courses that they were expected to teach and with the methods and techniques used in teaching ESP. They justified this need based on the fact that teachers who were assigned to teach ESP at vocational colleges generally lacked knowledge about ESP. They suggested that in-service training was also required to update teachers with a range of pedagogical choices and provide solutions to some teaching problems that research in the field suggests. Moreover, one of the participants suggested that the training courses should include familiarizing

teachers with the use of technology in teaching as this element was lacking in their pedagogical knowledge. For example Dina suggested that,

> "It's good to have a training day or a workshop, something like that. And it includes things like the reading I told you about. How to teach them reading? How to teach business? How to design your tests and how to assess students?"

Amira shared her opinion about the need for training courses enthusiastically, and believed it should be mandatory to all teachers throughout the academic year. In this regard, she stressed that:

> "It shouldn't be a matter of choice. OK, choose which course you want to take? They should be a necessary part of the year. And the head of department says OK, this week I'm putting you in this course, and you're going next week, and so and so, you're going next month; and you're not going to say yes or no. I'm not gonna give you a choice."

Other participants, though in favour of ESP teacher training courses, were against the idea of imposing them on teachers. They believed that teachers must willingly attend these courses otherwise it would negatively affect their attitudes towards their job. Moreover, they believed that teachers must be aware of the importance of these courses and choose them based on their lacks and needs in order to grow professionally. The need for pre- and in-service training courses in the context of this study is shared with ESP teachers in many countries around the world where ESP training programmes are lacked (Chen, 2000).

The data further revealed that the teaching environment lacked a lot of elements fundamental to language teaching in general and ESP practices in particular. Amira used the word "sterile" to describe their teaching environment. Their colleges lacked a library and resource area for teachers and learners. Their unequipped classrooms lacked proper air conditioning and were too small for their large class size. In some vocational colleges the buildings were too old and poorly maintained. In this regard Amira argued:

> "The teachers are frustrated, because you know we work in very wrong conditions. We don't have facilities at our hands,

> neither in our classroom, nor in the department. Where is the library that we can access and the books that we can access? Where are the projectors? Where are the training courses that would teach us how to use all that technology?"

Rasha also revealed her frustration about the contextual factors that affected her teaching. She believed that the LC and college administrations did not seem to care about the negative impacts of these factors on teachers' mindsets and on the outcome of their ESP programmes. She stressed that:

> "Our classrooms are not equipped, and the AC system doesn't work properly. One class is very cold and the other is very warm and this affects the students and us the teachers. The student's number is too large for the classroom size. This building was built what in the 60s as a high school and now we are using the same building. The whiteboard is always dirty with markers' residue that is difficult to clean, and it interferes with my teaching."

The participants' view of the required facilities is legitimate. All the above elements that their teaching environment lacked are proved to facilitate teaching and enhance learning (Earthman, 2004; McGregor, 2004). Impact of the teaching environment is further tackled in the second section of the data analysis chapter.

5.2 Teachers' personal knowledge

In order to realize how teachers conceptualized their knowledge of ESP and to understand the 'what' and 'why' of their practical decisions, I decided to explore their personal and prior knowledge that was constructed and shaped by their experience as learners, as teacher-learners and as teachers. This attempt was deemed necessary to reveal any possible connections between teachers' previous experiences with English language learning and teaching and their understanding of the teaching and learning of ESP and the impact of their prior knowledge on their practice as the literature suggests.

5.2.1. Perceptions of self as a language learner

The data in this study revealed that all ESP teachers that participated in this study genuinely enjoyed language learning. For someone like Latifa it compensated for her inability to actualize her dream of travelling to western

countries at that time. Bader wanted to prove to himself that he could learn the language and teaches it later on. Dina and Manar, though enjoyed learning the language, did not want to teach it. They believed that fate played a role in choosing their profession. In general, data revealed that as language learners the participants enjoyed positive attitudes towards learning a foreign language. Amira, who joined an English school stressed that English was her favourite subject. She said:

> "It was my favourite! But then I was in an English school. There was no language class. It was just... it just was."

Teachers' experiences as learners shared some similarities and differences based on the system of the schools that they attended. Accordingly, they could be divided into two groups: those who joined government schools in Kuwait, and those who joined private English or American schools in Kuwait or abroad. Therefore, I will introduce the data taking these two factors into consideration. Hereafter, teachers who joined government schools will be referred to as the first group, and teachers who joined private schools will be referred to as the second group.

Perception of self as a learner shared some similarities between the two groups of teachers. Both groups described themselves as dedicated and serious learners who cared for their education. They attributed their seriousness to their teachers who were also dedicated and responsible, and to the educational system that enforced such culture. Huda, for example, described schooling at her time, which was in the sixties of the last century, as follows:

> "Well, teaching and learning was really serious; I mean we were responsible students, going to school and learning was important. The educational standards in the 60s and early 70s were very high. Both teachers and students were responsible. That's why we really benefited from our education; we learnt."

Latifa agreed with Huda and stated:

> "I was very serious; I was very committed; I was very hard working you know; my daughters call me a dork you know when I talk to them about how I was. But I was really…. I was

> really dedicated. I was very serious and I loved it. I loved studying."

Participants' stories about their experiences as learners revealed that though they were serious students and all the stakeholders took education seriously, this did not necessarily suggest that as school students all the participants had positive attitudes towards the teaching methods and environment.

5.2.1.1. Attitudes towards the teaching environment

The literature on teachers' prior knowledge indicated that teaching environment could affect how learners construct their knowledge about practice. Some studies revealed that pupils' interests declined over the years and factors such as teachers, classroom activities and lessons, and school environment affected pupils' attitudes (Metsämuuronen et al. 2012).

Participants in the first group agreed that rules at schools when they were students were very strict and teachers used physical punishment as a method of classroom management and forcing students to study. However, they disagreed over teachers' general pedagogical choices. For example, Saad believed that strict rules and the availability of punishment as a means to promote learning was positive because it obliged them to learn. Manar rejected this notion and believed that punishment had negatively affected her as a student and changed her from being an interactive student, who was keen to learn through interaction and asking and answering questions, to a passive learner who would interact only when she was asked to. She explained:

> "Some teachers abused their rights in punishing students. The punishment was too much sometimes more than it was needed. I mean I became so afraid to ask or answer questions because I was afraid if I made a mistake I would be punished or ridiculed."

She believed that using punishment resulted in hostile feelings towards education in general, and towards the subject that a strict teacher taught in particular. This experience formed some participants' beliefs about the effects of teachers' personality on learners, hence, the outcome of teaching. In this respect Huda stated:

> "I remember from both Intermediate and secondary schools that teachers were the basic reason for liking the subject or disliking it. I still remember some sentences from the intermediate or secondary stages, the teacher's comments, or feedback, I still remember them. This means that the teacher's personality and style motivate students and make them enjoy their classes. That's why I think the teacher is the most important element in the success or failure of the teaching programme."

Other participants such as Bader related students' hesitation to interact in the classroom to the influence of culture. He stated that as students they were afraid to ask questions and communicate with their teachers for the fear of making mistakes and losing face. The male participants explained that their mistakes became the subject of jokes or ridicules among their peers. Fahad, though belonged to the second group of teachers, agreed with Bader and stressed that students' fear of losing face was supported by the findings of his Master's thesis. He believed that a majority of Kuwaiti students, in his study, were embarrassed to ask questions for several reasons among which he named: the fear of being ridiculed by classmates, and a culture that did not promote interaction.

The participants in the second group shared their stories about their schooling and language learning so passionately reflecting the joy of learning that they experienced as children and young adults. For example, Rasha explained that the school environment at the time she was a child was so enjoyable that she could not wait to go back to school after the weekend. She further explained that the activities teachers used were so exciting that she lost the sense of time in the classroom. In the same vein, Fahad described his school experience as being really good,

> "Because I started my primary school in England so when I came here I went to an English school. So everything was good. I didn't face the problems of public schools."

This group of teachers pictured their classroom as a 'beehive' where students had freedom to move around the class and work on different tasks. Fahad recalled the teaching environment at the private school that he attended and thought:

> "It was pretty good, because everything was based on activities not like our teaching which is teacher-based teaching. Everything was on students they had to interact. Everything was based on activities; we never sat in rows; we used to work in groups of four, interact and work together in groups. Everything was done in groups. I think it was really good."

To Manar who joined government schools, and Rasha, Amira, and Fahad who joined American and English schools, freedom was important not only in the ability to express oneself without fear, or to have an opinion about the how and what of their education, but also to move freely in the classroom and interact with other peers and the teacher.

The above data suggested that this element of freedom and self-agency was lacking in the first group's educational background, but was an important part of the second group's schooling experience.

5.2.1.2 Attitudes towards the teaching methods

The participants had experienced two distinctive approaches to language teaching. The first group was taught the language following structurally based methods, while the second group experienced communicative/interactive teaching and learning. For example, Latifa, from the first group recalled that:

> "It was in the sixties, you know; and it was grammar approach, I mean the direct approach. I don't remember doing a lot of translation, but it was mainly grammar and, you know, vocabulary."

Saad agreed and exposed his support for structural approaches in language teaching. He based his argument on the fact that any language had a system, and if a person understood and learnt that system s/he could easily learn the language. He put his argument this way:

> "About my third or fourth year [of learning English at intermediate school] we had a senior teacher, he started teaching methodically the rules of grammar. He was very systematic, I remember. Everybody was distracted, talking, but he taught present perfect and he taught the rules by…ahhh… we say in Arabic (e'rab) the parts of speech: this is the verb, this is the noun, this is the adjective and so on. And I enjoyed it, because I thought there is a system. There was a system and I could apply it. And once I knew that there is a rule for

> each sentence and I could apply the rule and the sentence could come out correctly, then I clicked on with English."

Unlike Saad, Manar did not like the systematic way of teaching a language. She said:

> "Our language classes were boring. It was basically teaching grammar and vocabulary. We had to memorize the rules without understanding why we do this or that."

She then gave an example of the differences between the use of the past simple and the present perfect tenses that confused her until she became a teacher. Only then, and only in practice, she was able to figure out the differences. The realization process that Manar and other participants experienced conformed to the literature suggesting that teachers learn from experience, and through reflection on their own teaching (Schön, 1983, 1987, 1991) that results in expanding their awareness and refining their skills (Troudi, 2005).

Data regarding the first group's language learning experience revealed that the speaking skill was not emphasized or assessed. Their exams were structurally based and mainly assessed their understanding of grammar, vocabulary, and some basic reading comprehension skills. Their language classes were teacher-centered and interaction was limited to answering questions and doing some follow up exercises. The writing skill was minimized to translating some passages from English to Arabic and Arabic to English.

The second group of teachers had a totally different experience. They all emphasized that they did not learn but acquired the language (Krashen, 1981). Unlike their colleagues in the first group whose exposure to English language was restricted to an hour or two a day in the classroom, the second group used English all the time at school, and in some cases at home either with their parents or housekeepers who communicated with them in English. Thus, English was a more natural experience – to them there was no language class per se, as Amira explained:

> "There was no language class. It was just … it just was. That's it. I can't ever think back [and think that] I was taught grammar

> by itself or I was taught comprehension by itself... and we used to just have English language, that's it; and it was mostly… I don't know…I can't remember, writing; grammar; it was never… it was never cut off like that."

Grammar was taught implicitly to this group of teachers. It was acquired through the different tasks that they performed as part of their lessons and classroom activities. Rasha explained:

> "I didn't have any language classes. I went to American school. They don't teach the way we do. I mean to teach present continuous and present perfect. They didn't teach us this way."

She then compared her awareness of the language as a school student with her ESP learners' understanding and linked the reason behind learners' problems with English grammar to the fact that they translated from Arabic to English – that they thought about the rules in Arabic and when they could not link them with readily available representations in their first language they found the rules difficult to comprehend. As a result, they made unreasonable mistakes. She then argued that their,

> "students don't know what present perfect is. They think in Arabic and this interferes with learning. In American school we weren't taught this is called present perfect and this is present continuous. We learnt this with the language."

Moreover, this group talked about the different teaching aids that were used in their classrooms that enhanced the fun and joyful experience of learning. For example, Fahad, who had a very pleasant memory of learning, recalled that learning at his school was engaging and motivating. He attributed this to the fact that they had to work on projects and give presentations on topics of their choice. This joyful experience was in contrast with his teaching experience at government schools in Kuwait, where he taught English to young learners prior to joining the tertiary college. That is why he described his teaching experience as an unhappy one. He explained that he was unable to use what he thought would have made the class fun and pleasant for the young learners, because he had to follow a rigorous syllabus and to prepare students for their exams within a specific framework of time. He maintained:

> " I remember I taught at government school. I taught first year. They were six-year- olds, and everyday they had about 15 words to learn; and I had to teach them from 11 to 16 words in one class period. There weren't any visual aids, nothing."

Fahad added that the Kuwaiti educational system fostered spoon-feeding and a "stuffing" type of learning in which knowledge generally was lost when examinations were over. However, in the private schools that he had joined, knowledge was acquired through various enjoyable activities and through hands-on-learning that accelerated understanding and helped them build their knowledge upon an accumulated body of information that was gained throughout the school year.

The positive impact of hands-on-learning and the use of teaching technologies, such as audio-visual aids in facilitating learning in general and language learning in particular, is already established. However, the data suggested that though language curriculum in Kuwait was based on the communicative approaches that entail the use of educational technology, according to the interviewees, local schools seemed to ignore the use of educational aids. This agrees with the latest results of studies that investigated teaching and learning English in Kuwait (Al-Nwaiem's, 2012; Al-Nouh's, 2008) and revealed that contrary to what was expected, teachers at government schools predominantly applied structural methods in teaching the language in teacher-dominated classrooms.

Fahad's description of the teaching/learning situation at government schools, that he had only recently left to join a tertiary college, resembled and reflected what teachers in the first group remembered about their schooling system that did not promote interactive learning as if the situation at local schools remained static all those years.

5.2.1.3 Restricted vs. democratic education

The data regarding teachers' prior knowledge, that was elicited from their stories about classroom environment and teaching methods, further exposed two types of educational values: 1) restricted education that nurtured dependent learning, and 2) democratic education that fostered autonomy and

independent learning. It is important to realize that autonomy does not indicate working alone and not sharing knowledge with other students. It means taking responsibility of one's own learning within a community of learners.

The above philosophies were reflected in participants' discussions about their classroom seating arrangements and the choice of activities. The first group of participants believed that the disadvantage of their traditional seating arrangement, which was basically in rows of two or one did not allow for the application of any communicative activities. They did not have any opportunity to work with other peers to solve problems or discuss issues related to their lessons. The arrangement of their classroom fitted and complied well with the structural methodology of that time. It also matched the values of an authoritarian society with standard rules governing the relationships between the different groups of the society: parents/children; teachers/students; employers/employees, etc.

The seating choice usually conforms with, or is informed by the choice of syllabus and teaching methods. Obviously, traditional seating complies with traditional syllabus, and module and horseshoe seating conforms to the notional/functional and task-based syllabi. The traditional syllabus overlooks students' active role in constructing knowledge, because it is based on the view that the teacher is the knower and the student is 'tabula rasa' or the 'empty vessel' that is expected to be filled with the knowledge that the teacher possessed. As a result, the teacher assumes a central and significant role in training and preparing students for their examinations. In other words, teachers control and emphasize the knowledge that learners need to remember to pass their exams. What learners need to remember becomes the focus of teaching and learning not what they need to know.

In the communicative language teaching (CLT), on the other hand, the controlling role of a teacher is converted into a more equal role of give and take where the power between the teacher and students keeps changing, and the interaction that results from the exchange of power between teacher and learner and learner and learner becomes a powerful catalyst for learning. In this type of learning, students feel that they have control and power over their

learning and failing to reach the desired learning outcome will not be seen as solely the teacher's or the system's shortcoming. This way, students learn to become more responsible and take learning seriously, and as Fenstermacher (1986) coined they learn to "student". Fenstermacher argues that, "The teacher's task is to support R's (the learner) desire to student and improves his capacity to do so. Whether and how much R learns from being a student is largely a function of how he student (p. 39)." This type of education that aims at "improving the student's ability and capacities to be a student" is not only needed to prepare learners for their ESP and EAP learning environment, but also to make them active members in their societies upon graduation. It enables them to apply the learnt skills in constructing professional knowledge and accumulating expertise through observation, analysis, synthesis and extended awareness.

5.2.1.4 Agency

Agency was another significant element that seemed to be lacking in the first group's educational background, but appeared to be reinforced in the second group's schooling experience. As learners, the first group seemed to have been deprived of the right to be active members in their educational communities. However, the second group had the feeling that, as schoolchildren, they mattered, their voices mattered, and their choices mattered. Rasha raised and justified this issue saying:

> "Our teacher used to ask us what we wanted to do. He gave us the feeling as if we were in control; as if the lesson was our choice, and this made us want to learn. We were happy to learn because it was what we wanted to do. So the teacher taught us what we needed to know without we feeling that teaching was imposed on us."

As a learner, it is essential for students to feel that they are important, that their contribution to the schooling experience matters, and that their opinions are considered. The feeling of being responsible for one's own learning and having an active role in it, which means being an important member in the educational system boosts learners' motivation and provides them with a sense of agency.

This element is especially important in the ESP settings, where students' wants, needs and lacks become the focal point of the ESP course objectives, and their voices and choices become crucial factors that influence classroom activities and the outcome of the programme.

5.2.2. Perceptions of self as a teacher-learner

The data once more revealed two distinctive experiences that participants went through as teacher-learners. Both groups joined Kuwait University to continue their education in English Language and Literature or Education departments. Participants in the first group talked about their university backgrounds as an experience that they had not been adequately prepared for. For example, Saad described his university experience as a 'scary' one, because it followed a totally different system than their secondary school. He explained:

> "So when I went to the university, my first choice was English. And then it was very spooky experience, because it was nothing like what we had in high school. We had introduction to poetry and we were such helpless students coming from high school, going to Kuwait University, this huge structure, and setting in the English department, first year, you know."

Not only the huge structure of the university made the environment intimidating for Saad, but also being taught by American and British teachers and being exposed to native speakers' accents, which they were not used to. He said:

> "Our teacher was American, he was talking in a strange accent, you know, and for two hours we were looking at him, and when we came out of the class, we were asking each other, did you understand anything? What did he say? And I think I heard imagination, that was the only word I got."

This experience came to Saad as a big shock that questioned his ability in understanding the language that he thought he had mastered at intermediate and secondary schools. He stated: "It was like the same situation they talk about American schooling: you either sink or swim. You know you are just a pot in a pole and then it's up to you if you swim you swim, if you sink you sink."

Other participants in this group agreed with Saad and believed that learning at the university helped them realize the deficiencies in their schooling system.

Their educational background did not prepare them to become independent learners, and did not acquaint them with academic skills such as speaking and writing that all the participants in the first group seemed to have struggled with. This reality of being ill prepared for academic education was reflected in Saad's "spooky" experience:

> "I just found one problem at Kuwait University education, which haunted me for a very, very long time, because they didn't make us good writers. It's not their fault but we were not given the basic structures for writing, the basic skills, ahhh writing was a scary subject it was give as exposited pros something like this. But when I went to the states I found out that writing is the most important skill to have because that's how grades are appointed through your writing not through fancy fluency skill you know."

Huda attributed their deficiency in oral communication as university students to their previous learning experience as school pupils. She explained that though they were able to write correct sentences in English, they were incapable of conveying their thoughts in speaking. She stated that at government schools:

> "English programme lacked that realistic context. We used to memories vocabulary, and learn grammatical rules and get it all right on the tests, but it wasn't realistic. We couldn't apply what we learnt in the real life, so we used to forget them. That's why, especially our generation, our oral language was very weak. Our reading and writing were good but not speaking."

The above presentation might indicate that the first group's schooling experience did not prepare them for university and academic type of education. The educational system that they belonged to seemed to foster dependent learning instead of nurturing and reinforcing independent learning needed for their undergraduate and graduate education. Thus, it could be ironically said that the participants in the first group experienced a kind of academic cultural shock.

Participants in the second group did not go through the same difficulties that the first group experienced. They were used to native speakers of English such as American and British teachers. They were also used to writing assignments and doing projects. They had the privilege of experiencing autonomy at their

pre-university education, so their experience at Kuwait University seemed to be much smoother.

As graduate students, the interviewees experienced a different academic environment as they pursued their education in Britain and the USA. They were exposed to a more liberal type of education that fostered autonomy and independent learning. Those who went to the United States experienced a different student/teacher relationship that was more informal and relaxed. Graduate students were treated as staff – their teachers treated them as their equals despite the difference in knowledge and expertise. For the first group of teachers, who were used to a strict and authoritarian type of education, the above experience was astonishing. As Arabs, culturally, most of the participants came from a top-down type of a system and were used to boundaries that separated students from teachers, such as those that separated parents from children, and administrators from employees. Their American teachers seemed to be more lenient, but "in a good way" as Dina argued. Their casual attitudes inflicted a relaxing learning atmosphere that the teacher-learners' enjoyed. It helped them interact with their teachers and peers more comfortably. Moreover, their teachers' encouraging attitudes and showing interest in the learners' views and arguments as if they "were contributing to knowledge (Dina)" motivated them to participate in classroom discussions. Bader remembered how being encouraged by his teacher motivated him to work harder thus contributed to his success. He stated:

> "[So] whenever I found myself or tried to, you know, to improve my skills, especially, in the communicative way, I find out that there is a limit that I can't jump over it. But I remember that one of the professors he gave me the trust that I can do it, that I can achieve in certain situations, in certain skills which was linguistics. Imagine that he gave me the trust! … All the time he gave me the trust that I can. I felt that when I became a professor I want to do the same thing. It is one of the theories in teaching, which is high expectations."

This reality seemed to impact Bader who decided to set up some high expectations for his students, and to apply the same encouraging techniques that his professors used, to improve his ESP students' motivational level. This corresponds to the effect of prior knowledge and experience on teachers'

actions. For example, he realized that their students lacked agency and were not self-assured about their capabilities in learning, that is why they focused on getting a diploma regardless of the knowledge gained in the process, and in some cases, with no obvious future plan. Therefore, he used his background knowledge that he gained from studying abroad to improve his students' situation. He said:

> "I try to show that they can do it. I tell them my real story and how I couldn't imagine that someday I could become a teacher of English. I tell them to have high expectations."

In the same vein, Dina realized that the assessment criteria that her American teachers followed were more reasonable than the ones her teachers in Kuwait used, because grading was not based on midterm and final exams only, but was distributed in a way that assessed the students' work throughout the term. She explained that:

> "In America they depend on projects. They assess students' works based on the whole term's work. For example, they don't assign fifty per cent of the total mark for the final. Fifty is assigned for the project, twenty five for the midterm, and twenty five for the final."

She believed that the above distribution of marks could enhance learners' motivation because they realize that they have a chance to make up for a bad test or quiz.

Some participants also recalled that their American professors asked to be called by their nicknames. This, as they explained, contributed to the informal classroom atmosphere. They believed that an informal atmosphere was motivating because they were not intimidated to interact with a lenient teacher who was like a friend. This informality offered the learning environment its relaxing feature and encouraged teacher-learners to become actively involved in the academic experience.

The above observations that the participants shared and their beliefs about the positive impact of a relaxed and involving educational context on learners' achievements conformed to a study by Vincent Tino (1997) that revealed that

learners' involvement inside and outside classroom in the academic life and particularly with faculty improved learning. He stated:

> "Generally speaking, the greater students' involvement in the life of the college, especially its academic life, the greater their acquisition of knowledge and development of skills."

All the participants enjoyed their postgraduate experience that they found to have been eye opening in so many ways especially in relation to the teacher-learner rapport and teachers' styles of teaching. However, they stressed that it was challenging to apply some of the elements they liked with regards to teacher/learner relationship in the Kuwaiti context due to the cultural differences, and the dissimilarities between the Arabs' and Westerners' mentalities. This will be discussed further under the fourth theme of challenges in teaching ESP.

5.2.3. Perceptions of self as a teacher

The data revealed that teachers' perception of self was generally positive when it was related to their personality and character, but it varied when they referred to their practice. They described themselves as dedicated teachers who took their work seriously. For example, Huda discussed how she learnt that being strict with classroom roles did not mean being hard on students, it meant teaching them responsibility. She explained that at the beginning of each term students' attendance was usually very low – receiving two or three students only. As a result, she used to start her classes a week later to ensure adequate attendance. Later, she realized that it was a wrong approach. However, by taking her teaching seriously and teaching from the beginning of the term, she propelled learners' to take their education seriously as well. Huda stated:

> "But now I know being strict in some rules like attendance does not mean being a tough teacher. You can be very understanding at the same time you let the students know that being a student means being responsible. They learn these things from their teachers. If you take your teaching seriously they learn from you and take their learning seriously."

However, the analysis further indicated that, in some cases, the above-mentioned characteristic has been challenged by contextual factors that

overtime seemed to have changed some teachers to become more passive and indifferent towards their profession. For example, Rasha argued:

> "At the beginning I believed that I could make a difference, but with all the disappointments that I've been through I don't think I can do much on the unit's level, but in my classes I try my best."

Jinan related her indifferent attitude that has been accumulated over the years to dealing with students who were not interested in learning.

> "It's the learner. It's the learner. I think it's the attitude OK. Because you go in, you sit an expectation and I think the first thing is they show you that this is us we are who we are just like the walls, so deal with it. So you the teacher adapt to the learner."

With regards to the educational environment and its impact on their self-image, teachers believed that the institution they worked for did not take them seriously for several reasons: first, because LC is a service department that provides the specialized departments with their needs of EGP and ESP courses. As a result, language teachers' needs and wants are always at the bottom of the colleges' priority lists; second, the institution does not provide the ELUs with their educational needs, such as equipped classes with educational aids and technologies, classroom furniture that promote interactive learning, and fully equipped and functional labs; third, the lack of libraries and resources that could promote professional development and facilitate teaching and learning (this is a common problem that LC shares with other departments); the old and poorly maintained premises that, in their view, reflected the fact that education at their colleges was not taken seriously by officials and decision makers (during the course of this study two vocational colleges under study moved to their new buildings). Bader, for example, argued if the administrators wanted teachers and learners to take vocational education seriously they would have done something about the premises. He maintained:

> "This building was built, what? in the 60s as a high school and now we are using the same building. The classes are poor the building is miserable. How can we expect students to care if we show them that we don't care?"

The question: “Do you think they care?” was posed by the majority of the participants when they talked about different contextual factors affecting teaching and learning. This might suggest a shared belief that the educational authorities did not take teachers and their jobs seriously.

5.2.3.1 Disorientation

ESP teachers at the vocational colleges in Kuwait experienced a kind of disorientation at the beginning of their career. The lack of orientation and/or a pre-service teacher-training programme affected their attitudes towards teaching and their perceptions of self. For example, Rasha maintained:

> “When I first started my job here, no one gave me any idea of what is expected from me, or what I needed to do. I was given a timetable and textbooks. That’s it.

The lack of orientation resulted in a scary experience for Huda who did not have any prior experience with teaching adult students. She stressed:

> So they handed me the textbook and said these are the grammar and these are the vocabulary words that you need to teach. So, although I prepared the words and grammar to teach, but the experience of facing a big audience (the students) was intimidating.

Amira shared the same overwhelming experience saying:

> “And it’s scary you know because I’ve never stood up in a classroom, I’ve never done this before. O.K. I have qualifications but they qualify me as a linguist, but not as anything else. So O.K. what do I do when I go to the classroom? Oh, say good morning and be nice to them. That was the advice I got.”

She thought that it was totally unprofessional to bring teachers, like her, with no prior teaching experience and send them to a classroom full of adult students with no orientation or training. She compared her experience in teaching ESP with her experience in teaching afternoon dancing classes and believed that the dance teachers’ approach to introducing her to teaching and classroom management was far more professional than the English department’s (now LC) approach. She said:

> "And when I did my dance training, my teacher she's you know a native speaker, she's English. You think she let me stand in a classroom like this cold turkey! It took a year for me moving through all over her classes watching exactly what she does. Taking classes with her in the classroom and out of the classroom…you know doing courses abroad, all the rest of it…before she ever let me be in charge of any class of young people to teach them dance. I mean it's not something affecting the world or anything it's just an extracurricular activity. So how come here, just because we have some sort of qualification that says you know we're adults or whatever, we're allowed to go in and teach."

In the absence of any orientation, workshop, or teacher-training programme, Amira thought of seeking help from her senior colleagues through classroom observation to promote awareness. However, only two teachers out of the whole staff members agreed to let her in their classes. Realizing the importance of classroom visits she claimed to have suggested the implementation of this activity to the LC as a tool to introduce novice teachers to PCK. However, apparently to this date, the LC and the teaching staff have not taken her suggestion seriously. Peer visits and collaboration seemed to be missing in the participants' professional experience.

The above stories implied that the participants experienced some kind of "reality shock" (Veenman, 1984) at the beginning of their career. As a result, the majority suggested that an orientation or pre-service training is needed to help familiarize novice teachers with their new environment and their job requirements.

In my opinion, even an experienced teacher needs some kind of orientation when they join a new teaching environment. They need to get familiar with their new milieu: the culture of teaching, the policy and planning, the type of learners and their backgrounds, the objectives of their programme, etc.

Some teachers were able to use their prior knowledge as teacher-learners and/or as teachers to compensate for the lack of PCK needed at the college level. The impact of their prior knowledge on their teaching was manifested in their stories about teaching experience. Manar, for example, decided to start her first day of teaching by introducing herself to the students, and asking

students to introduce themselves to the class. This decision was informed by her prior experience with learning in the States where professors' used 'introduction' to 'break the ice' between them and the students. She explained:

> "I really didn't know what to do, but I recalled my American teachers used to introduce themselves on the first day, so I did that and I asked the students to do the same and introduce themselves to the class."

5.2.3.2 Pedagogical justifications

Data previously revealed that as language-learners participants were exposed to two different language methodologies: structural/teacher-dominated and interactive/learner-centered classroom environments. The majority of the participants suggested that they preferred the communicative/interactive methodology in language teaching and believed that it was more suitable for ESP teaching. However, the data indicated that in practice they used structural approaches. The first group, who learnt at government schools in Kuwait, when the structural approaches were in use in language teaching, had different attitudes towards this approach. For example, Saad one of the strongest advocates for the structural methodologies justified his preference based on the belief that the communicative approaches focused on fluency on the expense of accuracy. He criticized the fact that learners' errors in producing the language were unjustifiable. Moreover, he and other participants who criticized Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) shared the view that the end product of CLT was leaners who in addition to their insufficient speaking skills were very weak in all the other language skills. He argued:

> "I felt it left something unaddressed, which is students' accuracy. I mean they are fluent but then you see inexcusable mistakes you know, like subject-verb agreement, Like I and then for example has, and you know, something like that, you know the subject does not agree with the verb: "They is", "You is", whatever."

As a result, he believed that language was best learnt through a systematic teaching of the structure of the language to ensure accuracy. In justifying his belief, he compared his generation's linguistics abilities with their learners' and argued:

> "They weren't given a chance to develop the same way we were given a chance to develop. We had a very solid development in the language because we were drilled much more on grammar. But they said to them grammar is for the birds you don't need to know any grammar just go ahead and grammar will come to you by subliminal inspiration you know."

The participants' views that supported the application of traditional structural approaches in teaching the language corresponded to English language teaching in Taiwan. Chang (2011: 21) reported that some teachers in Taiwan strongly believed in the application of grammar-translation method in language teaching. They justified their beliefs arguing that: "Without grammar, words hang together without any real meaning or sense."

Latifa, Huda and Nabeel favoured the communicative approaches, but justified adopting structural approaches in their teaching to the fact that learners have been exposed to this approach during their schooling experience and they would not do justice to them if they suddenly expose them to a whole new approach. Nabeel believed that it was impossible to improve learners' communicative competence in such a short period of three to four terms. On the other hand, Jinan and Manar who were strong supporters of the CLT believed that they had to adopt the structural approaches in teaching ESP, because all their other colleagues were doing so, and because their students were familiar with it. In this regard, Jinan argued that the students resisted the application of new methods, which affected her pedagogical decisions in her ESP classes. She explained:

> "So it is very difficult for me to adopt or change, because they [the students] are resistant. And the thing is we can't do it alone, because these girls come from levels and if the first level [2 EGP courses preceding the ESP ones] teacher shows them that only this is required from you [preparing them for the exam], so if you try at this level to do something else – resistance!"

This group's stories indicated that prior experience (learning the language structurally) could have influenced their choice of remaining in their comfort zone of using a familiar approach. The familiarity with their teaching environment that resembled their schooling experience appeared to make it

easier for them to accept teacher-centered and structural approaches. Their stories did not reveal any apparent efforts to change their environment to a more interactive and learner-centered one suitable for the ESP classes, nor did it indicate any efforts for improving learners' language and preparing them for their ESP classes.

The participants' shared views, that the structural approaches were more suitable for their students could have stemmed from their deeply embedded belief that understanding grammar was the route to language learning. The fact that the majority of their students after eight to twelve years of learning English the communicative way were unable to produce a single accurate sentence seemed to prove their points, reinforce their beliefs, and influence their preferences.

The second group of teachers' interactive and communicative educational backgrounds lacked the traditional approaches frame of reference to access for help with the how and what of teaching at their context. Their prior knowledge was formed through experimenting and exploiting various concepts, synthesizing results, and learning in a constructive way. Therefore, they were shocked with the teaching environment at their colleges. They were unfamiliar with the teacher-centered and the structural approaches adopted by the LC and applied by the ESP staff at the different colleges. In this regard Rasha argued:

> "In American school we weren't taught this is called present perfect and this is present continuous. We learnt this with the language."

In justifying the use of structural approaches, the participants in this group agreed with their colleagues that CLT was beyond the scope of their students and their teaching context. Based on this belief, this group of teachers decided to learn and adopt structural approaches to teaching the language in both EGP and ESP classes. One of the justifications that was shared by some participants in both groups was related to students' unwillingness to change. For example Rasha asserted:

> "If I change the way of teaching and assessing students to be more functionally based, they (students) protest. They don't like the change because they are so used to the structural approach, which they've been exposed to at school and now here in our college."

In addition to the learners being used to structural approaches, she claimed that they were used to being dependent on their teachers who 'spoon-fed' them with knowledge (Al-Nouh, 2008; Al-Nwaiem, 2012). As a result, using any approach that was based on autonomy and hands on learning was doomed to failure. She further argued that:

> "Our students if you try challenge them they think you have something against them. They want to be spoon-fed; they are used to being spoon-fed."

