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Exploring English Language Teachers' Perceptions of their Participation in Decision-Making on Assessment, Curriculum Development and Professional Development Activities.

Submitted by

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Abstract

The issue of teachers' participation in decision-making has recently gained interest as various studies were conducted in different parts of the world and contributed to the literature (Somech, 2010; Cheng, 2008; Sagvandy and Omidian 2015; Mehat, 2015; Lau, 2004; Anderson, 2002; Ho, 20010; and Lin, 2014). It has also been researched in the Gulf area, where this study was conducted. Research about assessment (Troudi et al., 2009; Dammak, 2017), curriculum (Mullik, 2013; Troudi and Alwan, 2010) and professional development (Badri et al,. 2016; Al Taneiji, 2014) have addressed teachers' participation in decision-making in a segmented way. This study is significant as it addresses the three areas of teachers' participation together in one study.

The main aim of this thesis is to explore the nature of teachers' participation in assessment, curriculum development and professional development activities in one of the educational institutions in the UAE. An exploratory methodology was used. Interviews and questionnaires were used sequentially to gather data from English language teachers.

The findings of the study show that teachers' participation in the three areas of assessment, curriculum and professional development activities is limited and unsystematic. The study indicates that most teachers are decisionally deprived and that their desire to participate in decision-making exceeds their actual participation. The findings also reveal the absence of a professional environment and the dominance of a top-down approach to decision-making.

The undesirable condition of decisional deprivation, the absence of a professional environment and the dominance of a top-down approach to decision-making created a feeling of dissatisfaction among teachers.

The need for professional environment, systematic participation and partnership were the implications of this study. The thesis concludes with recommendations for future research.

List of Contents

List of Tables

Abbreviations

UAE: United Arab Emirates

ADNOC: Abu Dhabi Oil Company

LMS: Learning Management System

TESOL: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

SIG: Special Interest Groups

DELTA: Cambridge Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults

CELTA: Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults

PLC: Professional Learning Communities

PDS: Professional Development Schools

PDM: Participative Decision-making

PDM: Participatory Decision-making

SSAS: Schools of Staffing Survey

CLT: Critical Language Testing

ELT: English Language Teachers

OCB: Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

QUAL: Qualitative

SMI: School Management Initiative

Chapter One

Introduction

The general topic of this study is the participation of teachers in decision-making particularly in assessment, curriculum and professional development activities. The issue of teachers' participation in decision-making has been discussed for a long time in education and cannot be understood in isolation from the two different approaches of inclusive and exclusive professionalism and the two distinct views of teachers' decision -making power: the centralized top-down and the decentralized bottom-up policies (Ingersoll, 1996). These two distinct views may determine the nature and extent of teachers' involvement in decision-making. The lack of teachers' participation in decision-making has been widely discussed (Bourke et al., 2015; Picower, 2015). Active teachers' participation (Day, 1999; Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992; Ingersoll and Merrill, 2011; Tam, 2015) and its impact on teachers' performance has also been discussed (Somech, 2010; Mehta, 2015). Teachers' participation in decision-making in the Gulf area and particularly in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where the actual study was conducted, has been addressed by different researchers. Teachers' participation in curriculum, professional development and assessment activities in the UAE have been researched respectively by Troudi and Alwan (2010), Badri et al., (2016) and Dammak (2017).

1.1 Rationale for the study

The rationale of this exploratory study stems from my interest in the issue of teachers' participation in decision-making. This rationale emerged out of my informal discussions with my colleagues and from teachers' discussions in several meetings I attended. During some of the discussions, teachers would engage in heated debates over the extent of their participation in decision-making particularly in assessment, curriculum development and professional development activities.

My interest in exploring the issue of teachers' participation in decision-making stems from another reason. The results of the critical exploratory study which I conducted in the same context (Dammak, 2017) about problematizing teachers' participation in designing exit tests triggered me to explore teachers' participation in assessment, curriculum development

and professional development activities. Moreover, I intend to contribute to the existing literature on teachers' participation in decision-making. This study will add to the existing research about teachers' participation in decision-making in the Gulf area. It will build on the existing research on teachers' participation in assessment (Troudi et al., 2009; Dammak, 2017), teachers' involvement in curriculum activities (Troudi and Alwan, 2010; Mullick, 2013; Al Kaabi et al., 2013) and teachers' contribution to professional development policies and activities (Borg, 2014; Buckner et, al. 2016; Al Taneiji, 2014; and Badri et, al., 2016).

1.2 The significance of the study

This is an exploratory study, which will have both theoretical and practical significance. First, I think that my study will have exploratory significance as it will examine and shed light on teachers' participation in decision-making. Moreover, I expect the results of the study to be significant in better understanding the nature of teachers' participation in decision-making. I also expect my study to draw attention to the importance of teachers' involvement in decision-making and the recognition of the importance of the teachers' voices. Second, this study will attempt to contribute to the discursive literature on teachers' participation in decision-making. Exploring teachers' participation from the point of view of teachers may increase our understanding of teachers' problems and enrich the existing literature. It will investigate areas and extents of teachers' participation in decision-making. It will also explore teachers' satisfaction with their participation in decision-making. I hope my study will stimulate further interest in future investigation into aspects associated with teachers' participation in decision-making.

1.3 Contribution to knowledge

This exploratory study will attempt to contribute to the discursive literature on teachers' participation in decision-making. My belief is that exploring the areas and extents of teachers' participation and their satisfaction with their involvement in making decisions might build on the existing studies and contribute to enrich the available literature. To my knowledge, there is no research addressing the three areas of teachers' participation in assessment, curriculum and professional development in one study. Previous research addressed teachers' participation in decision-making in a segmented way and studied the areas of teachers' participation separately. Therefore, the current study will attempt to build

on previous work and contribute to the literature by investigating the different areas of teachers' participation together in one study rather than in a segmented way.

1.4 Research aims

The aim of this study is to explore teachers' participation in decision-making. Succinctly, it aims to answer the following research question:

What is the nature of teachers' professional participation in decision-making on assessment, curriculum development and professional development?

The following sub questions will help to answer the main research question:

1) What do English language teachers think about their participation in assessment activities?

2) What do English language teachers think about their participation in curriculum development activities?

3) What do English language teachers think about their participation in other professional development activities?

These research questions will be addressed through interviews and a questionnaire.

1.5 Organization of the study

The thesis consists of six chapters. Following this chapter, the second chapter provides an overview about the context within which I conducted my study. Chapter three is a review of the relevant literature and the conceptual framework that informs my research. Chapter four outlines the research methodology. It gives detailed information about the participants, the methods, data validation, and ethical issues. Chapter five involves the findings, interpretations and discussion of data in relation to the literature in chapter three. The thesis ends with a concluding chapter, which comprises conclusions, implications of the findings, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two

Contextual Background

This chapter provides an overview of the context in which my research occurs. It starts with a brief insight into the political, socio-economic and educational context of the study. It also describes the technical institute, where the study is conducted and the position of English language teaching in the institute. The chapter describes the role of English language teachers in the institute and the nature of their involvement in decision-making, regarding curriculum development, assessment, and professional development activities.

2.1 Context: A technical institute

The study is conducted in a technical institute in the United Arab Emirates (henceforth UAE) which is one of the Arab countries in the Gulf region. Since the discovery of oil and gas in the middle of the twentieth century and the incorporation of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) in 1971, the UAE has witnessed an economic boom. Driven by high revenues from the oil and gas industry, the UAE has invested wisely in the sectors of infrastructure and education. The rapid economic boom has necessitated investment in human resources to meet the requirements of the work market and to nationalize the oil and gas industry. The government has invested millions of dirhams to establish technical institutes and academies to train technicians and supply skilled workforce that meets the requirements of the industrial work market.

The technical institute where this study is conducted consists of two distinct departments which are situated in two different buildings and offer different programs: academic foundation program and technical program. First, the foundation program offers math, science, Arabic, Islamic and English language courses. It aims to prepare students for the technical program. Students cannot join the technical program without meeting the requirements of the foundation courses. Except for Arabic and Islamic courses, English is the medium of instruction in all subjects. The English foundation program consists of three levels and aims to help students develop their reading, writing, and communication skills. The technical program offers technical English courses and different technical courses which are mostly delivered in workshops with English as the medium of instruction. After

spending two years in the technical program, students graduate as instrumentation technicians, mechanics, operators and electricians.

2.2 The role of English language teachers in the foundation program

As the study focuses on the participation of English language teachers in the foundation program in decision-making, I will examine the role of English language teachers in this department as stated in the teachers' job description (Appendix 1) and the strategic plan of the institute (Appendix 2). According to the first document which will be further analysed in section (5.2), English language teachers should be involved in assessment, curriculum and professional development activities. Moreover, the strategic plan which will be also further analysed in section (5.2) states that the institute should provide quality professional development services to its personnel to ensure a high standard of training for instructors.

2.3 Professional development

Most teachers in the UAE are encouraged to engage in professional development practices. Teachers can benefit from the different professional development opportunities that are available within the educational facilities or external activities offered by different providers.

2.3.1 Institutional professional development

According to the teachers' job description in the institute (Appendix 1), teachers should prepare an individual professional development plan in coordination, participate in professional development programs in the institute and attend local conferences in coordination with the senior instructor. To help teachers develop professionally, the institute provides teachers with opportunities to use new technologies in teaching and testing. Computers and overhead projectors are available in all classrooms. Teachers can use the teaching materials on the learning management system (LMS) in the classrooms. Moreover, teachers should use the computer labs at least once a week to enable students to interact with different course materials. As for quizzes and biweekly tests, students use the computer based tests instead of pen and paper tests. The in-house events in the institute are restricted to the professional development days which are an annual event held during the month of April. According to the institutional academic calendar, students are given a week

off to break the long term into two parts. So, in order to keep teachers busy, they are required to attend or make presentations on various topics. One week before the event, coordinators send an email to encourage teachers to present on any topic.

2.3.2 External professional development opportunities

Throughout the country, English language teachers can benefit from external professional development opportunities. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) is the most reputable organization that provides opportunities for teachers to meet annually to develop professionally. It also gives teachers continuous development opportunities through the efforts of Special Interest Groups (SIG) that are active throughout the whole academic year. In addition to TESOL, the British Council provides teachers with opportunities to develop professionally by running the Cambridge Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (DELTA) and the Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) courses.

2.4 Summary

In this chapter, I relied on the job description document of English language teachers in the institute to provide a comprehensive picture of the context in which I conducted my research. I outlined the role of teachers in the institute and the nature of their contribution to the development of the curriculum and assessment tools. I have also highlighted the opportunities of teachers to develop professionally within and outside the institute. This comprehensive picture, the status-quo, will serve, in the subsequent chapters of presenting and discussing results, as a gauge that I will consider in discussing the nature of teachers' participation in decision-making. In the following chapter, I will review the relevant literature about teachers' participation in curriculum development, assessment, and professional development.

Chapter Three

Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of the literature relevant to my study. It will explore the important place of teachers' participation in decision-making in the wide construct of professionalism. In section 3.1, I will discuss the difficulty of defining professionalism. I then review the challenges to professionalism in section 3.2. Section 3.3 will explore the issue of inclusive professionalism. In section 3.4, I will discuss teachers' participation in decision-making. Following this, I will review teachers' participation in assessment, curriculum and professional development activities. In section 3.6, I will discuss the issue of empowering teachers. Finally, I will highlight the role of decision makers in section 3.7.

3.1 Defining professionalism

The issue of teachers' participation in decision-making, the focus of my research, cannot be understood in isolation from the concept of teacher professionalism. For this reason, highlighting the difficulties of defining professionalism and the challenges facing teachers to become active participants in decision-making may help us understand the hidden power conflict that determines the extent of teachers' participation in decision-making. The scrutiny of the literature discussing professionalism in education in general reveals that defining this concept is a controversial issue as a result of power conflict between stakeholders. Waring and Evans (2015) attribute the discrepancies in defining professionalism to the focus on the multiple aspects of the concept. They contend that while some theorists "outline a holistic view of professionalism, focusing on what teachers do both as an external and internally mediated process" (ibid, p. 1), others focus on how individuals understand and enact professionalism in their practice. They draw to our attention to the fact that "professionalism means different things to different people depending on their specific occupational groups; it reflects the perceptions of a person's group formed by their intended purpose, status, and nature of expertise, as well as their code of practice" (ibid, p. 2). The various meanings that different theorists give to the concept of professionalism reminds us of Fox's statement that "professionalism means different things to different people" (1992, p. 2). This echoes Hoyle's declaration (2001, p. 148) that professionalism is "a somewhat amorphous concept which varies in its

provenance and its content". Helsby's (1999, p. 93) contention that teachers' professionalism has been constantly "redefined in different ways and at different times to serve different interests" and Hargreaves' analysis that "teacher professionalism in particular has taken on very different meanings over the past century" (2000, p. 152) indicate the conundrum surrounding the definition of professionalism. The variety of provenances and contents and the interchangeable use of different technical words such as professionalism, professionalization, teacher development, teacher growth, professional growth, and professional development has not only widened the scope of the concept and toughened the challenge of defining professional development but has also highlighted the lack of conceptual clarity. Hargreaves and Goodson in Evans (2002, p. 128) refer to the lack of conceptual clarity of teacher professionalism by explaining that terms such as, "… to be professional, to show professionalism or to pursue professionalization [are] not universally agreed or understood…what counts as professional knowledge and professional action in teaching is open to many different interpretations". According to Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin in Patton, Parker, and Tennehill (2015, p. 3), "Professional development refers to a variety of educational experiences related to an individual's work and is designed to improve practice and outcomes". This definition, for example, restricts teachers' development to the educational practices in an individualized approach regardless of the working environment, other stakeholders and teachers' participation in decision-making, a key component of being professional.