Other justifications that these participants shared with the first group were related to students' poor language levels, and to the lack of educational facilities.

It could also be argued that teachers' decision to ignore communicatively based methods might have stemmed from the lack of adequate knowledge of interactive methods and techniques especially in the ESP context. The fact that they were familiar with terms such as communicative language teaching did not necessarily reflect their understanding of what these approaches involved (Nunan, 1988, 1986, 1991). This was evident in some participants' responses to a prompt about methods and techniques used in teaching ESP. Some participants were unable to share any specific methods or techniques. Others referred to pair and group work as effective techniques, but admitted that they were not used in their teaching practices due to some contextual factors as the above discussed ones. In this regard Aimra commented:

> "I don't even know if I could tell you what technique I use. I don't know what techniques are. I have no idea. It's a technique that I've made up for myself. It's what works for me. I have no clue of what it's called. I don't know all of these technical names and you know. As if I cared."

Though, her response might reveal a gap in her knowledge about ESP pedagogies, the effect of experience on her professional growth was

manifested in the descriptions of her teaching practices and the fact that she made up her own techniques that worked for her students (Borg, 2003; Johnson, 2006). Her indifferent attitude, however, might have stemmed from the teaching environment that she labeled as "sterile":

> "Because it's sterile. It's sterile. There is no atmosphere. There is no learning there is no nothing. It's sterile. It's a sterile atmosphere, completely."

Knowledge of the CLT approaches is important for ESP teaching and can be an asset to encourage learners to take risks and go beyond memorizing patterns (Savignon, 1991). It could facilitate learning through conscious involvement in classroom activities to expand awareness of the various ways language could be exploited to produce meaning. Savignon (ibid) asserts:

> "By encouraging learners to ask for information, to seek clarification, to use circumlocution and whatever other linguistic and nonlinguistic resources they could muster to negotiate meaning, to stick to the communicative task at hand, teachers were invariably leading learners to take risks, to venture beyond memorized patterns."

Undesirable contextual realities such as learners' low competency levels and unequipped classrooms affect the application of CLT as indicated in the context of this study and could impede the application of knowledge in practice.

5.3 Conclusion

In the first part of this chapter I introduced and analyzed the data regarding teachers' knowledge of ESP and teachers' personal knowledge. The findings of this section could be summarized as follows:

- The majority of ESP teachers in this study (seven out of eleven) believed that ESP courses were geared towards learners' needs for the language.
- Two out of the eleven teachers believed that visiting target places was important for the realization of learners' target language needs.
- Four out of eleven believed that the distinction made between ESP and EGP teaching was unrealistic. The principles that governed their beliefs

seemed to be based on two factors: that on the theoretical level, ESP and EGP shared a lot of similarities than differences; that the ESP courses offered at the context of this study lacked authenticity and appeared to be EGP in disguise.

- The majority of ESP teachers (nine out of eleven) lacked formal training in ESP. This is common in the world of ESP as it is usually taught as part of a broader field such as Education, TESOL, or Applied Linguistics.
- Orientation and pre- and in-service trainings were lacking in the context of this study.
- Due to the lack of orientation and training, the ESP teachers at the context of this study experienced identity conflict. Time and experience seemed to have played a role in the realization that they were language not specialized teachers.
- The participants focused on personality traits rather than pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) or specific pedagogical content knowledge (SPCK) as requirements for effective ESP practices.
- Needs analysis, a core activity in ESP, was totally ignored in the context of this study.
- ESP activities such as course and material design and adaptation, programme evaluation, collaboration, and research and development were either missing or did not follow authentic criteria as needs analysis was not practiced.
- ESP teachers' perceptions of their learners did not match the reality of vocational college learners.
- ESP teachers' perceptions of the ESP teaching environment did not match the reality of their context.
- The study indicated that teachers' prior knowledge had some impact on their perceptions of a productive educational environment, and on their pedagogical choices.
- The participants' views of self as previous learners and current teachers seemed to influence their perceptions of, and expectations from their students.
- The participants viewed agency as an important quality that was not promoted in their educational context.

- The participants, regardless of their prior educational system (authoritarian or democratic), revealed passive attitudes towards their unhealthy and unproductive educational environment.

Findings of the Study: Part two

5.4 Preview:

In this second part of the findings I present the data elicited from the study regarding research questions three and four: 3) How do ESP teachers in Kuwait explain their classroom practices? 4) What Challenges do ESP teachers encounter in implementing knowledge in practice?

5.5 ESP Teachers' Practical Knowledge

Data regarding teachers' practical knowledge reveal that ESP teachers' professional choices are influenced by two main factors: context, and their 'personal' practical knowledge accumulated through experience. However, it seems that the contextual factors played a significant role in shaping their practical knowledge. The data also indicate a gap between their knowledge of teaching and learning (theory), and what they ended up doing in their classrooms (practice). For example, although all the participants believed that ESP could be best taught using the communicative or eclectic approaches, in practice and in their context they were convinced that the application of the communicative methods and activities was almost impossible. The effects of teaching in a 'sterile' environment with unequipped classrooms, inadequate teaching materials, and students who lacked adequate linguistic and academic competencies, were clear in their justifications for their actions. The findings regarding teachers' actions and justifications for practice are presented through the following themes: 1) Implementation of content knowledge; 2) Implementation of PCK; 3) Implementation of Knowledge of general pedagogy; 4) Pedagogy and the ESP learner; 5) Pedagogy and the teaching environment; 6) Pedagogy and self awareness. Table (5.2) presents a sample of teachers' knowledge, practice, and justification for practical choices.

Table (5.2) ESP Teachers' knowledge, practice, and justifications

Knowledge	Practice	Justification
ESP is tailored to learners' needs	Learners' needs are not assessed; EGP courses deemed to be more appropriate	Learners' low competency in the language
Needs analysis informs ESP course design	Objectives are set based on textbooks	Needs analysis is a huge project beyond teachers' expertise and capabilities
ESP entails the use of communicative and eclectic methods; Interactive teaching facilitates learning	Structural approaches are used to teach ESP; Implementation of Teacher-centered pedagogy	Learners' low competencies; Learners' schemata and expectations; Structurally based syllabus and exams
Learners are careless and could not be trusted with their own learning;	Teacher-controlled pedagogy Teacher/giver, learner/ receiver education Lack of student agency	Language teaching model in Kuwait is imitation not democratic
Language is a system – grammar is central to language learning	Focusing on vocabulary and grammar	Language is a system once mastered acquisition takes place
Learners are mainly exposed to language in the classroom; Teachers must speak English most of the time	Arabic is used as the language of instruction; Code switching is applied	Learners' low competency in English; The ability to link new language to available representations in L1; Lack of teacher fluency
General content is adequate for teaching ESP	Simplification of content; the use of unauthentic material	ESP teachers are language not specialized teachers; Students' knowledge about the language is inadequate
Contextual and political factors are vast, improving or changing the teaching/learning situation at the colleges is challenging	Passive practice; Indifferent attitudes; Limited attempts for professional development	Lack of teacher and learner agency; Education is not taken seriously by the officials

5.5.1. Implementation of Content knowledge (CK)

The data so far suggested that ESP teachers did not have any kind of training to familiarize them with the specific content of their ESP courses. Moreover, in the absence of needs analysis, their choices of content and pedagogy seemed to be based on readily available textbooks. Some participants also suggested that their ESP courses were more general than specific and that this reality was the outcome of their students' low competency in English. The following is a demonstration of the impact of ESP teachers' personal practical knowledge on practice.

5.5.1.1 Simplifying the content

The data indicated that the ESP teachers at vocational colleges of Kuwait faced a problem of having to deal with students' whose language level was elementary. According to them, the students were weak in all the four skills of the language and were unable to produce accurate sentences. This reality turned classroom interactive activities into a difficult task, and forced teachers to focus on improving learners' language skills. A decision that deprived learners from getting engaged in interactive and task-based activities that proved effective in improving learners' knowledge about language use in specific target situations. One of the solutions that teachers sought in response to the learners' low competencies was simplifying the content. In this regards Rasha maintained:

> "One of the difficulties that I face in my classes is the students' low level of the language. How can I teach ESP when our students' level is below elementary? They don't know the difference between 'she' and 'he'; they can't write one complete sentence. Their grammar is weak; their vocabulary is poor."

Classroom observations corresponded with the interview results and revealed that ESP teachers' subject matter content knowledge was affected by their students' attitudes and expectations. Ball and McDiarmid (2013: 20) argued "if teachers face learners who rebel against uncertain or complex intellectual tasks, they may feel pulled to simplify content." This argument accurately described what was happening at the context of this study. ESP teachers stressed that every year they encountered students whose literacy standards in

general, and language competencies in particular, got lower and lower, which forced them to simplify their content until it reached a "ridiculous" level. Jinan, for example argued that:

> "I can't come in with a high expectation for a simple reason, because they don't want to learn. So you kind of sink yourself down to their level to give them the basic necessity that they need, that's about it. I've been here for more than ten years and the students are going from bad to worse."

This reality could justify why teachers' subject matter content knowledge seemed to remain static at the vocational colleges under study. Teachers have been teaching the same concepts in the same way for years. They did not face any challenging classroom situations or any stimulating encounters with their students that could have influenced them to improve their knowledge and/or vary their teaching methods. Their subject matter content knowledge was more than enough for handling their "disguised" ESP courses and catering for a majority of students who lacked some essential academic and language skills.

Amira, one of the teachers who volunteered to be observed, commented on a stimulated recall interview question about her ESP class, saying:

> "Do you think it's ESP? It's basic English, if we don't know, you know, when to use the (s) and when not to use the (s) in the present simple, I don't think we are talking ESP, are we? There isn't … it is a very simple book. It goes beyond simple this book, which I thought … I mean I thought it's too simple anyway. But the simpler we make it, I don't know as the years go on it's still not simple enough for them. I don't understand what else we could be teaching then; what are we teaching them about the business world? Nothing. In my opinion, just the word 'bank' and the word 'HR' and the word 'IT'. That could be vocabulary."

The data also indicated that the participants at the other more technical colleges, such as the health sciences and technology, have also found the solution in simplifying their content. According to Saad, all the ESP courses at the college of technology were converted to general English courses with a hint of specific vocabulary. Although teachers' decisions to simplify content were based on their understanding of their learners and their linguistic backgrounds,

it could be argued that oversimplifying content might run the risk of depriving learners from the quality of training they need for language use in their target places.

5.5.1.2 Lack of specific content knowledge (SCK)

Experience played a big role in teachers' realization that they were supposed to teach language through content not vice versa. However, they seemed to ignore the importance of having a reasonable understanding of some specific concepts related to their students' fields in order to become better facilitators for the transmission of knowledge. In practice some teachers were able to realize the importance of SCK and its effects on their pedagogical choices. Fahad, for example, explained how his inappropriate knowledge of engines placed him in an awkward situation when his students had a debate about how an engine worked. He explained:

> "Well, there was a lesson in one of the textbooks about tools and engines, so of course I followed the teacher's books' suggestions on how to teach the lesson; so all the answers were already in the teacher's book, I mean I had all the answers for the exercises. But one time the students asked me about how the engine worked, they wanted me to discuss it with them, but I didn't know. So, I followed the description in teacher's book and was very strict on my opinion, because I thought that people who wrote this book know better. So the students disagreed with the information I gave and challenged me by saying no the cylinder goes up first, then the stroke works. But the book said it goes down first and you notice that the students know what they are talking about, so it was a bit difficult because you really don't know."

Fahad's personal practical knowledge seemed to negatively affect his decision and nurture his biased view (Tsang, 2004) that textbooks that were designed by experts included correct information, while students' information could be wrong. Later on, he realized that both were correct but each approached the problem from a different angle. One of the reasons for his misunderstanding, as he realized, was the deficiency in his SCK. The other one was related to his biased view influenced by the learners' low competency in English that resulted in underestimating the learners' knowledge about the specific content. This experience altered Fahad's view about his students and convinced him that a

reasonable knowledge about the specific content was essential for a successful ESP practice.

All the participants confirmed the reality that the first and foremost source of their SCK was their textbooks followed by their classroom experience, which conformed with Ball & Feiman-Nemser's (1988) findings. However, ESP teachers' dependence on teachers' books was perceived by some experts and researchers in the field of teacher education as problematic due to the misrepresentation of knowledge in some textbooks (Ball & McDiarmid, ibid), and to their inadequate content knowledge.

Although ESP teachers are not subject teachers and are not required to have the specialized knowledge of the subject, their familiarity with the specific content used for teaching the language is important. They can raise their awareness about the specific content by consulting and collaborating with the specialized teachers (Dudley-Evans & St. Johns, 1998). Additionally, they can use their own students (if knowledgeable enough in their fields) as a source of SCK. In the above story, although Fahad felt awkward to find himself in the middle of an argument between two groups of students on SCK that was beyond his understanding and expertise, he claimed to have learnt a great deal from classroom discussions and the learners' specific content knowledge.

Classroom encounters such as the one Fahad experienced indicate that it is in such situations that teachers' awareness of the SCK could play a significant role in improving learners' ability to reach a decision based on facts not on assumptions, and by moderating debates in a meaningful way using accurate knowledge. Moreover, it is important that ESP teachers convey to learners that they are language teachers not subject specialists, and that they teach them the language in a context that is familiar and meaningful to them. This action prevents ESP teachers from trying to act like experts in fields foreign to them and put themselves in uncomfortable situations. The debate between the two groups of learners that occurred with no prior plans by the teacher could have been used as a technique to encourage learners to implement their language knowledge in practice. This kind of classroom occurrence is at the heart of ESP teaching (Schempp et al. 1998). It is worth mentioning that the above

experience is not an odd situation in the ESP classroom where students' specific knowledge, in some courses, exceeds that of their teachers', especially if the teacher is not oriented towards the specific field or if s/he lacks the specific training.

5.5.2. Implementation of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)

Participants' pedagogical decisions seem to be informed by their personal practical knowledge and shaped by their context. For example, factors such as: learners' low competency in English, lack of educational equipment and teaching aids, lack of interactive environment, insufficient contact hours, and their own shortcomings influenced their decisions. Moreover, as the data previously indicated, teachers had to deal with students who lacked motivation, ambition, and the desire to acquire knowledge, which resulted in the majority of the ESP teachers to give in and teach the basics and prepare learners for their exams. Jinan, for example, maintained that:

> "They just want the basics, whatever you can give it to them and that's it. They don't want to study more than they need."

In addition to the above factors, teachers justifications for focusing on what learners needed to know in order to pass their exams was based on their belief that the students were used to (teacher/knower)/(learner/receiver) type of education and to their unfamiliarity with the interactive/constructive learning atmosphere. As a result, teachers chose to apply the structural approaches focusing on teaching vocabulary and grammar to prepare their students for their structurally based exams. Teacher-centeredness with minimum learner interaction became a norm in the majority of ESP courses offered at the different colleges under the study.

5.5.2.1 Arabic as the language of instruction

Having to deal with students who suffered from deficiencies both in the language and in the learning skills essential for "studenting" (Fenstermacher, 1986), the majority of participants agreed that in practice, and contrary to their formal knowledge of language teaching, they used Arabic as the language of instruction. The participants believed that, in the EFL context, learners' main source of language contact is the classroom. Therefore, they realized the

importance of exposing learners to as much as the language as possible. However, students' insufficient knowledge of the language and their demand for the use of Arabic in teaching the language seemed to influence teachers' decision. Amira, for example, justified her choice of using Arabic as the language of instruction saying:

> "The main challenges are involved in actually standing up in the classroom and teaching, and then getting over this business of don't speak Arabic in the classroom, or speak Arabic in the classroom; and I decided to speak, you know, a lot of Arabic in the classroom, because we don't have enough time to be able to elicit the information just from talking English the whole time."

Students' low competency and the time limit were the two factors affecting Amira's decision. She also gave in to students' language preference for the fear of their withdrawing from her courses. She argued:

> "And the problem is that the students have a choice. They can drop your course if you speak English all the time and go away and you'll never get the opportunity to teach them, or you can be a bit flexible and give them the little Arabic that they want and also try to enforce the English a little bit at the same time."

Manar agreed with the above opinion, and although tried to justify the prevalence of Arabic as the language of instruction based on students' low competency in English, she seemed to be frustrated with her decision. She stressed:

> "Our classes aren't English classes anymore; I find myself forced to use more Arabic than English."

The students demand for Arabic as the language of instruction that the majority of the participants complied with corresponded with the result of a study in Japan that revealed students preference of the use of native language as the language of instruction (Saito & Ebsworth, 2004). It also agreed with the learning preferences of Saudi Arabian female students who believed that they needed a native teacher to explain concepts to them (Abdool et al. 2011). Moreover, it concurred with the results of Al-Nofie's (2010) study that indicated

both teachers' and students' revealed positive attitudes towards using Arabic in the classroom in the Saudi public schools.

5.5.2.2 Impact of Learners' attitudes

Another factor that influenced teachers' pedagogical choices seemed to be linked to the majority of students' irresponsible and careless behavior and their passive attitudes towards their education. All participants agreed that their students were not motivated to learn and that their schooling experience did not acquaint them with the skills necessary for learning. Latifa said: "They don't know how to ask a question;" Moreover, Manar maintained:

> "Even when I tell them it is OK to ask or answer questions in Arabic, they still don't do it. If you are lucky you get three or four students out of 38 who will speak, but only in a mixture of English and Arabic and sometimes only in Arabic."

Saad believed that students' irresponsibility was the result of an educational culture that nurtured passive learning and favoured quantity over quality. Fahad stressed that their students were used to being spoon-fed and to pass their exams with minimum effort. Based on his previous teaching experience at government schools, Fahad related learners' passiveness to the view that at the end of the school year parents usually got involved in teachers' grading and begged teachers for passing grades for their children. The above reality corresponded with the stories that the majority of participants shared about their ESP students begging for higher or passing grades. Their attitudes towards this reality varied: some were totally against interfering with teachers' grading, and others gave in under the pressure of their educational culture. Bader tried to justify his actions of being lenient when it came to grading explaining that with the tribal mentality it was difficult to say no to the students' parents. It was considered disrespectful. He stressed:

> "It is difficult because when a student's father talks to my father to help his son to pass or get good grades, and my father talks to me I can't say no. You know you can't because a lot of people will be mad because I didn't respect them. My father also will be shameful because they [the people appealing to him] think he didn't have authority on me, and because I didn't respect my father's wish."

Jinan justified her practical choice of focusing on the basic language skills, with learners' resistance to change and peer pressure. She believed that some of her colleagues (the other ESP teachers at the college) practiced preparing learners for their exams, because learners were used to such approach. As a result, if she decides to use new methods such as the communicative ones students' will resist and learning will fail. She explained:

> "So, it is very difficult for me to adopt or change, because they [students] are resistant; and the thing is we can't do it alone, because these girls come from levels and if the first level teacher shows them that only this is required from you, so if you try at this level to do something else – resistance!"

Jinan was referring to the two EGP courses that preceded their ESP business courses. She found it challenging to teach ESP communicatively when her colleagues who taught the prerequisite courses of (099) and (101) adopted traditional approaches in teaching and evaluating the learners. Students seemed to favour this approach because it continued to spoon-feed them and teachers seemed to find it easier to evaluate learners using exams that consisted mainly of multiple-choice questions. Students' resistance to change in the context of this study concurred with the findings of a study about Chinese students resistant to accept change in teachers' approach from structural to communicative language teaching. Hu (2010) attributed their resistance to cultural values and traditions that were in conflict with theories of communicative teaching and learning.

5.5.2.3 Resistance to interaction

ESP learners at vocational colleges in Kuwait, as the participants indicated, not only resisted teachers' attempts in using different methodology, but also in getting involved in interactive activities. This reality seemed to impact the implementation of pedagogical content knowledge in the ESP classes. Some teachers like Manar, who though believed in learners' resistance to classroom participation, tried to pull them in and encourage interaction. However, in practice, she seemed to realize that her efforts were not fruitful. This reality affected her attitude and subsequently resulted in changing her pedagogical

choices to more traditional ones. The following episode that was recorded in one of her classes demonstrates this problem.

T: OK. Open your books on page 6 and look at the picture.
What does it tell you about the world of business?
SS: (Inaudible)
T: (Repeating the question in Arabic.)
SS: (Inaudible)
T: Oh, come on. You can respond in Arabic; it's OK.
T: Look at the picture. Come on. What do you see? Can you see anything? Pause. (teacher repeats everything said in Arabic)
T: (lellah ya mohseneen) For the sake of God, almsgivers.
Say it in Arabic, it's OK.
SS: (Students smile)
S1: A computer.
T: Very good! A computer. What else?
S2: People.
T: Yes, people. So we need computers and people for a business, right?
SS: (students nod in agreement)
T: OK, anything about the picture that is unusual?
SS: (Inaudible)
T: Oh! Come on! Are you serious! You don't see anything unusual about the picture (in Arabic)?
(pause)
T: OK. (Essora wadha) Is the picture clear?
SS: (La mo wadha) No, the picture is not clear.
T: Very good. It's blurry (teacher translates in Arabic: essorah mahzoza)
T: OK. Have you ever taken any pictures?
SS: (Some students nodded)
T: When do you get a blurry picture like that? (in Arabic)
S3: When they move (in Arabic)

T: Yes, when they move. Slowly or fast (in Arabic)? (repeats in English)

S3: Fast.

T: OK. It's fast. So, what does this tell you about the world of business then?

S1: It's fast.

T: There you go!

During the post-lesson stimulated recall interview, Manar explained that this was a 204 course, which was the fourth English, and the second ESP course offered to students majoring in business. As a result, she expected some interaction from the students, but was disappointed to find that the students' language remained poor despite the courses they previously completed. In addition, she realized that the students lacked the learning skills necessary for constructive learning. She maintained:

> "I used to think that students had language problems, you know. It's not… I mean it is they are very weak in English, but this is not the only problem. It's the fact that they don't know how to think, and how to connect ideas, and how to ask questions, and how to engage in educational discussions, that's the problem."

Manar here seemed to be referring again to "studenting" that she believed had impaired learning. Fenstermacher (ibid) argues that a learner must desire to acquire knowledge, which is only possible if s/he students. That is learning is the result of certain activities done by the student that is connected with and complement the teacher's actions. He puts it this way:

> There are ranges of activities connected with studenting that complement the activities of teaching. For example, teachers explain, describe, define, refer, correct, and encourage. Students recite, practice, seek assistant, review, check, locate sources, and access material. The teacher's task is to support R's [student's] desire to student and improve his capacity to do so. Whether and how much R [the student] learns from being a student is largely a function of how he students (p. 39)."

Based on Fenstermacher's argument, and on the data elicited from teachers' stories about the impacts of learners' resistance to interaction in the classroom

and their lack of interest in learning, it could be assumed that the ESP learners at the vocational colleges in Kuwait were not studenting. Consequently, the lack of this important element in learners' schemata has significantly affected teachers' practical choices.

In the above episode, Manar tried to get her students to interact through the discussion of what the picture in the book implied about the world of business. Although her language learning background was traditional, her approach was based on cognitive teaching that fostered critical and analytical thinking. Her choice seemed to be based on her implicit theory that in order to know, learners should be provided by the opportunity to synthesize and construct knowledge through interaction and the use of critical thinking abilities not by imitating teacher's model. However, learners' lack of autonomy and critical thinking skills seemed to affect her on emotional and professional levels. On the emotional level, her frustration from the situation was reflected in the tone and pitch of her voice, and in the emotional expressions that she used to explain the teaching/learning situation at her classroom, such as "this is really frustrating!" "it's unbelievable!" and "you just give up!" On professional level, she admitted that at the beginning of the course and with fresh groups of students she usually starts teaching interactively but realizes that she has to modify her approach to a more teacher-centered one. The reasons for the adjustments in her pedagogical choices were similar to the ones given by her colleagues, and once more were attributed to students' preference and their aim to pass the exams. This concurred with the findings of a study by Ricks and Szczerbik (2010: 165) indicating that "a number of students at universities in the Gulf are not prepared to be independent learners," and that this reality becomes an obstacle in implementing curriculum that is based on autonomy and independent learning. Moreover, the teachers' view of the students' inability to use critical thinking skills to describe, analyze and synthesize a concept or an idea also conformed to a study by Khafaji (2004), who realized that not only learners with traditional educational backgrounds were unaware of the nature of critical thinking and its application in the construction of knowledge, but also the more open-minded students, who graduated from

bilingual and language schools that applied modern and updated instructional techniques.

However, albeit their two distinctive educational backgrounds, the participants' observation that there was a lack of learners' desire to get engaged in critical thinking implies that the teacher and the educational context might play a significant role in this problem as well. Based on the above data, it could be argued that Manar's accumulated frustration of the ESP learners' attitudes has distracted her from spotting opportunities that could have facilitated learning. In the above episode, she seemed to beg the students for a response – a possible indication of her frustration; she seemed so focused on extracting a particular answer from her students that she overlooked the many opportunities that the learners' answers could have provided for discussing different aspects of the world of business – the topic of the lesson.

The learners' short and unenthusiastic responses to the questions were seen as an inability to think critically and a lack of desire to do so. However, the teacher's emphasis on a specific response and direction for a given exercise indicating the need for a "correct answer," seemed at least partially responsible for the problem. Students were asked to figure out what the teacher thought and expected, rather than what they thought and realized. Combined with some further evidence suggesting that anxiety and fear of ridicule played a role in the learners' willingness to engage in critical discussion, the teacher's focus on one particular answer further disengaged the students from the learning experience.

5.5.2.4 Teaching vocabulary

Several factors influenced teachers' PCK, such as: their students' levels, the teaching environment, and their personal views about teaching. For example, in teaching vocabulary, Latifa preferred to give her students a list of vocabulary items with their meanings in English and Arabic. The awareness of vocabulary items was also checked through a discussion of synonyms and antonyms. She justified her choices arguing:

> "If I leave it to them [her students], you know, they won't do it; I mean they are so used to being introduced to vocabulary in this way that they feel lost if you don't give it to them the same

> way. They want to see the list, you know, and I know I'm not supposed to do that, but this is what they want, you know, this is what they know."

Latifa based her decisions in teaching vocabulary on students' wants and expectations. She seemed to focus on the outcome of the process not the procedure. If providing the students with the list of vocabulary items and their meaning equaled learning, then in Latifa's view that would be the right choice. Her choice might have also been influenced by her understanding of the students' backgrounds as dependent learners, thus, unreliable in taking the responsibility of their own learning.

This reality corresponded with some other interviewees' responses about their decisions in teaching vocabulary. Contrary to their beliefs that students should take initiative in learning – look up the words in dictionary and learn their meanings – the majority of teachers indicated that they give their students a list of vocabulary words including the Arabic definitions and the synonyms and antonyms when available. Their justification was similar to Latifa's that their students' were unreliable to leave the task of finding the meanings of vocabulary items up to them. Their concern was that learners might not perform well on their exams. In this regard Jinan argued that: "you can't risk having them come to the exam unprepared." She further explained:

> "I know we're not supposed to prepare them for the exam, but this is what they want and if we don't do it this way they blame us for their mistakes, and when everyone else is doing it except you, then you look bad when you get the worst students' results."

Other participants such as Amira and Manar were against providing learners with the list of vocabulary items, because it fostered learners' dependence on teachers. Amira chose to explain the vocabulary while reading the text or passage, then write the words on the board and ask the students to write the meaning on the margin of their textbooks. She believed that giving the students the list of vocabulary with the definitions was not her job. Manar agreed with Amira and was totally against giving the students the vocabulary words and the meanings. She argued that teachers should not continue spoon-feeding their

students. It seemed like teachers' decisions on how to teach vocabulary was influenced by their views of the teachers' and learners' roles in the teaching/learning equation: the knower/receiver, or the facilitator/constructor. However, even when they believed that students must take responsibility for their learning, the reality of their situation sometimes forced some of them to make a decision that contradicted their beliefs.

The following episode that is extracted from the observation of one of Latifa's classes, demonstrates her approach to teaching vocabulary by explaining the meaning of the words in Arabic.

T: Ok. Let's look at page 14; page 14 please, exercise two.
Ok. Read the list of vocabulary in the box.
S1: (raises her hand)
T: Yes, Anwar.
S1: turnover
T: (teacher interrupts) OK. What is turnover?
Ss: (awayed errebh)
T: That's right, (awayed elarbah)
S1: employs
T: What is employs?
Ss: wadifa
T: wadifa is job; what is to employ? (teacher writes the word on the board)
Ss: yowadif.
T: That's right. Yowadif. Can you think of other words that belong to the same family?
S1: employee
T: That's right. Employee; that's a noun for a person (writes the word on the board)
There is another noun, do you remember? It means occupation/work?
Ss: (Inaudible)
T: employment, right? OK.

When I asked Latifa about the reason behind her choice in giving the meaning of the words in Arabic, she replied,

> "Well, I'm trying to be realistic with the type of students that I have. They don't have a good bank of vocabulary words. Their vocabulary is very poor. It's sad, but this is the way it is. So I can't expect from them more than what they can offer, you know. And I also believe that knowing the meaning in Arabic is good in this situation, because they can relate the word with something they know."

Latifa's choice was based on her evaluation of the situation at hand, and on her knowledge of her students. It was also based on the awareness that sometimes using the first language (L1) to understand the second language (L2) helps in connecting the new information – the word in L2 – with a representation or equivalent definition – the meaning in L1 – already accessible in students' minds (Freeman, 1991; Brown, 2000). Latifa's decision also seemed to conform to Bailey's (1996) study result that teachers' decisions are sometimes based on the principle of serving the common good. It also conformed to the findings of a study about teachers' pedagogical choices in Egypt by Abdelhafez (2010) in which he stated that teachers decision on the appropriateness of techniques used in teaching vocabulary was based on "the suitability of the selected technique to the curriculum material, students' comprehension, or even according to personal orientation of the teacher." Moreover, Al-Shammari (2011) found that the use of Arabic for clarification purposes and a balanced use of the mother tongue in the language classroom by both teachers and students could be useful in the learning process and essential in increasing learners' comprehension. The above finding also concurred with other studies about the preference or benefits of using the mother tongue in teaching the language, such as, Saito & Ebsworth (2004), Mat & Soon (2010), Abdool et. al. (2011), Al-Nofaie (2011), and Damra & Al-Qudah, (2013).

5.5.2.5 Teaching grammar

As far as grammar was concerned, teachers revealed that they have been teaching it explicitly and separately. They justified their decisions based on learners' humble understanding of language forms, and on their belief that learners preferred explicit grammar teaching. Classroom observation results

agreed with the interview results revealing that, in teaching grammar, teachers focused on teaching forms and language usage but seemed to ignore meaning and language use (Larsen-Freeman, 2003). Their focus on the rules of grammar was similar to the grammar translation approach that was used during some participants' schooling experiences. This might indicate that these participants' learning background could have influenced their choices. This was manifest in the way Latifa and Manar taught grammar following their schoolteacher' examples. However, Amira who went to a private English school and learnt the language holistically seemed to have struggled before she could eventually do what her other colleagues have been doing. She believed that teaching grammar was a very challenging task, because as school student she acquired the language and did not learn it. In her words, she put it this way:

> "Because for me I think I acquired the language…I don't think I learnt the language. I think it just happened."

She explained her experience with teaching grammar as something she had to help herself learn and teach explicitly. She explained:

> "I had to spend time on myself to learn what do they mean by the simple present, and what do they mean by the past tense, and whatever these rules … you know, that you have to tell the student and unfortunately the students come with preconceived ideas that they want the rules, that if you don't give them the rules as a rule then they don't feel that they've learnt anything. They might be making…you know…perfectly fine sentences and everything, because they're following your example, but they don't feel they've learnt anything unless they've got a rule that they can highlight, that say that with she…he…it, you know, the verb takes (s) at the end. That's see I've learnt it myself."

The view that learners came with preconceived ideas that they wanted the rules of grammar was supported by some interviewees and concurred with findings of other studies such as the case of teaching English in China (Hu, 2010). However, this belief was not supported or challenged by the ESP learners' in Kuwait for the lack of research in this area. It could be argued that it was based on ESP teachers' assumptions of their learners' preferences. Other participants thought that it did not matter how teaching vocabulary and

grammar were approached, because learners' were not interested in learning the language. They asserted that the learners wanted teachers to focus on the items expected to be included in the exams. Moreover, The majority of the participants held the belief that the students were trained to study for exams not to acquire knowledge about the subject.

In the following episode that is extracted from Amira's classroom observation, practicing the adverbs of frequency with the students is demonstrated.

T: Frequency adverbs. We use frequency adverbs to talk about how often Things happen or don't happen.
(Teacher reads): a. Colleagues often work on international projects. Where is the frequency adverb here, please?
S1: often.
T: often, yes. You can say (ofen) or you can say (often) it doesn't matter, both pronunciations are correct.
T: (Teacher reads) b. In traditional teams, people usually work on the same projects. Where is the frequency adverb?
Ss: usually/work.
T: Usually, not work, usually. c. This sometimes helps the team to decide if an idea is good or bad.
Ss: Sometimes.
T: Sometimes, that's correct. d. Teams are not always formal.
S2: formal.
S3: always!
Ss: always.
T: Yeah, always. Did you complete the rule? It's an interesting rule.
SS: Yes.
T: And what does the rule say?
S1: Adverbs of frequency go after verb to be, and before normal verbs.
T: (in Arabic) (a), (b), and (c), are 'normal' verbs, regular verbs. (d) is verb to be, because we have (are), right? All regular verbs, all regular verbs, the adverb of frequency goes before the verb. You have 'always' followed by a verb; you have 'usually' followed by a verb; you

have 'often' followed by a verb; you have 'sometimes' followed by a verb; only when we have verb to be; and verb to be always has its own rules, right? And we have seen this hundred times, with verb to be the adverb of frequency comes after it. Right? OK. Page Five!

S1: Page nine.

T: It's page nine; I don't have my glasses. It says, choose the arrow a or b, which shows the correct position of the frequency adverb in brackets. ((in Arabic) : it means that you have to choose where the frequency adverb goes. Does it go before the verb or does it go after the verb?) When does it go before the verb? When the verb is…?

S1: normal verb.

T: normal verb any verb. But it goes after the verb when …?

S1: verb to be.

T: verb to be that's right.

Amira's classroom observations revealed that she decided to teach the language skills separately. In the above episode she went through the adverbs of frequency helping students do the exercise in their textbooks. The interaction was minimum to answering the teacher with one or two words. Students were not given a chance to think about the structure and understand the different meanings of the rules and their use. Moreover, the choice of grammar was not based on the learners' future language needs.