The overlapping definitions of professionalism urged highly respected scholars in the field of education such as Sachs in Day (1999), Day (1999), Hargreaves (2000), Evetts (2012) and Waring and Evans (2015) to examine the concept and attempt to offer conceptual clarity, a deficiency discussed earlier in the beginning of this section.

Before the start of the current century, Sachs in Day (1999) identified five essential values which constitute the fundamentals of professionalism. I think that the importance of Sachs' contribution stems from the conceptual clarity that he offers to the concept as he links these values to teachers' participation, the focus of my research. According to Sachs, the first value consists of learning and should be practiced by teachers, individually, with students and colleagues. Participation, the second value, is the condition in which teachers act as active agents in their professional worlds. The third value, collaboration, should be

understood by teachers as a strategy exercised between internal and external communities. Co-operation, the fourth value, will help teachers to develop a common language to document and discuss practice and outcome. Finally, the fifth value, activism, entails teachers' engagement with issues related to schooling and education, as part of their moral objectives. These five essential fundamental values of professionalism give an active role to teachers and evolve around the necessity of including teachers in decision-making. The fundamental values of learning, participation, collaboration, co-operation, and activism may empower teachers and pave the way to more teachers' participation in decision-making.

Despite Day's focus on the importance of teacher professional development from the perspective of "maintaining and enhancing the quality of teachers and the leadership of principals" (1999, p. 2), his discussion of the concept of professionalism did not incorporate the fundamental values of participation, collaboration, co-operation and activism, proposed by Sachs. Day suggests that professionalism can be achieved by career long professional development, which is the collective responsibility of teachers, schools, and governments. Thus, he proposes a definition of professional development that incorporates the acquisition of content, knowledge, and teaching skills. According to him, professional development consists of:

> all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives (Day, 1999, p. 4).

Hargreaves (2000), another respected author in the field of education, distinguishes between professionalization and professionalism. According to him, professionalization includes the improvement of the status of teachers whereas professionalism involves the quality and standards of practice. He argues that the evolution of the idea of professionalism has witnessed four different stages: the pre-professional age, the age of

autonomous professional, the age of the collegial professional, and the post professional or postmodern age. Although Hargreaves acknowledges that these phases, though relatively common across Anglophone culture, are not universal and should not be viewed as discrete stages that all other cultures must follow, many of their features, mainly those of the post modern age, are similar to the context where my research is conducted. During the pre-professional stage, teachers learn through practical apprenticeship and improve by individual trial and error. The age of autonomous professional, from the 1960s onwards, was characterised with individualism and isolation with the absence of notions of collegiality. As a reaction to the individualistic aspect of the age of autonomous professional, there were efforts during the age of collegial professional to build strong professional cultures of collaboration within which teachers learn best in their own professional learning communities. According to Hargreaves, "professionalism here is 'new' rather than 'old'; collegial and collective, rather than autonomous and individual" (ibid, p. 166). Hargreaves explains that the fourth age, the post-professional, is characterized by a struggle between "forces and groups intent on deprofessionalising the work of teaching" (ibid, p. 153). They are forces that foreshadow a post-professional era where teacher professionalism will become diminished or relinquished. As a reaction, Hargreaves advocates for a form of postmodern professionalism that is "more democratically inclusive of groups outside teaching" (ibid, p. 167). The suggestion for more inclusion implies the dominance of the practice of exclusion, a situation that most theorists interested in professionalism highlight.

Evetts (2012) agrees with Hargreaves that the concept of professionalism is interpreted differently and attempts to offer conceptual clarity by differentiating between professionalism, professionalization and profession. She explains that professionalism was "interpreted as an occupational or normative value, as something worth preserving and promoting in work and by and for workers" (ibid, p. 3). Evetts contends that the discourse of professionalism is used in advertising and in different workplaces as a marketing slogan to attract clients and new recruits; hence giving the opportunity to the voice of interest to prevail. What is interesting in Evett's discussion is the coherence between her analysis of professionalism in the current decade and Hargreaves' analysis of the situation of professionalism in the post modern age. Terms such as market, clients, advertising and slogan reflect that the concept of professionalism in education means more than

classrooms, teachers and schools. Therefore, the concept of professionalism is becoming more sophisticated and requires more scrutiny, something that I will try to discuss in the paragraphs below.

3.1.1 The sophisticated concept of professionalism

Evans (2014), a key contributor to the knowledge base relating to the concept of professionalism, identifies three main constituent components of professionalism: behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual. The behavioural component of professionalism relates to the processes and procedures that practitioners apply to their work. The attitudinal component of professionalism relates to attitudes, perceptions, beliefs and views, people's values, motivation, job satisfaction and morale. The intellectual component of professionalism relates to the bases of people's knowledge, the nature and degree of reasoning that they apply to their practice and what they know and understand. Despite the fact that the behavioral, attitudinal and intellectual incorporate most of the components of professionalism, the social and political components of professionalism and the context within which professionals can act and apply the behavioral, attitudinal and intellectual components were not discussed by Evans.

Waring and Evans (2015) tried to incorporate the social and political components. They examine the sophisticated conceptions of professionalism and discuss the notion of professional teacher, the development of critical professional identity, micro political literacy, integration of knowledge and capacity for autonomous professional development. Although this constitutes a broad body of knowledge, my interest in these notions will be restricted to the areas where teachers' participation in decision-making is discussed, a key component in being professional and the focus of my research. According to Winch et al. in Waring and Evans (2015), professional teachers should be autonomous in their own judgement in the classroom and make decisions about interpreting theoretical and research-based-knowledge. This freedom gives the chance to the professional teacher to use theoretical or empirical based knowledge and to interpret or adapt teaching to certain needs and situations. Granting professional teachers the ability to interpret theoretical and research-based-knowledge and the freedom of how to adapt it in their practice means giving them an active role in decision-making. Following this, a professional teacher is

autonomous in exercising judgment, reflecting, making decisions, interpreting and adapting research to teaching situations.

In addition to the notion of professional teacher, Waring and Evans (2015) consider that developing a critical professional identity and micro political literacy are important in the development of a more sophisticated notion of professionalism. A critical professional identity development is about addressing conflicts, reflecting on norms, beliefs, prejudices about teaching and education. Developing a critical professional identity entails exploring the power relationship, examining and challenging moral and political agendas to reduce inequalities and empower teachers. Developing a critical professional identity may be enhanced by assuring opportunities and networks that enable critical and collaborative discourse.

According to Waring and Evans, a more sophisticated conception of professionalism should integrate theoretical, technical, practical and self-knowledge. They use Eraut's (1994) typology of professional knowledge and add self-knowledge to it. Eraut's typology consists of conceptual knowledge (concepts and values), process knowledge (decision-making and management of change), knowledge of educational practice (alternatives in learning and teaching), situational knowledge (capacity to read situations) and people knowledge (what makes people behave). Moreover, Waring and Evans think that a more sophisticated conception of professionalism should integrate embrained, encoded, embodied and embedded forms of knowledge. An Embrained form of knowledge is theoretical and linked to the body of knowledge acquired through education and professional training. Encoded knowledge serves the purpose of standardisation and professional compliance. Embodied knowledge is individual, practical and learnt by teachers through trial and error. Embedded knowledge refers to the collective form of tacit knowledge shared by teachers. It also refers to the routines that shape the ethos within a school.

What is interesting in Waring and Evans' discussion of the sophisticated conception of professionalism is the wide freedom that they give to teachers to engage and participate in decision-making, the focus of this study. Professionalism is a willingness to engage with research and adapting it to context. It involves critical scrutiny of evidence and engagement in discourse to question consensus belief systems, values and taken for granted norms. A sophisticated conception of professionalism involves teachers' capacity for autonomous

professional development: self study, studying the work of others, classroom research, using feedback constructively, collaborating with colleagues, students and parents.

Waring and Evans' choice of the term 'sophisticated' to define the concept of professionalism was not accidental as it reflects the complexity of the term which engendered difficulties in defining the concept as was discussed in the beginning of this chapter. Their contribution to offer a thorough definition to the sophisticated concept of professionalism is not negligible. Throughout their examination of the concept and all its components, they highlighted the active role of teachers as researchers, interpreters, criticizers, implementers, reflectors as individuals and members of the teaching community and the larger society. Therefore, professional teachers in this concept of professionalism are active participants in decision-making. Accordingly, I believe that it is this type of participation that teachers need to experience to be professionals. Though tempting, achieving Sach's fundamental values and meeting the requirements of the sophisticated concept of professionalism discussed by Waring and Evans seem to be perplexing and will be challenged by various obstacles, barriers, forces and instances of exclusion as will be illuminated in the next section.

3.2 Challenges to professionalism

As highlighted in the previous section (3.1), Hargreaves (2000) and Evetts (2012) use terms such as market, clients, advertising, slogans, forces and interests among the causes that may explain the difficulty of defining professionalism. The use of this business language in education indicates that decisions about education, professionalism and teachers' participation extend beyond classrooms. The use of these words reflects the force and the conflict of interest between the various stakeholders and the challenges that may face teachers and impede their effective participation in decision-making.

Breen (2007) confirms this conflict of interest by asserting that much of what is referred to as professional development serves the interests of publishers and curriculum designers. Despite theorists' suggestions to involve teachers and help them develop autonomous and critical professional identities (Waring and Evans, 2015), Day (1999) argues that schools and other competing forces are among the challenges and obstacles that prevent teachers from becoming professionals. Top-down approaches to education represent the most

threatening factors to teachers' active participation in decision-making. They hamper teachers' efforts to reach professionalism, which is nowadays under the surveillance of disciplinary power and its three simple instruments: hierarchical observation, normalization and examination (Bourke, Lidstone and Ryan, 2015). According to Ryan and Bourke (2013, p. 420), teachers in Australia and Britain are presented "as cogs in the bureaucratic machine, who need to be told what to do, what to know and how to be a 'good' teacher, with little acknowledgement of the complex subjective and objective influences on teachers' work". Although Ryan and Bourke describe the nature of teachers' participation in decision-making in Britain and Australia, I feel that their analysis can also reflect the condition of teachers in the Gulf region, where this study is conducted.

Theorists' awareness about the dangers of imposing top-down approaches has been acknowledged many years ago (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992) and confirmed recently by Passy (2013, p. 1066) who asserts "that increasing central control over schools is a process that has led both to the intensification of teachers' work…to teachers' de-professionalisation as their autonomy and judgment have been restricted…and to the development of a performative culture in which teachers align their practice to external targets and evaluations". Hargreaves and Fullan (1992) caution against the problems caused by imposing professional development opportunities, particularly when "knowledge and skills-based approaches are usually imposed on teachers on a top-down basis by experts from outside their own schools" (ibid, p. 3). They draw our attention to the fact that imposed and standardized developmental programmes cannot uniformly meet the various needs, expectations, and desires of different teachers. For them, the nature of context in which professional development is supposed to take place, "can make or break teacher development efforts" (ibid, p. 13). They further outline how the shortage of planning time, the lack of resources, the absence of a supportive work context and positive leadership can be potential challenges to professional development. Contrary to the notion of imposition, understanding the knowledge and skills that teachers should master, their personality, needs, expectations and the various contexts in which they work is what teacher development revolves around (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992).

Day (1999) agrees with Hargreaves and Fullan that adopting top-down approaches to management may pose potential challenges to professional development. He asserts that

29

modifying assessment tools, deciding the content and context of curricula, adjusting teacher appraisal criteria, and differentiating salary structures constitute instances of managerial behaviour that serve to de-professionalise teachers. As a result of this intensified managerial interference, teachers' participation has been reduced to produce deskilled teachers who are "on the way to become technicians whose job is to meet prespecified achievement targets and whose room to manoeuvre, to exercise discretion - a hallmark of an autonomous professional - is thus increasingly restricted" (ibid, p. 10).