Various ESP situations require different emphasis on particular rules, which are practiced holistically through performing different authentic tasks. This type of holistic or communicative teaching was more familiar to Amira than the traditional grammar-translation approach. However, the paradox existed in the fact that Amira contrary to her belief that grammar should be taught implicitly using meaning-focused instruction, chose to teach it explicitly using form-focused teaching. This could support teachers' beliefs about the impact of contextual factors on teachers' knowledge and classroom practices that in this case obliged Amira to submit to and make a contradicting decision. This finding conforms to Assalahi's (2013) findings about the reasons why the grammar-

translation approach is still alive in some Arab countries. Table (5.3) illustrates some of Amira's practical choices and their underlying beliefs.

Table (5.3) Effects of Amira's embedded knowledge on practice

Embedded Knowledge	Practice
At vocational colleges time constraint calls for language learning not acquisition	Controlled teaching/learning; Explicit grammar instruction; Preparing learners for exams
Learners are used to explicit grammar teaching	
Learners need to be responsible for own learning	Intolerance towards carelessness; Focus on attentive learners; Indifference towards learners' passiveness
Learners are weak in all the four language skills; Lack of teaching aids	Articles are read by the teacher; Exercise questions are read by the teacher
Students are resistant to change	Familiar structural approaches are used; Exams are structurally based; Instruction is controlled
Students lack awareness of their needs	Syllabus based on teachers' perceptions; Lack of student agency
Students are uninterested in learning	Focus on covering the syllabus; Mechanical teaching and learning

5.5.2.6 Teaching reading

The classroom observations also revealed that teachers dominated their classes and preferred to teach each item of the language separately as previously indicated. At this juncture, it is worth mentioning that the two elements that were emphasized in teaching were vocabulary and grammar, and the two skills that were occasionally used by learners were reading and writing. The speaking skill was not reinforced and was limited to answering teachers' questions. The listening skill seemed to be minimally practiced in the form of listening to teachers' reading. Only one participant – Latifa – occasionally brought her audiocassette recorder to play a CD for her students. Another issue that classroom observation indicated was that the four language

skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking – were not integrated in teaching when occasions occurred. As, a result, learners' linguistics abilities were not tested in different contexts and through skills integration (Schempp et al. 1998). For example, during a reading period teachers, in addition to comprehension questions, could have asked learners to discuss and justify the grammar use. As with vocabulary, they could have discussed the different word families and properties, and why a word is preferred in one context over the other, or how a specific choice could resolve ambiguity, etc.

In a reading class, some teachers chose to read most of the time due to their students' poor reading skills and to avoid time waste and make sure that the syllabus will be covered on time. However, occasionally, the teacher would ask a good student to read. Teachers' justifications for their actions in teaching reading were mostly based on the above two reasons. Amira, for example, in teaching reading comprehension decided to read a passage from the textbook and then ask the students comprehension questions to check their understanding of the topic. She did not start by reviewing the students' understanding of the reading skills and/or explaining them. She read the passage and paused when she came across a new vocabulary item to explain the meaning and to make sure learners know the word. At the end of the paragraph she asked questions to check learners' understanding. She was not keen on making sure that the whole class is attentive. She seemed to be content with only three to four students participating in a class of 35. Moreover, she did not choose to integrate the language skills and ask the students to find any past or present tenses or adverbs of frequency, that she had previously introduced to learners, in the passage. This could have provided the learners a chance to practice the application of grammar and vocabulary in context and to connect meaning with language use. Amira's reading episode was more like a listening class where the teacher read to compensate for the lack of audio recorders. During the post-lesson stimulated recall interview she was asked why she chose to read for the students? She responded,

> "We don't have… the recorder is not available, so what do you want me to do? Bring mine from the house, and you know in and out, in and out…. Their classrooms are not equipped.

> When they put them … [*God willing*], when we move to Ardiya [*God willing*], then we'll use them, otherwise, I'm perfectly capable of speaking and they are perfectly capable of listening."

The teaching environment seemed to play a significant role in teachers' choices of the teaching techniques. Lack of teaching aids and students' low level in English were the two factors behind Amira's choice to read for her students. However, during classroom observation, I noticed that some students were still looking for the page in the book while the teacher was reading, and others did not seem to be following. Amira commented on the students' inattentiveness saying:

> "It makes you frustrated but the class is never gonna be a class that every one is the same, right? And you try and go to middle level, you try and not go too fast and you try not to go too slow, because you don't want the people who are actually with you to get bored. But at the same time if, you know, you've got people who are not even on the right page, I'm not gonna go down to that level; they have just to get with it. Sorry, they just have to get with it."

The impact of students' attitudes on teachers' moods and practical choices were evident not only in teachers' disappointment and frustrations, but also in their choice to teach the syllabus whether the students paid attention or whether they learnt or not. They justified this by being fed up with spoon-feeding the students, and that it was time for students to become more responsible for their own education. Another justification that Amira shared for choosing to focus on teaching the syllabus whether students paid attention or not was based on students' careless attitudes towards their education. Amira justified her action saying:

> "Because they [were] sleeping, because they [were] day dreaming. That one [the student] didn't even know which book I was on; she was just looking at me, but I have no sympathy for them. I tried, I tried to pull them in; I've shown them what they need to do; if they don't want to do it, It's up to them; It's not my responsibility."

As she started to relate most of the problems that limited her pedagogical choices to the caliber of students and their learning problems, she seemed to have realized that teachers also could have played a role in the situation. She said:

> "Because I think it is the caliber of the students; I think it is motivation; I think we have a society problem; it has nothing to do … I mean there is a lack of learning block, somewhere. OK. May be part of it is us the teachers, I'm not saying no; may be, I don't know, I could go into more classes and see what other people are doing? How you are supposed to engage these people, and engage, I don't know may be 60% of the class and the rest are not responding. Is that my fault? May be. I'm not saying it is not, but is it going to get better because I have all that stuff to use [teaching aids]? I don't know. We have to wait and see."

This realization, I believe, stemmed from her reflection on her responses to the interview questions. As she tried to rationalize her actions, she seemed to realize factors that had not been considered before. This reveals the importance of teachers sharing and discussing their profession and reflecting on their teaching problems. Through this process, teachers' awareness expands as they realize their prejudices that could affect their pedagogical choices.

However, the data revealed that the above realization of the gap in teachers' pedagogical knowledge and their awareness of their roles did not seem to motivate Amira, and apparently her colleagues as well, to try and find solutions for their teaching/learning problems. The reason behind this act of passiveness might stem from their belief that most of their problems occurred as a result of political pressures and corruption in education. The former resulted in accepting students in numbers exceeding the capacity of their colleges (Al-Nwaiem, 2012), and the latter resulted in graduating students that lacked literacy skills. Nabeel, for example, said: "it is really naïve to think that we can do something about it [the problem of admitting students whose literacy level is elementary], this is beyond our control. It's a political issue."

5.5.3. Implementation of Knowledge of general pedagogy

5.5.3.1 Classroom management

General pedagogy entails classroom management experience. The ESP classroom usually has a more open and democratic atmosphere, because students have to interact and exchange information. They are usually engaged in problem-solving/task-based activities and the teacher becomes the conductor who helps keep students tuned.

Knowledge of general pedagogy in ESP then entails the awareness of the nature of ESP practices, as well as the awareness of the role that classrooms play as communities that promote and enhance learning (Tinto, 1997). Therefore, in order to explore this element of teachers' knowledge, I decided to observe teachers' approaches to managing their classes, and to understand the reasons behind their pedagogical choices. The following are some data that reflected teachers' decisions.

1. The silent treatment and dismissing students

In order to control the class noise and attract students' attention, Manar used the silent treatment as follows:

(Teacher enters the class; some students are talking, others are checking their mobiles)

T: Good morning!

Ss: Good morning.

T: How are you today? Good I hope!

Ss: (some students look at the teacher without responding)

T: As usual. You don't know how you are; how you feel; never mind - (in Arabic)

Ss: (Students smile, and continue talking.)

T: Alanood. (Teacher starts checking attendance); Anfal; Anwar …

Ss: (students get louder)

T: (Teacher looks at the students and decides to stop calling their names)

Ss: (Students keep talking; some tell their mates to stop)

T: (Teacher uses silent treatment)

Ss: (The majority stop talking while a few continue to talk)

T: When you are ready we'll start; and if you are not going to be ready consider the lesson discussed. It is totally your responsibility and I'm not going to make it up for you (in Arabic)

SS: (Students stop talking)

T: OK! Badria (the teacher continues checking attendance)

In justifying her action, Manar stated that 'threatening' the students and informing them that the lesson, that is included in the exam, will not be explained helped control students' talk and attention. Manar's decision seemed to be based on her knowledge and understanding of learners' mentality and attitudes. Later in the same episode as Manar continued with checking students' homework, she came across a student who was using her mobile to send texts. This time she decided to use a different approach as follows.

T: OK. Did you do your homework?

Ss: (Some students nodded)

T: What are you doing? You! Yes, you (Teacher walks towards a student) What are you doing? Is this a mobile in your hand?

S: (the student looks at the teacher but says nothing)

T: Get out! Take your mobile and get out! And when you learn to respect the rules you can stay in my class.

S: (The student who did not seem to be bothered leaves the classroom)

T: Next time anyone of you uses her mobile in the class will lose marks.

In the same manner, in another episode, she asked one student to read from her textbook, but the student did not have a book. The teacher decided to punish the student by dismissing her from class repeating the same punishment in the previous episode.

T: OK. Reem read!

S: I don't have the book (in Arabic).

T: Mashallah! and why (in Arabic)?

S: I forgot to bring it (in Arabic).

T: How many of you didn't bring their books?

SS: (A few students raised their hands)

T: Mashallah, and why did you even bother coming to the college (in Arabic)?All of you, get out and when you remember to bring your books, you can come to my class (in Arabic)

S: My friend borrowed it and didn't return it (in Arabic)

T: I don't care! It's your responsibility.

When I asked Manar to explain her decision of dismissing the students out of the class, she replied:

> "It's getting ridiculous! They come to the class with no books, no pens or pencils, no files, no notebooks, nothing! All they care about is their mobiles and sending and receiving messages. All the time, they are on their phones or daydreaming, or God knows what! I used to give them a chance. I used to advise them and, you know, put a lot of energy in educating them, but you reach a point where you find out that it's a waste of time. They aren't serious at all. They don't care. But they know by kicking them out, and considering them absent, they might be banned from taking the exam and this is exactly what they are afraid of…. and, you know, it really works, because they want to get good grades to graduate, so I use it because it is the only way that works with them."

Manar's comment was aligned with some of her colleagues' opinions about their students' carelessness, and with Saad's belief of using harsh measures in controlling the learners who are used to a top-down classroom experience. Table (5.4) illustrates some of Manar's practical decisions and their underlying beliefs.

Table (5.4) Effects of Manar's embedded knowledge on practice

Embedded Knowledge	Practice
Perceptions of self: dedicated and responsible; **Learners must take education seriously**	Intolerance towards learners' irresponsibility; Harsh measures taken to enforce responsibility
Teaching and learning are thinking processes	Attempts of implementing cognitive teaching; Asking provocative questions; Encouraging interactive learning
A pleasant classroom atmosphere enhances learning	Using of humor
Grammar should be taught implicitly but not in their context; **Learners are used to structural approaches**	Grammar is explained explicitly; Structural approaches are used
Textbooks are outdated and boring;	Use of supplementary materials
Learners need to connect new ideas to existing ones accessible in L1 knowledge	Code-switching is used in teaching grammar and vocabulary

Teachers also faced tardy students who were always late for the class. They believed that if they did not take a severe action this attitude of tardiness might persist. Amira took a decision of not allowing students to come in the class after fifteen minutes of class time as was evident in the following episode extracted from one of her classroom observation sessions.

T: What page are we on?

Ss: 28.

T: OK. Last time we talked about countable and uncountable; remember Countable and uncountable?

Ss: Yes.

T: OK then let's look at the words and decide if they are countable or uncountable. Shop.

Ss: Countable.

T: That's right. The next one?

S1: Suitcase, countable.

(a student opens the door and asks if she could enter the class)

T: No, I'm sorry; you know the rules.

S2: The traffic was bad and I live far (in Arabic)

T: Leave home earlier like all of us. Why can they make it but you can't? I don't understand (in Arabic). *Seriously!*

S2: So, can I come in? (in Arabic)

T: No, I'm sorry.

A few minutes later, two other tardy students arrived but were not allowed to come in either. When I asked Amira to explain her decision in managing her classroom, she replied:

> "Look! It takes ten minutes to check their attendance, so I allow them in during that period and I give an extra five minutes because we are, you know, just starting; but if I allow them to come after fifteen minutes of class time it won't just stop there, they keep coming until, you know, the end of the class. It's not right. It's not fair for the rest of the class. They disturb the flow of the lesson, you know; and they always have excuses. And frankly, I don't care about their excuses. They know it is their class time; they have to be there; they have to be responsible, period."

Latifa had a different approach in controlling her class. For example, she wouldn't forbid her students from attending the class if they did not have their books or if they were late, however, she decided to deduct from their grades. In justifying her general pedagogical actions, she argued:

> "I think these students are victims of their circumstances, and of an unsuccessful educational system; I already feel sad for them and want to encourage them to, you know, be more responsible, but I can't deny their rights to attend the class; so I decided to let them in, but tell them that any tardiness or you know not having their books will result in losing marks."

She further added that it might not motivate them all to be more responsible, but they know that it would affect their grades.

Although teachers' approaches in managing their students varied, the principle underpinning it was similar. They realized that the students needed the diploma; so, to maintain order they used various approaches in threatening them with the grades. The following table illustrates some of Latifa's practical choices and the underlying beliefs.

Table (5.5) Effects of Latifa's embedded knowledge on practice

Embedded Knowledge	Practice
The aim of teaching is student learning; **The use of L1 can facilitate L2 learning**	Techniques are diversified to enhance learning; End justifies means – Arabic as the language of instruction
Students need to be exposed to authentic language; **It is important to practice listening skills**	Audiocassette recorder is used to expose learners to native language and enhance listening comprehension
Vocational learners are victims of an ineffective educational system	Undesirable learning attitudes are tolerated; Structural approaches are adopted
Learners want to pass to get the diploma	Students' carelessness is controlled through marks deduction
Learners are used to being spoon-fed	Vocabulary lists, grammar rules and description, and relevant exercise questions are distributed and practiced; Informing learners about the exams' contents

The above demonstration revealed participants' shared views about their students and the fact that they suffered from multiple problems, however, their approaches to classroom management varied in severity. The range of decisions was based on teachers' attitudes that could be described as very frustrated with minimum toleration of students' carelessness, to understanding and tolerating some problems to some extent, or passively accepting the reality as is and acting accordingly.

The data in part one of this chapter revealed that most of the participants described themselves as dedicated learners who took their education seriously.

This image of a learner that the participants shared seemed to shape their expectations of their students. They also expected that that ESP learners must be motivated to learn the language that was linked to their future professions, but were disappointed and frustrated to see that their students' language was too poor to commence any 'real' ESP course, and to find out that their students did not fit their perceptions of ESP learners.

Teachers' frustrations with students' carelessness was noticeable in their actions in the classroom. They wasted a lot of class time trying to justify to students why they were not allowed to come in the class late, or why they had to bring their books, notebooks, and pens and be responsible learners. The teaching environment was academically unhealthy. Instead of spending their energy on improving their teaching and students' learning and/or getting engaged in research, ESP teachers were trying to discipline college level students.

2. Content and Task management

Classroom observations revealed that the aims and objectives of the lesson, and the management of content and tasks were not necessarily discussed or presented to students. In some cases, a general idea of the lesson, or a reminder of previous lesson or exercise was given to prepare learners for the new lesson. Stating the aims and objectives and informing learners about the topic to be discussed is believed to be an important element of classroom management (Nunan, 1988, 2001).

Amira's classroom observation revealed that she started directly with the lesson asking students to open their books and do the exercise. In justifying her action, she commented that the students were already aware about the exercises they were going to work on, thus, there was no reason to announce any aims or procedures. This action might stem from her belief that students' need to be responsible and independent. She stated:

> "I told them we were going to do the exercise, didn't I? The exercise was their homework actually, and they knew we were going to do that."

Latifa on the other hand reminded the students about what they did in the previous class and used the revision as a warm up period before starting the exercise. The following is an episode extracted from one of her class visits.

T: Last time we talked about travelling, do you remember?
Ss: Yes.
T: And we talked about how you prepare for a trip. Do you remember what you need to do before you go on a trip?
Ss: Buy tickets.
T: That's right, you need to get your tickets. What else?
Ss: Reserve a hotel.
T: Yes, you reserve a room in a hotel; you don't book the hotel for yourself, right?
Ss: (laughing) No.
T: OK. Now you are at the airport; you have your luggage and tickets with you; Where do you go next?
Ss: To the airport.
T: Yes, you are at the airport now. Look at the pictures in the book. It helps you remember.
S1: (we ship our luggage (in Arabic))
T: Yes, we check in. (teacher writes the word on the board) We check in our luggage or baggage, right?
Ss: Yes.
T: And then…?
Ss: We get our passport stamped (in Arabic)
T: Yes, we go through passport control, and get our passports stamped, correct.

During the stimulated recall interview, Latifa pointed out that she decided to remind her students of what they did previously for two reasons: first, because they needed to apply their previous knowledge in doing the exercise and practicing vocabulary in context; second, because she was aware that many students do not study or revise what already has been explained. As a result of her knowledge about the learners, she decided to refresh their memories and

pull them in. She also commented on their use of Arabic language and said: “If you are lucky you get three or four students who can communicate in English, the rest either can’t or don’t want to.” She then explained that nothing was wrong with the students’ ability to learn; they were just victims of an educational system that did not acquaint them with the necessary study skills and with proper language competencies.

Moreover, she stressed that some students decided not to interact in the classroom because they were aware of their weakness and were anxious to produce incorrect sentences or give wrong answers. Therefore, she did not want to intimidate them by forcing them to participate. She was trying to pull them in by showing that it was acceptable to express their knowledge in Arabic first, and learn it in English as the lesson continued. Latifa’s decisions were based on her knowledge of the context and her familiarity with the learners’ situation, background, and mentality.

In the same vein, Manar agreed that they had to attract their students’ attention by either reminding them of what they have already done, or by relating the question to students’ everyday life. She believed that when students are familiar with a concept they would be more motivated to interact and engage in a discussion about it. That is why she tried to link the Unit’s topic to familiar situations. The following episode is from her English for corresponding class session.

T: Today we are going to learn about emailing. You know what an email is, right?
Ss: Yes.
T: OK, then. How many of you send and receive emails?
Ss: (Three students raise their hands.)
T: Oh my God! Only three of you. How many of you use the Internet?
Ss: (The same three raised their hands.)
T: (Teacher to the rest of the class) Do you have a personal computer or a laptop?
Ss: No. (again only the same three students said yes.)

T: Oh my God! It's the age of computers. You need to know how to use it… when your kids, in the future, come to you and ask you about the computer, what are you going to say?

Ss: (students chuckle)

T: I wonder how you want to do your homework? Can you Use the computer lab here at the college?

Ss: We're not allowed to use it for other classes (in Arabic).

T: (She sighs) OK. Never mind. Have you ever written a letter to a friend?

Ss: (a few students) Yes.

T: OK. Let's pretend that you want to write a letter to your friend; How would you start your letter?

Ss: Dear … (in Arabic)

T: Yes, we write Dear… (teacher writes the word Dear on the board)…. You know what? I want you to write a brief letter to a friend you met say during the summer holidays. She's from England, for example. You want to invite her to Kuwait. You want to take her to some special places here, like the Kuwait Towers.

OK. You have five minutes to write it, and you can work in pairs. It's OK.

S1: In Arabic.

T: No, in English, of course.

Manar started her lesson by telling the students that they were going to learn about emails. This act of stating the aim of the lesson in advance is believed to draw students' attention to the topic and to focus their minds on it (Nunan, 1988). Believing that email writing has become a norm, Manar asked her students about it thinking that talking about something familiar will motivate learners to get engaged in discussing the topic. In the stimulated interview, Manar explained that her decision was based on the belief that students must have a personal computer and presumably send and receive messages. Moreover, she thought that the students use smart phones to send and receive messages and to access to the Internet. Therefore, she was surprised to realize that only few students were using the email.

Manar's assumption, then, stemmed from her belief that at the age of computers students must already have access to computer and Internet, so she acted accordingly. Her experience revealed that teachers might have some misconceptions about students' realities, and that the unexpected situations like the above one could clarify any biases that the teachers might hold regarding various learner related issues. She further explained that her spontaneous decision to switch from writing on the board to having her students practice writing the email first and then putting it on the board was based on the belief that students learn better from their own mistakes. She maintained:

> "I could have written the whole thing on the board and only a few students would have participated; but by having them actually write it first and then put it on the board it helps them compare what they did with how the email is written. It also helps them see their mistakes and learn from it. I think when you learn from your mistakes you'll never forget it. And it also helps to discuss it with them, because all of them can see it. It's right there on the board. That's why I wish we had an overhead projector, because this way I could put their own work next to the example and they could compare them and learn. It is more useful this way."

Manar's belief that learning from one's own mistakes could promote a deeper level of understanding in which the knowledge gained would not be forgotten informed her decision to let her students write first and then check it with an appropriate form of a letter of invitation. She believed in hands-on-learning, and learning through discussion and analysis and that belief informed her actions.

With regards to her spontaneous switch from introducing e-mail writing to having the students practice it first and then explain it, she stated that a lot of times she had to think on the spot and change a procedure depending on how the students responded. Her swift change of mind and rapid response to the learners' needs corresponded with what Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998: 14) believed to be "one of the keys to success in the ESP teaching." This action also revealed that the students' caliber and the classroom environment influenced teachers' decisions. It also conformed to Richards' (1998, cited in Borg, 2006) finding that teachers' on-the-spot modification of planned activities

was sometimes related to maintaining students' engagement and interest levels. It also conformed to Ulichy's (1996, cited in Borg, 2006) conclusion, and Smith's (1996) finding that teachers' unanticipated interactive decisions were promoted by student factors.

In the same vein, her decision to encourage pair work was informed by her knowledge of her students and her belief that learning is an interactive activity. In this regard she commented:

> "I tried group work before, but it doesn't work with our students. First of all, they aren't used to it; and then the large class size makes it difficult, you know, to put them in groups, and with our students it is not a good idea, you know, so the only activity that could be used is pair work. Sometimes even when you ask them to work in pairs and discuss ideas before writing them, you notice that they're not working together but I still believe that pair work is better than working alone, they learn from each other."

The above review of teachers' decisions on classroom activities and their justifications about what they did and did not do might reflect teachers' embedded beliefs and expectations about learning and the learners.

In contrast to the majority of ESP teachers' beliefs that ESP should be taught interactively using communicative methods, the traditional methods seemed to prevail in their ESP classes. Their justifications shared a lot of similarities and were based on the students' mindsets, large class size, unequipped classroom, inadequate teaching materials, etc. Thornbury (2006, cited in Hall, 2011) and Kumaravadivelu (2012), believe that the traditional approaches' ease of implementation, especially with large classes, could play a role in teachers' preference of these approaches. This view may justify the dominance of traditional approaches at vocational colleges in the Kuwaiti context.

Although in a "Postmethod era" the use of eclectic approaches, or any one approach for a particular class is acceptable (Hall, ibid), however, ESP teachers need not overlook the reality that interaction, discussions, and debates, which are important aspects of cognitive and constructive learning, are significant in teaching ESP. That is because learners learn the language as

they get engaged in thinking about a task or a problem, analyzing and synthesizing key elements affecting it, and attempting to find solutions or suggest improvement.

5.5.4. Pedagogy and the ESP learner

Familiarity with the learner is one of the components of teachers' practical or procedural knowledge. Understanding who the learners are, what they want, need, and lack, is believed to have a significant impact on teachers' thinking and decision-making. As was previously indicated, teachers' perceived knowledge of their learners' mentality and intentions informed their pedagogical choices. In addition to these two factors, teachers believed that their students' cultural background as well as their schooling experience – schemata – affected their teaching styles and the choice of content and pedagogy. The majority of their students came from conservative cultural backgrounds, where males were the sole decision makers who dominate the family. As a result, many female students seemed to be accustomed to having limited freedom of choice. Latifa who tackled this issue stressed:

> "I know that most of my students come from very conservative backgrounds; families that I'm sure, even now, they don't give girls the occasion to voice her opinion, you know, and that's even the simplest question."

This reality, according to some participants, could have resulted in students' inability to think independently, take decisions in the classroom, and/or engage in discussions (Richardson, 2004). It also resulted in teachers becoming cautious about the kinds of examples and activities to be used to avoid being offensive to their students, especially when it was linked with religion.

In addition, Manar complained that students did not favour getting engaged in activities that required moving around in the classroom. A simulation activity or a competition to solve grammatical problems or to construct a story from a vocabulary list, for example, was doomed to failure. In her opinion, the students were either too lazy to move around in the classroom or their clothes became a barrier:

> "Once they sit on their chairs, they don't like to move because they wear Abaya (long head to toe cover), and most of them are veiled, and sometimes you get a few that wear gloves, you know, it is difficult for them to move or do activities with all that outfit."

Latifa also believed that the students' background played a significant role in the way they acted in the classroom. She explained that they were not interested in sharing their opinions because they were not used to it. In this regard and in response to a simulated interview question, she stated:

> "I try to warm up and almost none of them answered the question: 'How was your weekend?' They are not interested; they don't care about sharing their opinions."

She agreed with Manar and the majority of the participants that their students were not keen on classroom participation. Latifa stressed that she stopped using classroom activities that included group or pair work as a result of the students' indolence and refusal to participate. She explained:

> "I tried it last year, but they are so reluctant; even in my writing course, I asked them to write a memo on the board and I almost begged them to do it, but it was very difficult."

The majority of the other participants agreed that one of the main discouraging factors leading to dismissing classroom activities was related to students' unwillingness to participate in those activities. Amira, for example, commented on a stimulated recall interview question saying: "They are not concerned about learning. The issue is people don't want to learn, because if you wanted to learn, it doesn't matter what will be in the exam." She further added:

> "You just saw them; they don't care to even come and ask about their mistakes; nobody ask any question. I gave them their quizzes and on purpose I didn't correct it with them; I asked them if they had any questions about their mistakes to see if anybody would want to see what the corrections were; one person only came and asked me, everybody else didn't care. Oh, I got a five out of ten great! Why not ten? It doesn't matter I got five. That's the general attitude; if you wanted to learn, you would want to know the correct answers, and you would want to go home and study it, so next time you could score ten. That's the attitude of learning of caring for your learning."

Latifa commented on this reality of uninterested learners and explained that no matter how they tried and selected different examples, or related the topics to their students' everyday lives or to familiar concepts, they always got the same number of students who participated and the rest were just listeners. She explained:

> "154 (a general business course) is an interesting course, you know, and we started talking about types of companies, we talked about different countries, about money and currencies, numbers and figures, you know; I had given them an assignment to look at different currencies and their values, you know; two out of thirty five have done it, and it was frustrating; and I thought why this is not working? I tried to make them think of the value of those currencies and then we talked about charities, but nothing seemed to interest them; it is very frustrating."

This, as teachers claimed, forced them to abide by students' wants even if it contradicted their own beliefs about appropriate methods and techniques, and even if it meant preparing them for their exams. In other words, instead of trying to raise students' awareness and facilitate language learning, teachers decided to follow their students' desires of getting prepared for their exams.

Some participants such as Nabeel, for example, believed that ESP learners at the vocational colleges were the byproducts of an educational system that did not support autonomy and did not acquaint learners with the necessary academic skills. Thus, he believed, it was unfair to expose them to a totally different teaching/learning environment where they might feel eccentric and disconnected. The participants' pedagogical choices then seemed to be influenced by their knowledge about their students' educational backgrounds that failed to prepare them for post secondary education.

Another reason that appeared to play a role in some teachers preferred teaching styles could have stemmed from the fact that a large number of the participants were themselves the byproducts of the same educational culture that produced dependent learners who did not have a voice or a choice in their education. As a result, their own passive reaction that was manifested in accepting their educational realities without any seemingly efforts to change or

improve them appeared to be a continuation of the same mentality of submitting to authorities and a system that managed all their needs.

5.5.5. Pedagogy and the teaching environment

Teachers who participated in the group discussion agreed with the interviewees that the teaching environment in some vocational colleges reflected the reality that the decision makers were not serious about fulfilling the curriculum objectives, and about learners' target goals. They further asserted that they did not show respect to the academia and its significant role in the advancement of the country. For example, Nabeel declared:

> "We look handicap, we look backwards to our students, because we can't use the Internet or any kind of technology in our classes."

One of the participants in the group discussion added:

> "We don't have a library or a resource centre for our students or even ourselves when we need supplementary materials or any ideas for teaching and assignments and projects."

This view agreed with the interviewees' opinions about their sterile environment that lacked resources and adequate facilities encouraging teachers' professional growth. She further explained:

> "We don't even have a cafeteria or a common room for teachers where we could meet and talk about our teaching and things like that, so when you feel that they don't respect you, that they don't care, I don't know, you kind of lose enthusiasm."

The participants' stories about their teaching environment suggested that their environment was not conducive to learning. They commented on their unsupportive environment and believed that the administrators and decision makers needed to provide students with the right surroundings, such as: fully equipped classes, a library and resource area, sports and leisure areas, a cafeteria, and a parking lot. This in their opinion reveals to the students that their education and training are taken seriously. Moreover, it enhances teachers' and learners' motivation, and reflects the reality that they are important members of the educational system and the work force.

The above argument is valid and revealed participants awareness of the effects of the teaching environment on students' and teachers' motivation and attitudes and on the quality of education. Teachers' views concurred with an accumulation of a large corpus of research that has already established the relationship between environment and the quality of teaching and learning (Earthman, 2004). For example, Earthman asserts that:

> "There is sufficient research to state without equivocation that the building in which students spends a good deal of their time learning does in fact influence how well they learn. Numerous studies have indicated that students in poor buildings perform less well than students in functional or acceptable buildings (p. 18)."

It was notable from the participants' stories that they perceived their problems to be overwhelming and beyond their control. They talked about numerous difficulties without any apparent attempt whether on personal or collective bases to change them. They did not seem to take any action to minimize the negative effects of their teaching environment on their practice. Teachers' passive attitudes towards their teaching environment contradicts researchers and education specialists believes that teachers are responsible for creating classroom conditions and events that support learning (Orton, 1996; Wilkins, 1974).

5.5.6. Pedagogy and self-awareness

Knowledge of self is an important element in understanding why teachers do what they do in the classroom and in enhancing their teaching practices. Teachers' reflection on their practices raise their awareness of their mind sets when a decision is made hence improves the quality of their teaching. This "Self-observation" and "self-evaluation" practice leads to the awareness of one's actions and the factors that influence them. As a result of making what is implicit explicit, teachers can consciously and continuously evaluate their own actions and improve them.

Observed teachers talked about two kinds of reflection that were discussed in the literature review: reflection-in-action, and reflection-on-action. However, the act of reflecting on practice that majority of participants (eight out of eleven)

claimed to practice was done in response to students' attitudes and the need for pedagogical modification. Only a small number (three out of eleven) reflected on their actions as a self-realization technique.

Manar explained that a lot of times she had to change the teaching plan based on the students' attitudes, agreeing with Smith (1996) and Johnson's (1992) findings that unexpected students' behaviour affected teachers' instructional decisions, or when a better procedure comes to her mind as a result of reflection in action (Schön, 1983; 1987; 1991). Changing the lesson plan, in response to learners' negative attitudes, from using an interactive approach that involved students' participation and engagement in learning with a teacher-dominant one seemed to frustrate Manar. She stated:

> "What happens is that a lot of times I find myself forced to change an exciting procedure that I have already prepared with a boring routine. Even my mood! They affect my mood, you know! I go to the class full of energy to challenge my students and get them into discussions, but their, how can I say this, their lack of energy, their laziness, you know, sucks my energy."

With regards to reflection-on-action, it seems that the monotonous nature of teaching almost identical groups of learners, whose attitudes to learning and competency levels did not vary, resulted in some teachers ignoring 'reflection-on-action' technique to improve the ESP teaching and learning situation or practicing it less often. Amira who reflected on her action based on the class mood, explained:

> "I reflect on my own teaching, sometimes, especially if I had a bad class and I come out of that class not feeling good, and feeling that the students don't do good, I need to ask myself what is it that I did that's wrong and that not to repeat it again and think of a different way to do it. Then again each class is different. What works with one class doesn't necessarily work with another class. I never give the same class twice the same. It just doesn't work."

This finding agrees with Tsang's (2004) who found out that teachers' personal practical knowledge guides their reflection on their practice to find better ways to deal with similar situations, or to find better ways to re-teach the lesson.

Amira further explained that her reflection-on-action helped her realize that not only learners' but also teachers' attitudes affected the mood of the class. She realized that sometimes she takes her own problems with her to the classroom. Consequently, she suggested that teachers should learn not to do that, because it was unfair to the students. In this regard she said:

> "I think it depends on the response that I get from students. Sometimes you get good bye, you leave the classroom when you think yes, yes, I've taught them something today, you know. They've actually learnt it, they were answering me, there were interactions; and sometimes a big mistake that teachers make is you take your 'how you feel' into the classroom. Sometimes you can't help it, you know, you're a human being."

Developing an awareness of her own shortcomings and being able to distinguish between her own limitations and those of her students over more than a decade of practice transformed Amira into a more understanding and a more lenient teacher. Her post-reflection taking the form of self-correction, observations, and judgment (Tsang, ibid) resulted in self-realization and awareness of her role in implementing knowledge in practice. This makes reflection on action an important aspect of personal practical knowledge and a significant tool for professional development.

Manar explained that she did not need to regularly reflect on her actions, because teaching the same caliber of students and using the same syllabus over a long period of time acquainted her with the experience she needed to realize what classroom actions were necessary without the need to continuously reflect on her practice. This concurred with Johnson and Golombek's (2002) realization that teachers' knowledge about themselves evolves throughout their professional experience.

Other teachers agreed that their stagnant teaching environment did not call for much reflection. Apparently, their teaching environment that lacked an inspiring and motivating atmosphere did not encourage the implementation of teachers' knowledge in practice. This agrees with Farrell and Lim's (2005: 10) study indicating that teachers "have a set of complex belief system that are

sometimes not reflected in their classroom practices for various complicated reasons, some directly related to context of teaching."

In some exceptional cases, as the data previously revealed, a couple of participants tried not to lose sight of their roles as teachers and the significance of their pedagogical choices, even when that meant making a decision as simple as bringing their own tape recorder to the classroom. For example, Latifa who used to take her tape recorder to the class justified her action saying:

> "This was the least I could do, you know. If this was not available [tape recorder] why not bring ours. I mean, the students would have benefited more if we had projectors, or computers, where I could have gone online and used the Internet with them to encourage them to participate and learn, but when this is not the case, why not we do what we can?"

Latifa realized that when the teaching environment lacks an important educational element it is the teachers' duty to provide it. She perceived herself as a dedicated language learner because her teachers were dedicated and responsible as well. As a teacher, she also believed that she was dedicated and responsible. She believed in setting a good example for learners by taking her job seriously. Thus to her, teaching meant being responsible towards her students, which also meant creating the conditions for learning (Wilkins, 1974). This agrees with researchers' and experts' views (Orton, 1996) that teachers are responsible for inventing classroom events and preparing a stimulating teaching environment that facilitated learning.

Manar's dissatisfaction with the teaching context and the demotivated learners did not impede her from asking provocative questions to intrigue the students into discussions. She sometimes used her sense of humor to pull her students in as could be perceived from the following episode that I extracted from the classroom observation transcript:

T:	OK. Let's do the exercise one on page 81. You have to complete the questions with superlative form of the adjective in brackets.
S1:	(raises her hand)
T:	Yes, Shaimaa. Read the first one it's done for you; it's ok.
S1:	What's the most important thing in your life?
T:	Yes, with important we use …….?
S1:	Most.
T:	Yes, we use most, why? Why most not -est?
T:	Asmaa! Yes, yes, you! You are Asmaa, aren't you? I caught you right before your plane took off, didn't I?
SS:	(Students laugh)
S2:	(Asmaa looks for the page)
T:	Yes, of course it will take her sometime to get off the plane, and return to page 81.
S2:	(laughs)

Manar explained that she used humor not only to pull her students in, but also to avoid getting annoyed and frustrated with the inadequate teaching environment. She stated:

> "You know, I think I do this more for me now than my students, because there came a time when I felt I didn't like to go to my classes anymore…. Sometimes I felt like that, imagine! I had to force myself to go to the class. I started feeling depressed then I thought I have to keep the class somehow funny and active so I don't lose, you know, interest in teaching."

Manar's reflection on her attitude and how depressed she became about teaching demotivated learners in a poorly equipped classroom and inappropriate teaching environment resulted in seeking refuge in the application of humor. This action reveals teachers' awareness of self and the realization that giving the class an informal atmosphere through the use of humor helps make it less threatening to her students. Manar came from a background that took education seriously at the same time she experienced an informal classroom environment during her graduation studies, that is why there seems to be an indication of conflict between her embedded belief that students

should be attentive and responsible, and her decision to be more passive and accept the reality of her teaching environment as it is (Andrew, 1999).

5.6 Challenges in teaching ESP

Data gathered from interviews, classroom observations, stimulated recall interviews, and group discussions revealed some challenges and obstacles that might have hindered the actualization of teachers' knowledge in practice. These challenges are grouped according to their importance to the ESP teachers who participated in this study.

5.6.1. Challenges related to ESP learners

5.6.1.1 Roots of the problem

All the participants believed that the major hindrance in teaching ESP and in the implementation of knowledge in practice was the students' low level of English in all the four skills of the language. They ranked their students' levels as beginners to elementary at the two-years tertiary colleges and as elementary to lower intermediate at the four years ones. Moreover, they stressed that the last few years witnessed more decline in the freshmen's English language levels and study skills. That is why all the colleges offered two general English language courses: (099) remedial, and (101) general English courses to prepare students for their ESP courses. However, that solution as Nabeel stated was more like "a bandage treatment". They stressed that the problem has to be dealt with genuinely considering the roots of it instead of focusing on minor surfacing issues. In this regard Amira argued:

> "We are preoccupied with minor stuff and the bigger issues are lost. It's the same here. We are looking at the small issues, let's get into class, we have big numbers of students, the AC doesn't work, the labs are not functioning, this is what we're looking at, but the content itself who's looking at it? Who's looking at it? When I teach a course of English and I'm teaching only four units each semester. Are you really telling me that they're gonna learn English like that. Come on let's be honest. Four units: two units and a midterm and then two units and a final. You're joking! What did they learn?"

Amira realized that there was a problem in their response to their students' needs; that something was missing in the course and syllabus design; that

instead of offering specifically designed courses that take students' situation into consideration and aim at raising their language standards, they ended up simplifying the content of their courses and minimizing the number of units to be taught.

All the other participants agreed and argued that they were surprised to receive students, who after twelve years of studying the language were severely incompetent in it. As a result, ESP teachers found themselves forced to become remedial course teachers instead of ESP practitioners. This reality could justify why ESP teachers at the context of this study did not find it necessary to get involved in some ESP activities such as needs analysis and course design.

5.6.1.2 Students' carelessness

The data also revealed that ESP teachers believed that students' attitude to learning was another obstacle in implementing knowledge in practice. They described their students as lazy, careless, and irresponsible. They claimed that their students did not take their education seriously and that their goal was merely to get a certificate on route to employment. In this regard, Rasha commented:

> "They come to class with no books, no notebooks, and no pens. I check with them and find out that after more than six weeks, and some of them are still with no books. Their excuse is that they couldn't find them, or they couldn't get a ride to the bookstore."

Manar attributed students' carelessness to a culture that promoted such characteristic. She argued that,

> "They [students] just want to get through, they just want to get through the system and it doesn't really matter how much they learn, with the exception of few who actually do want to learn, they just want to move through 'I just want to pass the course'; 'I just want to graduate'; I just want this; 'I need a job'; 'my husband doesn't allow me to stay longer [more than two years at the college]; 'my mother won't let me'; you know like that. It's culture."

Male participants talked about some similar attitudes among male learners. They suggested that the students did not care for their education and wanted to get through with minimum effort. One of the male participants in the group discussion described his students' carelessness towards attending their classes saying:

> "We have problems with our students now. Their attendance for example: kids you have to attend; kids you have to attend; we have to chase after them for attendance."

Saad and Nabeel agreed with their colleagues that the majority of the male students' aim for joining the various vocational colleges is to get a certificate to secure a future job for financial advantages. Knowledge and skills required in the different target places become a secondary issue. They further added that the political as well as the inadequate educational system are at the root of most of their problems.

5.6.1.3 Byproducts of an unproductive system

All the participants believed that their students were victims of an unproductive educational system that failed to acquaint them with the necessary learning and academic skills. Moreover, the participants argued that the educational system that focused on preparing students for their exams implied that knowledge per se was not valued, and that the aim of learning was to memorize the information needed for passing exams. Interactive and constructive learning and the value of knowledge and knowing seemed to be foreign to a large number of their students. As a result, when the ESP teachers tried to use communicatively based techniques to encourage interaction the students despised it. Jinan explained:

> "You see you come here and you have to do all the talking, you ask a question and you don't get any respond, when you ask a yes or no question you don't even get a yes or a no; after that you say OK you know you give up. You give up for a simple reason because the more you push you find that not only you don't get a response, they stop coming to the class. That's how bad it gets, you know."

Jinan's respond revealed the effect of students' attitudes on teachers' behaviour (Tsang, 2009). It also indicated the effects of teachers' belief system on their instructional decisions (Farrell and Lim, 2005). In this case, the teachers' fear of losing students who might withdraw from the course, or losing any possibility for minimum interaction seemed to be the two forces influencing her decision to do contrary to her pedagogical knowledge and give in to the contextual strains.

Bader pointed at the learners' ineffective educational backgrounds that failed to prepare them for their post-secondary education. He stated that they received students with very low literacy skills not only in English but also in Arabic. He argued that this reality interfered with their teaching that was reduced to the basics. He further explained that the limited contact periods of approximately 36 hours a term was insufficient to rehabilitate the learners and improve their reading and comprehension skills. He found himself forced to read the exam questions as a result of students' inability to read. In this regard he stated:

> "Their reading is weak; their vocabulary is weak; they don't understand the exam questions, because they don't understand the words; I have to read and translate for them; I have to explain the questions."

Teachers who participated in the group discussion agreed with their colleagues and believed that their students' brains were fixed on the type of education they had received during their schooling years – the spoon-feeding type of education. Thus, it seemed difficult for them to change their students' mentality within the limited time frame of their courses. This conformed to studies in Saudi Arabia (Abdool, et.al. 2011; Assalahi, 2013) that revealed the preferences of applying traditional methods in language teaching over the communicative/interactive ones.

One of the participants in the group discussion argued that the problem did not lie in the students' abilities or capabilities or in varying teachers teaching styles. However, it stemmed from the MOE's policy that promoted and nurtured that type of mentality. This participant, who had previous teaching experience at local schools, added:

> "Before the exams (at pre-college stages), the Ministry of Education sends a list of vocabulary to schools and asks them to give it to students and tell them this is going to be on the exam. They send it to the Inspectorates and the Inspectorates ask teachers to do that. Even in writing, they say it's OK to give them at least two marks for just writing anything; it doesn't matter whether the writing is right or wrong. Imagine! just for writing any nonsense even if they rewrite the question, the students get at least two marks for it."

She further added that the Inspectorates at the MOE do not see any problem with their inappropriate decisions and actions and their impact on students' mentality and attitudes towards education. She then gave an example that the Inspectorates actually downloaded, on the MOE's site, some pages from the TOFEL exam for the students to review and practice without acknowledging the source. She stressed:

> "Go online and check the Ministry of Education's website, it takes some pages from the TOFEL exam and put it on its website for students to check them and see how exams are. Can you imagine that? And they don't even put a reference. They make it look like it's their own, imagine! This is our Ministry of Education. That's why I think our problems go back to the Ministry of Education, we can't do miracles in a course or two with students who are used to being given the exam questions."

Nabeel agreed and related learners numerous problems to the educational system in Kuwait that was influenced by corruption in the political system. He believed that the MOE has failed to graduate learners with adequate literacy due to some unqualified people assuming top decision-making positions. That is why, in his opinion, education in Kuwait has been suffering for years with no serious solutions. He also believed that learners' attitudes were influenced by the country's political views – knowledge was not important as long as one had a certificate and connections that could help him get to top positions. In this regard he argued:

> "Our students are the byproducts of this system [Kuwait's educational and political systems] they know that knowledge doesn't matter and that they only need a certificate to get a job, so why should they put any effort [in learning] when someone who graduates with D and another who graduates with A get

> the same job, and sometimes the D student gets a better chance because he has connections, do you think they care? It's the system. It encourages ignorance and carelessness."

The above demonstration indicate a serious situation concerning the preparation of middle class workforce at tertiary and applied colleges and their role in the advancement of their country – the aims for which these colleges were established on the first place (see chapter two).

5.6.1.4 Clash of two cultures

Some participants attributed some of their challenges to cultural issues. Cultural awareness is an advantage in the language classroom both for teachers and learners. In Kuwait since the majority of the teaching staff is Kuwaiti understanding learners' culture and background is assumed to be already accessible. However, data revealed that some teachers experienced what could ironically be called a "cultural shock" when dealing with their students. The differences between teachers' and students' views and values, and some social conduct affected teachers' behaviour and practical decisions (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Students' unawareness of some essential educational and social behaviour distressed teachers and affected their pedagogical choices.

Some participants believed that their hands were tight in teaching the language due to cultural sensitivity. They asserted that language and culture were inseparable, but they had to detach language and culture to avoid any conflict with their students' mentality (Kennedy and Kennedy, 1998). Moreover, they explained that some of their students resisted learning English for the fear of deculturalization (Troudi & Jendli, 2011). Manar noted:

> "I asked them [the students] why aren't you interested in learning the language? And almost half of them said that they didn't want it to affect their culture and their way of life."

She further added that some students are still suspicious of the west and its effects on the culture and religion. This reality conforms to what Troudi & Jendli (ibid) suggested about the effects of English as a global language on the Arab culture and Arab students' attitudes.

In addition, some participants shared another element that was lacking in students' awareness about the culture of the academia. For example, Rasha explained that their students were unaware of the academic culture, and that their behaviour indicated the lack of common sense. She argued that students socialized in corridors between classrooms and disturbed her teaching. In this regard she stressed:

> "The students sit on the floor in the corridors talk loudly and eat. They socialize in the middle of the corridor and they block the passage in a way that we have to find our way between them. When you walk, they don't give way for teachers to pass. They don't have respect or common sense, which is frustrating."

This finding concurred with a recent study's result about pre-service language teachers at a teacher college in Kuwait that revealed a similar attitude among teacher-students (Al-Nwaiem, 2012). Other participants believed that their students did not understand the reasons for having rules and regulations at the college; and that those who realized the rules did not respect them. They believed that their students were always in the department begging for higher grades or asking whether their teachers will be attending their classes. Moreover, they complained about students' missing a lot of class hours believing that they will be excused if they show a sick leave that could be easily obtained. In this regard Jinan stated:

> "You know you tell them these are my office hours and if you have any problem with the course or if you need to talk to me I'm available at these hours. But they don't care, they come to your office whenever they want and if you mention it to them they say oh, I just wanted to ask one question or something like that."

She further added:

> "I haven't seen people with so many excuses. It is just unbelievable. They [students] are always in your office with loads of sick leaves begging you to excuse them for being absent."

Male participants who taught at male colleges had their share of dealing with some students' misbehaviour. This reality seemed to be one of the factors influencing Saad's belief that in order to control male students a teacher needed to be tough, as was previously explained. He described how male students took advantage of some of the foreign teachers' unfamiliarity with their students' culture and turned their classes into a show that the learners controlled. He believed that foreign teachers were unsuccessful in their classes,

> "Because they don't know how to manage the classroom… With all do respect to them, you know I once entered the room, I remember it was a circus. Students coming and like taking paper from him, like when I came in everyone was alright you know because they knew somebody will be thrown out immediately. They all quiet down, you know."

Saad's view was not only influenced by his knowledge of the learners, but also seemed to be nurtured by some deeply rooted belief that a good teaching/learning environment was that where students' passively set in the class (seen as an indication of good behaviour) and listen to their teacher with minimum interaction. This belief apparently influenced his perception of his expatriate colleague's seemingly democratic approach to be inadequate in their context. His embedded belief that culturally students needed to face a firm teacher to behave was apparent in his judgment of the classroom's atmosphere.

Although his view in the above comment appeared to be biased, some realities were recognizable in his attempt to justify his belief. In answering a prompt about what, in his view, was the reason behind students' misbehaviour, he answered:

> "Culture one word. Because culture assigns what is good or bad. Culture makes you feel like this is good to be firm, or maybe it's bad to be firm. You know the culture tells you that."

Saad's knowledge about his students and his decision to be tough and firm in order to control them might have stemmed from a shared authoritarian sociocultural background. This background seemed to have enforced order by

imposing power instead of fostering awareness about the benefits of respecting laws and regulations and respecting other people's rights. As a result, he believed that the students would not respect the laws unless they were forced to. Saad further justified his view by comparing democratic and authoritarian types of education. He explained that a democratic approach that foreign teachers used was doomed to failure in the Kuwaiti context, because it was incompatible with the Kuwaiti learners' culture, mentality, and their view and understanding of teachers' and learners' roles. He argued that:

> "In Kuwait you need to be a little bit less democratic and more authoritarian. You need to show your authority: speak louder, scream at them, and then they will be yours, you know."

The above justification reflected Saad's view of learners as some kind of a 'herd' that needed to realize who had authority in order to submit and follow. The above belief emerged in his justifications for using teacher centered approaches and firm pedagogical choices to control the class and its pace. This justification revealed and conformed to the effects of teachers' beliefs on their actions. It also concurred with a study about Iranian graduate students' conceptions about language teaching and learning by Pishghadam and Pourali (2011: 15) who described the learning situation in their study and the teachers' perceptions of learners' passive learning as follows:

> "Typical metaphor of this group [is] *sheep* and *recipient*, emphasizing the conceptual metaphor of *Learners as Recipient*, which demotivates students to act as active agents of learning."

In justifying the inappropriateness of a democratic type of education in the Kuwaiti context, Saad explained,

> "We tried the American way. It doesn't work. The model here is not cooperation it's competition. When you study the literature about classroom behavior you need a culture in which the class is collaborative. There is collaborative learning, which means the strong will help the weak, like I know a word I don't hide it from you because there is no contest. I know it, so we all our groups that team-work will be directed towards solving the issue or making the task for it, right? But here the student who knows, who figures out the answer, will hide it. So why?

> You ask, what's happened? We are in the same group [why you didn't share the information with us?]. So they are trained to compete not cooperate."

Saad's justification resembled the other participants' complains about the lack of cooperation and collaboration between the LC and the teaching staff, and between the teachers themselves as was explained earlier in this chapter. This might indicate a culture of education that does not foster cooperation.

5.6.2 Challenges related to the teaching milieu

The teaching context was the next obstacle mostly spoken about. According to the participants, context influenced their pedagogical choices and hindered the application of communicative approaches in teaching the language. They talked about class size, lack of facilities and resources, lack of teacher developing programmes, and inappropriate evaluation system.

5.6.2.1 Class size

Participants talked about their large class size and its effect on teaching and learning. They argued that a lot of class time was wasted in taking students' attendance and informing those who were absent about the hours that they have missed. They further indicated that student/student and teacher/student interactions were quite challenging in their large classes and resulted in teachers focusing on a few good students ignoring the rest of the class, especially the weaker ones. Dina, for example, explained how the large class size affected her job saying:

> "The large number of students, their poor levels…even if I think of giving them projects, how can I evaluate their projects…it will burn you out…45 students…5 classes…you shouldn't take your work home with you….you should do some academic research…If I'm planning to go for my PhD, I need time to search…with 45 students in each class, midterms, finals, no, no, it's impossible."

Other participants also argued that the application of some communicative activities such as group work became a tedious job in their large classes. Moreover, the learners' lethargy and the loss of interest in activities that were based on interaction and physical movements influenced teachers' instructional

decision that resulted in dismissing the use of communicative activities and promoting teacher centeredness.

5.6.2.2 Unequipped classes

Ten out of eleven participants talked about unequipped and unpleasant teaching environment. Two of the vocational colleges were built in the 1960s as intermediate schools. These two colleges have not been refurbished since then, however, they were expanded using mediocre construction that resulted in problems affecting teachers' mood and actions. For example, some classroom doors did not close properly. This deprived some teachers from enjoying privacy when needed and made it difficult for them to regulate the outdoor noise. Additionally, the AC system and the bad duct connections not only caused the airflow to become noisy and unbearable, but also resulted in some classes being extremely cold, while other ones being very warm. Rasha stressed that this environment made her sick most of the time, because she had to move from a cold room to a hot one and back to the cold one again. She argued:

> "Our classrooms are not equipped, and the AC system doesn't work properly. One class is very cold and the other is very warm, and this affects the students and us the teachers. Our classes are too small for our students' large number. This building was built what in the 60s as a high school and now we are using the same building. The whiteboard is always dirty with markers' residue that is difficult to clean, and it interferes with my teaching."

Rashas' distress and view that the old and poorly equipped teaching environment affected her teaching and students' learning is supported by other research findings. For example, Earthman (2004: 9) believed that "[o]lder buildings generally do not have the elements that directly relate to student achievement that functional buildings have, such as control of the thermal environment, acceptable lighting, acoustical control, and functional furniture." He further explained that results of fourteen studies that examined the effect of old and new school buildings on the teaching learning processes suggested that, "students in new buildings significantly outperform students in older buildings in reading, listening, language, and arithmetic (ibid)."

The feeling of frustration and disappointment that Rasha expressed was shared with participants from other colleges. For example, Fahad and Saad shared a similar story of unequipped classes and the lack of facilities at their college. They argued that their college was built as a state of the art academic construction taking into account the significant role of the various departments in training skilled workforce. However, when they moved to their new building, classrooms and language labs that were fully equipped with all the required educational technology and were ready for implementing their programmes were looted. They further added that the college administration did not take any efforts to find out what happened, or to replace the stolen devices. Moreover, they stressed that the administration decided to transform their language labs to classrooms that served other specialized departments due to the increasing numbers of students being admitted every term. They believed that this situation reflected the fact that no one really cared about fulfilling the aims and objectives of vocational education.

5.6.2.3 Inadequate teaching materials and resources

Another challenge that the participants faced in teaching ESP was the lack of adequate teaching material and the lack of resources. They complained that they had to use inadequate books for years, because there was a large stock of them in the colleges' bookstore. They needed to use the stocked ones before ordering any new textbooks. The participants were not sure who ordered those books and on what basis, and were distressed for the fact that they had to use dated books that they did not choose or order. To compensate for the lack of adequate books some participants decided to use supplementary materials.

As aforementioned, the data indicated that the choice of textbooks did not follow any systematic criteria serving learners' needs and/or considering their particular context. According to some participants, the efficacy of the textbooks was based on the perceptions of the members of the curriculum committee who were not necessarily experts in curriculum design and development. Recently, however, some of the books that the participants referred to in their interviews were changed and the new ones seemed to be more appealing to teachers. However, the new texts seemed to have a downside. According to Jinan, the

new books became as useless as their previous ones due to the lack of CD players that could run the included CDs and give learners the opportunity to get engaged in the activities and interactive exercises provided. In this regard she stated:

> "Sometimes we have a very good book, which is based on interactive teaching and the use of audio-visual activities, but for us it becomes lame because we don't have the equipment and our students don't want to interact, so then it becomes useless, you know."

Some participants argued that believing that using the best textbook could solve their students' problems like a magic wand was unrealistic and naïve. They believed that unless some key issues that hindered their practice, such as students' low competencies, their careless attitudes to learning, and the lack of conducive classrooms, was tackled and considered they should not expect miracles. Akin to Amira's belief that the administers and decision makers "should look at the roots of the problem." Rasha believed that students' attitudes should be addressed as they outweighed the best teaching materials:

> "As with my classes I try to provide students with some supplementary and useful material that can promote students' understanding, but it is still difficult with our weak and demotivated students."

The participants also believed that they lacked resources such as a library that included reference books, periodicals, and journals of different specializations. Some vocational colleges also lacked study areas for students and computer facilities that they could use to promote learning. Amira hopelessly stated:

> "The teachers are frustrated, because you know we work in very wrong conditions. We don't have facilities at our hands or in our classroom, or in the department. Where is the library that we can access, and the books that we can access? Where are the projectors? Where are the training courses that would teach us how to use all that technology?"

Other teachers talked about the lack of teachers' common rooms where they could meet and collaborate. Teachers' need for a conducive and productive

environment is valid. For example, Seigle (1999: 4) has found a direct relationship between architecture and teachers' collaboration. He stated that:

> "The arrangement of space has immediate and far reaching consequences for teacher's ability to effectively and efficiently accomplish daily activities, the formation of social and professional relationships, and the sharing of information and knowledge."

Moreover, McGroger (2004: 4) stressed that: "consideration of space where teachers meet and collaborate is just as important as the design of the classroom."

5.6.2.4 Inadequate assessment system

Participants also believed that the examination system influenced their decisions on what and how to teach. Since some exams, such as those designed for EGP 099 and 101 courses were unified and structurally based, and since the LC demanded that all teachers follow a uniform format for all their exams including ESP that was structurally based, teachers felt that they could not but follow a structural method in teaching all their classes. Rasha explained that one of the elements that added to the above problem was the fact that their students were used to structurally based exams. She explained:

> "If I change the way of teaching and assessing students to be more functionally based, they (students) protest. They don't like the change because they are so used to the structural approach, which they've been exposed to at school and now here in our college. They (students) just expect us (teachers) to prepare them for their exams. That's all. They ask us whether a page in the textbook is important and will be included in the exam or not."

Moreover, they believed that the educational and academic system was based on passing exams not on gaining knowledge as was repeatedly revealed in their stories. In this regard Fahad argued:

> "The whole environment is based on passing exams not learning. Their aim is to let the children pass the exams not what they gain. They want to pass regardless of what or how, they just want to pass, and that's it! This is something really sad. It's really sad."

Other participants believed that there was an element of mistrust in teachers' professionalism. The LC assumed that if they did not control the exam format and the content of the courses, teachers might not teach properly. The LC apparently was concern regarding teachers' reactions to their discouraging environment in a negative way – reducing and simplifying content and administering easy tests. The element of mistrust will be further tackled later in this chapter.

5.6.3 Compromised literacy

As noted earlier, participants believed that their problems and challenges in teaching ESP stemmed from the shortcomings of the MEO that failed to provide students at primary and secondary stages with adequate literacy for pursuing college education. For example, Fahad described the Ministry of Education's efforts as destructive to learners. He stressed:

> "I really think it is the Ministry of Education's shortcoming, because there is nothing [no knowledge]. They [students] come with nothing, and how do you expect to change them in one course or two? What do you expect me to do? You have destroyed him [the student]. In twelve years, you [Ministry of Education] have destroyed him."

The majority of the participants agreed with Fahad that the educational system in Kuwait has failed to acquaint learners with adequate knowledge and skills needed for post secondary education and cultivate in them the appreciation for learning. Fahad explained that:

> "There is no interaction; they never do anything out of school; they never have to do projects; they never have to read books every like one or two months. Nothing is done there. So he [the student] is used, for twelve years, to care for nothing except passing the exam. I mean there is passing with knowledge and just passing. They just want to pass; they are never attracted to gaining knowledge or anything they just want to pass."

The data indicated a separation between education and society. It seemed that there was a gap between the educational policy and the implementation of its objectives to produce well-rounded individuals that could contribute to the

advancement of their society and the country, which is one of the important characteristics of ESP programmes (Hyland, 2006).

Saad believed that educational problems and the students' inadequate knowledge stemmed from decision makers shortsightedness when it came to recruiting language teachers from other Arab countries without a reasonable payment plan. This, he believed, resulted in teachers not doing their jobs properly in order to give students private lessons after school time. He stressed:

> "The whole thing I mean the issue of tutoring for money, the issue of teachers' at that stage, secondary, or intermediate not really exerting themselves on purpose so that they get called by the parents to say, come and tutor them for the money. The problem is, it all starts from the ministry of education, because they don't pay them. They pay them like 300 KD, so you know imagine a guy with this kind of money what he will do? I don't blame them."

He then explained that the officials' mentalities were like merchants who bargain to buy goods for less. He believed that the Ministry of education bargained with expatriate teachers over their salaries overlooking the fact that the students were the losers in the deal. He argued:

> "But, you know, the victimization goes back to the students. And who is the winner? Kuwait is the biggest loser. I don't know, some officials in MOE think that he tricked those teachers out of their money, but now they are making three four times higher because they are charging the students 10, 12 KD an hour, more than [vocational colleges], right? So it's a big thing. I mean, that's why I'm saying when you have good students or weaker students they at the end come to you and are like damaged goods you're trying to revive them but it's very difficult, because language is a foundation."

Saad believed that students' poor foundation was the result of a compromised literacy. As a result, any effort to repair those "damages" was very challenging. This reality could reveal, to some extent, why most of the participants found changing their students' situation a perplexing endeavor, and why they have given up on trying to improve the teaching/learning situation at their colleges.

Fahad attributed their learners' literacy problems to the MEO that, in his opinion, cured educational problems by creating more problems. He argued that:

> "Our problem in Kuwait is that we cure a mistake with another mistake. For example, our teachers are really unmotivated, and how the Ministry of Education cures this problem? They don't think how to motivate them, how to make these teachers love their work? Instead they put more pressure on them. They extend their teaching hours, they give them administrative works, they extend or shrink the holidays, but this is not the solution. You are pressing them more. I mean, they are already unmotivated, and you increase their load, what happens [as a result]? You are destroying them. So the problem is within the Ministry of Education; with the curriculum; and they don't want to make amendments, no one listens."

One of the Participants in the group discussion linked the reason behind their persisting problems to the fact that culturally, in Kuwait, people like to talk about problems but don't take actions to solve them. He argued that at vocational colleges, teachers don't make an effort to change their situation "because we got used to being lazy and just nag about things. It's everywhere." He then emphasized that:

> "People here are very good at talking, but when it comes to application they don't want to apply. They don't know how to apply. They don't even know where to start."

The above reality that people in Kuwait talked, but did not take actions to change or improve a problematic situation was reflected in the participants' stories about their challenges that have been around for decades without any real efforts from the administrations, the LC, or even the English language staff to change them. Every one of the participants seemed to be disappointed and frustrated with their situation that they talked intensely about, yet their efforts to change their situation remained at a discourse level.

5.6.4 Challenges related to the administration

The majority of the participants found the LC's centralized administration and its top-down relationship with the teaching staff to be another obstacle that discouraged teachers from improving the teaching/learning situation. They

believed that not only it did not facilitate teachers' professional growth and development, but also inhibited their personal efforts to help themselves. Amira indicated that the LC's efforts were focused on controlling the five English Language Units (ELUs) at the different colleges in such a way that interfered with their work and future development. She argued that:

> "The Language Centre interferes with my work and that's it. It's all it does. I don't think they have any input into anything else. All their inputs are in managerial stuff and [that's it]."

Another participant from the group discussion commented on their relationship with the administration and said: "they only made our life difficult." This finding corresponds with a study conducted in New York about staff and administrators' relationship where they found that in some cases "administrators might have difficulty maintaining effective relationship with staff;" and that some academic staff believed that the administrators were there to complicate their lives (Ku, 2009:45).

The data further indicated some conflict of interests between the English language staff and the administrators at the LC. For example, the participants believed that the LC's meetings did not address real and important matters and did not help in providing solutions to their ever-persisting problems. Instead they have been focusing on dealing with management issues and creating more rules and regulations that exposed a level of mistrust between the administrators and the staff. This resulted in many teachers losing interest in attending departmental meetings. One participant from the group discussion stated that his only reason for attending the LC meetings was because it was one of the criteria for teaching summer courses. In his words, he explained:

> "Because they gather us and talk about things irrelevant to our work, so we think now I want to go what am I going to learn? But when it is imposed on us by the LC, we go because it is imposed on us, because when you want to take summer courses they say no because you didn't attend the meeting."

Huda, who had some teaching experience at a private university, compared their meetings at the LC with those at other universities, and explained:

> "I taught a few courses at a private university and I noticed that they have meetings all the time each meeting is like a brief course, and I feel as if I've taken an intensive course in teaching English in an excellent way. At the LC we need this."

Other participants believed that the LC's centralized management resulted in ignoring the actual needs of the staff and in devaluing their views about their problems. In this regard, Rasha stated:

> "At the beginning I believed that I could make a difference. I used to think that my opinion will be considered, or I mean we could discuss different opinions in our meetings but then I realized that this is not the case."

Participants believed that the challenges they faced put so much strain on them that they had little time to focus on their professional development. They expected the institutions' administrations and the LC to provide them with pre- and in-service training courses and to encourage them to attend conferences and workshops. However, they stated that training courses were not available, and going to conferences was made difficult by the changing rules and regulations. Huda stressed:

> "Even the conferences we weren't encouraged to go, and as teachers we didn't think how important those were for us; only lately we became aware of their importance."

The participants also commented that they did not have a research and development department or committee, and that the only time a teacher would get engaged in conducting research would be for promotional purposes not to improve knowledge or come up with solutions for existing problems.

The above reality seemed to echo their learners' attitudes that the participants criticized. They all perceived their students to care only for getting a diploma regardless of the knowledge gained in the process, and that knowledge itself was not their priority. The above act of doing research for promotional reasons only, but not to improve or suggest solutions for their problems appeared to resemble their students' attitudes of seeking a diploma. Accordingly, it could be argued that the above reality might be rooted in the impact of the sociocultural

background on how knowledge and education are perceived, because culture defines not only what its members think or learn, but also what they should ignore or treat as irrelevant which Goodnow (1996) defines as acceptable ignorance or incompetence.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I introduced and analyzed the data elicited from the interviews, stimulated recall interviews and group discussions. The data was explored through the different themes that were grouped under four main topics of: Teachers' knowledge of ESP; Teachers' personal knowledge; Teachers' practical knowledge; Challenges in teaching ESP.

ESP Teachers' practical and pedagogical choices seemed to be influenced by their prior knowledge, perceptions of ESP practices, activities, and their roles as ESP practitioners, and most prominently by some contextual factors. The contextual factors that seemed to impede the implementation of knowledge in practice could be summarized as:

- Students' low competency level in English;
- Students' lack of study and academic skills;
- Students' passive attitudes and lack of motivation;
- Gap between teachers' and learners' expectations of the ESP programme and their roles in fulfilling its objectives (from teachers' perspectives);
- Teachers' preferences of traditional approaches for ease of implementation.
- Teachers' inability to respond dynamically to learners' inputs in the classroom;
- Lack of educational facilities and fully equipped classes;
- Large class sizes;
- Classroom environment that did not promote interactive teaching and learning;
- Inadequate teaching materials;
- Inadequate language assessment system;
- Lack of programme evaluation system;

- Lack of ESP teachers' and learners' agency;
- Centralized administration and top-down authoritarian relationships between teachers and learners, and teachers and administrators.
- Indications of the impact of sociopolitical and cultural values on teachers' and learners' passive behaviours.
- Indications of Educational system that perceives the role of a teacher as a technician and teaching as a routine action.

In the next chapter I will discuss the findings in respect to the context and literature.

Chapter six: Discussion

6. Preview

In this chapter I present a discussion of teachers' knowledge of ESP and its practices at vocational institutions of Kuwait based on their views and reasoning about their profession. To get an insight into the findings of this study and its relation to relevant research outcomes, the discussion is divided under three themes: ESP teachers' practical knowledge, Impact of knowledge on practice, Challenges and the contextual factors. These themes are based on the suggested results: that teachers' practical knowledge is formed through experience, that this knowledge is influenced by teachers' prior knowledge, and that contextual factors played a significant role in implementing knowledge in practice.

6.1 Practical knowledge of ESP teachers in Kuwait

The findings of this study suggest that the participants' EGP subject matter and pedagogical knowledge were constructed formally during their undergraduate and graduate studies. However, their perceptions about ESP developed through practice, reading journal articles, and attending conferences. This finding agrees with literature on professional knowledge indicating it is constructed formally through structured learning – "knowledge-for-practices", or informally through practice and hands on experience – "knowledge-in-practice" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). In this regard Kumaravadivelu (2012: 24) argues that

> "[t]eachers acquire professional knowledge from a combination of sources: pre- and in-service training programs, books, journals, conferences, conversations, etc."