In the same line of argument, Hargreaves (2000) continues discussing the detrimental effects of imposing top-down approaches to professional development, a discussion that he had started with Fullan (1992). He asserts that imposing collegiality and implementing flattened management structures may limit teachers' participation to "technical acts of coordination rather than working together for fundamental change" (ibid, p. 166). According to him, teachers' participation has been weakened by "restricting the scope of their decision-making; prescribing centralised curricula; shifting them towards more temporary contracts; and generally lowering their status" (ibid, p. 168). As a result, teachers become de-professionalised people who lack autonomous professional identity, a key component of professionalism which Waring and Evans (2015) advocate. Consequently, teachers must deal with a new situation in the post professional era within which they find themselves torn between their role to be passive implementers of the orders of decision makers and their desire to be active participants in decision-making. Contrary to the imposed top-down approach which lowers teachers' scope of participation, Hargreaves contends that the new postmodern professionalism should be "broader, more flexible and more democratically inclusive of groups outside teaching and their concerns than its predecessors" (ibid, p. 167).

Breen (2007) agrees with Hargreaves and Fullan (1992), Day (1999) and Hargreaves (2000) about the dangers of imposing top-down approaches without involving teachers in the decision-making process. He maintains that teachers' knowledge, practices, accountability, and working conditions are the four key concepts of teachers' work that are challenged. He cautions against the imposed top-down approaches by explaining that these professional development programs restrict teachers' participation to mere implementers and passive receivers of new knowledge brought from outside experts. In addition to

imposing top-down curricula, job insecurity is another challenge facing teachers. In this context, Breen suggests that "the contractual conditions of many English language teachers combine with current changes to intensify professional uncertainty" (ibid, p. 1072).

Evetts (2012) builds on Hargreaves and Fullan's objection to the imposition of top-down approaches by observing it as an ideological tool to control workers that can lead to employees' alienation. She contends that the discourse of professionalism "is taken over, reconstructed and used as an instrument of managerial control in organisations, where professionals are employed" (ibid, p. 11).

Evans (2014), a highly respected author in the field of teachers' professional development pinpoints how individuals develop professionally. She attributes the failure of most professional development programs to their inability to take into account two crucial factors: teachers' motivation to engage in professional development and the process by which change in teachers occurs. Building on her three constituent components of professionalism (behavioral, attitudinal and intellectual) reviewed in section 3.1, she acknowledges that the behavioral development may be imposed upon individuals by others such as employers, leaders and managers. She also maintains that imposed 'professional development' may not necessarily be considered improved practice - and hence, not necessarily professional development - by those upon whom it is imposed; if it is not accompanied by attitudinal change that allows the 'developee' to accept and support it" (ibid, p. 192). Evans' denunciation of imposing behavioral development, which I evidently agree with, and her call for a focus on the micro-level development, which she defines as "the enhancement of individuals' professionalism, resulting from their acquisition, through a consciously or unconsciously applied mental internalization process, of professional work-related knowledge and/or understanding and/or attitudes and/or skills and/or competences" (ibid, p. 186) stems from her conviction that professional development should be internalized and not imposed from above.

Waring and Evans (2015) list globalization, technological innovations, growing cultural diversity, social change, performativity agendas and the changing conceptions of what good teaching is as challenges for professionalism within the twenty-first century learning environments.

31

The consensus amongst the reputable theorists in education (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992; Day, 1999; Hargreaves, 2000; Breen, 2007; Evetts, 2012; Evans 2014; and Waring & Evans, 2015) makes us believe that that professionalism is confronted with challenges. I also share their concerns that teachers' exclusion and imposing top-down professional development programs are among the most threatening challenges. In addition, restricting teachers' role may undermine teachers' pedagogical competence, reducing them to mere passive receivers and implementers of experts' ideas. The lack of participation in decision-making along with the passive role that they play may threaten teachers' status and capability as authorities who are capable of developing and building strong professional identities. Therefore, such a restriction brings into focus the need to call for teachers' involvement in decision-making, a point I will discuss in the subsequent section.

3.3 Inclusive professionalism.

As a reaction to the traditional top-down approaches and the exclusion of teachers from participation in decision-making, many voices of concern have been raised to empower teachers, an issue that will be discussed in detail in section 3.5. These voices of concern have criticised expert-driven, top-down approaches (Butler, Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger and Beckingham, 2004; Patton, Parker, and Tannehill, 2015) in order to redeem the lost prestige, autonomy, creativity, effective participation and power. Kumaravadivelu (2001), a scholar in language teacher education, proposes the model of the postmethod teacher characterised by autonomy, possibility and ability to conduct research. Other theorists suggest teachers' collegiality as among the requirements towards teacher professionalism (Day, 1999; Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992; Clement and Vanderberghe, 2000; Lee Harris and Anthony, 2001; Butler et al., 2004; DuFour, 2004; Stodolsky, Dorph, and Nemser, 2006; Green and Allen, 2015; and Tam, 2015). My review of the literature about the importance of collegiality partly emanates from the conviction of these theorists, with whom I concur, that collegiality and collegial working atmospheres may foster teachers' participation in decision-making and therefore empower them.

The importance of collegiality was highlighted by Hargreaves and Fullan (1992) as a factor involving active teachers' participation. They advocate avoiding the individualistic and top-down approaches to professionalism and instead recommend the extension of "teachers'

networks so that they can learn from each other" (ibid, p. 10). Though dating from more than twenty five years ago, Hargreaves and Fullan's advocacy remains valid with the current challenges faced by teachers. Their appeal for a collegial context, which may allow and stimulate teachers to exchange experiences and learn from each other, indicates the lack of this atmosphere in real professional lives of teachers.

Hargreaves (2000), aware of the challenges facing teachers in the post professional age, continues what he started with Fullan in 1992, advocating for inclusive professionalism which can be achieved by involving teachers, students and parents through balancing power relationships between the different stakeholders in decision-making. Moreover, Hargreaves encourages teachers to broaden the idea and practice of collegial professionalism which should not be restricted to colleagues in the close environment but should also target teachers everywhere. Collegiality in this regard is a multi-faceted activity, within which teachers should interact with the outer world as well as the inner circle of colleagues because "postmodern professionals who interact with people beyond the school must also be collegial ones inside it - postmodern professionalism includes and depends on collegial professionalism"(ibid, p. 173).

Hargreaves' appeal for interaction with the world beyond their narrow environment resonates with Breen's advocacy for communicating with the wider community of fellow practitioners. Breen (2007) reiterates that teachers' local explorations can be shared with other colleagues who have the same interests, hopes and who experience the same pressure. According to Breen (2007, p. 1078), teacher development should "address all the attributes of professional identity and self-esteem grounded in ongoing achievements rather than merely the attainment of external imperatives" (ibid, p. 1078). Breen' pronouncement for a professional development addressing the attributes of teachers' professional identity echoes Waring and Evans' (2015) examination of the sophisticated conception of professionalism, reviewed in section 3.1. According to Breen, collegiality, discursiveness, and evolution are necessary elements in developing professionalism. For this reason, Breen encourages teachers to revise, discuss, question constant beliefs and gear their professional context "towards discursiveness or engagement in discourse" (ibid, p. 1080). In this case, professional development becomes a space where teachers can discover ways of thinking and acting collegially. However, Breen acknowledges the difficulty of implementing

collegial environment because of the individualised aspect that has characterised professionalism, another challenge which can be included in the list of challenges discussed in section. 3.2. Breen's acknowledgement of the difficulty of building collegial environments is shared by Clement and Vandenberghe (2000), Dufour (2004), Stoll and Louis (2007) and Tam (2015).

3.3.1 Impact of collegiality on teachers' participation

Despite the individualised approach and the difficulty of implementing collegial environments, many studies investigated the impact of collegiality on teachers' participation and performance. The findings of these studies are relevant to my research as they address the impact of collegial environments on teachers' participation. Moreover, they may provide a comparative perspective to the findings of my study. The first of these studies was conducted by Clement and Vandenberghe (2000) who analyzed the impact of two workplace conditions, autonomy and collegiality, on elementary school teachers' professional development. They declared that collegiality can favour teachers' professional development and contribute to emotional support. In addition, collegiality can challenge teachers intellectually and give them fresh ideas. They concluded their qualitative study by stating that collegiality does not automatically lead to professional development with the rationale that "longing for a completely collegial school is as unrealistic as undesirable" (ibid, p. 98). Instead, they advise that workplace conditions should reconcile autonomy and collegiality, a setting where "collaboration implies challenges for professional development without teachers having to abandon their autonomy" (ibid, p. 98).

In a second study, Lee Harris and Antony (2001) explored the nature of collegiality and its role in teachers' professional development by comparing the interviews of veteran social studies teachers and the conversations of in-service teachers as they participated in a shared inquiry group. Their analysis of the data revealed that collegial interactions helped produce an emotionally supportive work environment and engendered significant professional development. Lee Harris and Antony (2001) described three ways to encourage the development of collegial relationships. Mentoring, the first way, consists of assisting novice teachers. Second, collegial relationships can be developed by establishing interdisciplinary teams of four or five teachers to plan, teach, discuss, observe, and reflect.

Finally, teachers' networks are suggested to be a voluntary and legitimate forum to promote teacher development.

Theorists' and researchers' advocacy (Day, 1999; Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992; Clement and Vanderberghe, 2000; Lee Harris and Anthony, 2001; Butler, Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger and Beckingham, 2004; DuFour, 2004; Stodolsky, Dorph, and Nemser, 2006; Stacy, 2013; Green and Allen, 2015; and Tam, 2015) for collegiality and active teachers' participation as fundamental features of professional development cannot be achieved in individualised or top-down approaches but rather in collaborative professional settings as will be examined in the following section.

3.3.2 Collaborative professional development settings.

My review of the literature about collaborative professional development settings is based on my conviction, which is shared by many theorists, of the importance of working environments as essential factors contributing to collegiality and effective professional development. Most theorists agree that working environments can exert remarkable influence on the extent of teachers' participation in decision-making. Although theorists give various names to ideal working conditions and environments as one of the requirements of empowering teachers and increasing their participation, they all meet in asserting the importance of these working environments. Professional Development Schools (Burbank &Kauchak, 2003; Yendol-Silva & Dana, 2004), Professional Learning Communities (Stoll and Lewis, 2007; Du Four, 2004; Green and Allen, 2015; Tam, 2015; and Wang, 2016), Professional School Cultures (Stodolsky, Dorph, and Nemser, 2006), Teacher Learning Communities (Wood, 2007), Collaborative Institutional Models (Burns, 1995), and Communities of Practice (Butler, Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger, and Beckingham, 2004) are among the names that theorists attribute to ideal working environments that can ensure teachers' participation and enhance their influence as active participants. Although their research took place in many parts of the world and in primary, secondary and higher education settings, their findings are still relevant to my study as will be demonstrated in the discussion chapter.

The first of these studies was conducted by Stodolsky et al. (2006) who used interviews with teachers and principals to study professional culture and professional development in

Jewish schools. They believe that effective professional development should not be in the form of one shot, one size fits all workshops but rather, ongoing, sustained and intensive. I agree with them when they state that "sustained interaction among teachers about teaching and learning is a hallmark of professional school cultures that support teacher learning" (ibid, p. 93). In my opinion, it underpins the observation that developing collegial atmospheres occurs in educational institutions with strong professional cultures of inclusion within which teachers discuss practices, objectives, goals, students, assessment, curriculum and professional development opportunities. There are a number of ways in which this can be achieved. Stodolsky et al. advocate classroom observation and encourage schools to create opportunities for teachers to observe each other as this is believed to be a promising vehicle for professional development. According to them, it is the responsibility of learning institutions to adopt "structures and practices that permit teachers to interact with one another around teaching and learning" (ibid, p. 103). I share Stodolsky et al's. conviction that providing teachers with a strong collegial professional culture fostering discussion, inclusion, involvement and teachers' active participation in decision-making may help teachers develop professionally. Parallel to this, Wood (2007) contributes to the discussion in a scholarly article and agrees with Stodolsky et al. that teacher-learning communities may offer to teachers a professional atmosphere encompassing classroom observation and continuous collegial dialogue. Wood's advocacy for professional learning to be an integral part of teachers' work seems to have been motivated by her attempt to revive Dewey's approach to teacher professionalism where "teachers engage in collective inquiry in order to weigh their practices and innovations" (ibid, p. 282). Wood (2007) suggests that reflecting on practices, airing classroom struggles, approaching colleagues for help, engaging in group discussions, and raising topics for investigation may help teachers build considerable resources of knowledge. Wood's support for collegial communities is an appeal to inclusive professionalism in which teachers' participation in decision-making stands as a cornerstone. Wood's recommendation of collegial communities resonates with other appeals for collegiality (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992; Calderwood, 2000; and McDonald, Mohr, Dichter, & McDonald, 2013).