The majority of the participants (10 out of 11) did not have any kind of formal knowledge or training in ESP. They became familiar with ESP after joining the vocational colleges where their understanding of ESP was developed as a result of their everyday practices and classroom interactions – "knowledge-in-practice". However, it could be, ironically, said that their realization of ESP appeared to be more theoretically based than practically informed. For example, some participants realized that ESP courses were those geared

towards students' purposes for learning and that these purposes and needs are identified as a result of language and target needs assessments. Nevertheless, they were not involved in any needs analysis exercises, or in any subsequent ESP activities based on needs analysis results such as ESP course and syllabus design, ESP material design or adaptation, and ESP programme evaluation. Therefore, it could be argued that their understanding of ESP activities and practices remained at a theoretical level with no apparent implementations in practice. This might indicate a gap in teachers' specific content knowledge and specific pedagogical content knowledge necessary for ESP teaching.

Despite the inconsistency between teachers' ESP knowledge and practices, some participants believed that assessing learners' needs in order to identify the gap in students' current and target competencies (Belcher, 2009) and familiarizing self with the nature of language use in students' target places were important aspects of ESP teachers' knowledge and practices. This realization is valid since needs analysis is a core activity in ESP that informs all the other essential subsequent activities aforementioned (Hutchinson & Waters, 1991; Dudley-Evans and St. Johns, 1998; Gatehouse, 2001).

The above finding and the discrepancy between knowledge and practice seems to agree with Argyris et al. (1985) who argued that when people are asked about their behaviour in certain situations they respond with their espoused theories of actions – encompassing their aims and intentions, which may or may not be compatible with their theories – in use (Kane et al., 2002).

6.1.1 Specific content knowledge

The data further indicated that the humanity-trained ESP teachers at vocational colleges in Kuwait believed that their subject matter content knowledge was adequate for teaching ESP. This view seemed to contradict Beijaard et al.'s (2000) belief that the above knowledge is still partial because it does not consider the complexity of teaching in domains such as ESP that covers a wide spectrum of disciplines. They agree with Hoyle and John (1995 cited in Beijaard et al., 2000: 751) that:

> "Until some decades ago, most people believed that knowledge of subject matter and some on-the-job training was sufficient for being a good teacher. Nowadays, it is widely accepted that such a conception of teaching takes insufficient account of the complexity of teaching, and new conceptions of the teacher as classroom manager, facilitator of learning, etc. are acknowledged."

In order to become a catalyst (Hutchinson & Waters, 1991) and a facilitator for learning (Dudley-Evans & St. Johns, 1998), and to manage ESP classroom effectively and professionally, ESP practitioners require additional knowledge about the nature of the communicative tasks in particular situations. They need to combine their knowledge of subject matter with their 'specialized' content knowledge and knowledge of pedagogy to provide ESP learners with meaningful learning. Additionally, as Feiman-Nemser (2001: 1017) argues: "If teachers are responsible for helping students learn worthwhile content, they must know and understand the subjects they teach." She further stated that:

> "Besides knowing content, teachers must understand the nature of knowledge and inquiry in different fields. How is a proof in mathematics different from a holistic explanation or a literary interpretation? Such understanding influence the questions teachers ask, the tasks they set, and the ideas they reinforce. If teachers do not understand how scholars working in different fields think, they may misrepresent those subjects to their students."

Thus, in teaching in general, teachers need to have a broader understanding of how knowledge of their subject matter and content is connected to other subjects and use that knowledge in making informed and intellectual pedagogical choices that promote critical and analytical thinking. This becomes a significant element in ESP teachers' knowledge, because they have to deal with diverse courses that are geared towards various occupational needs of the ESP learners.

It could be argued, then, that Humanity-trained teachers' common core subject matter knowledge or "knowledge-for-practice" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) is important as a foundation for constructing their knowledge of ESP practices, however, it is not enough for undertaking their responsibilities as ESP

practitioners who set the seen in the classroom to negotiate and facilitate learning.

6.1.2 Knowledge of curriculum, syllabus and material design

Teachers seemed to have contradictory views about ESP teaching and practices. For example, some participants realized that ESP teachers needed to know the purposes of their courses and teaching that was linked to learners' reasons for learning. This is considered an essential element of teacher knowledge that has been reinforced in the literature and supported by research findings such as the works of Elbaz (1981), Shulman (1987), and Turner-Bisset (1999) and others. Furthermore, the participants believed that having this knowledge qualifies ESP teachers to be involved in planning their syllabus and to have the freedom to choose or adjust material to students' levels and needs. This is also supported by ESP specialists view that ESP practitioners needed to be involved in planning and designing their own courses (Swale, 1980; Hutchinson & Waters, 1991; Dudley-Evans and St. Johns, 1998; Gatehouse, 2001; Hyland, 2002a, 2006). However, the data indicated a gap in teachers' knowledge about their students' target needs and the ESP course objectives due to the absence of needs assessments. Moreover, the data suggested that knowledge of course and material design was also missing due to the lack of training. The participants seemed to be confused about curriculum and syllabus as they used the terms interchangeably to describe the same concept – textbook contents to be covered in a course. Richards (2001) believed that it was important to differentiate between curriculum and course or syllabus because some areas of concern in curriculum development are out of the hands of teachers as course designers. Therefore, it is important that ESP teachers be clear about the meanings of course, syllabus and curriculum. Since curriculum's aims and objectives inform course and syllabus design, it could be argued that the unfamiliarity with curriculum raises the risk of designing courses that do not conform to its aims and objectives. Apparently, this was the case of ESP course and material designing and/or adapting at the vocational colleges under study, which seemed to suffer from a gap between objectives and the procedures required to attain them.

Designing ESP course and syllabus entails understanding the language beyond “common core” subject matter knowledge. It requires knowledge of the specific content and written and spoken genres related to particular professions (Belcher, 2009). It also entails knowledge of specific pedagogical activities that could promote professional language awareness. In the absence of needs analysis, teachers’ knowledge lacked essential data about learners’ language needs in target places. Additionally, in the absence of training, teachers’ knowledge lacked the elements required for course and material design. As a result, the ESP teachers in the context of this study relied on readily available books that guided their teaching procedures and informed their choice of methods and techniques.

Despite their belief that course and material design was very challenging due to the lack of expertise and knowledge, some ESP teachers at vocational colleges in Kuwait believed that freedom and the ability to choose their own syllabus and material was an important part of their job. This belief agrees with the role of ESP teachers as course and material designers/adapters. However, due to administrative restrictions and the lack of informed criteria teachers’ choice of teaching material has been based on the availability of textbooks in the market and the suitability of the textbook’s level for their students. This agrees with the findings of a recent study by Al-Nwaiem (2012) that revealed the lack of any systematic needs assessment that could inform material selection. As a result, Al-Nwaiem (ibid) asserted that there seemed to be a mismatch between the objectives, the textbooks, and the language courses. It also corresponds with the case of ESP teaching and the lack of locally produced teaching material in Russia (Sysoyev, 2000), and agrees with Vičič’s (2011: 119) conclusion that “there are no absolute criteria to rely on when selecting teaching/learning materials” in ESP. Depending on what is available in the market was considered a problem in some countries (Sysoyev, 2000; Bodegas, 2007; Abdulaziz et al. 2012,). Bodegas (2007:275) stated that teachers use commercial textbooks as their syllabus, and sometimes modify or add what is considered missing in the textbook used. However, they “do not take into consideration that most of the books have not been designed specifically for [their] different contexts.” As a result, ESP teachers in Kuwait found the solution

in using supplementary material deemed necessary to compensate for the lack of specifically designed textbooks for their students. This agrees with Ellis and Johnson (1994, cited in Vičiči, 2011) and with Abdulaziz et al. (2012) about the use of commercial and in-house produced material.

6.1.3 Evaluation and research knowledge

Evaluation, reflection and research are interconnected and ongoing processes crucial for ESP programme development. For example, evaluation is necessary to ensure adequate planning, implementation, and continuous improvement of the programmes (Tsou and Chen, 2014). Reflection on action and on the adequacy of teaching materials help ESP practitioners assess whether the goals of the programme have been met, and realize factors that have served or hindered attaining programme objectives. Both reflection and evaluation are also components of research knowledge and are linked to needs analysis; therefore, they are considered essential elements of ESP practitioners' knowledge.

The above knowledge is important because ESP is a dynamic programme and the practitioners need to regularly evaluate teaching materials, syllabuses, pedagogical choices, students' reactions and feedback. Belcher (2009: 6) argues that a "significant contribution to the efficacy of needs analysis is the seemingly simple realization that needs assessment is best when ongoing." Belcher (ibid) furthers this argument to include learners, especially when already in the target setting, as crucial data providers on the effectiveness of concurrent ESP instruction, and as detectors of new target needs that surface as their community immersion deepens. The demand for assessing needs does not only start before the programme and certainly does not end by the end of it (Brindley, 1989; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Graves, 2000). Even after the end of the programme evaluation, reflection and needs assessment provide valuable insights into the nature of the problem – needs and lacks, which could be addressed to come up with suggestions and recommendations to support learning and improve the ESP programmes' outcomes.

Holme and Chalauisaeng (2006) believe that teachers could involve learners in needs analysis. This act provides realistic data about learners' needs, lacks,

and wants (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), and serves as a technique for improving learners' language. They stressed that by including learners in this vital activity, ESP teachers:

> "help learners discover their own needs within the course structure, promoting a greater sense of ownership of them, and making consistent identification between need and want then is often achieved in ESP programmes (p. 404)."

The above fundamental activities seemed to be neglected in the ESP practice at vocational colleges in Kuwait, which might imply a gap in teachers' knowledge of ESP and reflect an inadequate self-image as an ESP practitioner. ESP activities that grant ESP teachers their practitioner title, because they are actively involved in "inventing" and "reinventing" their realities, are not separable from their self-image as ESP teachers. The participants' suggestion that a committee should take up the responsibility of conducting needs analysis and designing ESP courses might be suitable in the context of this study, however, research should not be seen as other people's job or problem. Troudi (2006: 1) asserted that "[t]here is now an increasing expectation in many educational institutions especially those at tertiary level for EFL teachers and instructors to be involved in some form of research."

Research knowledge is essential for ESP teachers and is part of teachers' responsibilities in academia because it promotes their professional growth, and encourages and increases their professional contributions to their academic institutions and the teaching profession in general. Thus, though a committee could undertake the responsibility of conducting a 'macro' type of needs analysis, it is essential that ESP practitioners at least perform a kind of 'micro' type of language needs assessment for each of their ESP classes or groups of learners in order to tailor their courses according to each group's specific needs. Moreover, they need to constantly evaluate the outcomes of their ESP courses and programmes, which entails the awareness of evaluation criteria and management.

One of the approaches to promote teachers' awareness of the importance of research, reflection and evaluation is through training, encouraging teachers to

get involved in action research (Troudi, 2006), and staying in touch with the latest developments in language education in general and teaching ESP in particular. It is also crucial to encourage regular departmental presentation and seminars in which teachers could present the results of their findings and discuss their problems with their colleagues. This kind of activity helps raise their awareness about their problems and unveil some shared beliefs and traits that in some cases might act as obstacles in the road of accomplishing their objectives. It also provides them with a wealth of possibilities for classroom interactions that could improve the teaching/learning situations at their colleges. The ESP practitioner is a facilitator, and all the above activities help her/him become the best catalyst for particular contexts.

6.1.4 Collaboration

In unfolding their stories about how they understand ESP, only one participant stated that there was a need for collaboration with the specialist teachers. This might imply that the other teachers were either unaware of this important role, or they did not believe it was essential in their context where ESP courses were very general in nature and the students very weak in the language. It might also suggest the lack of this important element in ESP teachers' knowledge in Kuwait.

Collaboration could help fill the gap in ESP teachers' knowledge about the specific contents that they need to use to teach learners the language. Moreover, the ESP and the specialist teachers could collaborate in team teaching, which "gives students access to subject and language experts simultaneously", and could form "learning communities" by linking ESP and subject-area classes (Belcher, 2009: 12-13). This collaborative harmony supports the objectives of the vocational college programmes and promotes their success.

In teaching ESP, and in the absence of in-service training, humanity-trained teachers are encouraged to collaborate with subject teachers and with each other to enhance their awareness of the specialized content of their courses and the communicative genres of specific fields. This kind of collaboration helps familiarize ESP teachers with how specialists express their thought and

translate it using language for specific purposes (Koh, 1988; Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; Belcher, 2009). Moreover, it becomes significant in bridging the gap between ESP subject knowledge and the specialized content knowledge, and in compensating for the inability to visit target places.

The above suggestion is supported by ESP experts who believe that collaboration with subject specialists, students, and specialists in target places is a crucial resource for the development of ESP teacher content knowledge (Orr, 1995; Dudley-Evans & St. Johns, ibid). It is also justified based on the argument that: "At higher levels, and especially at post-graduate level, […] it becomes necessary to understand content if the language is to be effectively taught (Kennedy, 1980: 122)."

Visiting students' target places to familiarize self with the communicative job related genres is another type of collaboration in ESP. ESP teachers can get in touch with employers and graduate students who could provide them with a wealth of information about the nature of various tasks and communicative activities performed using the language. In addition, it helps them realize the extent that their ESP programmes succeeded in fulfilling learners' target language needs and identify or design methods to improve them.

The majority of the participants in this study were not keen on visiting target places that ESP specialists recommend not only as a means to understanding authentic language use for job performance, but also as a source of obtaining authentic material as stated above. Belcher (2009) suggested that collaboration with the employers (the field's specialists) could result in "lending teachers sample documents and recommending authentic communicative tasks (ibid)."

In addition to the lack of collaboration with subject teachers and area specialists, collaboration between ESP teachers and their colleagues in the language units at the various colleges seemed to be missing. Three participants while talking about their experiences with teaching ESP discussed the need for classroom visits, discussing and reflecting on encountered problems, exchanging information regarding different approaches to teaching, and understanding the significance of preferring a method to another. They

were aware that their knowledge about teaching ESP does not only develop through formal training courses, conferences, and workshops, but also through their informal interactions and exchanges of expertise. This understanding about peer collaboration was valid and complied to many experts and researchers' arguments that through this type of interactions "teachers form bonds that result in the exchange of knowledge, and in the generation of new knowledge (Feldman, 2007, 2010)." Therefore, participants who felt the need for some kind of collaboration and cooperation between ESP teachers were disappointed that those vital activities were missing in their professional experiences.

6.1.5 Knowledge of the culture

Some participants believed that language and culture were inseparable, thus, teachers' awareness of the language entails familiarity with its culture. They justified their belief arguing that language does not exist in vacuum and that it is deeply rooted in the culture and traditions of its context. As a result they perceived that separating these two from each other carries the risk of language losing its gist and turning into unrealistic utterances, or futile translation of terms with insignificant meanings. These participants' beliefs correspond to the language experts' views that language and culture are inseparable (Valdes, 1986; Kramsch, 1993; Byram, 1994). It also agreed with Flores (2001) findings where teachers realized the importance of language and culture in the acquisition of knowledge.

However, the participants were unable to implement this knowledge in practice due to some contextual factors. For example, they found themselves having to deal with skeptical learners who assumed that learning English could affect their language, cultural values, and beliefs (Troudi, 2005). As a result, they had to modify their syllabus and instruction to avoid being offensive to their students. Their action was in agreement with Valdes' (1986: vii) view that "until threatening is removed language learning may be blocked". Thus, participants were aware that they needed to accommodate their teaching to be less threatening to learners.

The data further indicated that the participants seemed to ignore another type of culture significant to teaching ESP. Knowledge of culture in ESP goes beyond the context of the language taught – it involves the context of the target culture. To realize how language is utilized as a means of communication in a specific target situation requires knowledge of its specific culture and the context it serves. Admitting that they were not in touch with the market's needs and realities, and were not involved in any needs assessment activities, the participants in this study seemed to lack awareness of the significance of this element in ESP teachers' knowledge.

Realizing the above gap in teachers' knowledge could inform ESP teacher training or teacher development programmes to include this element in ESP teacher training courses in order to familiarize them with the language culture of the target places. In doing so, they improve teachers' awareness of the type of language used in various job cultures, hence, their choice of appropriate pedagogy and classroom activities.

6.1.6 Knowledge of the learner

Knowledge of the ESP learner was perceived as another important element of ESP teacher knowledge. According to literature, this is one of the most important aspects of teacher knowledge (Shulman, 1987; Turner-Bisset, 1999; Mayer and Marland, 1997), because without learners there is no teaching; and without knowledge of learners, teachers cannot adapt teaching materials and methods to correspond with their needs (Fenstermacher, 1986).

The participants shared their opinions about the characteristics of ESP learners that conformed to those expected and suggested by ESP experts and reflected in ESP literature. They believed that ESP students are mainly adults who want to learn language relevant to their future job requirements. They also believed that the nature of ESP courses that focus on the functional language becomes interesting for learners and intrinsically motivating. Their view about ESP learners is valid and agrees with ESP experts' views. However, it could be argued that this knowledge is only partial because it ignores learners' language needs.

In addition to realizing ESP learners' attitudes and the specific features that distinguish them from EGP learners, ESP practitioners need to know what the learners need and expect from their ESP classes. This knowledge, as aforementioned, is derived from language and target needs analysis results. The awareness of learners' lacks, needs, and wants is considered the backbone of the ESP programme (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), because it is this data that informs ESP practitioners and course developers to choose appropriate syllabuses and materials that fulfill the needs of particular learners. In the absence of needs analysis this gap in ESP teachers' knowledge in Kuwait is understandable.

It is worth mentioning that teachers' perceptions of their ESP learners' characteristics did not match the reality of their students. For example, they assumed that their ESP students have already acquired basic language competency to start their ESP courses and were motivated to learn authentic language relevant to their future job requirements. In practice, however, they realized that they had to deal with a majority of demotivated learners whose competency levels were considerably below the expected level to commence any ESP programme. They also found that some learners were not keen on learning the language, because they believed that learning the language would not serve any future job purposes.

In addition to this reality, teachers found that their students lacked learning skills and avoided getting involved in classroom interactions. This influenced their pedagogical choices and resulted in simplifying course content to the extent of becoming inauthentic and in some cases serving no obvious target purposes. This unchallenging environment may have resulted in ESP teachers' knowledge and pedagogy in the context of this study to remain rather static.

It could be argued that teachers' expectations about learners were not only based on their expectations and understanding of the characteristics of the ESP learners, but was also influenced by their own experience as language learners. ESP teachers' stories revealed that they were more concerned about the attitudinal aspects of the ESP learners than their actual language deficiencies and target needs. This could stem from their implicit beliefs about

good learners' characteristics and reveals that their knowledge about learning and learners developed and was influenced by their prior knowledge as language learners (Veerlop et al., 2001) and their practical experiences as language teachers (Clandinin & Connolly, Golombek, 1998). The findings suggested that the majority of the participants had positive language learning experience as school students and described themselves as dedicated and responsible learners who respected their education. Based on their experience, teachers expected to see some of the above traits in their students. However, their perception did not match the reality of having to deal with learners who seemingly were not interested in learning. This certainly contrasted teachers' perceptions, and ESP experts and researchers' views, that the nature of ESP courses that are tailored to fit specific learners' needs makes it more motivating for the students. Since this reality was shared by the participants in responding to most of the interview questions, it becomes important for ESP programme developers and practitioners in Kuwait to address the causes of learners' passiveness and try to find solutions for it.

6.1.7 Language perceptions and pedagogy

The data in this study revealed that the ESP teachers' views of the language varied and were influenced by their prior knowledge and experience with learning the language and teaching it. In practice, their perceptions about the language were manifested in their instructional choices and the methodologies they employed in teaching the language. Moreover, some teachers' tendency to adopt their schoolteachers' preferred approaches was also noticed both in practice and in describing their pedagogical choices. The data also indicated that the educational system played a role in how teaching and learning a language were perceived. The majority of participants who joined government schools and were taught language following traditional methods, viewed language as a *system* that once mastered could lead to sound communication. The other group who were taught the language in a communicative style viewed language as a *discourse* and believed that grammar should be acquired implicitly.

A couple of participants who experienced traditional language teaching and learning also shared the latter view that language was best learnt using interactive/communicative methods. This could suggest that sometimes teachers' understanding of what language is and how it should be approached might contradict their prior experience with language learning, and might imply that teachers' could adopt different approaches based on their own constructed principles.

The impact of teachers' implicit theories of language learning and teaching was manifested in their justifications for their choice of methods and approaches to teaching ESP. For example, those who viewed language as a system and the road to learning a language passes through the mastery of that system, (Howatt, 1987 cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2012), believed that "use through usage" approaches were more appropriate in teaching the language (Widdowson, 1990; Kumaravadivelu, 2012). While those who viewed language as a vehicle for communication, believed that teaching should not focus on the language system, but on involving learners in interactive and hands-on-learning activities that facilitate learning through saying and doing something with the language (Kumaravadivelu, ibid). However, as will be further discussed, the latter group admitted that their practices contradicted their own beliefs as they chose to apply the structural approaches familiar to their students' backgrounds in language learning. The result in both cases was the prevalence of structural approaches over communicative ones in the context of ESP teaching at the vocational colleges in Kuwait.

The effects of context and teachers' personal 'detrimental' beliefs on their preferred approaches agree with the results of studies on language teachers' beliefs about EFL teaching (Peacock, 2001; Zheng, 2009). Zheng (ibid) argues that:

> "If a teacher believes language teaching should focus on communicative teaching, this might imply certain beliefs about how the language is most appropriately taught and learned and what role the teacher should play (p. 77)."

It could be argued that teachers might hold a certain view about the language and be aware of the best teaching approaches, however, this knowledge does not guarantee the implementation of belief in practice. The results of this study revealed that teachers who believed in communicative/interactive teaching and learning were unable to apply methods supporting their views due to contextual influences.

It is worth mentioning at this point that both views about the nature of language and pedagogy are valid and correspond with Kumaravadivelu (2012) and other language teacher educators' views that the awareness of language both as a system and as a discourse is indeed a crucial element in language teachers' knowledge (Troudi, 2006). This understanding is especially important in EFL context where learners' exposure to language in most cases is limited within the boundaries of the language classroom. Thus, it is necessary that language teachers realize that the above views need not be divided. In understanding language as a system, for example, teachers need to realize that "the nouns and verbs and adjectives are not just hitched end to end in one long chain, there is some overarching blueprint or plan for the sentences that puts each word in a specific slot (Pinker 1994:94, cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2012: 25)." This realization, as Kumaravadivelu (ibid) suggests, helps them find better ways to raise students awareness and enable them to speak and write in a grammatically acceptable way. Therefore, this understanding becomes an important element in language teachers' knowledge about the language. When a teacher lacks this knowledge we cannot expect learners to understand the language and communicate accurately (Feiman-Nesmer, 2003). In the same way, knowledge of discourse entails the understanding of "the coherent relationship between, form, meaning, and the communicative intent within a particular communicative situation" – such as in ESP learners' various target places – "so language use comes out to be grammatically correct as well as communicatively appropriate (ibid)." This supports some participants' belief that both fluency and accuracy were important elements of the subject matter content knowledge because teachers must set good examples for their students. It also agrees with experts' views of language teachers' knowledge

base in language teacher education (Halliday, 1973; Norris, 1997; Mullock, 2003; Liu and Meng, 2009; Kumaravadivelu, 2012).

Teachers' roles in the ESP classroom evidently followed their views of language and language teaching, and/or were imposed on them by the context. The choice of general pedagogy revealed teachers' different beliefs about classroom management, and teachers and learners relationships seemed to have been reinforced through their schooling experiences. Those who were accustomed to a strict and restricted teaching environment seemed to favour a controlled type of teaching with the boundaries setting clearly between teachers and learners. Similarly, those teachers who experienced a democratic type of schooling and graduate learning experiences and believed in the positive impact of such environment on learning chose to be strict with their students and control their classes. Both group's justifications matched and pointed at the ESP learners' perceptions and expectations of their courses, and the teaching/learning environment that fostered teacher-centeredness. Teachers' consensus seemed to indicate a shared and deeply rooted belief that learners were used to a controlled and restricted type of education. As a result, they agreed that changing towards a more democratic education at the college level was doomed to failure. Therefore, it could be argued that the choice of general pedagogy seemed to be influenced more by contextual factors than by teachers' pedagogical knowledge.

Knowledge of classroom structure and its effects on teaching and learning was also seen important in teaching ESP. Participants believed that the choice of classroom arrangement and the use of educational technology were important in facilitating learning and encouraging interaction. A productive and healthy classroom environment, in their view, was not always that where interaction occurred between teachers and students, but also between students and students. It is in the latter type of interaction, especially in ESP classes, where a lot of learning takes place. This view that reflects one of the elements of teachers' pedagogical knowledge corresponds with Troudi's (2005) belief that the TESOL classroom is not an environment where isolated and discrete

language skills are learnt, but a community where ideologies and meanings are co-constructed and personalities are developed.

However, the reality of their educational milieu contradicted their perceived and favoured classroom environment. One participant used the term “sterile” to describe their college and classroom context that did not encourage interaction and cooperative learning. Some participants believed that their environment was an important factor contributing to learners’ passive attitudes. This view corresponded with other studies on college classrooms that found “that students’ participation in college classrooms is relatively passive (Tino, 1997: 601)”. It also revealed that “learning appears to be a ‘spectator sport” in which faculty talk dominates (Fischer and Grant, 1983 cited in Tino, ibid), and only few active students participate (Smith, 1983; Nunan, 1996). Moreover, the above result agrees with the finding of a study by Al-Nwaiem (2012), which revealed that the unequipped, overloaded classes and the unsupportive seating arrangements at a teachers’ college in Kuwait hindered the application of interactive methods. It also agrees with Pennington and Richards (1007) and Richards and Pennington (1998) whose studies exposed the powerful influence of contextual factors on practice. The educational milieu will be further discussed under challenges in teaching ESP.

6.1.8 ESP teachers’ identity and professional development

Knowledge of self is believed to be an important area of teachers’ knowledge that could impact instruction and teacher development. A lot of factors influenced ESP teachers’ identities at the various vocational colleges: lack of training and orientation, lack of supportive and productive system and environment, and a culture that promoted passiveness. For example, when ESP teachers joined their colleges, they experienced what researchers called a “reality shock” (Lortie, 1975; Veenman, 1984; Huberman, 1991, Farrel, 2003). The reality of their students’ low competency and other contextual factors, such as the lack of support (orientation) and guidance (training), and the feeling of isolation at the beginning of their career (Veenman, ibid; Huberman, ibid; Flores, 1997), as well as the class size, unequipped classrooms, inadequate course and materials, and the lack of facilities (Al-Nuwaiem, 2012) resulted in a

lot of ESP teachers experiencing a frustrating and "painful beginnings" (Huberman, 1989). These factors affected teachers' professional self-image and resulted in the rise of some negative emotions towards their profession and the educational context they belonged to. Teachers' lack of support both from the institution (providing in-service training) and from experienced peers (allowing classroom observation), resulted in ESP teachers trying to cope and make sense of their environment on their own. This resembled one of the participants' comments about the culture of education in Kuwait being based on competition not cooperation. It also agreed with the results of a study by Farrel (2003) who examined the early socialization experiences of an EFL teacher in Singapore and found out that his induction into a new profession was not a positive experience, because the individualistic culture of the educational context provided few opportunities for collegial sharing. The study provided ample evidence on how the institutional and social context where language teachers work can shape their initial cognitions, especially with respect to their professional identity as ESP practitioners (Borg, 2006).

However, in spite of the negative impacts of the context on their identity, some participants still believed that having a sense of professional identity was important because it could positively influence their attitudes towards their teaching and professional growth. This agrees with Flores and Day (2006: 220) view that:

> "A sense of professional identity will contribute to teachers' self-efficacy, motivation, commitment and job satisfaction."

With regards to teachers' influential characteristics, ESP teachers in this study believed that possessing specific qualities, teachers could positively influence their learners and their practices. These according to them were tolerance and endurance, ambition, resilience, and motivation. Other traits that two participants perceived as elements of professional identity and deemed essential for effective teaching were: charisma that could positively impact learners, and taking their job seriously in order to set a good example for learners. This agrees with the results of Zheng's (2009: 77) study suggesting that teachers:

> "hold beliefs about their own professional development but with very restricted accounts that teaching is largely a matter of personality with a few managerial tactics."

Although the participants' perceptions of their roles were influenced by two different educational backgrounds (democratic/interactive vs. authoritarian/controlling), their self- image seemed to share a lot of similarities. For example, in justifying their pedagogical choices especially when these choices were in odds with their beliefs some teachers appeared frustrated, others seemed to be rather passive or indifferent towards their profession. However, not only the passive ones, but also the frustrated teachers did not take any steps towards improving their situation or changing it. The similarities in their attitudes towards contextual challenges and the unconducive teaching environment that affected their own professional development could be linked to their sociocultural backgrounds. Ten out of the eleven interviewees were Kuwaiti (Arabs); culturally, their identity was tied "to affiliation to family and community"; every member was "designated hierarchically-coded place" and was expected to stay there. This system "imposed a totalized concept of identity on its members, which treated them as no more than parts of the collective (Kumaravadivelu, 2012: 57)." Kumaravadivelu (ibid) argued,

> "With socially accepted boundaries of a refined external world imposed on them, individuals had a very little meaningful choice outside of clearly delineated characteristics of birth and origin. If they wanted to find personal meaning, they had to do it within such a rigid system. In other words, the "modern" Self was more externally imposed than self-constructed."

This, in my view, described to a reasonable extent why participants' self-realization as teachers was so similar despite their different educational culture. The modern Self in some democratic school environment was "externally imposed on them than self-constructed". As a result, as teachers, all the participants from democratic and not so democratic schooling backgrounds became "passive technicians who merely play[ed] the role of conduits transmitting a body of knowledge from one source to another (p. 56)." They did not seem to care for improving the teaching and learning situation at their colleges, and their response to such a situation was always: they were not the

authority or the administrators did not listen to or value their views. Moreover, the majority of the participants did not get involved in academic activities that promoted professional growth and development, such as doing research, presenting studies at conferences, giving or attending workshops, consulting periodicals and reading about the latest developments in the world of EGP and ESP practices. The only reason that a couple of participants shared for conducting research was for promotional purposes. It is worth mentioning that the focus of their studies was in areas other than ESP or EGP teaching. This agrees with Beijard et al.'s (2000) belief that "[t]eachers' perceptions of their own professional identity affect their efficacy and professional development as well as their ability and willingness to cope with educational change and to implement innovations in their own teaching practice." Sprinthall, et al. (1996) claims that professional development is in a sense personal development. Thus, understanding the reasons behind teachers' indifferent behaviour and realizing the effects of the educational culture on teachers' passive attitudes become significant in designing and improving ESP programmes and teacher development agenda.

Based on the data generated and analyzed in this study, it could be argued that the culture of education in Kuwait seems to view teachers and treat them as passive technicians, as in many parts of the world (Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 9). The endurance of such traditional technicist view of teachers and teaching, that seemed to noticeably reflect how the LC and the ESP staff at vocational colleges under study regarded themselves, "provides a safe and secure environment for those teachers who may not have the ability, resources, or willingness to explore self initiated, innovative teaching strategies." This goes without arguing that the above view is in odds with the dynamic, interactive, and innovative nature of ESP and ESP practitioners' roles and identity.

In the domain of ESP, teachers' identity evolves from being mere technicians or conduits, "channeling the flow of information from one end of the educational spectrum (i.e., the expert) to the other (i.e., the learner) without significantly altering the content of information (Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 8; 2012)", to becoming practitioners who are actively and innovatively constructing and

reconstructing their realities through the involvement in numerous roles fundamental to ESP practices. These roles start with conducting needs analysis (Brown& Lewis, 2003), designing course and syllabus, adapting teaching materials, and end by assessing learners' understanding, evaluating the efficacy of their courses, and reflecting and researching to improve the outcomes of their courses (Swales, 1988; Dudley-Evans & St. Johns, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters 1987; Gatehouse, 2001). The range of the above roles and responsibilities certainly shapes ESP practitioners' identity and reflect the scope of the title they earn in this domain. The awareness of these activities then becomes an important aspect of ESP teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, and a crucial element in ESP teacher training programmes.

As ESP practitioners, language teachers are required to use their knowledge to design their courses based on the learners' and markets' actual needs. They are also required to examine available materials and evaluate their appropriateness and concurrence with the objectives of their courses and their students' purposes for learning. Additionally, they need to regularly reflect on, evaluate, and improve the outcomes of their ESP programmes (Brindley, 1989; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Graves, 2000). Zheng (2009) argues that teachers' self-image is linked to their teaching theories. A teacher who considers teaching as a lifelong learning process would see oneself reflecting and trying out one's theories constantly, while a teacher who does not realize the importance of professional development would regard teaching as merely a task. The latter view seems to portray most ESP teachers' professional identity at the context of this study.

It is important for ESP specialists and educators in Kuwait to realize that ESP demands teachers with fluid identity that is constantly constructed and reconstructed through experience and reflection. They also need to recognize that in ESP, the language teacher's role expands and transforms from being a mere technician, to becoming a reflective practitioner and a transformative intellectual who develops progressive pedagogies that, in addition to raising students' awareness about the role of language in the target contexts, provide them with critical and analytical skills training to be able to function in the larger

society as transformative agents (Giroux, 1988, cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2012).

Kumaravadivelu (2010:36) asserts that "[m]ore than any other educational enterprise, language education provides its participants with challenges and opportunities for a continual quest for subjectivity and self-identity." He then quotes Wooden (1987:21) stating that:

> "Language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed."

6.2 Impact of knowledge on practice

As with their teaching experiences, the majority of the participants in this study experienced bleak and challenging beginnings with respect to the institution's expectations of them as ESP teachers on one hand and with their own struggle of fitting in their teaching environment on the other. Time and experience helped them realize their roles and how they needed to approach their classes.

6.2.1 Impact of the educational culture

It could be argued that teachers' realization of their roles in their educational institution was rather negative (Farrel, 2003). The data indicates that the educational system has implied to both teachers and learners that the aim of teaching and learning is to get a certificate for a job. In other words, knowledge (the process) is not important, but passing the exams (the end) is. As a result, teachers turned into employees whose job was to prepare learners for their exams. The above realization eventually resulted in approaching their profession as a routine job that required minimum development.

Nevertheless, the data revealed that the few first years of their career combined with their prior knowledge had an impact on their conceptualization of their role as ESP teachers and on their decisions on how to approach their courses. Burden's (1990) suggested that the first year of teaching provides crucial learning experiences because professional knowledge and skills at this stage go through rapid growth and development. The data in this study

suggested that ESP teachers at the contexts of this study were deprived of such an opportunity for growth. They eventually realized their roles and the institution's expectations from them though it was an undesirable understanding. The appropriateness and success of this kind of development, in my view, depends on the educational system and its philosophy, mission, and objectives.

Realizing that teachers got negative inputs about their roles as ESP practitioners and about the aims they were required to accomplish, this research provides important clues to various deficiencies in the educational system in general and the ESP programmes in particular that need to be seriously addressed.

6.2.2 Impact of prior knowledge

In addition to the bewildering experience that ESP teachers' endured at the beginning of their career, they believed that there was a gap between their formal education (theory) and the reality of their classroom environment (practice). Teachers in this study either had some teaching experience prior to joining vocational colleges or lacked it. The former group appeared to be more in control and more confident about their work and believed that their subject matter and pedagogical knowledge was adequate for their course and students' levels. This confidence seemed to stem from their previous teaching and learning experiences that familiarized them with the traditional approaches to language teaching and with the teaching environment. In other words, their schemata gave them advantage over their colleagues who lacked prior teaching experiences, and whose interactive and communicative learning backgrounds, naturally, fell short of providing them with representations to facilitate their teaching experience using traditional approaches. This conforms to Xu and Liu's (2009) findings that teachers' prior experiences affect current practices and future plans. It also corresponds to the literature on teachers' knowledge that considers pedagogical content knowledge (knowledge-for-practice) as an essential area of teachers' knowledge (Shulman, 1987; Cochran Smith & Lytle, 1999). Moreover, it agrees with the conclusion of

Hegarty's (2000) study that experience is one of the factors influencing the development of the knowledge base of teaching.

The effect of teachers' educational background (their previous learning experience), and previous teaching experience or practical knowledge (knowledge-in-practice), which is regarded as the most essential knowledge for teaching (Cochran Smith & Lytle, 1999) was noticeable in the enduring use of structural approaches to language teaching and in adopting teacher-centered instruction. Bodegas (2007: 278) stated: "although there has been a preference for particular methods at different times, methods often continue in some form long after they have fallen out of favour. This remark is true regarding the grammar-translation approach that is still alive in some parts of the world." She further argued that: "Finocchario (1983) claims that the grammar-translation approach was inherited from the teaching of Latin, a language that was only taught for passive use (ibid)." This claim could partially explain why ESP teachers in Kuwait continued to use this method in teaching English. Both teachers and their students were taught modern standard Arabic at schools (which could be considered for passive use since it is not the spoken language). The method used for teaching Arabic focuses on teaching grammar as a road to mastering reading and writing the language accurately. This is because in Arabic short vowels are not written but uttered as one reads a text or speaks the standard language (in restricted cases: such as part of religious ceremony, or in reporting news on TV or radio). If one's knowledge of grammar is not sound the vowels can be used incorrectly, which can alter the meaning of the word and result in miscommunication. As a result, mastering grammar to produce accurate language seems to be embedded in teachers' implicit theories and underlying beliefs of language as a system. Consequently, the majority of the participants thought that in order to understand a language one must understand its system (grammar). The focus on grammar in language teaching at vocational colleges in this study could also stem from teachers' conviction that in order to understand grammar it should be taught separately and drilled explicitly. This finding agrees with the results of a study by Richards et al. (2012: 11), which revealed that many teachers "still hold firm to the belief that grammar is central to language learning and direct grammar is needed by

[…] EFL/ESL students." They also reported that while this view seemed to be changing, "more responses indicated that the view of grammar as foundational has not changed."

Other participants, who believed that ESP should be taught communicatively but used structural approaches in practice, attributed their decision to contextual factors such as students' expectations, their language learning backgrounds and low linguistic levels, the inappropriate teaching environment, and the structurally based syllabuses and exams. This result corresponds to Assalahi's (2013) findings about the reasons behind the dominance of structural approaches in EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, it agrees with Farrell and Lim's (2005) study that teachers' prior learning experience affects their choice of methodology.

The study also suggests that another factor might have contributed to some teachers' "resilient" beliefs (Breen, 1986, cited in Richards et al. 2012) about the centrality of grammar in language teaching. For example, some participants believed that CLT adopted by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Kuwait has failed to acquaint learners with adequate competency in the language. Moreover, they attributed their own sound understating of the language as school children compared with their students' low competency levels to the use of structural approaches that dominated language teaching during their schooling time.

Recent studies about English language teaching at government schools, and teacher colleges in Kuwait (Al-Nwaiem, 2012; Al-Rabie, 2010; Al-Nouh, 2008), however, revealed that CLT was not applied in language teaching at government schools despite the fact that teaching materials and syllabuses adopted are communicatively based. Two participants in this study also agreed with the above results: one, who had recently moved to vocational colleges after teaching at government schools and claimed that teachers did not use communicative approaches in teaching the language; and another youngest participant who was unable to recall any communicative activities in her language learning experience, and asserted that their teachers focused on teaching grammar and vocabulary in a structural way. The data then seems to

indicate that the majority of the participants in this study, who attributed learners' low competency levels to the application or misapplication of the communicative approaches at government schools, might be out of touch with the reality of language teaching at local schools. It also suggests that the participants' sometimes based their views on alleged assumptions than on facts. This might indicate and support the idea that belief is sometimes hard to change, or it might empower one's biases towards an idea or a situation to the extent that important factors could easily be missed in constructing one's knowledge about a certain situation. In the case of ESP teachers' pedagogical knowledge in Kuwait, and in relation to knowledge of the learner – a significant element influencing teachers' pedagogical choices (Shulman, 1987; Mayer and Marland, 1997; Turner-Bisset, 1999) – it seems that their beliefs, influenced by their prior knowledge, played a role in seeing what they wanted to see in order to justify their pedagogical choices and practical actions or inactions. Their perceptions of students' language learning backgrounds affected their choice of methodology, and their assumptions about learners' language needs influenced their decisions in modifying their syllabuses to suite the students' presupposed language proficiency levels.

A couple of participants related some teachers' preference of the structural approaches over the communicative ones to the fact that teaching grammar and vocabulary restrict teachers' interaction to explaining rules and meanings, while communicative teaching rests upon teachers' ability to converse fluently and accurately. So, teaching structurally seemed to be safer and less threatening (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, 2012). This agrees with the results of Afifi's (1991) study about teaching ESP at the College of Business Studies in Kuwait.

6.2.3 Impact of classroom environment

The study also reveals that alongside prior knowledge, contextual factors played a significant role in teachers' pedagogical decisions. Teachers' choices disregarded the use of a variety of methods and techniques and/or motivational strategies that could have enhanced learning. They held the belief that the use of group work, for example, was difficult if not impossible in their large classes of linguistically poor learners. This corresponds to Chen and Hird's (2006)

findings that group work in language learning in China proved to be challenging for language teachers because it was not possible to neutralize student differences.

Classroom environment has a lot of influence on teachers' practical choices, but a sound knowledge of classroom management could be helpful in overcoming some of the contextual problems, such as seating rearrangement or choosing good students to manage team-work activities, etc. "Research shows that effective classroom managers are nearly always good planners. They establish rules and follow principles that guide both their own and the students' behaviors in the classroom, and they arrange their classrooms to make certain that instruction can proceed efficiently (Murray and Christison (2011: 05-11)."

The study revealed that students' manners also affected teachers' pedagogical choices and sometimes forced them to take measures that contradicted their own beliefs about classroom management skills. For example, some teachers chose not to tolerate students' carelessness and took firm measures believing that it was the only way to control their students' passive and indifferent behaviour. Students' lack of 'common sense', as some teachers indicated, and sitting, eating, and socializing on the floors in the corridors obstructing classroom passages distracted other students' attentions and affected teachers' feelings and attitudes. This finding corresponded to a recent study by Al-Nwaiem (2012) who reported the same attitudes among learners at a teacher training college in Kuwait. It also corresponded with studies that linked teachers' social and emotional competence (SEC) and well being to classroom and student outcomes. Jennings and Greenberg (2009:92 cited in Jennings et al., 2011), suggested that when "the classroom climate deteriorates, the demands on the teacher increase, triggering in the teacher what has been referred to as a "burnout cascade." Under these conditions, teachers' responses to student behavior may become hostile and punitive, reactions that may derail student motivation and contribute to a self-sustaining cycle of classroom disruption." The emotional impact of the educational context on

teachers and learners needs to be addressed in order to provide a healthy and conducive environment for learning.

A noticeable reaction that the majority of teachers revealed towards their numerous challenges was, indifference. They seemed to passively accept the reality of their unsupportive context and the students' endless problems such as tardiness, carelessness, and missing a lot of contact hours. As a result, teachers decided to go with the flow of minimizing teaching to as low as four units a course and focusing on students' memorization of concepts required to pass their exams. The above attitude seemed to stem from their belief that changing their reality was impossible for its link to some political pressures and agendas (Al-Nwaiem, 2012). Consequently, they found that using teacher-controlled approaches and an instruction that focuses on test like questions to familiarize and prepare students for their exams were more appropriate in their context.

Teachers' seemed to ignore that the use of traditional approaches to teaching left little space for learners' interaction with teachers and peers. This action contradicted the language specialists and researchers views that second language teachers needed to be more willing to involve learners in activities that give them more control over their own learning (Andrew et al., 2008). It also contradicted the nature of ESP practice that is theoretically and practically communicatively oriented. Engaging students in their learning not only improves their awareness about the language, but also can solve some of the problems that learners suffer from.

The above result of controlled teaching and preparing learners for exams, agreed with the findings of a study conducted by Carter and Doyle (cited in Calderhead, 1987:11) who suggested that "teachers' concern with managerial aspects of their work might often result in classroom experiences where children are learning to get the 'right answers' without developing their understanding of the curriculum." Although this study was about school children, it resembled the ESP teaching and learning situation at the vocational colleges under study.

The classroom environment and the caliber of students seemed to impact teachers' practical choices and hinder the use of what teachers perceived as effective techniques for enhancing learners motivation and giving the classroom a relaxing atmosphere. For example, participants' prior knowledge revealed the positive impact of teachers' lenient personality on students' motivation hence learning. However, in practice, they realized that removing barriers between teachers and learners and giving the learners more freedom was misunderstood by students who were used to a top-down educational system. Instead, their leniency seemed to have been directed towards taking students' grading lightly. Consequently, their exam results did not appear to accurately reflect the learners' achievement. Some participants justified this action by the influence of the political system that interfered not only with the vocational colleges admission policies, but also with teachers' grading. Therefore, they did not see any problem in taking grading lightly. Others justified this action with the fear of losing students who preferred a teacher who is generous with grading. In their own way, teachers tried to maintain a supportive teacher-student relationship (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009), however, since what they did was a response to a detrimental situation, it could be argued that, it resulted in an unhealthy classroom environment. If the language classroom was not to be regarded as simply a context for learning isolated and discrete language skills, but a community where ideologies and meanings are co-constructed and personalities are developed (Troudi, 2005), then the contextual factors of the tertiary and applied colleges affecting teachers' decisions seemed to be destructive.

When teachers go to their classes with predetermined minds that their students do not want to learn and all that they care about is passing exams and getting diplomas or certificates for employment, and that the educational system and government policy foster such attitudes, they find no choice but to modify their syllabus and pedagogy accordingly – focusing on minimum teaching, drilling and memorization, and preparing learners to pass exams with modicum knowledge as aforementioned. No wonder that the students' devastating problems and the barren teaching/learning environment persists. ESP Teachers at the various vocational colleges need to involve learners in learning

and provide the environment for productive learning. Encouraging learners to feel responsible for their own learning enhances their motivation and can result in developing autonomy in learning (Spratt et al., 2002; Garner, 2005). Teachers need to set an example for learners, as some participants suggested, by taking their profession seriously. The above findings appear to point again at the reality that some beliefs that teachers hold about ESP remain on a theoretical level.

6.2.4 Inadequacy of curriculum and syllabus and the role of agency

The data also indicate the significant role that knowledge of curriculum could have played in teachers' instructional choices. Teachers use this knowledge to "select materials and activities that will translate the goals and objectives into learning experiences for students. In other words, materials and activities are not selected [merely] because they seem like a good idea or because students might find them fun, but because they will help learners meet the goals and objectives of the course (Murray and Christison, (2011:05-11)." In teaching ESP, the choice of syllabus and material is a dynamic process, because the ESP practitioner needs to evaluate the success of their courses and attainability of the objectives all the time and with every group of students. They need to design their own courses based on the curriculum's goals and objectives. They also need to assess their students' learning to find out whether the goals were achieved, and do adjustments or necessary changes in their procedures based on the evaluation results (ibid). The cycle of evaluation, reflection, and production is what makes ESP courses effective and efficient.

Although some ESP teachers in this study were aware of the importance of knowledge of curriculum in designing their courses, like most of their knowledge and beliefs, it was something agreed upon but not applied in practice. In deciding what and how to teach, they did not follow the required ESP procedures mentioned above. They were aware that their decision to play it safe and follow the procedures suggested by the teacher's book was the result of the gap in their knowledge about course designing, choosing or adapting teaching materials, and about learners' actual and specific needs.

The gap in ESP teachers' knowledge about choosing syllabus and adapting teaching materials could be addressed by providing in-service training courses that could compensate for the lack of ESP teacher education programme, and aim at developing their pedagogical content knowledge and raising their awareness and understanding of the above activities and their roles in serving their programmes.

A crucial element that seemed to be lacking in teachers' professional lives and apparently played a role in their passive attitudes was agency. ESP teachers believed that the administrators did not promote teacher agency and did not value their feedback regarding the curriculum. This resulted in the curricular objectives being unclear to the majority of teachers and caused them to approach their classes like schoolteachers who had to follow predetermined syllabus and material without any professional contributions. However, in some cases, they ended up using their common sense, subject matter knowledge, and their contextual knowledge to make appropriate changes to their syllabuses, and to use supplementary materials obtained from online sources to complement the existing material. The act of depending on common sense and drawing on existing knowledge is viewed by some experts such as Hargreaves (1998) as the creative application of knowledge.

Agency is an important element of self-knowledge that was not fulfilled at the tertiary and applied colleges. But the participants who believed that agency was important for their professional and pedagogical knowledge development used it whenever and wherever they could. For example, by reflection on and in action they came up with their own methods and techniques suitable for their context. They also modified their teaching methods and materials to a reasonable extent to accommodate for their learners' needs and expectations, as was mentioned earlier in this chapter.

It is important for ESP teacher development and training experts to understand that in ESP agency and freedom of choice with regards to syllabus and materials, based on learners' needs, is a crucial factor in the success of ESP teaching and learning.

6.3 Contextual challenges

The above discussion revealed some inconsistencies between ESP teacher knowledge and practices in the context of this study. While on theoretical bases the majority had a good understanding of teaching and learning a language, in practice their choices were fundamentally in contrast with their knowledge. The data largely pointed at contextual factors as the main reason behind this inconsistency. Some factors were partly discussed under the above two themes. The following is a further discussion of the impact of context on the implementation of knowledge in practice.

6.3.1 Impact of context on practice

Several contextual factors affected teachers' pedagogical choices and contributed to the challenges of teaching ESP. One was related to the students' low competency, their careless behavior, passive attitudes, and some undesirable manners. In order to improve learners' language level and prepare them for their ESP classes, the LC offered two general courses (see Chapter two). However, this did not seem to solve the problem of elevating learners' competency level for several reasons. First, the unequipped and large classes created numerous challenges that hindered the application of CLT and interactive activities that engage learners in constructive learning. Second, due to learners' reluctance to study teachers seemed to have given up on trying to address learners' problems and on finding solutions, and believed that keeping up with the traditional approaches that controlled learning was inevitable. Third, teachers' embedded beliefs that most of their students did not need English to perform future job related tasks, especially at the business and teacher colleges, resulted in teachers' taking their ESP programmes casually. Forth, the reality of accepting a large numbers of students with a majority of underachievers exposed deficiencies in the educational policy regarding the aims and objectives of vocational education and the decision makers' indifference towards the outcome of vocational programmes. This resulted in teachers viewing themselves and acting as employees who are expected to finish a routine job regardless of the end results, and unconcerned about the efficiency and benefits of their work for their society.

Other challenges that the participants encountered were related to their premises and teaching environment. Some ESP teachers worked in deterring work places that lacked supportive facilities such as well-equipped library and classes. Teachers believed that a library that carries books supporting their curriculum was necessary to facilitate and enrich learning. They also thought that it was important for teachers to access reference books, journals and periodicals to improve teaching and develop effective methods and techniques, update their knowledge in their field, and to support research and professional development. The lack of a library and/or its poor contents seemed to endorse teachers' beliefs that educational officials in Kuwait did not take vocational education seriously. This again is a setback that needs to be considered and altered, because the country depends on the graduates of these colleges to take upon their shoulders the development of their country. The above finding agrees with Al-Nwaiem's (2012) study result that reported the lack of a library in the context of his study – a teacher college in Kuwait.

Although a substantial body of research since 1990 revealed a positive relationship between school libraries and student achievement (Lonsdale, 2003), it is hard to believe how this important knowledge could go unnoticed at the various vocational institutions in Kuwait. The availability of libraries not only help students' get access to relevant material and knowledge to improve their learning and understanding of the language, but also provide teachers with opportunities to use it as an approach to teaching ESP. For example, teachers could use some reading-focused educational activities to promote reading skills, and arrange discussion groups to give feedback on different topics, hence, encourage dialogue and interaction.

In addition to the lack of libraries and resources, the participants believed that the building conditions were demotivating for both teachers and learners, especially at the business and teacher colleges. The Buildings including the classrooms conditions, as aforementioned, were so impoverished that some participants described it as "sterile" and repellent. They wondered how educators expected students to take their education seriously when they were deprived of their rights to a supportive environment? Their unequipped classes

and classroom furniture and seating arrangements were among the various reasons behind teachers' decisions to use traditional approaches in teaching ESP, and among factors that seemingly discouraged some teachers to be active members of their academia and/or engage in professional development activities.

Teachers concerns about the effects of the teaching environment is legitimate as "there is sufficient research to state without equivocation that the building in which students spend a good deal of their time learning does in fact influence how well they learn (Earthman, 2004:18)." Both the facilities and the structure of the building are reported to impact both teachers and learners' attitudes. Studies have shown that the buildings that are designed to have friendly and welcoming entrances, and colorful common places where students could meet, interact and develop a sense of community, in the same way cafes were designed to attract people, stimulated positive attitudes and enhanced students' motivation for learning (Fisher, 2000 in McGregor, 2004:2; Bunting, 2004:12). Moreover, a well-structured academic building improves teaching instruction, which again influences students' learning.

In addition to the above shortage in facilities, some colleges lacked a cafeteria, staff common rooms, and leisure and sports facilities. A couple of participants believed that the availability of such facilities encourages both teachers and learners to stay longer at the college, and this increases the occasions for students to learn from peers and staff to meet and discuss educational matters and common problems.

The above findings could partially explain why teachers treated their job as routine and acted like employees who left the college as soon as their teaching hours ended. They also seem to justify teachers' lack of interest in conducting research or attending workshops and their reluctance in improving their environment and growing professionally.

Libraries and other resources can facilitate professional development and academic contributions and help teachers construct their "knowledge-of-practice." This is an important aspect of teachers' knowledge that is

constructed through reflection on what has been done. Cochran Smith and Lytle (1999: 250) argue that:

> "It is assumed that the knowledge teachers need to teach well is generated when teachers treat their own classroom and schools as sites for intentional investigation at the same time that they treat knowledge and theory produced by others as generative material for interrogation and interpretation. In this sense, teachers learn when they generate local knowledge *of* practice by working within the contexts of inquiry communities to theorize and construct their work and to connect it to larger social, cultural, and political issues."

The impact of bleak and demotivating educational environment on teachers' practices and students' achievements is supported by studies showing a direct relationship between architecture and teachers' activities in and outside the classrooms. Siegel (1999:4), argued that "[t]he arrangement of space has immediate and far reaching consequences for teacher's ability to effectively and efficiently accomplish daily activities, the formation of social and professional relationships, and the sharing of information and knowledge." McGregor (2004:4) added that consideration of the spaces where teachers meet and collaborate is just as important as the design of the classroom.

6.3.2 Gap between knowledge and practice

This study revealed that context affected the implementation of teachers' knowledge of content and pedagogy in practice. As previously discussed, teachers in the context of this study were unaware of the overall curriculum objectives, and their course objectives were based on their perceptions not on learners' actual needs. Moreover, their choices of syllabuses and materials as well as some teaching procedures were informed by their textbooks contents. Their decisions on what to teach were restricted by the LC that sometimes imposed teaching materials on ESP teachers. In spite of the reality that textbooks were designed for beginners and pre-intermediate learners, ESP teachers considered it too difficult for the learners and tried to modify the content to an adequate level for their students. However, they believed that learning suffered regardless. They attributed the unsuccessful outcome of their programmes to the caliber of students and to their unsupportive context. For example, they justified their decision to abandon communicative approaches,

central to ESP teaching and learning, and adopt the traditional ones to the students' mentalities and attitudes towards language learning that were shaped during their schooling experience. This view also influenced the choice of supplementary materials that focused basically on teaching grammar and on introducing lists of vocabulary items with their meanings in Arabic. Teachers' decisions to control their classes and focus on drilling the learners in vocabulary and grammar and preparing them for their exams was also based on their perceptions of their learners' characteristics. For example, they were concerned that a lot of students might fail the course if they use communicative language teaching. They also believed that students were used to the traditional approaches to teaching grammar and vocabulary and resisted the change in methodology. Moreover, teachers held the belief that the students were reluctant to study, thus, unreliable to take up the responsibility of their own learning.

The above view seemed to impact teachers' perceptions that some of their recent textbooks proved to be ineffective in practice because they were communicatively oriented. They argued that the lessons and exercises in their textbooks were designed to be used alongside CDs included with the books. However, since their classes lacked the necessary equipment to play the CDs they had no choice but to switch to the structural approaches using the whiteboard and a marker (resembling the "chalk and talk" technique of the grammar-translation period in Kuwait). This reality deprived teachers from the chance to practice more than one skill using both written materials, and listening to audiocassettes and watching videos. Consequently, it minimized the opportunity to reinforce both productive and receptive abilities (Bracaj, 2014).

Teachers' beliefs were also challenged in practice because they were not given the freedom to choose their own syllabus and material and they were not encouraged to get involved in any course and syllabus design. A couple of participants believed that they needed to use authentic material to make their courses more interesting and motivating for the learners. This view agrees with the nature of ESP teaching. ESP classes as well as the learners and their

needs vary, therefore, teaching material needs to be modified and supplementary materials especially selected for every group of learners to attend to their needs (Sysoyev, 2000; Dudley Evans and St John, 1998; Graves, 1996; Hutchinson and Waters, 1991), and function as a link between learners' 'existing knowledge' and new information (Bracaj, 2014: 45). Some ESP experts and researchers believe that material selection reflects what teachers think and believe about the learning process (Hutchinson and Waters, 1992 cited in Bracaj, 2014). The data in this study then revealed that though some teachers occasionally talked about the need for relevant material and authentic content that could engage learners in interactive learning, their deeply rooted belief (implicit theory) that language is acquired through the learning of its structure seemed to prevail over their stated belief (explicit theory) and over some contextual influences.

The pressure of having to deal with learners' limited proficiency in the language forced the majority of teachers to choose Arabic as the language of instruction. Contrary to their beliefs that communication with learners needed to be mostly in English, because classroom is the main place where learners are exposed to the language, teachers found themselves forced to explain the language in Arabic. In some cases, their decision seemed to stem from their belief that teachers needed not lose sight of the overall aims of their programmes. If the goal of teaching is learning and using Arabic could facilitate learning then using it, as the language of instruction, is justifiable. This view agrees with Cook's (2001: 402) belief that the aim of second language teaching is not to transform the learner to a native speaker. The learner should be able to use both languages based on needs. She also asserts that: "The first language can be a useful element in creating authentic L2 users rather than something to be shunned at all costs."

Whether pro or against the use of the mother tongue in the ESP classroom, it could be argued that both groups used their knowledge of language teaching and learning to decide what best, in their views, could serve their course objectives and the learners' needs. This agrees with researchers' suggestion that teachers' pedagogical choices are influenced by their embedded

assumptions about language and language learning (Richard and Rodgers, 2001). However, ESP instructors at vocational colleges in Kuwait should be careful not to act as passive technicians (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) who spoon-feed their students the same way schoolteachers at government schools have seemingly been doing. They can try methods that help achieve better results, such as engaging learners in work-oriented and task-based activities. They can also facilitate learning by engaging learners in games such as crosswords, put words in categories, match words with meanings, and look up the meaning of words in a dictionary (Assalahi, 2013).

Advocates to communicative language teaching, like some participants in this study, are against the idea of translating the meaning of the words in the first language. They believe that it might deprive the learner from the opportunity to acquire the language naturally by thinking directly in English (Kuzborska, 2011). However, others, in agreement with the majority of the participants, believe that in some situations this decision can actually compensate for learners limitations (Corder, 1981; and Kobayashi and Rinnert, 1992 cited in Kuzborska, ibid) and enhance language learning (Ellis, 1985; Wenden, 1986; Atkinson, 1987; Cohen and Brooks-Carson, 2001).

In countries like Kuwait, where English is taught as a foreign language and learners have less opportunity to practice their language outside their classrooms or job places, the latter view seems to be more appropriate. The participants who decided to explain the vocabulary items and/or translate them seemed to have realized the above situation and acted accordingly. However, what seems to be missing in ESP teachers' PCK in teaching vocabulary at vocational colleges in Kuwait is to develop learners' vocabulary awareness and strategies, and encourage them to apply it successfully not only in reading and writing but also in speaking. It is important to show learners, for example, how vocabulary is structured, how words relate to one another, and how to make proper use of a dictionary (Nuttall, 2005 cited in Kuzborska, 2011). In ESP, this understanding becomes even more relevant and important, because words can have different meanings in various contexts. Thus, raising students' awareness about these genres is believed to facilitate vocabulary acquisition (Hyland,

2006) and application. In order to provide learners with better opportunities for exploiting the specific language in their ESP classes, the use of language corpora is also encouraged. This can be used in both 099 and 101 EGP classes to prepare students for the more interactive and demanding ESP courses. According to Lee and Swales (2006) and Sinclair (1991 cited in Kuzborska, 2011) this helps raising students' awareness of vocabulary and improves their skills in constructing knowledge about the specific terms and genres when they join their ESP classes.

Focusing on preparing learners for their exams was evident in teachers' decisions to teach grammar following traditional approaches. The participants used similar justifications for drilling and training learners in the use of different tenses by doing the exercises in their textbooks and using supplementary exercises for further practice.

As the previous chapter revealed some participants explained grammar explicitly by teaching the rules that students needed to know without giving them a chance to elicit the meaning of different tenses in context or engaging them in the analysis of how different rules affected or altered sentence meanings. The ESP teacher played the role of the knower who decided to pour the knowledge in students' heads and then help them memorize the rule through exercise practices and drills. This act contradicted their own beliefs that learners' needed to be responsible for their own learning, and teachers should discontinue spoon-feeding them as the data further indicated.

A good knowledge of vocabulary and the awareness of language structure can facilitate reading comprehension. Teachers can integrate these skills with some reading skills and strategies to get better results in decoding the written symbols and understanding the message. As learners interact with the writer and think about the written symbols, they get engaged in predicting the meaning, reasoning, and confirming; at the same time, they practice writing as they take notes or write comments about the text (Nunan, 1999). However, in the context of this study, reading skill seems to be less emphasized than the writing skill, which is only focused on in an English for correspondence course.

Speaking skill is also minimally used and seems to be limited to students answering teachers' questions.

The attitudinal factors that the students exposed and teachers believed to have impacted their pedagogical choices and forced them to ignore interactive task-based activities were: lack of motivation and passion for learning the language; carelessness (as with forgetting their textbooks, pens and pencils, and homework assignments); inattentiveness to classroom discussions and tasks; irresponsibility towards their duties as learners which was reflected in the number of absences and excuses; dependency on others for their own education; and shyness and the fear of losing face. These problems corresponded with the findings of a study by Abdulaziz et al. (2012) about ESP teaching and learning in Pakistan. Students' misbehavior and their unawareness were reported as two factors associated with unplanned interactive decisions (Smith, 1997), which correspond to some extent with the above findings.

Learners' autonomy was perceived to be another obstacle in the road of implementing knowledge in practice. According to the participants, most students if not all of them were passive and dependent learners. They expected their teachers to pour into their heads all the knowledge required for passing exams. Thus, knowledge per se was not perceived important; it was the diploma that they were after. The majority of participants believed that it is the learner's obligation to act as a mature student and be responsible for their own learning. Coming to the college with no books, no notebooks, no pen, and no necessary learning kits reflected students' indifference about their education. The participants accused the MOE for a lot of the shortcomings in educating, training, and in preparing students for the academic life.

The impact of the above factors: the large classes, unmotivated learners with insufficient language skills and knowledge, students' resistance to new ways of learning, the seating arrangements, the unequipped classes and the unified exams, on teachers' decisions to abandon the teaching principles promoted during their teacher education training (Borg, 2006) – knowledge construction through interaction, reflection, and understanding – corresponded with the

findings of a study conducted by Pennington and Richards, (1997) and Richards and Pennington (1998). Though their study focused on novice teachers' experiences in implementing knowledge in practice, the factors that forced them to focus on teaching grammar and vocabulary to prepare their students for their exams were very much similar to the findings of this study (Borg, 2006).

Although ESP teachers were not responsible for the accumulated problems that learners brought with them to the ESP classes, however, instead of acting passively or focusing on preparing learners for exams, teachers could contain many problems with good lesson planning, varying classroom activities, using pair work instead of group work, rearranging seating positions, and discussing the importance of learning English to learners. These choices could help improve students' motivation and eliminate shyness (Abdulaziz et al., ibid). The above recommendations are supported by research findings. For example, Tsui (1996) based on the results of his study, believes that peer practice encourage students to speak up, and Wang et al. (1994) believes that exchanging information might be helpful in raising students' confidence and supporting interaction.

The students' large number and lack of motivation, overloaded schedules, and unsupportive environment seemed to have stressed teachers and compromised their ability to maintain healthy relationship with their students, support learning, and manage their classrooms effectively (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009). Some teachers believed that students' misbehavior in and outside the classroom disturbed their classes and affected their teaching. Teachers' frustration was manifested in the emotional terms they used to describe a situation or their feelings towards it. This reality, in some cases, forced teachers to become tough and rigid, and take severe measures to restore classroom order. Strict reactions to students' misbehavior could result in creating a harmful learning environment (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009). Besides, such attitude is in odds with the ESP teacher image that need to act as a facilitator and negotiator and create a safe environment for learning, where learners are not afraid to interact with teachers and peers. According to

Williams and Burden (1997), “management of students’ learning is linked to teachers’ ability to set an appropriate tone and gain learners respect and cooperation in class (cited in Abdelhafez, 2010: 261).” This agrees with Bracaj’s (2014) view that the ESP teacher is expected to create a positive classroom atmosphere for its links to motivation and the fulfillment of aims and objectives of the course.

Large classrooms also affected teachers’ instruction, classroom management techniques, and pedagogical choices. For example, due to classroom density, teachers were unable to use some communicative activities such as group work, or activities that required students to move around the classroom. The density of the classroom obstructed teacher/student or student/student interactions and forced some teachers to exclude some students from interaction, especially those whose proficiency level was very low. In addition, teachers found that controlling their students when tests and exams were administered became a difficult task due to the class size. They related the problem of oversize classrooms to political reasons that forced the administrators at the vocational institutions to admit students in numbers exceeding the capacity of buildings, facilities, and teaching staff (Al-Nwaiem, 2012; Al-Hasawi, 2013).

In order to overcome the obstacle of large classes, ESP teachers in Kuwait could use strategies such as dividing the class into mixed ability groups where students could learn from each other, and the group could be managed by a good student who acts as a teacher assistant or a team leader, “so that more powerful shared learning [could] occur (Shulman, 1992)”; or they could offer tutorial sessions to help weaker students catch up.

Another challenge, that in teachers’ views hindered students’ learning, had to do with their unequipped classrooms that lacked educational technology, such as the audio/visual aids and multimedia proven to be crucial in facilitating learning, especially language learning (Mathew and Alidmat, 2013; Warschauer and Miskill, 2000). The Lack of educational aids and technology does not seem to be the problem of the less fortunate colleges of business and teacher education, but also the other more modern and recently built premises of

technological, scientific and paramedical colleges. A couple of participants exposed their frustrations about the passive attitudes of the administrators at their college, who did not take any action when classroom equipment went missing and did not attempt to replace them. They believed that such attitude has a negative impact on teachers. The fact that the administrators did not investigate the case of the missing equipment and did not replace them, in the participants' views, suggested that they were not taking education at their college seriously. They supported their views by the fact that their language labs were turned into classes to serve other specialized courses due to the increasing number of students who joined the college each term. This, according to them, reflected two important issues: that the administrators viewed specialized courses as more important than the ESP courses that served them; that the administrators did not care about the effects of depriving both teachers and language learners from using important teaching aids on the outcome and success of the language programmes.

With regards to teaching materials and methods of teaching, ESP teachers in general prefer to use eclectic approaches to teaching. This decision is based on the distinctive nature of the ESP courses that accommodate different groups of learners in terms of backgrounds and abilities. At the same time, ESP book publishers tend to design books based on the above reality to serve a broader spectrum of teaching needs in different countries (Mathew and Alidmat, 2013). The units in the commercial textbooks usually make use of various audio/visual aids and come with ready CDs and/or DVDs. Therefore, the lack of equipment required to support the use of CDs and DVDs becomes a serious problem.

Due to the lack of the necessary equipment in the context of this study, ESP teachers who use commercial books are faced with another difficulty in teaching their lessons communicatively. This is especially true when using teaching aids is at the core of the suggested activities in the textbook as previously discussed. As a result, teachers find no choice but to use structurally-based methods to which the use of whiteboards and markers fit comfortably.

Teaching aids are considered vital tools for enhancing the teaching and learning processes. ESP teachers could use a variety of teaching aids to make their classrooms more interactive and interesting for learners, hence, more motivating (Yorio, 1987). Moreover, the use of educational technology could also improve students' thinking skills (Koc, 2005), promote problem-solving abilities, and enhance creativity. Although many advocates of using educational technology are aware that it can never replace the human mind, but they believe it can help expand it (Ranasinghe and Leisher, 2009).