Other researchers believe that professional learning communities (PLC) are ideal working environments to achieve various goals (Stoll and Lewis, 2007; Du Four, 2004; Green and Allen, 2015; and Tam, 2015). According to Tam (2015, p. 24), professional learning

communities "help to move from individual professionalism to collective professionalism, and facilitate practitioners to work interdependently rather than independently". In the same line of argument, Stoll and Lewis (2007, p. 3) suggest in a book chapter that professional learning communities should not focus on individual teachers' learning but on professional learning within the context of a cohesive group that focuses on collective knowledge. According to Stoll and Lewis, professional learning occurs within a community of interpersonal caring that permeates the life of students, teachers, and school leaders. Likewise, DuFour (2004) identifies in a scholarly article the core principles that represent professional learning communities, agreeing with Stoll and Lewis (2007) regarding the necessity of creating a culture of collaboration whose focus should be on students' results and therefore on learning rather than teaching. To contribute to the discussion about professional learning communities as ideal working conditions, Green and Allen (2015, p. 59) define them in their quantitative causal comparative study as "a strategy for promoting intense teamwork, includes groups that learn and practice collectively to make improvements in instruction and achievement". The focus on instruction and achievement reflects the priority on learners' results and performance, an idea also echoed in DuFour's (2004) and Stoll and Lewis' (2015) discussions. From a different perspective, Tam's longitudinal study (2015) examines the impact of professional learning communities on teachers' beliefs and practices. Contrary to the contributions discussed above that focused mainly on learning, Tam concludes her study by highlighting the possibility of professional learning communities to change teachers' behaviour. Tam contends that "collaborative learning activities such as reflection, observation, action research, and dialog provide a powerful learning environment which in turn leads to teacher change" (ibid, p. 37).

In addition to professional learning communities as ideal environments that enhance professional development activities and therefore increase teachers' participation, professional development schools (PDS) have also been introduced as educational settings providing opportunities for teachers to improve their practice within a professional culture. Burbank and Kauchak (2003, p. 502) indicate in a mixed method study investigating the process of collaborative action research that professional development schools can "foster exemplary practice, provide collaboration between public school and university faculties, and offer continued renewal to participants in the PDS process…provide teachers with opportunities to examine innovative teaching and participate in shared decision-making".

The latter idea of teachers' participation in decision-making is also discussed by Yendol-Silva and Dana in their ethnographic study (2004). They state that PDS encourage teachers to develop as decision makers, educators, researchers, and political advocates. They assert, "as PDS work creates spaces for teachers to participate in decision-making, teachers struggle with how to develop voice within the space" (ibid, p. 131). They conclude their study by suggesting that teachers should "develop their voices as decision makers and teacher educators if they are going to assume the responsibilities of teacher researcher and political advocate" (ibid, p. 138).

Although the literature reviewed in this section discussed the issue of professional development settings in schools and higher education, the findings and recommendations are relevant to my study which is conducted in a technical institute. They all agree that collaborative professional development settings contribute to effective professional development and enhance teachers' participation in decision-making, an issue that will be discussed in the next section.

3.4 Teachers' participation in decision-making

The issue of teachers' participation in decision-making cannot be understood in isolation from the different approaches to professionalism as reviewed in sections 3.2 and 3.3. Ingersoll (1996) discusses two distinct views of teachers' decision-making power. On the one hand, he presents the traditional view that sees schools lacking "coordination, control, consensus, and accountability" (1996, p. 160). Proponents of this view attribute organizational disorder and ineffectiveness to the loose structuring of schools and suggest a reform based on "greater accountability, higher standards, top-down state controls, [and] national goals" (ibid, p. 160). For this reason, supporters of the traditional view advocate for centralisation and control through imposing top-down policies which implies restricting the scope of teachers' participation in decision-making. On the other hand, Ingersoll presents the second view that advocates "forms of decentralization, such as school based management, which are designed to increase the participation of teachers in the operation of schools" (ibid, p. 160). By presenting the two distinct views about teachers' participation in decision-making, Ingersoll illuminates the conflict that is conspicuous in the relationship between teachers and policy makers and attempts to highlight the role of this conflict in

determining the nature of relationships within educational settings. To reduce the tension that characterizes the relations between teachers and administrators, Kirk and MacDonald (2001) propose the notion of partnership that "seems to promise a fusion or integration of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' strategies for reform in education" (2001, p. 353). Integrating top-down and bottom-up strategies means the distribution of power, control and authority, which is one of the most crucial issues in contemporary education research and policy (Ingersoll and Merrill, 2011). There are a number of studies that discuss teachers' participation in decision-making (Somech, 2010; Cheng, 2008; Sagvandy and Omidian 2015; Mehta, 2015; Lau, 2004; Anderson, 2002; Ho, 20010; and Lin, 2014). In a theoretical article, Somech (2010) attempts to develop a model for understanding the impact of participative decision-making (PDM) on school and teachers' outcomes and concludes that "flatter management and decentralized authority structures carry the potential for achieving outcomes unattainable by schools' traditional top-down bureaucratic structure" (ibid, p. 194). Mehta (2015) agrees with Somech that participative decision-making is the most powerful component of the whole management process as it may increase job satisfaction, job involvement and may decrease role ambiguity, conflict and alienation. Before plumbing the depths of the impact of teachers' participation, which will be reviewed in section 3.4.3, it is useful to review Alutto and Belasco's (1972) framework to link the aims and objectives of my study to the issue of teachers' participation in decision-making.

3.4.1 Conceptual framework

The current research draws its theoretical support from Alutto and Belasco's framework (1972) for participation in organisational decision-making. They developed an analytical framework to study teachers' participation in decision-making and claim that participation in decision-making can be conceptualized in terms of the discrepancy between teachers' actual and desired participation in decision-making. They contend that "one can deal effectively with decisional participation by considering a continuum of participation typified by the following three conditions: (1) decisional deprivation…(2) decisional equilibrium…; and decisional saturation" (ibid, p. 118). Alutto and Belasco's typology, which I present in the figure below, is characterized by conditions of deprivation, equilibrium, and saturation in teachers' decision-making. According to them, decisional deprivation refers to a condition where actual participation in decisions is less than desired.

Decisional equilibrium is the condition in which the actual participation in decision-making is as much as desired. As for decisional saturation, it refers to a condition whereby actual participation in decision-making exceeds the desired contribution.
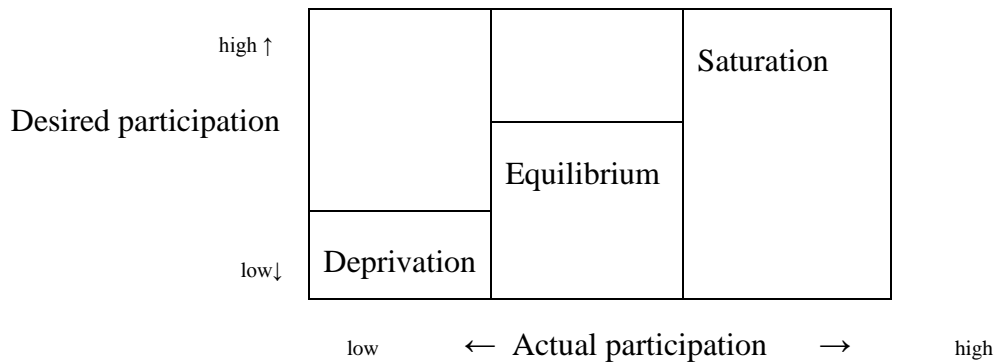
Figure 1: a representation of the analytical framework of Alutto and Belasco

Alutto and Belasco draw our attention to the possibility that certain individuals may be, at one and the same time, decisionally deprived and saturated in that "they wish to participate in some decisions from which they are actually excluded...and they do not wish to participate in some of the decisions in which they are currently involved" (ibid p. 118).

By using questionnaire survey techniques, Alutto and Belasco (1972, p. 118) conducted a study to explore "the extent to which the degree or level of involvement in decision-making affects correlates of decisional making". They were exploring whether individuals experiencing high deprivational conditions differ from those experiencing low levels of decisional deprivation; whether those who have high levels of saturation differ from those characterised by low levels; and whether those who participate in few decisions and desire to be involved in only a few decisions differ from those who reach decisional equilibrium through participating in a large number of decisions. They concluded that decisionally deprived individuals evidenced a clear preference for more participation; subjects achieving decisional equilibrium seem to be satisfied with their level of participation; decisionally saturated subjects evidenced a conspicuous preference for reducing their rate of participation in decision-making. The results of their study also showed that decisionally deprived individuals tended to be younger males teaching at secondary schools in rural areas, possessing favourable attitudes toward collective strikes and unions and perceiving very high levels of role conflict. In addition, decisionally deprived individuals think that the

power of top administrative personnel controlling decision-making should be lowered. Alutto and Belasco also found out that teachers experiencing decisional saturation tended to be older females teaching at elementary schools in urban areas, possessing moderate unfavourable attitudes toward collective strikes and unions and perceiving moderate levels of role conflict. Moreover, they concluded that decisional deprivation does not lead teachers to significantly lower commitment to the organisation than decisional equilibrium or saturation. It will be interesting to see the finding and interpretations of this current study in chapter five with reference to Alutto and Belasco's framework. It must also be noted that factors such as age, gender, teaching levels, school district (urban or rural), attitude toward strikes and unions, discussed in Alutto and Belasco' study, will not be analysed in my research because of the limited scope of the study. Therefore, the focus will be on the discrepancy between actual and desired levels of participation in the three factors of assessment, curriculum development and professional development activities.

As a result of its clarity in fragmenting the construct of decision-making, several studies adopted Alutto and Belasco's framework to investigate teachers' participation. In the first study, Ho (2010, p. 613) used this framework to discuss "the difficulties and issues of greater teacher participation in curriculum and decision-making in local preschools" in Hong Kong. She examined the decision-making process of actual and desired teacher participation and suggests conditions of ideal participation in decision-making. Ho was not the only researcher to adopt Alutto and Belasco's framework as Cheng (2008) and Lau (2004) used the same typology to discuss the issue of teacher participation. In the second study, Cheng used questionnaires in secondary schools in Hong Kong to check the causal relationship between teachers' participation in decision-making and their affective impact on developing a decisional model of participation. The results of her study revealed that all the affective variables including job satisfaction, job commitment, and perception of workload are "related to the form and extent of teachers' participation in decision-making" (2008, p. 31). Cheng's structural equation modelling research revealed that teachers perceived themselves as decisionally deprived in all decision-making domains despite their desire to be involved, mainly in instructional decisions.

In the third study, Lau (2004) used Alutto and Belasco's framework to investigate Participatory Decision-making (PDM) and its relation to job satisfaction, organizational

commitment and role ambiguity in secondary schools in Hong Kong. Lau gave questionnaires to 959 teachers to examine the relationship between teachers' PDM and emotional work outcomes. Participants in Lau's study belong to two different types of schools: non-School Management Initiative (non-SMI) schools and School Management Initiative (SMI) schools. According to Cheng (1992), the former refers to schools that were not involved in the reform and improvement movements of schools in Hong Kong. The latter belongs to the schools of reform and improvements that took place in Hong Kong in the 1990s. The recommendations in the SMI aim to define clearly the roles of sponsors, managers, supervisors and principals. It also aims to provide for greater participation of teachers and parents in school decision-making and management. Finally, SMI schools encourage more systematic planning and evaluation of programs and activities and more flexibility in the use of resources. Lau concluded that teachers are generally less involved in PDM in the managerial domain than in the teaching domain. She also discovered that teachers from non-school management initiative have less participation in managerial decisions than school management initiative schools. In the fourth study, Mehta (2015) used Alutto and Belasco's framework to develop a decisional participation scale and to study a Hindu university teachers' actual and desired participation in the managerial, technical and institutional domains in India. She found out that teachers have a significantly strong desire for more participation in each decision domain with a high discrepancy between their actual and desired participation in the managerial domain and a low discrepancy in the technical domain decisions.

The use of Alutto and Belasco's framework enabled the researchers in the above studies (Ho, 2010; Cheng, 2008; Lau 2004; and Mehta, 2015) to highlight the discrepancy between teachers' actual and desired participation in different domains of decision-making. The adoption of the same theoretical framework enabled Lau (2004), Ho (2010), Cheng (2008) and Mehta (2015) to achieve comparable results about the extent of teachers' participation. In Cheng' study, teachers "perceived themselves to be in a state of decision deprivation in all the decision domains" (2008, p. 41). Similarly, teachers in Ho's study "tend to define their role and functions as being limited to the area of curriculum implementation" (2010, p. 619). Lau (2004) concluded that all teachers are deprived from decision-making spheres. Finally, Mehta's Study revealed teachers' deprivation state in the institutional, technical and managerial domains and their desire for more participation in the three domains.