In the time of rapid technological advancement, the need for acquainting teachers with knowledge of how to handle different gadgets becomes crucial. This knowledge can significantly impact teachers' choices of using the most effective teaching aids appropriate for various practical tasks and activities to fulfill the purposes of their lessons. Moreover, teachers' knowledge of the learners combined with knowledge of technology can also play a significant role in attracting students' attention and enhancing motivation when teachers use what appeals to the tastes and interests of their learners and satisfy different styles. For example, visual aids can support other techniques, as mentioned above, that are used in teaching vocabulary and verbal communication to increase students' understanding of various genres and help them remember useful words and terms (Short and Fitzsimons, 2007). This is specifically important in vocational colleges, where prospective skilled workforce is being prepared for future work place. The use of a video, for instance, can familiarize learners with the job environment, tasks and skills. Moreover, the use of language skills in various job places can be discussed, analyzed, and understood.

This study also revealed that some senior participants were intimidated by the idea of using technology in the classroom. As a result, they suggested that the use of smart classes and different educational technology be part of in-service training that was lacking in their colleges. This shortcoming corresponds with the findings of a study about challenges in teaching ESP in Pakistan, where teachers did not know how to use teaching aids and other multimedia in their classrooms (Abdulaziz et al. 2013). Like their Kuwaiti counterparts, ESP

teachers in Pakistan suggested that teacher training programmes and peer help could facilitate the use of multimedia in their classrooms.

6.3.3 Staff and the administration relationship

This study revealed that the administrators' relationship with staff affected their knowledge and practices. Some teachers believed that their voices are not heard and their needs are not met by the administrations at their colleges. They also revealed some conflicts between the teaching staff and the LC that overlooks the five language units at the various colleges. In order to have a successful teaching programme administrators are required to accommodate teachers' needs and wants and provide them with opportunities for growth and accomplishment. Kuo (2009: 43) argues that: "university academic staff and administrators play critical and central roles in higher education in fulfilling the mission of education, research advancement and public service." Kuo (ibid) believes that if we look at the academic staff and the administrators from organizational and systemic perspectives, they could be regarded as two cultural organizations that through regular communication and interaction with each other construct and reconstruct relationships. In this relationship both sides, generally, "express a high level of respect and collegiality towards each others intellectual and professional contributions." Their distinct cultures that are shaped by their various functions and commitments influence how they develop and sustain their relationships (Clark, 1983 cited in Kuo 2009). This dynamic relationship is important for the fulfillment of the institutions' educational objectives and the advancement of research and professional development. However, since the academic organizations are complex, agreements and conflicts occur between the staff and the administrators (Horton and Philips, 1995 cited in Kuo, 2009).

The data in this study also suggests that the management at the vocational institutions do not perceive the LC as important as the specialized departments. This has caused some tension between the LC and the staff who think that the LC's administration needs to exert more pressure on the institution's management to consider their requirements and provide them with their essential requirements. The participants think that the LC's administrators have

limited power, which makes it difficult to fulfill the staff's academic needs. Any requirements, suggestions, or necessities that ESP teachers request has to first be approved by the Dean of the college then by the top administrators at the vocational colleges. Apparently, it is through these two channels that teachers' voices and demands go astray. This reality agrees with research on the relationship between the academic and administrative managers that suggested a fundamental tension existed between the two (Kogan, 1999).

Some participants believed that the main issue behind all their problems was that wrong people were appointed to managerial positions. Other participants described the relationship between the LC and the staff to resemble that of school principals and schoolteachers. In their view, this revealed that the administrators at the LC had the wrong idea about the academic environment and the distinctive staff and administrators' relationship, where "no one has the absolute authority within the organization (Perkins, 1973:xv, cited in Kuo, 2009:44)."

The relationship between staff and administrators should be professional and based on collegiality, dynamic interactions, and open dialogue (Kuo, 2009), because higher education staff and administrators are intellectuals whose efforts should serve not complicate the aims of their institutions.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the results of the study in relation to context and research evidence. Three interrelated themes were constructed. The first tackled teachers' knowledge and understanding of ESP practices and the development of teachers' practical knowledge. The second attempted to explain teachers' knowledge in action by examining the rationale behind teachers' practical choices and the factors that influenced them. The third theme presented the challenges encountered in implementing ESP teacher knowledge in practice at the various vocational colleges in Kuwait.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion, recommendations and suggestions

7. Preview

In this chapter I discuss the implications of the study and propose recommendations and suggestions for further investigations into teacher professional and practical knowledge in ESP. I start by presenting the conclusion of the study followed by the summary of major findings and the theoretical and pedagogical implications. I then present some implications for ESP teacher education, curriculum development and course design, and research and professional development. I also recommend some strategies for improving ESP teacher knowledge and practices based on the findings of the study. Finally, I present some suggestions for future research.

7.1 Conclusion

This study explored ESP teachers' knowledge and practices in tertiary and applied institutions in Kuwait, and found out that the connection between what teachers did and what they knew was hindered by the teaching context. Therefore, in order to understand teachers' knowledge in practice, it is necessary to study it in relation to context in which it is performed.

This study also revealed some gap between theory and practice in teaching ESP. Due to the mutual relationship between knowledge and practice, understanding teachers' knowledge becomes partial if it is not approached in relation to practice. The practical and pragmatic nature of classroom practices entails the use of qualitative methods such as classroom observations, journal writing, interviewing and discussions in order to elicit rich data about teachers' implicit theories and beliefs.

The fact that the aim of teaching is student learning, exploring learners' views and hearing their voices in studies similar to the current one could provide profound insights into the nature of ESP language teaching and learning. It could also elucidate any misconceptions and mismatch between teachers' and learners' perceptions about the teaching/learning processes. Thus, it could be argued that this study suffered the limitation of excluding the learners' voices in

data collection. Nevertheless, due to the fact that this study aimed at exploring teachers' practical lives and understanding the rationale underpinning their pedagogical decisions from their own perspectives, and due to the relatively large number of the interviewees, the use of different tools for data collection, and the amount of data that this study generated, including learners as another source for data collection was out of the scope of this study.

The findings of this research filled the gap in literature about ESP teacher knowledge and practices in the context of Kuwait and the Gulf Arab countries that share similar culture and educational perspectives. They provided future researchers with some insights into the nature of ESP teaching at vocational institutions in Kuwait and the difficulties encountered in the implementation of knowledge in practice.

7.2 Summary of major findings

This study explored ESP teachers' knowledge and beliefs about ESP practices. It focused on how this knowledge was constructed and developed and how it was shaped and influenced in practice by context. Summary of findings are discussed as follows:

7.2.1 ESP knowledge and practices at vocational institutions in Kuwait

This study revealed that ESP teachers at vocational institutions in Kuwait accumulated knowledge about language teaching formally during their undergraduate and graduate education (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Their knowledge about teaching ESP was formed 'practically' through teaching ESP courses at various vocational colleges. Their stories revealed a gap between their formal (theoretical) knowledge, and their practical (Golombek, 1998), or experiential knowledge (Wallace, 1991) gained from teaching practices. Moreover, the data exposed some areas of deficiency in ESP teachers' knowledge about teaching ESP and the changing roles of the ESP practitioner. The lack of adequate knowledge about the nature of ESP practices seemed to play a significant role in overlooking some important ESP activities. The structural approaches to language teaching and teacher-centeredness noticeably dominated the ESP classes, and the choice of methods contradicted the majority's knowledge and beliefs about language teaching and learning.

Moreover, the link between course objectives and practice seemed to be vague. The limitations in implementing ESP knowledge in practice were linked to contextual factors among which students' lack of language and study skills, as well as undesirable attitudes prevailed.

The findings also exposed teachers' beliefs that political forces and agendas played a significant role in impeding the application of knowledge in practice. They also related their passive role in improving their programmes and developing professionally to the above factor, as they perceived any attempt to change their reality beyond their control.

The power relationship seemed to play a role in a lot of the problems that this study revealed and tackled. For example, a mismatch between what some ESP teachers wanted and needed in order to implement knowledge in practice and what the LC or the administrators expected them to do was apparent. Some teachers believed that as ESP practitioners they needed to have the freedom to choose appropriate syllabuses and teaching materials for their specific courses. However, they claimed that the LC restricted teachers' autonomy. The administrators at the LC seemed to be concerned that teachers might abuse such freedom by lowering the level of instruction, thus, jeopardizing the attainment of curriculum objectives. The element of distrust and the top-down, centralized management, of the LC appeared to play a role in devaluing teachers' voices in the ESP context under study.

7.2.2 Factors affecting teachers' knowledge

The study revealed that teachers' prior knowledge as learners and teacher-learners appeared to play a role in shaping their knowledge about language teaching and learning. The participants were exposed to two different language teaching and learning environments: authoritarian/teacher-centered, and democratic/learner and learning-centered types. The majority of those who experienced the former type of teaching believed in controlled learning. This was manifested in requiring learners to study restricted sets of vocabulary and grammatical rules that followed specific sequences of simple to more complex patterns. It was also apparent in the application of structurally based assessment system to evaluate learners' language competencies. Therefore,

teachers controlled instruction, students' learning, and the type of assessment. The teaching practice of the majority of participants in this group was noticeably influenced by their previous experience of teaching and learning English using structurally based approaches. Teachers, in this study, claimed that their attempts to teach ESP using communicative task- and/or content-based approaches went astray due to learners low competency levels and an environment that lacked all the supportive requirements.

The other group of teachers who were used to learner and learning–centered approaches also found themselves following their colleagues' trail of using structural and teacher-centered approaches to teaching. Their justifications matched their colleagues and were attributed to the contextual factors. The findings also suggested that teachers attempts to use methods that facilitated learner autonomy and motivated students to be responsible for their own learning proved to be unsuccessful in their context due to students' unfamiliarity with independent learning and to their lack of ambition and motivation necessary for interactive learning.

The prevailing use of the structural approaches in the ESP classes was linked to the sterile teaching environment that lacked facilities required to promote language learning, and to students' competency level that was much below the expected level to commence their ESP courses.

Teachers experienced some conflicts with what they believed should have been done in the ESP classroom and what they were actually doing. This conflict needs to be addressed and resolved because of its negative impact on the teachers, the learners, and the ESP programme. On several occasions during the interviews teachers revealed their frustrations with their situation. This was apparent in using strong terms to describe their teaching environment. It also reflected their own emotions that varied from very frustrated, to angry, to helpless, to passive and submissive to the reality of their situation. The findings also suggested that some teachers were demotivated and lacked interest in their own professional development.

7.2.3 ESP in action

The presentation of new vocabulary and the explanation of grammar dominated the ESP classes in the vocational institutions of Kuwait. ESP teachers controlled their classes with the majority of talk and explanations, followed by sessions of questions and answers. Language skills were not introduced to learners or practiced based on realistic objectives and authentic needs. It was not clear which skill was emphasized and for what purposes. Due to students weak language skills and the absence of audio/visual aids, teachers decided to read from text and then ask students some follow up questions to evaluate their comprehension of specific terms and understanding of grammar. A student's ability to accurately or acceptably answer a question and/or the ability to complete an exercise was taken as an indication for learning even if the answers were already written on a textbook borrowed from another student. Errors were corrected in order to move on to the next exercise, or the next unit without paying attention to the reasons behind students' mistakes. Speaking skill was reduced to students' answers to teachers' questions. The lack of communicative activities and group or pair work, and the dominance of teacher-centered approaches, and the large classes allowed little opportunity for students to use the language in the classroom.

Writing skill was not practiced except in English for correspondence course. In this course some predetermined letter and e-mail structures were introduced and students had to study them for their exams. In other words, students reproduced letters and e-mails that they had already practiced instead of writing letters based on the knowledge gained from instruction and/or on their own constructive understanding about correspondence. The transmission of pre-constructed knowledge deprived learners from becoming part of the learning process, and from using creativity and intuition in the construction of knowledge.

The data also suggested that teachers preferred conventional pedagogical choices in order to control the pace of classroom activities, because they were more concerned about covering the syllabus than about how and what their students were learning (Al-Nwaiem, 2012). Moreover, some ESP teachers in

the context of this study preferred the use of conventional methods to minimize student talk and maintain discipline.

7.2.4 Challenges and the implementation of knowledge in practice

Several possibilities that could explain why teachers were unable to realize their knowledge and beliefs in their practice were identified. The choice of adopting structural approaches to teach communicative ESP courses, and the absence of content and task-based activities fundamental to ESP teaching revealed teachers' unfamiliarity with the nature of ESP and the lack of understanding of the ESP curriculum. It also suggested that the effects of contextual factors on teachers' actions and pedagogical choices outweighed the influence of their knowledge. Difficult working conditions: unequipped classes, lack of facilities, overloaded classes and schedules, students' low proficiency level, inadequate teaching materials, lack of teacher training and development courses, etc. played significant roles in teachers' decisions to remain in their comfort zones and use the familiar and easily controlled teacher-centered approaches.

Other factors that teachers believed to have hindered the application of theory in practice were related to the administrations. Teachers believed that the administrators at their colleges viewed the LC and its units as serving divisions, thus, less important than the specialized departments. Their desires and requirements remained at the bottom of the priority scale. Moreover, there seemed to be a gap or misunderstanding between the LC administrators' wants and the English language staff's needs. Teachers believed that the LC did not exert enough pressure on the institutional administration to respond to their various needs. This resulted in teachers' passiveness and indifference towards their inappropriate teaching conditions and their unproductive environment.

In addition to teachers' beliefs that the administrators were not responsive to teachers' concerns about their teaching environment and the difficulties faced in the ESP practice, the students' academic and linguistic deficiencies were perceived as the main hurdle in the road of exploiting knowledge in practice.

The primary reason preventing teachers from addressing the roots of their students' problems and attempting to find answers and solutions to change or improve them was based on a shared belief that the administrators and the students at vocational colleges did not take teaching and learning seriously. Teachers who taught at female colleges assumed that female students lacked ambition, and that the majority of the students perceived their future jobs as a source of income not as a career where, besides financial benefits, professional development and national advancement needed to be fulfilled. Teachers who taught at the male colleges shared similar views of careless and demotivated learners whose main ambition was to work for Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) and other privileged companies for the financial benefits and the incentives that those sectors offered.

Some teachers believed that their students' views were shaped by the strict, authoritarian, male-dominated tribal culture, while other teachers attributed it to corruption in the educational system.

7.3 Contributions of the study

The current study contributes to teacher knowledge and practices in general and ESP in particular from theoretical and pedagogical perspectives.

7.3.1 Theoretical contribution

This study fills a gap in literature regarding ESP teacher knowledge and practices in the Kuwaiti context. In the area of TESOL this type of research has recently gained momentum, but still considered in its infancy; in ESP it is scarce. Thus, this study not only helps expand our knowledge about ESP teaching in Kuwait, but also adds to the general knowledge that is needed to better understand ESP teacher thinking and actions. This awareness can enhance teacher educators' and programme designers' views regarding ESP teachers' "lacks", "needs", and "wants", and help them make informed and educated decisions regarding the content of ESP teacher training programmes.

This study also demonstrated the importance of qualitative research and constructivist/interpretivist mode of inquiry in understanding teachers' thoughts and actions. As was discussed previously, teachers who were supposed to be

more aware of the importance of conducting qualitative research in education, especially when attempting to understand what goes on on teachers' minds and its effect on their actions in the classroom, were reluctant to be observed, or in some cases, for their answers to interview questions to be recorded.

It is hoped that studies like this one will eventually raise all the educational stakeholders' awareness towards the importance of contributing to the world of education by participating and sharing opinions and views about teaching and learning, and justifications for decisions and actions in order to expose clearer images of what is going on in teaching and learning, and why? This can form a strong and solid base for educational change and reform that is built upon true not assumed knowledge.

In the last decade, Kuwaiti Doctoral students are becoming more aware of the importance of constructivism and social constructivism in educational research as part of their studies (Al-Nwaiem, 2012; AL-Rubaie, 2010). However, the stakeholders in Kuwait have not yet grasped the significance of this type of enquiry. This could be the result of education being conservative in Kuwait (Al-Nwaiem, ibid), and because the word "scientific research" implies that it is more accurate and reliable. Therefore, studies like this one can pave the way for constructivism to take its valuable position in the world of educational enquiry in conservative contexts such as Kuwait.

On the level of methodology, this study can provide an example of using qualitative methods such as interview, group discussion and classroom observation to elicit reliable data about the teaching/learning processes. Some teachers who were reluctant at first to participate in the interview or group discussion agreed to do so when they realized that their names will be kept confidential and alternative names will be used in data analysis and discussion. Thus, it is hoped that studies like this one can reassure and encourage subjects' participation in future studies.

7.3.2 Pedagogical contribution

This study shed some light on the possible effects of teacher knowledge on practice and the outcome of the teaching process. It revealed some deficiency

in ESP teachers' knowledge of pedagogy, or the importance of such knowledge in teaching ESP at tertiary and applied institutions in Kuwait. The findings also corresponded to research on teachers' knowledge and practices and revealed the impacts of context on knowledge and pedagogy. It is hoped that educational decision makers in general and the administrators at vocational colleges in particular could benefit from studies like this one in making informed decisions about language curriculum and improving teacher education programmes that pay attention to this important element in teacher knowledge. It also helps them realize the significant role that teaching environment can play in enhancing teaching and learning. Moreover, it enlightens them about the importance of listening to teachers and learners about instruction and valuing their views and involving them in educational plans and decisions.

7.4 Implications of the study

Several implications are recognized from the current study that could inform ESP teacher education and teacher training programmes to develop training courses that cater for ESP teachers' needs both in the context of this study and the broader context of ESP.

7.4.1 Implications for ESP teacher education

The data generated from the current study agrees with similar studies that humanity-trained English language teachers need to be acquainted with specific content knowledge (Górska-Poreçka, 2013), and be adequately prepared for their new roles and responsibilities in ESP (Chostelido et al. 2009). As far as content knowledge is concerned, the diversity of ESP courses might pose difficulty in designing courses that could familiarize prospective ESP teachers with the specific contents of various disciplines. However, ESP teacher education programmes could provide "for the understanding of abstract concepts underlying practical techniques in order to enable student teachers to adapt to novel situations and apply their knowledge in varying and changing teaching contexts (Hüttner et.al., 2009: 100)." Teacher development programmes, as will be discussed later in this chapter, could support teacher education programmes by offering more specific training courses in various disciplines related to particular contexts. By focusing on specific target places,

these courses should be geared towards familiarizing ESP teachers with the role of English in performing certain job related tasks.

Teacher education programmes could also focus on improving ESP teachers' analytical and critical thinking skills using authentic material derived from studies such as this one to illustrate when, how, and why experienced ESP teachers choose to do what they do in real classrooms. Elements such as these provide teachers the opportunity to construct knowledge based on actual practices (Borg, 1998). This kind of analytical, engaging and reflective training is significant for competent teaching (Calderhead, 1987; Berliner 1987), because it links theory to practice (Golombek, 1998). It assists teachers to make sense of theory by connecting it to, and investigating it through "experiential knowledge" formed as a result of their backgrounds as teachers and learners. This type of informed education could help fill the gap in teachers' theoretical and practical knowledge gained from experience.

Johansson's (2006) suggest that teacher educators could use research findings on teacher knowledge to improve and reinforce the training of prospective teachers. Therefore, teacher educators, for example, could design database reflective tasks that encourage analytical thinking and provide prospective teachers the opportunity to "access experienced teachers' practices and the cognition underpinning them (Abdelhafez, 2010: 269)." This act could also result in accessing their own implicit theories and beliefs, and develop awareness of the impact of their cognition on classroom practices (Borg, 1998). In other words, the practice of examining and critically analyzing and discussing authentic materials and classroom occurrences with professional trainers and experienced ESP practitioners develops a "multi-dimensional awareness" in teachers, and "the ability to apply this awareness to their actual contexts of teaching (Tomlinson, 2003:2)."

Moreover, the above suggestion could increase novice teachers' awareness of the impact of their knowledge and implicit theories on their practical decisions and help them make better and more effective choices. Additionally, it could improve experienced teachers' understanding of the relationship between teacher knowledge, practice, and the learner. This way teachers become more

like a chef who is familiar with a recipe at the same time s/he is aware of what is available in the fridge or on the cupboard's shelves. As a result, when s/he finds out that some ingredients are missing, her/his awareness of the available alternatives makes it easier for her/him to make an informed choice of using what best could replace the missing ingredient and yield a satisfying outcome.

ESP teacher education programmes also need to familiarize language teachers with the changing roles of the ESP practitioner, and to acquaint them with necessary knowledge to effectively perform the tasks and activities that the different roles impose on them. Moreover, they could use knowledge gained from research such as the current one in designing courses that address teachers' needs, lacks, and wants in the ESP context.

A crucial element of ESP practitioner's knowledge about teaching ESP, and the core activity in ESP practice (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley Evans & St Johns, 1998) that studies like this one revealed to be missing from ESP teachers' knowledge is the ability to conduct needs analysis (Munby, 1978; West, 1994). Though teachers in this study believed that this activity was a complex one, however, adequate training is desired to familiarize ESP teachers with theories underpinning different inquiries and their methodological implications. The rationale for acquiring this knowledge lies in the fact that ESP teachers are required to justify their decisions about the types of courses they design and because ESP courses must serve actual and practical needs of specific learners that are accessible only through a thorough investigation of learners' and target needs. It is also important that ESP teachers become familiar with all the other activities that follow needs analysis and are based on its results, such as curriculum development, course and syllabus designing, material designing and/or adapting, and the evaluation of the outcomes of ESP programmes in their contexts.

Additionally, the ESP practitioner needs to be aware of the criteria used for choosing different courses and teaching materials, and to understand their relevance to ESP teaching. This helps practitioners make wiser and more effective choices that ensure the attainment of their ESP programme objectives.

7.4.2 Implications for the professional development of ESP practitioners

In addition to ESP teacher education programmes, professional development programmes at tertiary and applied institutions in Kuwait, where ESP is central to its various programmes, could help fill the gap in teachers specific pedagogical content knowledge that teacher education programme was unable to cater for due to its theoretical nature.

Ongoing ESP in-service training programmes, for example, play a significant role in developing teachers' pedagogical content knowledge. This role could be more powerful and the training courses more effective when they are informed by findings from research on teachers' knowledge and practices. For example, in-service teacher training programmes could provide opportunities for teachers to update their knowledge and get fresh insights into new or different modes of practice based on realistic classroom performances (Clark, 1986; Fenstermacher, 1986; Borg, 1998).

Borg's (1998:32) asserts that the stimulated representations of classroom practices that emerge from studies like this one can be used in professional development programmes, "not as prescriptive models of exemplary teaching but to inspire other teachers to analyze their own beliefs […] and to find support for or review the *practical arguments* […] on which their own […] teaching practices are based." This kind of arguments and reflective thinking enriches teacher development programmes and provides educators and teachers alike with the opportunity to examine possibilities of the application of theory in practice. It also aids in recognizing from multiple perspectives the various factors that affect filtering teachers' knowledge, disregarding the application of existing knowledge in practice, and/or favouring a teaching method over the other. Abdelhafez (2010: 271) maintains that this would also "help trainee teachers realize that teaching is a knowledge-based activity;" and that "teaching is a rational action when teacher educators highlight teachers' knowledge as well as their practice as an integral component of teacher education [and professional development] programme[s]."

Additionally, professional development programmes could organize workshops where experienced teachers share with the participants their actual teaching

experiences. They could also arrange classroom visits as part of a training course where novice teachers could observe the realities of classroom lives and how teachers exploit knowledge in action. The observation could be followed by group discussion sessions to provide experienced teachers a chance to justify their pedagogical choices and novice teachers an opportunity to acquire or improve analytical and reflective skills. This type of practical and vital activity not only helps increase novice teachers' cognitive awareness of the nature of teaching practices, but also supports the experienced teachers' professional growth through the insights acquired from their own reflections on and justification for their actions. Novice teachers' feedback and inquiries could play a significant role in raising experienced teachers' awareness and realization of their explicit theories that could have remained unexplored provided they have not been tapped by an external observer and vice versa.

Moreover, as Borg (1998: 32) puts it, the relationship between research and practice "becomes a reciprocal relationship in which research is grounded in the realities of classroom practice but at the same time provides teachers with insights into teaching through which they can critically examine, and hence improve, their own practice."

Another important element of ESP teachers' practical knowledge that goes hand in hand with classroom observation is the awareness of the value of collaboration, teamwork, and peer support, which this study revealed to have been neglected or lacked in the Kuwaiti context (Al-Nwaiem, 2012). Smyile (1995: 103) asserts that "[o]ne of the most salient conditions [to promote learning in workplace] is opportunities for individuals to work with and learn from others on an ongoing basis;" and collaboration is believed to allow for such professional growth through "communication and examination of taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions in work and learning." Thus, professional development programmes need to emphasize the benefits of collaboration and the sharing of knowledge and encourage teamwork. This is especially important in countries like Kuwait, where educational culture do not promote such knowledge and activity. In other words, the programme can work on establishing an academic culture that promotes teachers' sense of belonging to

their institution and reveal their significant role in their professional development, hence, increase motivation and enthusiasm.

The exchange of expertise prevents teachers from reinventing the wheel and saves time to learn from and build on the existing knowledge. Experts on teacher learning such as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), Little (1999, 2002, 2003), McLaughlin and Talbert (2001, 2006), Talbert (1995), and Westheimer (1998) suggest that professional communities of practice (Plauberg, 2007) could significantly improve teachers' learning and innovations in practice through collaboration and teamwork.

Exchanging ideas and expertise in ESP is not restricted to collaboration between language teachers but extends to involve specialist teachers as well. Collaboration and teamwork with subject specialists promotes ESP teachers' understanding of the specific content and coping with subject specific issues that might emerge in the classroom. Professional development programmes could use the expertise of language teachers and subject specialist to organize workshops on the nature and benefits of collaboration and teamwork.

Some studies, however, suggest that collaboration might be regarded as money and time consuming. In this case, training programmes could use the specialist's knowledge to raise language teachers' awareness of the specialized content and the ways it informs the utilization of language in specific target situations. In other words, pre-service courses at the beginning of each term could play a significant role in familiarizing ESP teachers with the necessary knowledge of specialized content and the specific tasks that learners need to perform in various target places using their knowledge of the language, as previously mentioned.

Findings generated from studies on teachers' knowledge and beliefs, such as the current study, revealed some discrepancy between what teachers believed about teaching and learning and what they actually did in their classrooms (Borg, 2006; Mohammed, 2006). Thus, by addressing the underlying beliefs of ESP teachers about ESP practices, professional development programmes could help teachers make the implicit knowledge explicit (Freeman, 1995). This

way, teachers become more aware of their own philosophies and beliefs and realize the impact of their embedded knowledge on their practical choices. As a result, changing existing beliefs becomes more feasible, because it is much easier to improve or change an idea if one is aware of it and of its sources. Mohammed (2006) maintains that "[t]eachers are more likely to change when they are shown that a discrepancy exists between what they would ideally like to do and what they actually do." By examining theories of teaching and learning, and comparing it with teachers' personal theories, and their effects on their pedagogical choices, the intangible knowledge becomes tangible hence understandable, controllable and changeable if necessary. This allows for the reconstruction of teachers' knowledge (Zheng, 2009) based on reflection on their own practice (Borg, 1999), and on other teachers' teaching strategies that they might have overlooked in their pedagogical choices. That is why teacher-training courses that are informed by the results of studies such as this one are believed to be "a necessary stage of development for professionals (Clarke, 1982: 447)."

7.4.3 Implications for ESP curriculum development

This study suggested that some ESP teachers at tertiary institutions in Kuwait were either unaware of the ESP curriculum or confused it with the ESP syllabus. It also revealed that ESP teachers (the participants) were not involved in curriculum or syllabus design. Authorities at the educational system in Kuwait that overlooks the vocational institutions and its administrations need to be aware of the importance of using teachers' expertise when curriculum is designed or amended. Additionally, vocational colleges administrators need to realize that syllabus and course designing is not only a significant role of the ESP practitioner, but also one of the main characteristics of the ESP practice. The lack of agency, and the fact that teachers' voices were excluded from educational policies decision-making, and were ignored in recommending what language curriculum needed to include was supported by similar studies such as Al-Nwaiem's (2012). It was also revealed in Troudi's (2006) study, which indicated that: "teachers are often excluded from educational policy and play an insignificant role in decision making."

Studies like the current one become important in informing administrators and in raising their awareness about the significance of involving experienced ESP teachers in curriculum planning and designing. This kind of involvement helps link theory to practice and results in designing relevant curriculum that responds to genuine needs of the stakeholders, not on the assumptions of foreign experts who may be out of touch with the reality of the context for which the ESP curriculum is designed.

Another important issue that curriculum developers need to consider in designing ESP curriculum is the crucial role that contextual factors play in implementing knowledge in practice and in attaining programme objectives. It is not logical nor feasible to expect teachers to teach communicatively based courses when the teaching environment, including learners' background, does not support the application of such methods. Thus, the vocational colleges' decision makers must take into consideration the importance of providing the right environment that facilitate the implementation of knowledge in practice and promote learning. They must also be aware of the significance of ESP as a supporting subject and the crucial role it plays in the success of the specialized programmes. The officials at vocational colleges must realize that the various language units' needs for fully equipped classrooms and language labs that facilitate presenting, simulating, and performing the target tasks is a necessity not luxury.

Moreover, they need to cooperate with the MOE in tackling the problems of students' low competency level and the lack of essential learning skills and come up with solutions to improve future students' literacy. This is important because vocational college programmes are designed based on learners' accumulated prior knowledge.

7.5 Recommendations and Future research

The current research could have implications for future educational research. Qualitative research is still in its infancy in Kuwait, therefore there is a need to promote this type of research in order to get insights into the nature of language teaching in general and ESP teaching in particular in the Kuwaiti context. It is also needed in order to recognize factors that influence curriculum

and course design and implementations. Perceiving educational problems and phenomena from multiple perspectives help in delivering a lucid picture of the reality, which could contribute to finding more accurate and pertinent solutions.

In addition, there is a need for researching novice teachers' experience in teaching ESP and comparing it with the knowledge of experienced teachers. Investigating both experienced and novice teachers' knowledge complements both types of endeavor and increases our understanding of the factors that influence the way teacher knowledge about ESP practice is filtered and constructed.

There is also a need to investigate the effects of political views on education in Kuwait in general and language education in particular, and to explore the reasons behind the low language proficiency levels of the students after twelve years of English language instruction. This type of endeavor could contribute to research in the field of teacher knowledge in general by providing insights into the role of context in shaping teacher knowledge and practices.

There is also a need to study the effects of bottom-up or decentralized educational systems on the outcome of educational programmes in comparison with the top-down centralized ones. This type of study could emphasize the role of agency and the importance of giving more weight to experienced teachers and practitioners' voices in educational decisions especially in relations to curriculum, instruction, and the teaching environment.

ESP Learners, as stakeholders, also need to be approached qualitatively to get insights into their version of the story and compare it with teachers' knowledge and perceptions of learners and learning. This could provide a wider perspective of the problems that are assumed to hinder the teaching/learning processes and suggest solutions for improvement.

As was discussed in chapter five and six of this study, the participants expressed strong emotions when they shared stories about their professional experiences. This could inform research on teachers' emotions and their impacts on the implementation of knowledge in practice and on professional development.

Another relevant issue that this study revealed was that ESP teachers were not keen on pursuing personal professional development. They seemed to be disappointed with their teaching environment that resulted in their passive attitudes. It is important to investigate this issue and realize all the factors that contributed to this kind of attitude in order to change it. Teachers are expected to inspire their students and increase motivation and interest in learning. Passive and demotivated teachers cannot foster enthusiasm in their learners and cannot be sources of inspiration.

The current study could also inform researchers who are interested in understanding and improving teaching and learning through the study of knowledge and practice in the field of language teaching. It could also inform researchers in other educational fields by providing some methodological information that could be used as guidelines for future research.

7.6 My Personal research Journey

Embarking on this journey and getting engaged in constructing, researching, and making sense of this study has been empowering both academically and personally.

Reading about the philosophical assumptions that underpin our belief system and govern the interpretations and meanings that we bestow upon various realities and phenomena helped me realize how I have been making sense of the world around me. This realization is very important because I am able now, more than any time before, to understand why I think the way I do, and how that thinking process influences my choices not only in professional advancements but also in life in general. Throughout the study and as I got engaged in interviewing, transcribing, interpreting and making sense of data I have been refining my lenses to synthesize meaning. Consequently, my reflective, evaluative, and analytical skills improved.

My knowledge was continuously challenged with new insights and provocative questions that my supervisor asked. The discussions that we had about the topic of the study and some relevant issues illuminated the flaws in my

arguments and enlightened me not to lose sight of the broader picture and all the forces that could influence a phenomenon.

As a result, I became more aware of my own biases and realized how different belief systems or prejudices can produce different viewpoints about the same phenomenon. For the first time I learnt not to be judgmental as a researcher or at least to control the urge. I learnt to accept the reality as is, and instead of deciding on how much of what is being said reflects the truth, as I saw it, I found myself intrigued to understand others' points of view and realize why people act or react the way they do – in this case the participants of the study. I recognized that making sense of a phenomenon or a problem in education entails the understanding of the sociopolitical structure of the context of study. This is especially important in countries like Kuwait where religion and tradition influence policymaking and shape people's mental lives. This understanding will help me start any research project in the future more attentively and with an open mind to all possible influences.

On personal bases this study helped me understand why I was able to swim against the currents and challenge my own belief system, customs and traditions. In a conservative country like Kuwait and as a female it is not always easy to question traditions and common believes. This study helped me realize what was going on in my mind and why I was doing what I was doing. It is only when one understands oneself that appreciating others become possible.

On the professional level it taught me that philosophical arguments could be developed and applied in response to a broad range of educational concerns (Haydon and Orchard, 2004). It helped me realize that in order for our educational system and policy to be reformed, people ought to understand the philosophy and aims of education. This awareness, in my view, becomes a fundamental requirement and a crucial element of teacher knowledge.

Appendix 1

Teachers' interview questions

I. Knowledge of ESP

1. How did you get familiar with ESP?
2. How long have you been teaching ESP?
3. How would you explain your experience as an ESP teacher?
4. Taking your experience into account, what type of knowledge a language teacher needs in order to teach ESP?
5. How different is teaching ESP from teaching EGP?
6. How important is this knowledge in your teaching?