3.4.2 Domains of teachers' participation.

The adoption of a conceptual framework to gauge the extent of teachers' participation in decision-making has urged researchers to explore the domains of participation. Despite giving different and various terms to the domains of teachers' participation, most researchers limit it to the following domains: curriculum, instructional, and managerial. Cheng (2008) conceives that the three-domain participation model, which includes the instructional, curriculum, and managerial domains, represents the overall dimensions of participation in decision-making. Ho (2010, p. 613) discusses the "theoretical significance, difficulties and issues of greater teacher participation in curriculum and pedagogical decisional making in local preschools." Compared to Ho and Cheng, Lin (2014) suggests expanding teachers' participation outside the classrooms to include curriculum development, school staffing, resource allocation, textbook selection, learning assessment, student placement and professional development. From another perspective, Mehta (2015) proposes a broad list of twenty decisional situations of teachers' participation under three decisional domains: managerial, technical, and institutional. For the purpose of my research, the domains proposed by Lin (2014) seem to be more comprehensive and cover the curriculum, assessment and professional development domains of teachers' participation, the focus of my study.

3.4.3 Effects of teachers' participation.

Despite the fact that the studies discussed in a previous section (3.4.1) indicate that most teachers are decisionally deprived, they are nevertheless able to highlight another fact which is related to the effects of participation on teachers. In addition to providing a general consensus on deprivation and reporting teachers' desire to be more involved in decision-making, the previous studies shed light on the effects of teachers' participation. Alutto and Belasco (1972, p. 124) concluded that "some assumptions about the consequences of increased participation in decision-making should be modified" as no evidence proves that decisional participation can lead to an increase of organizational commitment. Contrary to this argument, Omidian and Sagvandy (2015, p. 24) demonstrated in their applied and descriptive correlation research that allowing teachers to contribute to different areas of decision-making helps them become familiar with the most updated teaching and assessment methodologies, educational websites and information technology. These

findings are in agreement with the results of other researchers who highlighted the positive effects of teachers' participation in decision-making (Lin, 2014; Ho, 2010; and Cheng, 2008). For instance, Ho argued that teachers "have greater job satisfaction, higher morale and reduced burnout with higher participation in decision-making" (2010, p. 621). In the same line of thought, Lin's review (2014) of teachers' participation in school decision-making concluded that teachers' empowerment may contribute to increase teachers' commitment to schools, improve the quality of decisions effectively and free teachers from deprivation by giving them voice which may lead to more democratic organizations. Moreover, Cheng's self-response questionnaire survey revealed how "increasing teachers' participation in decision-making could be an effective management strategy that could satisfy teachers self-esteem and self-actualisation needs" (2008, p. 43). Accordingly, Cheng (2008) suggested that teachers' involvement in decision-making determines their perceptions of job satisfaction, commitment, and workload. That is why she postulated that teachers' greater involvement in managerial and curricular decisions could increase their satisfaction. Omidian and Sagvandy (2015) also agree with Cheng about the impossibility of enhancing professional skills without providing suitable opportunities for teachers' participation. From a different perspective, Ingersoll (1996) used the data provided by the Schools and Staffing Survey (SSAS)to examine two types of "decision-making power that teachers wield to core educational issues in high schools…on the degree of conflict among teachers, students, and administrators" (1996, p. 159). He concluded that autonomy and influence over instructional activities appear to count for little if teachers lack power over decisions concerned with socialization and sorting activities. According to Ingersoll, teachers' power over the crucial social policies of schools should be expanded. He thinks that teachers should be involved, in addition to their involvement in instructional activities, in determining who may attend the school and who may not. Teachers should also be involved in deciding about ways of tracking students.

3.5 Teachers' participation in assessment, curriculum development, and professional development activities.

As reviewed in section 3.4.2, Lin's suggestion (2014) to expand the scope of teachers' participation outside the classrooms to include curriculum development, school staffing, resource allocation, textbook selection, learning assessment, student placement and

professional development seem to be comprehensive and covers the curriculum, assessment and professional development domains of teachers' participation which I am exploring in this research. The discussion of teachers' participation in these three areas in the literature will be reviewed in the subsequent parts as well as in the discussion chapter.

3.5.1 Teachers' participation in assessment activities.

Throughout the last few decades, the issue of teachers' participation in assessment activities has been widely discussed (Rea-Dickins, 1997; Shohamy, 2001a-b, 2005; McNamara, 2000, 2001, 2012; Troudi, Coombe and Al-Hamly, 2009; and Dammak, 2017). This controversial issue cannot be deeply discussed without situating it within the premise of the power conflict between the different stakeholders involved in the assessment process. Issues related to power conflict and their relationships to testing are dealt with in the specific area of Critical Language Testing (henceforth CLT). Shohamy (2001 a), a pioneer of critical language testing theorists, presents the principles of CLT as an important domain for scrutiny. The analysis of these principles reveals the power conflict in assessment activities and the strategy of using tests to empower some stakeholders and marginalize others. For the purpose of this study exploring teachers' participation in decision-making, I will examine the CLT principles that reflect power conflict and determine the extent of teachers' participation in testing. Shohamy claims that CLT assumes that the act of language testing cannot be viewed as neutral as it is the agent and outcome of educational, social, ideological and political agendas that determine the life and future of the different test stakeholders; teachers being among them. She adds that a CLT perspective positions test takers as political subjects who should be encouraged to question and criticise the value inherent in tests, embedded as they are in educational, cultural, and political contexts. Moreover, CLT questions the agendas behind implementing tests, examines tests' stakeholders and investigates the parties involved in designing and producing tests. It also enquires about "whose knowledge tests are based on...is it something that can be negotiated, challenged, and appropriated?"(ibid, p. 132). In order to create a level playing ground, CLT proponents call for a more democratic process where the different stakeholders including teachers, test designers, parents, students and policy makers, are all involved in the process of designing tests. The call for involving the different stakeholders in the design of test may imply that some stakeholders are more powerful than others and

that the actual teachers' participation in assessment activities is an issue that should be explored. The advocacy to involve teachers in testing, which I concur with, refers us back to the discrepancy between teachers' actual and desired participation in decision-making as reviewed previously in section (3.4.1). Moreover, the struggle of teachers to be more involved in assessment activities may unravel a hidden conflict of power that needs to be addressed. Teachers' quest for more participation in testing reflects their desire for inclusion and a struggle for democratization (Shohamy, 2001a-b; McNamara, 2012; and Rea-Dickins, 1997).

3.5.1.1 Testing: a disciplinary tool.

In order to scrutinize the issue of teachers' participation in testing and its effects on teaching practices and educational choices, it is necessary to examine the uses of tests to understand the nature of the power conflict inherent in this issue. Theorists such as Shohamy (2001a-b), Foucault (1979), McNamara (2000 &2012) and Bourke et al. (2015) discuss the powerful uses of tests. Foucault (1979, p. 184) discussed the issue of using tests as disciplinary tools by stating that "at the heart of procedure of disciplines, it manifests the subjection of those who are perceived as objects and the objectification of those who are subjected". Building on Foucault's subdivision of disciplinary power, Bourke et al. (2015), previously referred to in section 3.2, argue that decision makers control teachers through the three simple instruments of power: hierarchical observation, normalization and examination. The first instrument is a technology of surveillance and a way of controlling conduct and improving performance. Normalization, the second instrument, consists of enforcing norms of behaviour, knowledge and attitudes amongst students and teachers. Bourke et al. agree with Shohamy, MacNamara and Rea-Dickins that examination, the third instrument, is used as a disciplinary tool. They contend that the performance of students

> "on standardized tests are not only used to evaluate teacher competency but they also control teachers' daily routines because of their need or desire to prepare students for these tests. The external pressure from high-stakes testing forces teachers not only to operate as regulatory authorities demand, but also to focus entirely on enhanced examination". (Bourke et al., 2015, p. 89)

46

This use of tests as a disciplinary power was also discussed by Shohamy (2001 b, p. 374) who argues that tests "are powerful tools, often introduced in undemocratic and unethical ways for disciplinary purposes and for carrying out various policy agendas". Furthermore, in her critical analysis of the uses of tests, Shohamy, like Bourke et al., McNamara and Rea-Dickins, discusses their use in society as a disciplinary power, drawing our attention to the silent voices of test takers and also to the detrimental effects on them. According to her, using tests as disciplinary tools is an extension of the manipulation of tests by those in authority - policy makers, principals and teachers - into effective instruments for policy making. For this reason, decision makers attribute huge importance to tests while restricting involvement to a selected body. This shows how tests serve the interests of those in power to perpetuate their dominance, enforce their policies and allow them to control and manipulate knowledge.

McNamara (2000, 2012) agrees with Shohamy, Bourke et al. and Foucault that tests are used as disciplinary tools by discussing their use as weapons for policy reform and immigration policy, thus reminding us how "language tests have a long history of use as instruments of social and cultural exclusion" (2000, p. 68). He argues that the principles and practices of testing, which have become established as common knowledge or common sense are actually ideologically loaded to favour decision makers. As far as the use of tests as instruments of cultural and political exclusion is concerned, McNamara contends that the discussions of "shibboleth within language testing draw attention to the potential of language tests to be used unjustly" (2012, p. 566). He explains that the notion of the shibboleth has been cited by writers on language testing as a metaphor for the political and social functions of tests. According to the biblical story, the word Shibboleth, as a distinguished dialect feature, was used as a way of differentiating between friends and foes during a military conflict. Correct pronunciation of the word gave protection while wrong pronunciation meant death. For this reason, McNamara (ibid, p. 570) states that the adoption of a shibboleth system "acts as a two-edged sword, that inclusion always carries with it the potential for exclusion". The alleged accusations that tests are ideologically loaded to favour those in power and perpetuate status quo conditions find evidence in Tahmasebi and Yamini's study (2013). The use of questionnaires and the participation of three stakeholders, teachers, students, and parents, reveal that "tests could be tools of power that serve the empowered parties' policies and manipulate individual lives" (ibid, p. 103).

3.5.1.2 Teacher' limited participation in testing

The use of testing as a disciplinary tool is not restricted to controlling teachers' daily routines (Bourke et al., 2015) but extends to marginalising the role of teachers. Shohamy (2001a) connects teachers' participation in testing to the democratisation of educational systems. For her, it all revolves around power, trust and trustworthiness and she argues that the "selection of the testing body can also provide a good indication of the extent to which the educational system trusts the teachers and is willing to grant them professional authority" (ibid, p. 30). Selection, trust and professional authority are key words that position teachers' participation in assessment activities. It implies that the decision of selecting some teachers to be involved in testing is made by powerful decision makers who not only trust the selected teachers but also grant them some professional authority. Granting professional authority to some teachers and involving them in testing also implies excluding some others and therefore denying them the chance to have professional authority. In order to strengthen her argument, Shohamy (2001a, p. 57) reported the introduction of a national reading comprehension test which was administered by the ministry of education to counterattack the "complaints that innovations and new programmes in reading comprehension were not being introduced into the system" and to give to the public the impression that change is taking place. Apart from the imposed and centralised aspect of the test, the nature of teachers' participation in administering this test is important to my study. Teachers were not only excluded from designing and deciding about the test but also "humiliated by the system which viewed them as potential cheaters and untrustworthy, forcing them out of their classrooms during the test and failing to brief them on what their students were expected to know" (ibid, p. 57). Shohamy expresses concerns about the effect of teachers' exclusion and wonders "about the message conveyed to students when their teachers are not trusted by the system" (ibid, p. 57). According to Shohamy, teachers are "viewed as bureaucrats; … [and] are being used by those in authority to carry out testing policies and thus become servants of the system" (2005, p. 106).

Rea-Dickins agrees with Shohamy by relating teachers' participation in testing to the issues of power and democratisation and advocates for "democratisation of assessment processes through greater stakeholder involvement" (1997, p. 3). She contends that the decisions

made by important and powerful stakeholders affect teachers as weaker parties. I agree with Rea-Dickins that consulting and involving the different stakeholders, teachers amongst them, "in the process of test development and test use reflects a growing desire among language testers to make their own tests more ethical" (1997, p. 304). From a critical perspective, Rea-Dickins questions the amount of teachers' participation in the assessment process and poses the following question: "how much control do teachers have of the assessment procedures and the tests they administer?" (ibid, p. 307). I think that wondering about the amount of participation is a refusal of the marginalised role that teachers are playing in the assessment process. Instead of marginalisation, Rea-Dickins contends that giving teachers opportunities to work with the materials and develop greater understanding of the assessment process will allow them to become better skilled at constructing tests. Her appeal resonates with Jeong's (2013), O'Loughlin's (2013) and Malone's (2013) advocacy for developing teachers' assessment literacy to overcome the lack or paucity of training (Malone, 2013).

The issue of teachers' participation in assessment activities has been examined by researchers in the Gulf area, where the current study was conducted. The importance of these studies emerges from their relevance to my research and the possibility of comparing their findings to those of my research. The first of these studies was a qualitative study based on an open-ended questionnaire, conducted by Troudi, Coombe, and Al Hamly (2009) in the UAE and Kuwait to highlight teachers' exclusion from testing and give opportunity for teachers to make their voices heard. The researchers investigated issues of assessment design and implementation in these two Gulf countries and tried to explore teachers' assessment philosophies and their roles in student assessment. Results of the study showed that teachers' role in assessment was minor because of "the top-down managerial approaches to education and a concern for validity and quality assurance in large programmes" (ibid, p. 546). The researchers reported noticeable instances of exclusion and concluded that exclusion was a fact that participants complained about. Results also showed that decision makers did not solicit teachers' opinions and excluded them from designing assessment tools because they were "perceived not to have expertise in this area" (ibid, p. 550). The importance of the study of Troudi et al. stems from the ability of the researchers to present the reasons that policy-makers give to justify teachers'

exclusion from designing assessment tools. Decision makers argued that assessment should be centralised for reasons of efficiency, practicality, and reliability.

In the second study, Dammak (2017) conducted a critical exploratory study in the UAE to problematise teachers' exclusion from designing exit tests and presented the justifications of the different stakeholders. Results of this study showed that most teachers were not allowed to participate in designing exit tests despite their assessment literacy and involvement in designing, implementing and correcting daily quizzes and weekly tests. Moreover, the issue of power was present as results also showed that the testing policy is hinged on a hierarchy and dominated by the head of the academic section. Results further revealed that teachers' participation in weekly tests was monitored by unit coordinators, whose involvement was similarly overseen by the head of the academic section. For this reason, teachers attributed their exclusion from designing exit tests to the top-down approach to assessment. In addition, Dammak highlighted the impact of problematising the issue of exclusion and the intention of the excluded teachers to call for an active participation. The studies about teachers' participation in testing conducted by Troudi et al. (2009) and Dammak (2017) in the Gulf area contributed to the discursive literature and came to the same conclusion that imposing managerial policies in assessment may reduce teachers' participation in decision-making. However, teachers' participation in decision-making cannot be restricted only to assessment activities as it can encompass other vital areas, curriculum amongst them, as will be discussed in the next section.

3.5.2 Teachers' participation in curriculum development.

As highlighted in section (3.5), my discussion of teachers' participation in decision-making encompassed assessment, curriculum and professional development activities. My review of teachers' participation in assessment in the previous section (3.5.1) revealed that this issue was controversial and that theorists advocate for more democratic involvement of teachers in the assessment process. In this section, I will review the literature about teachers' participation in curriculum development activities.

Carl (2005, p. 223) defines curriculum development as "the encompassing and continual process during which any form of planning, designing, disseminating, implementation and assessment curricula may take place". In a more recent study, Troudi and Alwan (2010, p.

108) agree that "developing a language curriculum involves processes of articulating broad educational philosophies, language policies, conducting needs analysis, setting of goals and objectives , and deciding on educational content, materials and methodological approaches". As the issue of teachers' participation in curriculum development is the main focus of this part of the research, I will discuss it in relation to the power conflict between the different stakeholders, in the same way I did with teachers' participation in assessment activities. Kirk and MacDonald's (2001) advocacy for teachers' authoritative voice and partnership between teachers, researchers, administrators, teachers' educators, and parents in curriculum development cannot hide the power conflict between these stakeholders about curriculum development. As discussed in section (3.2), Evetts (2012), Hargreaves (2000), Day (1999), Hargreaves and Fullan (1992), and Breen (2007) attribute teachers' lack of participation in decision-making to the top-down imposed managerial approaches. They unanimously highlight the power conflict and the desire of those in power to impose their policy through intensified bureaucratic managerial interference which implies teachers' exclusion. Carl (2005) examined teachers' involvement in micro and macro curricula activities. Although teachers' involvement in micro-curriculum activities is warranted by their presence in classrooms and their role in the implementation of programs, participation in the macro curriculum development is questioned. According to Carl, teacher participation has always been distinguished by two distinct tendencies. The first tendency regards teachers as recipients of the curriculum that is designed by experts outside schools. This top-down approach limits the role of teachers to simple implementers of others' ideas and is detrimental to the process of taking ownership of the curriculum.

The second tendency gives voice to teachers as they are partners in the steps and process of curriculum development. Carl contends that teachers' voice should be given "the opportunity to be heard before the actual implementation" (ibid, p. 223). Carl's contribution is commendable in its ability to draw our attention to these two opposing approaches to teachers' participation in curriculum development. Other researchers discussed the issues of imposing change from above and the exclusion of teachers from broader perspectives as I reviewed above. Sparks and Horsley (1989), Evetts (2012), Hargreaves and Fullan (1992), Breen (2007), and Troudi and Alwan (2010) discuss the two approaches of introducing change, that is top-down and bottom-up approaches. They highlight the detrimental effects of the top-down imposed approach and the amount of exclusion inherent in it. They all

agree that the nature of teachers' participation is determined by whether a top-down or a bottom-up approach to change is adopted. They believe that, in top-down approaches, teachers are mere recipients or technicians whose sole role consists of implementing experts' ideas. Shilling's (2013) qualitative case study stands as a good illustration. Shilling examined the perspectives and experiences of educators involved in a curriculum mapping initiative concerning the processes and activities that foster or impede curriculum mapping implementation. Shilling concurs with the previous researchers by arguing that despite the centrality of curriculum to all the processes occurring in school settings, it "has traditionally been an essential responsibility of outside experts, excluding teachers from active participation in the curriculum development process" (ibid, p. 20). Ho (2010, p. 614) reacts to this situation and suggests that "teachers need to shift from the traditional role of curriculum users to a new role of curriculum leaders".

Although the research of Carl (2005), Shilling (2013), and Ho (2010) took place in school settings rather than technical institutes and in different cultural and political contexts, their findings are still relevant and can inform my research. Other researchers in the Gulf region addressed the issue of teachers' participation in curriculum development activities and conducted studies which I consider important since they allow me to compare their findings to the findings of my research.

The first of these is a small scale critical study conducted by Mullik in Saudi Arabia in 2013. Using questionnaires and semi structured interviews, he investigated the lack of teachers' voice in curriculum development. The results of Mullik's study revealed the absence of teachers' voice since the "overall analysis of data revealed that participants viewed voice as a foreign concept" (ibid 43). Moreover, Mullik presented data that reflect oppression and reiterated that the statements of participants "show a sense of imprisonment as teachers experience subordination through an imposed assimilation policy" (ibid, p. 44). Mullik concluded that as a result of this top-down approach to educational management, all participants agreed that they are not involved in curriculum development, a task which is monitored by other stakeholders who " believe that they are acting in the best interest of others" (ibid, p. 44).

In the second study, Al Kaabi, Al Zaatar, and Ibrahim (2013) investigated factors for teachers' resistance to educational change in the United Arab Emirates. In their quantitative

descriptive research, the researchers concluded that teachers resist change because of the top-down model as change was imposed without consulting them. The similarity between this study and the previous one conducted in Saudi Arabia is obvious as the top-down approach is prevailing. The informants showed no resistance to the top-down approach as they "felt the need for change and trusted change agents and principals" (2013, p. 25). However, participants in the study expressed concerns about the results and the frequency of change. The researchers concluded that "change was introduced without involving [teachers] in the planning process…and the change was felt to be imposed on them rather than emanating from the realities of their work" (Al Kaabi et al., p. 33). They also recommended the inclusion of teachers by preparing them for change and involving them in the planning process.

In the third relevant study, Troudi and Alwan (2010) used a qualitative interpretive approach to investigate English language teachers' perceptions of curriculum change in the UAE. The results of the study revealed the absence of teachers' participation in the curriculum development processes such as needs analysis and modification of materials. Troudi and Alwan (2010, P. 15) argued that the absence of teachers' participation is a "reflection of the authoritative and top-down approach to educational management in general, and more particularly to curriculum development in the UAE". Troudi and Alwan discussed the effects of imposing top-down approaches to curriculum development and concluded that "a considerable number of the participants had low morale as they perceived their role in curriculum change as marginal, inferior and passive" (2010, p. 107). It is clear from this review that researchers who conducted studies about teachers' participation in curriculum development in the Gulf area agree that teachers are excluded and attribute this exclusion to the top-down managerial approach to education. The findings of these studies will be compared to the findings of my research in chapter five.

3.5.3 Teachers' participation in professional development activities

I explained in section 3.5 that my discussion regarding teachers' participation encompassed assessment, curriculum and professional development activities. My review of the studies conducted in the Gulf region about teachers' participation in assessment (section 3.5.1) and curriculum development activities (section 3.5.2) reveal that teachers' actual participation in decision-making in these two areas leaves a lot to be desired. In this section, I will

review the available literature about teachers' participation in professional development activities.

As I highlighted in section 3.3.2, theorists and researchers affirm that teachers are in need of appropriate work settings as a principle requirement for more active participation. Communities, culture, and collaboration are the recurrent words in all suggestions which reflect the importance of collective work to enhance teachers' participation. Most theorists claim that teachers' effective participation should occur in settings characterized by commitment to collaboration rather than top-down imposed approaches to professional development.

3.5.3.1 Imposed professional development activities

The issues of imposing top-down approaches to management and decision-making and the importance of context and collaborative professional development settings were discussed respectively in sections 3.2 and 3.3 In this section, I will focus solely on teachers' participation in professional development activities and review some of the studies that compare top-down imposed forms and collaborative forms of professional development activities. These studies investigated the impact of professional development approaches on teachers' participation in professional development activities. My review of these studies enabled me to illuminate the difference between the two approaches and highlight their impact on teachers' participation in professional development activities. Moreover, the findings of the reviewed studies are relevant to my study and will be used in chapter five while discussing the findings of my research.

A number of studies distinguished between traditional, top-down imposed forms and collaborative forms of professional development activities. These studies presented the different types of top-down imposed professional development activities such as one-size-fits-all workshops, expert driven training, summer institutes, and after-school seminars and highlighted the drawbacks and inconveniences of such approaches as they restrict teachers' participation to mere implementers of experts' ideas that are totally divorced from the advantageous characteristics of various collaborative educational settings (Burbank and Kauchak, 2003; Patton et al., 2015; Buczynski and Hansen, 2010; and Butler, Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger, and Beckingham, 2004). The first of these studies, conducted by Butler et

54

al. (2004) in Vancouver, was a discussion of a two-year collaborative research partnership project. The researchers compared traditional and collaborative models of professional development. They claimed that, in contrast to traditional models that include one-stop workshops, with a top-down approach to disseminating knowledge, collaborative models emphasize the importance of nurturing learning communities within which teachers try new ideas, reflect on outcomes, and co-construct knowledge about learning and teaching. In the second study, Burbank and Kauchak (2003) investigated the process of collaborative action research in a qualitative and quantitative study, involving secondary pre-service and in-service teachers in Utah. They concluded their study by stating that "one of the major limitations of traditional models of professional development is the passive role imposed upon teachers, who find it difficult to implement ideas that are often conceptually and practically far removed from their classrooms" (ibid, p. 500).

3.5.3.2 Collaborative professional development activities

Contrary to the traditional top-down imposed professional development activities, theorists and researchers (Glatthorn, 1987; Burban and Kauchak, 2003; Burns,1995; Demulder and Rigsby, 2003; Butler et al. 2004; Patton et al. 2015; and Guskey 2009) advocate for more collaborative models of professional development activities within which teachers' participation is more conspicuous and their voices are more heard. Glatthorn (1987), a respected author in the field of teacher education, proposed in a scholarly article, cooperative professional development activities as cornerstones for teachers' growth. According to him, professional dialogue, peer supervision, peer coaching, and action research are among the cooperative professional development activities that can enhance teacher growth. Guskey (2009) contributes to the discussion and draws to our attention that effective professional development may stem not from a single list of best practices, but instead from a collection of core elements that must be adapted to the unique contextual characteristics of a particular school. He believes that variables such as time, strong leadership, and collaboration in problem solving are core elements in professional development activities. Patton et al. (2015) agree with Guskey that "teacher learning is strongly affected by the school environment and the administration that has the responsibility for that environment" (ibid, p. 2). In their scholarly article, Patton et al. (2015) contend that professional development should be ongoing, sustained, be facilitated

55

with care, focus on improving learning outcomes for students and be based on teachers' needs and interests. According to them, learning is a social process that should include collaborative opportunities within learning communities of educators. Professional development should treat teachers as active learners whose pedagogical skills and content knowledge should be enhanced. Dessimone (2011) agrees with Patton et al. and presents what she considers to be the main features of professional development that have been associated with changes in knowledge, practice and student achievement. She believes that effective professional development activities should spread over a period of time and focus on subject matter content and how students learn that content. Moreover, she thinks that groups of teachers should have opportunities to get involved, such as observing and receiving feedback, analyzing student work, or making presentations, as opposed to passively sitting through lectures. Dessimone's (2010-2011) features of effective professional development reflect her advocacy, which I share, for collaborative professional development activities which can constitute learning opportunities for teachers as opposed to top-down imposed or one size fits all activities. Dessimone contends that embedded professional development, reviewed in section 3.1, can come in many forms such as co-teaching, mentoring, teachers' networks, study groups, book clubs, group discussions, or reflecting on lessons.