II. Knowledge of ESP content and pedagogy

7. What are the sources of your ESP content knowledge?
8. How does ESP content knowledge affect your teaching?
9. How do you decide what content your students need?

Prompts: a) How do you assess your students' needs?

b) Have you been involved in any ESP activities such as, needs analysis, course and material design, research and course evaluation?

c) How important is it for you to be involved in these activities?

10. Could you describe a typical ESP classroom experience showing how you make use of your knowledge in teaching?
11. What is your ides of a successful ESP classroom experience?
12. How much of that corresponds with the teaching/learning environment at your college?
13. How do you prepare for your ESP classes?
14. What approaches do you think are important for teaching ESP?
15. How do you assess your students' performance in ESP?

III. Prior knowledge and self awareness

16. How would you describe your experience as a language learner?
17. How would you describe the methods and techniques that your teachers used in teaching the language?
18. Could you describe the type of language learner you were?
19. Do you recall a teaching experience that had any effect on your practice?
20. How would you explain your experience as a teacher-learner?
21. How would you describe your experience as a language teacher?
22. What experience had the most effect on your teaching today?
23. From your experience both as language learner and teacher, what do you think language students need to become successful ESP learners?

IV. Challenges in teaching ESP

24. What challenges have you encountered in teaching ESP?
25. How do you cope with these challenges?
26. Would you like to add anything else?

Appendix 2
Interview transcript

Q: How would you describe your experience as a language learner?

A: I enjoyed language classes in other … like private institutions. You know those that offered summer courses, like AMIDEAST, private institutions that offered summer programmes. But government schools programmes were traditional although they used to use some teaching aids like [wasael] Charts and games. I used to enjoy hangman for example. I used to enjoy the games more than reading texts from our textbooks, the government's textbooks.

Prompt: Could you explain why you enjoyed AMIDEAST and private institutions programmes more?

A: Their curriculum was communicative. I mean… first of all, I liked the idea that they were foreigners. You know when you are taught in government schools is different from being taught by foreigners [native speakers].

Prompt: What do you mean by: they were different? Could you explain, please?

A: Because the native speakers have the culture as well. You want to learn English from a native speaker, because you think, s/he's a foreigner, I want to communicate with her/him and show that I can speak the language, especially when you are young and want to show off, you know it is different. My mother used to enroll me in those schools in the summer, like Gulf English School. I used to enjoy it. We used to have many activities, colouring, and conversation. We used to learn a lot from the conversing. They used books, of course, in teaching, but even their books were different. Pictures were different, the font was larger, and their style was totally different. Even the way we were seated, we used to sit in groups, unlike government schools where students used to sit in double rows, or like our classes here at our college, where students sit in single rows, you know. And there were fewer students in each class.

Prompt: So you mean in private institutes they used to use group work activities, but not in government schools?

A: Yes, and I remember we had conversation classes when I got older and joined AMIDEAST, we used to be seated in u shape classes, which made it easier for the teacher to walk around and talk to all of us.

Q: Do you recall a teaching experience that had any effect on your teaching now?

A: Look as a language class, even now when I teach you have to be careful not to make students hate the class because of the teacher. When a very strict teacher comes to the class, especially from other Arab countries, I don't want to mention what countries, but their accents, their teaching styles, you know, it's different from, you know, we used to have Kuwaitis who used to teach us, who had American or British accents, and their teaching styles, especially in Secondary schools were more communicative. But at Secondary school, where I specialized in English, we had a course in translation, a course in reading, a course in composition. In Intermediate school, they used the Emirates' textbooks. I started English at Intermediate not Primary school and our books used to come from Emirates.

Q: OK. Would you like to add anything else?

A: Look, in Secondary school, it was the composition course. I remember that my teacher read my composition assignment to the whole class. She was so impressed with my writing; with the vocabulary I used. At University, it was the same; I remember my teacher expressed his fascination with my writing style and the words I used, but of course, I had mistakes, but of course he told me that my mistakes were minor compared with the level of my writing; because I like to write about something that is tangible. When I have a project in linguistics and I'm asked me to write about something specific is different than asking me to write about just anything based on my imagination. It's easier for me than to write something out of imagination. My analytical or critical writings were the ones that I got high grades on.

Prompt: So does that mean acknowledging your effort was a positive influence on you?

A: Yes, of course, it was their encouragement, because I wasn't expecting that they would like it, or that I was actually good at writing. So this enhanced my confidence and motivated me to do even better next time. That's why I try to encourage my students even for minimum efforts.

Q: How would you describe the methods and techniques that were used in teaching you the language?

A: I remember the teacher used to sit on her chair. I don't remember that they used to walk; I don't remember any movements. I don't remember any group works. May be they've done it, but I really don't remember. All that I remember as students we used to sit in rows and the teacher sits on her chair and starts explaining the lesson. She used to talk most of the time explaining the lesson then asks us to apply what she explained by doing some exercise. Only one teacher that I recall that used the u shape class, but still our language classes were really boring.

Prompt: Why do you think they were boring?

A: It's just the typical government schools were you go to the class, the teachers teach and you go home and do the homework, that's it. I don't remember doing projects or getting involved in any way. I don't remember at Secondary school, but University was different of course. I enjoyed studying at the university.

Q: How would you describe your experience as a teacher-learner at the university? And, What experience had the most effect on your teaching today?

A: Look, when I did my Masters degree, I realized that we're supposed to do a lot of role-play. And there are activities that can bring the language classroom to life, for example, instead of calling the students by name, for example, Fatima answer the question, or Sarah answer the question, you take a ball and throw it to the students and the one who catches it answers the question. This way the class will become more fun and you get students to answer your questions. So I learnt that we should include more games in our classes. I learnt that not always the teacher, but also the students' role is important. I

didn't know before, but now that I've learnt during the Master's programme, now I feel I can look back and recall those things.

Prompt: So you learnt that during your teacher-training programme?

A: No, it wasn't a teacher-training programme as such, but we used to learn how to teach the language. I had some courses where I visited schools and analyzed teaching, but there was a kind of friendship between us as students, and our teachers. It's especially important in language programmes, because Medicine, for example, is different; teachers have to be tough and serious, but in a language class the teacher should be flexible and friendly.

Q: In what way your postgraduate experience influenced you to become the teacher you are today?

A: First of all, teachers' style in teaching is really great! I just love the American way in teaching, because they act like your friends. I haven't tried the British way, so I can't tell. But in America they depend on projects, they assess students' works based on the whole term's work. For example, they don't' assign 50% of the total mark for the finals. 50% is assigned for the project, 25% for midterm 25% for the final. In addition, our professor used to give himself a nickname, he gives the class an informal atmosphere when he lies back casually on his chair and is very lenient. He's lenient in a nice way. You can't but respect him although he seems to be very lenient. When they ask you about your opinion in something, they respond by saying 'wow!' or show how impressed they are. They make you feel you have come up with something new; that you know or have learnt something, not that he's the only knower, or belittling your knowledge. No, they make you feel that you also know; that what you say is also important. If you ask him a question that he doesn't know, he says I don't know, let me go check it for you. So he makes you feel that you are both researching, both of you are looking for the answer. Not just you…you know that he knows everything…you know that when he says Wow! He actually knows it, but he's trying to motivate you and encourage you to say your opinion, and that your opinion is wow and new and that I haven't heard this before, you know. I also learnt that the textbooks we use to teach our general

English courses that includes pronunciation, reading, grammar and so on, all in one book is not effective for our students. We must have separate book for each skill; a course for teaching pronunciation; a course for teaching writing, a course for teaching reading, each skill separately. Then it should be related to what they do in their lives. That's why I don't like their courses. In one term they have to do all that.

Prompt: OK. Do you recall a language teacher that had an effect on you?

A: At the University, I had a teacher whose class was very interactive. I mean dialogue. I also remember a British teacher who used to teach us semantics, I never made an A in her class because her exams were really difficult, but I used to learn from her. What I liked about her was the fact that I learnt something from her classes. She knew I was a good student, she wrote me recommendation letter for the university when I applied for the Masters degree. She was aware of my analytical skills, but her exams were difficult, but I used to like it.

Q: Could you describe the type of language student you were?

A: I was a calm student; and I was a good student. I was enthusiastic. I was the kind of student who would make the teachers notice her. I remember my teachers used to notice me from the beginning of the school year.

Prompt: What about your learning style? How did you study the language?

A: I remember from the beginning of the school year my teachers used to notice me. I study the theoretical way, where you open the book and read and highlight the important parts. I didn't study for composition or translation. I just memorized the vocabulary words and studied the grammatical rules.

Q: From your experience both as a language learner and as a language teacher, what do you think a student needs to become a successful ESP learner?

A: First of all motivation. Then, they have to be familiar with the culture and experience it. I remember that when I learnt English at school, I didn't have the

opportunity to practice the language. Who was there for me to communicate with? With the Pilipino maids, or the teacher who I don't see except in the classroom. So, the students need to practice. Practice is a must. For example, if she's motivated she can travel abroad to an English speaking country and take courses there. Ireland, Britain, and so on and live in the culture. They also need to read newspaper and improve their vocabulary. They need to take vocabulary notes. They also need listening, a lot of listening to become familiar with…with all skills. They are integrated, but first of all they need structure, because structure is like the buildings foundation, so the most important is structure, then language function comes with culture. You don't teach language function…of course you give them ideas, you do thank you, I'm sorry and that stuff that they know about. But language function is embedded in the culture. It's in the films, in everyday language, and it's different from one country to another.

Prompt: How much of that corresponds with your students' situation?

A: Not much. First of all, they are not motivated to learn the language. They just want to pass, get good grades to graduate. Just a few of them who care and sit in the front rows, a few good students also sometimes sit at the back rows, because though their language is good but they are not interested to learn more. Those who are really interested are very few; those who come ask how? and give me the name of the dictionary?…and sometimes I give them the name of a dictionary and tell them this is English/English dictionary. A few only come to me asking about it. They are not motivated. The majority's attitude is that English is a required course and that they need to take it in order to graduate.

Q: Could you tell me what your major is?

A: Masters in TESOL from the United States.

Q: How long have you been teaching ESP?

A: Since 2007. Four years now.

Q: How did you get familiar with ESP?

A: I got familiar with it through teaching here at the CBS.

Q: Did you have any teaching experience before teaching ESP?

A: I taught part-time at the Communication and Navigation Institute. I taught general English courses there.

Q: Based on your experience in teaching ESP and EGP, how different is teaching ESP from EGP?

A: ESP is more focused. I remember when I did my Masters degree they taught us about needs analysis. You have to know why the students are learning English. Why do they need English? They need it for business. Many of our students are specializing in Banking. They want to work at banks; they want to talk to foreign customers. So they need English to talk on the phone with their clients, so I teach them something that's not included in their curriculum, such as telephone expressions, because they need it, because I know they need to use telephone expressions at Banks. So, yes, I enjoy teaching ESP more than GEP. The general English course's focus is more on grammar. Although in ESP we teach grammar, but it is still more focused. Even when the grammar is general, the vocabulary and language functions are more focused. Reading is also related.

Q: How important is this knowledge in your teaching?

A: ESP motivates me to read more about my students' specialization. I read online about things related to Banking, about telephoning.

Q: So is that the only source of your content knowledge?

A: Yes, and my textbook of course.

Q.: How do you decide what content your students need?

A.: Well, I know I'm supposed to design a questionnaire and decide based on that, but I don't do that. It's my assumption. I assume that this will help them.

Q: Taking your teaching experience into account, what type of knowledge a language teacher needs to teach ESP?

A: We need to visit banks for example and see how they correspond. This is good for our corresponding courses. We have to be involved with the job market outside our colleges, so our programmes become more authentic. Yes, we need to be exposed to the business… business sector.

Prompt: Have you ever done this before: visiting work places?

A: No, because I don't have time. I have two kids that I need to take care of.

Prompt: Has any of your colleagues been involved in assessing target needs?

A: I really don't know.

Prompt: Have you been involved in any ESP activities such as: needs analysis, course and material designing/adapting or programme evaluation?

A: I heard that one of our colleagues wanted to design a textbook for corresponding but it wasn't approved, because they have to follow some rules and regulations to write a textbook. You have to be at least a lecturer to think of designing a book, for example.

Prompt: So you mean they didn't do it because of the rules and regulations?

A.: I really don't know, but through my experience, I really didn't see anyone do any needs analysis or visit any work place. And I really don't know why? I don't know the reasons behind not doing it.

Q: OK. How important is it for you to be involved in ESP activities?

A: It is important, but there must be a committee that does that.

Prompt: Is this a suggestion?

A: Yes, of course. But we do have conventional [aadi] ESP committee. They just review books to see whether they suit our students or not.

Prompt: What types of books?

A: Books that are published abroad. Although the books are good, but our culture is different, I mean sometimes, like the correspondence book, it should include something that is related to us… for example, what is place an order? We don't do this in Kuwait.

Q: In your opinion, how suitable your books are now for your ESP courses?

A: 154 is OK, but 204 no, not at all. 204 for example is not based on the students' needs. We have a book that I follow, and that's it, but the 154's textbook is good, I like it because of the various activities included in it. But the 204 book is hard especially for our students. It includes many unrelated topics, for example, meetings. OK, you can give them some idea of a meeting and some points to remember, but our students after graduation need many years of work to get to executive positions where they need to attend meetings. So why to bother? Why not give them something they need now?

Prompt: So could you explain what you usually do when you don't like the content?

A: First of all, I try to make it simple. I try to give them more exercise and I use a lot of supplementary materials. We have to be realistic, our students are very weak and a lot of them don't need English when they work except banking and computer students.

Prompt: What criteria do you follow in designing your syllabus?

A.: When I became a coordinator for 154, I realized that some of the units are really boring, so I focused on the units that were more relevant, like money and banking, something more authentic based on my assumption.

Prompt: Is there any teaching material that you consciously avoid in teaching ESP? Why?

A: Listening, because I have to bring a tape recorder and…no, no, no…if it's not available in the classroom, I can't bring it with me.

Q: Anything else?

A: I think I avoid the culture…I don't want to discuss culture because I don't want to get involved into religious discussions.

Prompt: How important is ESP for a country like Kuwait?

A: Very important for business and companies, because you find workers from different foreign countries like India, Russia and so on, But ESP is for students whose English language is much better than our students. For example, for Institute of Banking students; for university's students; for Medical students, it's really helpful.

Prompt: Why not your students?

A: May be at the College of Technological Studies, for example. Those colleges where there are applied studies and they prepare Assistant Engineers yes, but not at our college here.

Prompt: Why? Could you elaborate, please?

A: Ahhh. I think it's …. Well, the number of good students being accepted each year at our college is really low. The majority is really educationally poor with very low standards in almost all subjects. So, we teachers find ourselves forced to lower teaching standards to match our students' level. So the lower you go the level or performance becomes poorer.

Q: OK. Could you tell me why you chose teaching as a profession?

A: errr…I didn't choose it [laughs]. When I did my Masters degree, which was in TESOL, because I wanted to continue my education, I wanted to get my Masters and PhD. So my goal was more to get a higher degree than to teach. It doesn't mean that I hate teaching, but at the same time I wasn't so keen about it. I didn't do the Masters to teach but to improve my academic standards. My objectives were to do it for me more than any other thing.

Q: How would you describe yourself as a teacher?

A: I'm lenient with the students, but then I tried to change my style, cause I thought I'm being lenient because I'm new, so I changed myself, but then realized that I can't change I'm lenient. I think I need to learn how to be a teacher. I still don't feel that I'm a professional teacher.

Prompt: Why?

A: Because I started my Masters degree without any teaching background. Now if I start my PhD, I feel I understand teaching better. I taught one course only before my Masters degree, and it was a general course, so when I learnt about how to teach and what techniques to use and came here, I found out that it's impossible for me to apply what I've learnt. May be if I was in another college I would have done differently, but I still feel that I'm the kind of teacher that my attitude in the class changes according to my students' levels. If the class is dull I try to change the students' mode but if they are not interested it affects me.

Q: What would you do to change some of your challenges?

A: I wish that many things could be different. For example the large number of students…I want to teach smaller classes. I remember teaching at Kuwait University's Public Service, where classes are offered in the evenings for the public. I remember I had only 10 students in my class, sitting in a u shape class. I felt the difference. The difference in the students' levels, their interaction…I really enjoyed it. I'd like it here to be the same. Here at our college we face many challenges, for example ethical problems, the types of students we have here. They are low achievers. They are so careless; they come to the class with their mobiles and they keep texting and using it in the class, things like that that really annoys you as a teacher.

Prompt: What do you mean by ethical problems?

A: For example, they come late to the class. I don't like it. Even though they know the rules, they keep coming late and then they take the class time in begging me to allow the in, they always have excuses. I haven't seen people that have so many excuses and so much problems or accidents in my life, and

this takes a large amount of class time. Errr…the mobiles that keep ringing, even though you threaten them and tell them I'll take your phones away from you, but they don't care. So there are things that keep interrupting the class, and I don't like that.

Q: How do you cope with this problem?

A: It's their culture. No matter what we do, it's the environment that they have come from that makes them this way. They are adult students, college level, so it's difficult to interfere with them.

Prompt: What do you mean by the environment they come from?

A: Their mentality is quite different than our mentality. We are more liberal, while they come from closed and tight families and culture…very strict kind of culture. They are more into religion…I mean we are all religious, but they follow religion in a more traditional way. Their traditions have a big influence on them. So, you can't talk about things like…I mean when you want to talk about a foreign language sometimes you talk about the foreign culture, you talk about movies, and things like that… but you can't do that with our students. It just limits our roles as teachers in the classroom. You just can't do it.

Prompt: In this case, what do you choose to do?

A: I abide by the curriculum, that's it. I teach them the rules and stuff.
I taught at the College of Basic Education during the summer, and I feel that the students' level affects me. When the students interact, I feel good, teach better and give more activities. But if the students are lazy and don't want to interact I get bored and don't like to teach.

Prompt: What do you choose to do when your students don't participate?

A: I ask the student, if she didn't answer I give her a chance but then other students answer the question. I used to call them by names, at the beginning, but now I don't do this anymore. Those who want to participate, fine, I engage them, and those who don't like to participate it's up to them.

Prompt: So you choose not to engage them because they don't want to?

A: Yes, they don't want to talk and you have more than 45 students in each class…if the number was less, you can give them time to encourage them to talk and to grade them, but with 45 students how can you manage? It's difficult.

Prompt: Have you thought of other solutions for the problem?

A: As I told you my goal is Academic more than it is teaching. I don't see my job as only teaching. As a member of the academics I have to do research also. I like research more than teaching. I mean I like teaching but I don't see that it helps me academically, like doing research…

Q: What are the areas you feel that you want to improve in your teaching?

A: Errr…exercises…I feel I need a bank of exercises for all of us. If I can benefit from retired teachers' experience, the inspectorates. I'd like to hear what they used to do. And courses may be, attending training courses.

Prompt: Have you attended any training courses?

A.: No, not any training courses, but a course in scientific research.

Prompt: What about pre- or in-service training courses for ESP teachers for example?

A: No, no. But sometimes we have presentations that are beneficial. For example, the other day we had a presentation about reading comprehension, and I feel it added to my knowledge. It helped me explore the reading in my class.

Prompt: So you think presentations are helpful for professional development?

A: Yes, I do. Although I've been teaching for four years now, I still don't see myself as a confident teacher who teaches professionally. No, I need more training and experience.

Prompt: Does the LC offer any teacher developing programmes or in-service training courses?

A: No, but it should. Like in private schools, they always have staff training programmes.

Prompt: Do you think a teacher-training programme is needed?

A.: Yes, very much.

Prompt: What would be a good training course for ESP teachers?

A: It's good to have a training day or a workshop, something like that. And it includes things like the reading I told you about. How to teach them reading? How to teach business? How to design your tests and how to assess students?

Prompt: How would you describe your first encounter with ESP at your college? Did you have any kind of orientation about it?

A: No, they just gave me textbooks and a schedule, that's it. I used to go and ask when I had a question.

Prompt: What does teaching mean to you?

A: Ahhh…teaching….like for example…the students are here to study English, their objective is to learn English…I help them improve their language. Ahhh…the language objectives when I teach primary school is different from teaching high school and from teaching college students. So teaching for me is the transmission of experience. The students benefit from your teaching style and your explanation.

Prompt: What motivates you in teaching ESP?

A: ESP motivates me to read more about my students' specialization. I read online about things related to Banking, about telephoning. Yes, I like to do that.

Q: How does ESP content knowledge affect your teaching?

A: To me it's about how to use the language in business, and I like the fact that I'm learning from it. But I remember teaching computer, that course annoyed me, because it was very technical. I didn't like it. It was as if I'm teaching them

about computers, the different parts of the computer. This is not a language course anymore. I enjoyed business more because it's not as technical.

Prompt: How would you change the computer course to become more appealing in teaching?

A: I think I would have used more reading comprehension that talks about computers and their uses, or may be conversation, but then what would you use in a conversation to make it more related to the field of computer? May be, I'd use more reading, some listening about computers, but with vocabulary, OK may be they just need to memorize some terms, that's it.

Prompt: So does this mean you didn't like the technical nature of your computer courses?

A: Yes, because they take courses in computers and its uses. So if I want to teach them that in English, I'm only repeating what they already know. I need to work on the language not the technical terms and usage.

Q: Looking back at you teaching experience, how would you compare your teaching now and then?

A: I think I've changed. First of all, at the beginning when I used to go to the class and see the students, and see that they are adults, and I don't have any experience, I used to go strictly by the book…teach and get out of the class…I used to talk in a low voice, but now I talk more, I talk to the students more not only about the subject but also as an older sister. Now I'm so used to them that I joke around with them.

Prompt: Do you still abide by the syllabus?

A: I do follow what I'm supposed to cover, but I also use supplementary materials. I like to add something new every time, like a new comprehension passage, and so on.

Q: What dimension of yourself that you recognize and wish to maintain in your teaching?

A: I'm friendly with the students. True, I don't allow the students to come and nag about their personal problems, but I'm very understanding, I listen to them, but the final decision is mine. So there is a limit, but I'm happy with the limit and so are my students.

Q: What dimension of yourself that you don't like as a teacher and wish to change?

A: What I really dislike and find difficult to do is to be firm with the grades, I mean when a student gets F it means F. I still think may be the question was too difficult for her, let me raise her grade. I still do this. I'm still very soft, very generous when it comes to grading, which I don't like…because I know I won't be unfair to them if I give them their grades as they are, but I look at the name and think she's got B but I know she deserves A it makes me feel bad … I really feel bad about it, so raise her grade.

I really don't like that 50% of the grade goes for the final, I think it's too much. May be I didn't prepare the final in a fair way for the students…I still struggle about this issue.

Q: What is your idea of a successful ESP classroom experience?

A: When I explain the lesson, then I do active exercise. I give them a piece of paper, for example, when I taught at the College of Basic Education, I gave them cross words, and I give a variety of exercises, then I feel that this class is a complete one, my teaching and their activities, not only teaching and explaining without students' involvement. I think the class time should be split 50/50 between the teacher and the students or 60/40 but it should be interactive.

Q: Could you describe a typical ESP classroom experience showing how you make use of your knowledge in teaching?

A: I don't think there is a typical ESP class, I teach them reading and vocabulary that's related to that specific course. I don't think there is anything I could mention to you as this is the ESP class.

Q: How do you prepare for your ESP classes?

A: Well, let's say today we have reading, and you know reading takes time, and we have 45 minutes for example, or today we have grammar, we only take grammar. I don't integrate them all together: reading, grammar, language function. No, I teach each skill separately.

Prompt: Now say you've prepared grammar or comprehension, what do you do when you're in the class?

A: I distribute the time between me and the students 50/50. I explain the lesson then I give them exercise for practice. In the correspondence course, I let the students write on the board.

Prompt: What type of activities do you prefer in teaching ESP? For example: group work or simulation and role-play, etc.

A: I don't use these activities, because I have 45 students in my class, and I teach 14 hours, I'll be exhausted with correction and evaluation.

Prompt: So you see the problem in the large class size?

A: Yes, that and the number of courses I'm teaching…14 hours of teaching. The students are very weak…so here a lot of things disappoint us…a lot of things make you minimize your activities in the classroom. So many things…you come back after getting your Master's degree with a high GPA, and you want to apply what you've learnt, but no, no, here you just can't do it.

Prompt: Could you elaborate more on the things that disappointed you in your teaching?

A.: The large number of students, their poor levels, even if I think of giving them projects, how can I evaluate their projects. It will burn you out. 45 students, 5 classes. You shouldn't take your work home with you. You should do some academic research. If I'm planning to go for my PhD, I need time to search; with 45 students in each class, midterms, finals, no, no, it's impossible.

Q: What are the sources of your ESP content knowledge?

A: The textbook of course and online resources.

Prompt: Are you engaged in any research in your field?

A: I'm planning to go for my PhD so I'm searching in the field I'm planning to study.

Prompt: I mean any research as part of your profession to improve the teaching/learning situation?

A: No, no. I haven't been involved in any research activity.

Prompt: Could you explain why?

A: I really don't have time. My time is distributed between my students at the college, and my kids at home. I do take some of my work home to finish it, so I don't have energy to do anything else.

Prompt: Is there any committee that encourages research?

A: No, we don't have any research committee.

Q: What approaches do you prefer to use in teaching ESP?

A: I like to use a variety of exercises…communicative exercise, like role-play, not just fill in blanks the typical exercise we use now. I wish we had smart rooms those with power point and stuff like that. Our classes are not equipped; we can't bring a laptop no, no, no. This is not right. We don't have any teaching aids.

Q: How do you assess your students' knowledge about ESP?

A: Like I said before, we focus mainly on grammar and vocabulary, the comprehension could be any text related to the ESP course, and the language function. And usually I give extra marks because I think our tests don't reflect the students' levels, I think may be the questions I've asked weren't the right questions, may be the technique I'm using is not the right technique.

Prompt: Have you tried to change the exam's structure or do anything to change this situation?

A: Yes, I changed the midterm's mark from 30 to 25, because in assessing my students I don't want to relay on the exams only, because sometimes the student may be ill or something, and doesn't do well, then it will be unfair to her. I have a student who got 48 out of 50 on her term work, but didn't do very well on the final exam and got a C+, so I think I really feel bad when this happens.

Q: What challenges have you faced in teaching ESP?

A: I noticed here at the Language Center that the exams are really very traditional; the style is very old. And when you come and suggest something they don't accept it and say that this is how we assess our students. I feel disappointed. Firstly, from the building and our classes, it's really old; then, there is the large classes, and our teaching loads. The administration, if they make our lives easier here, we will feel more relaxed and do better, but if they impose your timetable on you, or if you have extra load, or if the courses times are not suitable, for example I can't take the two o'clock course cause I have to pick up my kid from school. These psychological issues affect us. Also we need to change our traditional teaching and assessment, we need to improve. Also when I compare us language teachers with teachers in other departments, you feel you are a schoolteacher not a college teacher, not an academic. I want to feel that I'm academic, that I research. I feel that here the administrators' mentality is very old fashioned; it must change and renovate.

Q: What would have you done to change the situation?

A: First of all I would trust the teaching staff whether they hold Master's of PhD. I form a committee from people I trust, people with experience that I know can do the job. I would enforce workshops, training days. I distribute the work among all teachers; I would encourage teamwork. It would be really good to have meetings. I really like the workshops that we have started.

Q: Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

A: Yes, I want to say that even if you've got a degree and have done a great work, it doesn't necessarily mean that you will be a good teacher. Teaching is experience, the more you teach the more you learn. When you actually go into a class then you can decide whether you can use what you learnt or not. Experience comes with time, so we need more time to become good teachers.

I really enjoyed it and I feel I always wanted to say these things. The things we need and the things we lack. I look forward to know about your work's result in a presentation or a workshop. Good Luck!

Appendix 3

Pre-determined and emergent Analytical codes

Analytical Codes Related to Areas of Teacher Knowledge

Topic 1	Theme	Category	Code
Knowledge of ESP			**KE**
	Knowledge of ESP content and pedagogy		**KCP**
		Focused courses	KCP-FC
		Subject vs. Content	KCP-SC
		Syllabus and approach	KCP-SA
		Teaching grammar and vocabulary	KCP-GV
		Fluency vs. Accuracy	KCP-FA
		Teacher/learner roles	KCP-TLR
		Teaching material	KCP-TM
		Assessment in ESP	KCP-Ass
	Knowledge of ESP practitioners' roles		**KEP**
		As a teacher	KEP-T
		As a collaborator	KEP-C
		As a researcher	KEP-R
		As course and material provider	KEP-D
		As course and material evaluator	KEP-E
	Knowledge of ESP Activities		**KEA**
		Needs Analysis	KEA-NA
		Curriculum and syllabus design	KEA-CS
		Course and material design	KEA-CM
		Course and material evaluation	KEA-CME
		Programme evaluation	KEA-PE
		Research and development	KEA-RD
	Knowledge of the ESP Learner		**KEL**
		Focused aims	KEL-FA
		Language competency	KEL-AC
		Attitude to learning	KEL-AL
		Motivation	KEL-M

	Source of ESP Knowledge		**SEK**
		Formal knowledge	SEK-F
		Practical knowledge	SEK-P
		Reading (books, periodicals, Internet)	SEK-R
		Conference and workshop	SEK-CW
	Source of content knowledge		**SCK**
		Text/Teacher book	SCK-B
		Internet	SCK-I
		Conference	SCK-C
Topic 2			
Teachers' Personal Knowledge			**PK**
	Knowledge as a learner		**PKL**
		Attitude to learning the language	PKL-LL
		Attitude to learning environment	PKL-LE
		Learning Experience	PKL-LX
		Methods in language teaching	PKL-TM
		Learning style	PKL-LS
	Knowledge as a teacher-learner		**PKTL**
		Learning Experience	PKTL-LX
		Positive Experience	PKTL-PX
		Negative Experience	PKTL-NX
		Influence of Experience	PKTL-IX
		Favourite Methods	PKTL-FM
	Knowledge as a teacher		**PKT**
		Teaching Experience	PKT-TX
		Favourite Methods	PKT-FM
		Needs and wants	PKT-NW
		Knowledge of Self	PKT-KS
Topic 3	**Theme**	**Category**	**Code**
Teachers' Practical Knowledge			**TPK**
	Content knowledge in practice		**TPKC**
		Simplifying/general content	TPKC-SC
		Textbook as a source of content	TPKC-Txt
		Internet as a source of content	TPKC-I

	Pedagogical knowledge in practice		**TPKP**
		Gap between theory and practice	TPKP-TP
		Communicative vs. structural teaching	TPKP-CS
		Teaching vocabulary	TPKP-V
		Teaching grammar	TPKP-G
		Learners' influence on pedagogy	TPKP-LP
		Arabic as the language of instruction	TPKP-ALI
		Assessment	TPKP-As
	General knowledge of Pedagogy in practice		**TPKG**
		Classroom management	TPKG-Cl
			TPKG-P
		Planning	TPKG-O
		Stating objectives	TPKG-T
		Time management	TPKG-Ts
		Task management	TPKG-C
		Content management	
	Knowledge of the learner in practice		**TPKL**
		Learners' cultural background	TPKL-C
		Learners' educational background	TPKL-E
		Learners' attitudes to learning	TPKL-A
		Learners' needs and wants	TPKL-NW
	Knowledge of the teaching environment in practice		**TPKE**
		Unequipped classes	TPKE-E
		Lack of facilities	TPKE-F
		Class size	TPKE-C
	Knowledge of self in practice		**TPKS**
			TPKS-Ro
		Reflection on action	TPKS-Ri
		Reflection in action	TPKS-A
		Lenient and strict attitudes	TPKS-S
		Submissiveness	

Topic 4			
Challenges in teaching ESP			**CH**
	Challenges related to learners		**CHL**
		Incompetent learners	CHL-IL
		Learners' careless attitudes	CHL-LC
		Dependent learners	CHL-DL
		Lack of educational skills	CHL-ED
		Leaners' mentality, background, and culture	CHL-MBC
	Challenges related to the teaching milieu		**CHM**
		Class size	CHM-S
		Unequipped classes	CHTE-Q
		Lack of resources and facilities	CHTE-RF
	Challenges related to the administrations		**CHA**
		Centralized Administration	CHA-C
		Lack of agency and trust	CHA-AT
		Lack of training and professional development	CHA-PD

Appendix 4

PAAET
College of Business Studies
Language Center
English Language Unit

English 101 course Plan / Spring 2013-14

Week	Date	Unit	Materials to be covered
1	16-19 Feb	Registration	Orientation & grading policy
2	2-6 March	Unit 1	Grammar: present continuous & present simple
3	9-13 March	Unit 1	Voc. About weather
4	16- 20 March	Unit 2	Past simple & Time expressions
5	23- 28 March	Unit 2	Adjectives
6	30 March-3 April	Unit 3	Articles
7	6-10 April	Unit 3	Pronouns
8	**13-17 April**	**Mid-Term Examination**	
9	20-24 April	Unit 4	Present Perfect
10	27 April-1 May	Unit 4	Voc. Medical items
11	4-8 May	Unit 6	Negatives
12	11-15 May	Unit 6	Modals (will-may)
13	18-22 May		Revision
14	**(To be decided by the College Timetable)**	**Final Examination**	**All Units and lessons**

Appendix 5

STUDENT HIGHER-LEVEL RESEARCH
DISSERTATION/THESIS

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

DISSERTATION/THESIS

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/guidelines/ and view the School's statement on the GSE student access on-line documents.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). **DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

Your name: Farida Abedeen

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Your email address: fa232

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I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my dissertation / thesis (delete whichever is inappropriate) **to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.**

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Signed:...Farida Abedeen.....date: 28/4/2011.....

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updated: April 2011

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):

Participants are informed that recorded interviews and classroom observations will be downloaded on the researcher's Laptop during data collection and analysis period, and that all will be deleted when the study is completed. A sample or two of the recorded material, from participants who permit it, will be saved as references.

Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

Teachers are encouraged to talk about difficulties and obstacles that were or are encountered in their profession. To answer this type of question, teachers might refer to political or cultural issues, which are sometimes, sensitive and controversial. In this case teachers are reminded about the anonymity confidentiality, but are given the right to decide on how much information they would like to share.

***This form should now be printed out**, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's **Research Support Office** for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.*

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This project has been approved for the period: May 2011 **until:** Dec 2012

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): Salah Trauki **date:** 4/5/2011

*N.B. **To Supervisor:** Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occur a further form is completed.*

GSE unique approval reference: P/10/11/66

Signed: Salah Trauki **date:** 4/5/2011
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