The advocacy of Glatthorn (1987), Guskey (2009), Dessimone (2010-2011) and Patton et al. (2015) for collaboration and active teachers' participation in professional development activities is concretised in many different studies. Three of these studies are particularly relevant to my research. The first of these studies was reported by Burns (1995). In a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Japan association of language teachers, Burns discussed the role of collaborative research in supporting curriculum change. In the discussed collaborative research project, Burns drew on the voices of teacher-researchers with whom she worked in the Australian Adult Migrant English Program. The teacher-researchers chose their research focus and data collection methods, and shared their findings in collaborative discussion. Throughout the steps of the collaborative research, the contribution of teachers was conspicuous; a method that is found to contribute significantly to teachers-researchers' professional development. Burns concluded that "teachers greatly value collaboration ways of working together, rather than in isolation, to solve mutual teaching problems" (ibid, p. 16).

In the second study, Burbank and Kauchak (2003) used qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the process of collaborative action research. Burbank and Kauchak proposed this process as an alternative to top-down traditional professional development activities. Adding to the advantage of leading to feelings of community and professionalism, the two researchers concluded their mixed method study investigating the process of collaborative action research by stating that "collaborative action research was conceived positively…on a number of dimensions including changing teaching practice, changing views about research and as a vehicle to dialogue about research and teaching practice" (ibid, p. 512).

In the third study, Butler et al. (2004) focussed on collaboration as a requirement for professional development activities. They reported on accomplishments and challenges within a two year collaborative research partnership. As in the studies of Burns (1995) and Burbank and Kauchak (2003), collaboration is the crux of the matter. Butler et al. reported the impact of teachers' participation on teachers' practice and their conceptual knowledge about teaching. The findings of their research illustrate how teachers benefitted from participating in a collaborative learning community. Butler et al. (2004) explained that "teachers were actively reflecting on and self-regulating their learning and were constructing new knowledge about teaching" (ibid, p. 446) despite the pressure of time constraint which the informants complained about.

I agree with the findings of the studies discussed above that the existence of a supportive environment of collegiality and collaboration may enhance teachers' participation in professional development activities. These studies, which show that collaborative professional activities, as opposed to top-down imposed approaches and activities, contribute to effective professional development, will be compared to the findings of the current study in chapter five.

The recommendations and findings of the above reviewed studies conducted in various contexts can be compared to the findings of some studies conducted in the Gulf area, where my study was conducted. The findings of these studies are important to my research as they were conducted in the same context of my study and they address the issue of teachers' participation in professional development activities. The first of these studies was conducted by Borg (2014) in the Gulf countries to evaluate the impact of conference

attendance on ELT (English Language Teachers) community. Borg used online questionnaire and telephone interviews to address his research questions. He found out that respondents came from seven Gulf countries and that all participants had been sponsored to attend at least one international ELT conference between 2011 and 2013. Several respondents felt that attending a conference had enhanced their knowledge of ELT techniques and that this enhancement had led to changes in their professional practices. Moreover, respondents explained that networking with other ELT professionals was a major benefit from attending conferences. They argued that these conferences gave them the opportunity to meet, talk to, exchange ideas with, and learn from other ELT professionals. Finally, participants felt that attending conferences enhanced their own confidence and motivation. Despite the fact that all participants in this study were very positive about the impact of attending conferences on their professional development, they suggested that such impact could be further enhanced through a more systematic support before and after conferences. The goal of pre-conference support should be to ensure that conference delegates receive orientation to what happens at conferences, differentiate between plenary sessions and workshops, choose sessions and take notes. After conferences, participants will benefit from support by reflecting on what they learnt at the conference, adapting ideas and techniques from the conference in their own context, sharing ideas with colleagues, and continuing to network with professionals they met at the conference.

In the second study, Badri, Alnuaimi, Mohaidat, Yang and Al Rashedi (2016) investigated the perception of Abu Dhabi's secondary school teachers of professional development needs, impacts and barriers. The researchers used survey and focus group discussions to ask teachers about their participation in professional development activities during the twelve months before the survey. The results showed that the most frequently rated areas of high development needs in Abu Dhabi were new technologies in the workplaces and teaching students with special needs. The results also showed that the three highest professional development activities that teachers participated in are student evaluation and assessment, pedagogical competencies in teaching own subject, and student behaviour and classroom management. Moreover, teachers reported positive views of the impact of all types of professional development activities. Finally, the results also showed that teachers in Abu Dhabi think that the lack of incentives and the conflict between the timing of professional

development and work schedule are the two main barriers facing teachers. Despite the positive view of the impact of professional development activities, the focus group discussions revealed a lack of clear professional development program philosophy, standards, and a lack of meaningful teachers' involvement in professional development planning, implementation and evaluation.

In the third study, Buckner, Chedda, and Kindreich (2016) examined, in a policy paper, public school teachers' perceptions of professional development in the UAE. The results of the survey revealed that 88% of public school teachers participated in a professional development course or workshop in the previous twelve months. The results also showed that teachers participated in different professional development activities and attributed the high rate of participation to the compulsory aspect of involvement. The results of this study correlate with the results of Al Badri's et al. (2016) results as they found out that teachers participated mainly in professional development courses or workshops about evaluation and assessment, pedagogical competencies in subject field and classroom management. The correlation between the findings of both studies highlights the barriers faced by teachers as Buckner et al. also reported the lack of incentives and the conflict between professional development and teachers' work schedule as major challenges facing teachers.

In the fourth study, Al Taneiji (2014), explored in a qualitative study the expectations and realities of professional development in the model schools in the UAE. The results of the semi-structured interviews revealed that the teachers were satisfied with the professional development as the topics addressed teachers' needs. Moreover, the results showed that the formats of presenting these professional development activities ranged from theoretical presentations to classroom observation and that interviewees showed a preference for an insider trainer who can speak Arabic rather than an English native speaker. Finally, teachers wanted external motivation such as certificates, financial incentives or accreditation for their training hours.

The discussion of the literature about teachers' participation in decision-making in this section (3.5), which encompassed assessment, curriculum and professional development activities, revealed teachers' lack of participation mainly in assessment and curriculum development activities. As far as teachers' participation in professional development activities is concerned, teachers complained about the nature of participation, the lack of

incentives and the conflict between professional development and teachers' work schedule. Different theorists and findings of various studies attribute the lack of teachers' participation in decision-making to current roadblocks to teacher empowerment consisting of standardization of tests and curricula, hierarchical school structures, teacher isolation, top-down imposed professional development activities and workshops. For this reason, many voices have raised concern for empowering teachers, an issue that will be reviewed in the next section.

3.6 Empowering teachers

The insistence of researchers and theorists, discussed in sections (3.3) and (3.4), on the need for teachers' participation in decision-making in collaborative professional settings is linked to their conviction that an equitable relationship should exist between various stakeholders. I agree with Ingersoll and Merrill (2011, p. 191) when they support this claim by stating that "the distribution of power, authority, and control in schools is one of the most important issues in contemporary education research and policy". In a more direct way, Gray (2013, p. 250), in a paper discussing the idea of the big society, education and power in the United Kingdom, suggests the idea of distribution of power in education and contended that an educational reform requires "a redistribution of power between some of the stakeholders, with new stakeholders entering the sector". Although Gray's and Ingersoll and Merrill's call for redistribution of power between different stakeholders in education took place in different countries and settings, their advocacy for power redistribution and therefore empowering teachers through active participation in decision-making remains valid and relevant to the context where my study was conducted.

Teachers, being one of the stakeholders, should be amongst the parties that should be empowered through more active participation in decision-making. Stacy (2013, p. 40) defines teacher empowerment "as teacher autonomy to make decisions, to make professional judgments regarding teaching, and to have professional voice". In a similar way, Del Val and Lloyd (2003, p. 102) define empowerment as "the management style where managers share with the rest of the organizational members their influence in the decision-making process".

There are a number of studies that called for redistribution of power, explored the construct of teacher empowerment and investigated its impact of teacher performance. The first is a qualitative study focusing on critical professional development in New York City. In this study, Picower (2015) demonstrated the ability of inquiry action groups to empower teachers and provide them with a community of camaraderie and professionalism. According to Picower, critical professional development studies have shown features for success such as self-organisation and regulation, democratic participation with shared power and authority, collaborative interactions, and stress-free working environments. Within this process of critical professional development, Picower highlighted the central role of teachers who must be active, emotional, intellectual, empathetic, professional, and political actors who should reflect on their role in the schooling system.

In the second study, Bogler and Somech (2004) investigated the relationship between teacher empowerment and teachers' organizational commitment, personal commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviour in Israeli middle and high schools. The results of their quantitative study revealed that the most frequent dimensions of empowerment amongst high school teachers were, in descending order: status, professional growth, impact, self-efficacy, autonomy and decision-making. Bogler and Somech noted that there was a strong correlation between participation in decision-making and organisational commitment. The results of their study also revealed that status, professional growth, and self-efficacy were significant predictors of organizational and professional commitment, while self-efficacy, status and decision-making were significant predictors of organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). Bogler and Somech concluded their study by suggesting that "self-efficacy and status appear to be crucial in predicting all three organizational outcomes and should therefore be strongly acknowledged" (ibid, p. 286). The third study, conducted by Zembylas and Papanastasiou (2005) in Cyprus, investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and teacher empowerment. The results of their quantitative study revealed that satisfaction with the opportunities of promotion had the largest direct effect on empowerment and that "the latent variable of decision-making had the second largest direct effect on empowerment" (ibid, p. 449). The results of the study revealed also that teachers who felt satisfied with their decision-making ended up feeling more empowered, while teachers who were dissatisfied with their decision-making felt less empowered. The two researchers found out that status, promotion, personal growth and decision-making are all

variables that significantly affect the sense of teacher empowerment. They finally concluded that "decision-making not only reinforces teacher empowerment, but it might also have a positive influence on job satisfaction" (ibid, p. 453). In the fourth study, Pearson and Moomaw (2005) examined the relationship between teacher autonomy, work satisfaction, empowerment, professionalism, and on-the-job stress in three school districts in Florida. The results of their quantitative study showed a relation of cause and effect between the different variables. For example, they concluded that as curriculum autonomy increased, on-the-job stress decreased. This relation of cause and effect is also obvious between different variables. It was demonstrated that as general teacher autonomy increased so did empowerment and professionalism. Moreover, it was noticed that on-the-job stress decreased as job satisfaction, perceived empowerment, and professionalism increased. Finally, it was demonstrated that greater job satisfaction was associated with a high degree of professionalism and empowerment. The two researchers found out that "the strongest relationship was found between perceived empowerment and professionalism, which would suggest that teachers who perceive themselves as empowered also view their occupation as true profession" (ibid, p. 48).

The findings of the studies reviewed above illustrate examples of teacher empowerment through more active participation in decision-making. The findings of these studies demonstrated the ability of inquiry active groups (Picower, 2015) and active participation in decision-making to empower teachers (Zembylas and Papanastasiou, 2005 and Bogler & Somech, 2004). Moreover, these studies illustrated the cause and effect relationship between teacher autonomy and empowerment and professionalism (Pearson and Moomaw, 2005). In addition to these variables contributing to the empowerment of teachers, the role of principals can be considered an important factor as will be discussed in the next section.

3.7 The role of decision makers

The call for empowering teachers and enabling them to be active participants in decision-making has been linked not only to their participation in decision-making and to the different variables reviewed in the section above but also to the positive role of decision makers. They can be principals (Davis and Wilson, 2002; Wang, 2016; and Edwards et al., 2002), administrators (Lunenburg, 2010; Stacy, 2013) and supervisors (Muttar and

62

Mohamed (2013). Instead of the power conflict between decision makers and teachers that has been attributed to the fact that "principals view themselves as powerful actors in reference to decisions concerning teacher evaluation and hiring and teachers as among the least powerful actors" (Ingersoll and Merrill, 2011, p. 192), a supportive attitude on the part of decision makers should be adopted. The decision-making process may determine the nature of teachers' participation. Lunenburg (2010) distinguished between two models of decision-making: the rational model and the bounded rationality model. The former refers to the instance when administrative decision-making is assumed to be rational. It implies that administrators are certain about the decisions they make because they know the alternatives, outcomes and decision criteria. This decision-making process can be divided into six steps: identifying the problem, generating alternatives, evaluating alternatives, choosing an alternative, implementing the decision and evaluating decision effectiveness. In contrast to the rational model, the bounded rationality model implies that "the decisions will always be based on an incomplete and, to some degree, inadequate comprehension of the nature of the problem being faced" (Ibid, p. 8). As a result, decision makers will never be able to generate all possible alternatives.

Parmigiani (2012) builds on the rational model and proposes the adoption of a group decision-making process. According to Parmigiani (Ibid, p. 174), "an effective group decision-making process develops in the following phases: identify the problems, generate various ideas and solutions and evaluate them, collect and share relevant information, then choose the option that is most suitable to the problem that can satisfy expectations". Parmigiani's suggestion to adopt a group decision-making process within educational institutions may ensure teachers' involvement and empower them. Similarly, there are a number of studies that suggest teachers' involvement and a more supportive role of decision makers. (Davis and Wilson, 2000; Bogler and Somech, 2004; Edwards, Green, and Lyons, 2002; and Wang, 2016). Although these studies were conducted in different settings and locations, their findings and recommendations are relevant to my study as they address the issue of teachers' participation in decision-making and teacher empowerment.

In the first study, Davis and Wilson (2000) conducted a quantitative study in public elementary schools in Washington to examine the relationship between leader empowering behaviours, job satisfaction, motivation and job stress. The findings of their study showed a

significant relationship between leader empowering behaviour and teacher motivation. Davis and Wilson found out that the more principals participate in empowering behaviours, the more teachers feel that they have an impact and the better they fulfil work related tasks. Davis and Wilson argue that leaders should create working atmospheres that create a shared commitment to organisational goals. In a second study, Edwards et al. (2002) acknowledged in a quantitative study, conducted in a large suburban school district in Colorado, the role of principals in empowering teachers. They claimed that principals have the potential to influence teachers, empower them and work toward fostering a climate in which teachers feel safe and work collaboratively and professionally. In a third study, Bogler and Somech (2004), used questionnaires to examine the relationship between teacher empowerment and teachers' organisational commitment, professional commitment, and organisational citizenship behaviour in Israeli middle and high schools. They urged principals to empower teachers by establishing working conditions that will bring teachers to perceive themselves as having a high level of competency and experience high status and self esteem. They concluded their quantitative study by stating, "principals' practice of joint-decision-making should be recognized as highly important to the organization and its members" (ibid, p. 286). In the fourth study, Wang (2016) reported the findings of a qualitative study on school leadership and professional learning community in China. The findings of his study revealed that school leaders "demonstrated strong instructional leadership and visionary stewardship for school continuous improvement" (ibid, p. 202). The findings of Wang's study also showed that school leaders played a critical role in supporting and monitoring collegial learning and shaping a culture of trust. The findings of the studies reviewed in this section reveal the importance of the role that principals can play in empowering teachers. Through their empowering behaviours, principals can enhance teacher motivation (Davis and Wilson, 2000), influence and empower teachers (Edwards et al., 2002), boost teachers' confidence and self-esteem (Bogler and Somech, 2004) and develop a culture of trust and collegial learning (Wang, 2016).

In this chapter, I have attempted to provide an overview of the literature relevant to my study. I discussed the difficulty of defining professionalism and reviewed the challenges facing teachers to become professionals. I also reviewed the issues of teachers' participation in assessment, curriculum and professional development activities. In the following chapter, I will discuss the research design and methodology of the study.

Chapter Four

The Research Design and Methodology

According to Creswell (2009, p. 3), "research designs are plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis". Therefore, a research design involves "the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods" (ibid, p. 5). Based on this theoretical assumption, this chapter will give an account of the research design of my study. It will start with a brief discussion of the three main research paradigms: positivist, interpretivist and critical theory. This will be followed by a description of the research methodology and the research questions of the study. This discussion will justify the adoption of the research design and the compatible methods of data collection. Justifying the sampling choices, presenting the participants, and describing data collection procedures such as piloting and conducting research instruments will precede data analysis procedures and research quality criteria. After this, I will discuss the role of the researcher and the ethical issues. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the limitations of the study.

Before starting a research study, it is vital that researchers consider the epistemological and ontological assumptions that determine the intended research paradigm to be adopted. It is also important to decide about the methodology and consequently the research methods of investigation. For the purpose of organization, I will start my discussion by distinguishing between the positivist, interpretivist, and critical theory paradigms as a way of justifying my informed choice of the research design of my study.

4.1 Major research paradigms: positivist, interpretivist, and critical paradigms

Positivists hold a realist, foundationalist ontology (Dammak, 2015). Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 109) state that "an apprehendable reality is assumed to exist, driven by immutable natural laws and mechanisms". For the positivists, social reality is external to individuals and objects exist independently and have no dependence to the knower (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2003). From a similar perspective, Pring (2000, p. 58) defines realism as "the view that there is reality, a world, which exists independently of the researcher and

which is to be discovered". Epistemologically, positivists hold a dualist and objectivist view (Dammak, 2015). Being objectivist is a fundamental aspect of any competent inquiry (Creswell, 2009). For the positivists, the researcher and the object to be known are different entities and neither of them should exert influence on the other. Positivists have been committed to value neutrality, statistical, quantifiable, and observable events to establish causal law (Seale, 2000). The ontological and epistemological assumptions of the positivist paradigm determine the choice of their research methodologies and methods. As the cause-effect relationship is one of the tenets of the positivist paradigm (Creswell, 2009; Grix, 2004; and Mc Donough & Mc Dounough, 1997), experimental designs try to explain this causal relationship (Creswell, 2009). The researcher should seek a cause-effect relationship between the independent variable, which is the intervention and cause of any improvement, and the dependent variable, the outcome of the intervention. The attribution of change to the effect of the independent variable can be warranted by the manipulation of other variables threatening research validity. True experimental designs use empirical testing and random sampling, attempt to explain relationships and therefore make predictions and generalizations. Researchers control and manipulate variables and use experimental and control groups (Brest and Khan, 1993). Positivist researchers use data collection instruments to gather quantitative and numerical data that can be tabulated and analyzed statistically (Dammak, 2015). According to Creswell (2008), instruments can be tests, questionnaires, tally sheets, logs, observational checklists, inventories or assessment instruments. For positivist researchers, validity and reliability are the criteria to evaluate the quality of research. According to Kumar (1999, p. 138), validity is the "ability of an instrument to measure what it is designed to measure". For positivist researchers, the findings of a study are not internally valid if factors other than the independent variable affect the outcome. For this reason, the main task of a researcher is to control other variables that may be a threat to the validity of the research such as morality, history, Hawthorne effect, and practice effect. External validity refers to the degree to which the findings can be generalized to larger populations. The second quality criterion, reliability, is consistency of data results (Perry, 2005). According to Cohen et al. (2003, p.117), reliability is "a synonym for consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents". A research instrument is said to be reliable if it is consistent, stable, predictable, and accurate (Kumar, 1999).

Contrary to the positivists, interpretivists hold a relativist, anti-foundationalism ontology (Dammak, 2015). Relativism is the view that reality differs from person to another (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Interpretivists believe in multiple realities and hold that reality is socially constructed (Crotty, 1998; Pring, 2000). Epistemologically, interpretivists hold a subjectivist view. Crotty (1998, p. 79) states that the object "cannot be adequately described apart from the subject, nor can the subject be adequately described apart from the object". Therefore the relationship between the knower and the subject to be known is one of involvement rather than of detachment. In a similar way, Grix (2004) contends that the interpretivists hold that the world is constructed through interaction of individuals, that the natural and social worlds are not distinct, that researchers are part of the social reality and that they are not detached from the subjects they are studying.

Methodologies associated with the interpretive paradigm include case studies, phenomenology, and ethnography. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p. 29), "qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive methods, always seeking better ways to make more understandable the worlds of experiences they have studied". Interpretivist researchers strive for exploring and understanding phenomenon inductively and believe that the "social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated" (Cohen et al, 2003, p. 19). Contrary to the positivists, interpretive researchers believe that theory should generate from the collected data (Creswell et al., 2003).

As far as sampling is concerned, interpretivist researchers, contrary to positivists who rely on randomization, utilize purposeful sampling and select participants and sites that are information rich (Creswell, 2008). Interpretive researchers use various methods to collect qualitative data which can be categorized into four categories (Creswell, 2008). They are documents (public and private records, newspapers, letters and personal journals), interviews and questionnaires (one to one interviews, focus group, telephone, and electronic mail interviews), observations (participant and non participant), and audiovisual materials (photographs, videotapes, digital images, paintings and pictures). Qualitative researchers use different techniques to organize the immense data that they can collect. Miles and Huberman (1994) present their view of qualitative analysis which consists of data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and verification.

Dornyei (2007) contends that establishing explicit quality criteria for qualitative data is problematic. He thinks that uninteresting data focusing on individual meaning, quality of the researcher which determines the quality of the study, and selecting specific examples to present findings are the three basic quality concerns in qualitative data. In their attempt to overcome these shortcomings, Lincoln and Guba, in Seale (2000), present criteria to establish the trustworthiness of qualitative research. First, credibility should replace internal validity and can be achieved by persistent observation, criticism by a peer reviewer, and member checks. Second, transferability, which can be built by providing thick description of the investigated situation, should replace external validity. Third, dependability should replace reliability. It can be achieved by auditing. Finally, confirmability, which should replace objectivity, can also be achieved by auditing. Seale (2000, 2002) argues that Lincoln and Guba added authenticity as a fifth criterion. It can be demonstrated by representing different realities. According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (1998), prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy, member checks, and use of triangulation techniques are various ways to establish credibility.

Contrary to the positivists and interpretivists, the critical research paradigm adopts a problematising stance and claims an emancipatory role. As a result, reality in this paradigm is described within a cultural, historical, political and economic context (Dammak, 2015). Associated with the Institute for Social Research founded by Adorno, Marcuse, and Horkheimer, critical theory is especially influenced by the work of Habermas (1972) and Freire (1996). According to Mertens (2008, pp. 74-75), the "transformative-emancipatory ontology assumption holds that there are diversities of viewpoints with regard to many social realities but that these viewpoints need to be placed within political, cultural, historical, and economic value system to understand the basis for the differences". Epistemologically, critical theory researchers emphasize the importance of the interactive relation between the researcher and the participants and the impact of social and historical factors that influence them (Dammak, 2015). According to Mertens (ibid, p. 99), the "interaction between the researchers and the participants is essential and requires a level of trust and understanding to accurately represent viewpoints of all groups fairly". Within this paradigm, participants engage actively in the research process and may help researchers in

designing question research, collecting and analyzing data, and reaping the benefits of the research (Creswell, 2009).

Contrary to the positivists and interpretivists who rely solely on quantitative and qualitative approaches respectively, critical theorists suggest a mixed method approach relying on both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection (Howe, 1988; Mertens, 2008; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). From a pragmatic perspective, Howe (1988, p. 11) suggests that "combining quantitative and qualitative methods is a good thing" and denies that such a wedding of methods is epistemologically incoherent. According to Mertens (2008, p. 98), "a mixed methods research design framed within the transformative emancipatory paradigm might include the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods for the purpose of capturing the complexity of a situation".

Based on the transformative-emancipatory ontology, critical methodology is directed to interrogate accepted injustice and discrimination and raise the awareness of participants. Critical theorists are "concerned with action rather than discovery" (Edge and Richards, 1998, p. 341). In the same line of argument, Creswell (2009, p. 9) states that "the advocacy/ participatory worldview holds that research inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and a political agenda". As far as critical methodologies are concerned, Carr and Kemmis (1986) propose technical action research, practical action research, and emancipatory action research as three forms of action research parallel to Habermas' three types of knowledge interests.

Instead of the positivists' and interpretivists' quest for validity, reliability, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, Lincoln and Guba (1994) explain that critical theorists' "appropriate criteria are historical situatedness of the inquiry…the extent to which the inquiry acts to erode ignorance and misapprehensions". In the same line of argument, Lather (1986) contends that adopting measures of conventional ethnography may help researchers achieve the qualities of rigor and care. Lather recommends using member checks, systematized reflexivity, triangulation, and catalytic validity which "refers to the degree to which the research process re-orients, focuses, and energizes participants…[and] knowing reality in order to better transform it" (ibid, p. 67). According to Cohen et al (2003), catalytic validity embraces the critical theory paradigm and aims to ensure that

research will lead to action. It is employed to reveal injustice, dominance and help participants to understand and change situations (Dammak, 2015).

4.1.1 The research paradigm of the study

The preceding discussion of the three research paradigms informed my choice of the paradigm of this study, which aims to explore what teachers think about their participation in decision-making within the context of their work. As my research attempts to explore the meaning that the participants give to their participation in assessment, curriculum development and other professional development activities, it falls within the interpretive paradigm. As the aim of my study is to explore what participants think about teachers' participation in decision-making, I assume, ontologically, that realities are "apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature" (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 110). Therefore, from an ontological perspective, my research aims to understand and interpret what teachers think about their participation in decision-making. As far as epistemology is concerned, I assume, as Guba and Lincoln contend, that "the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known" (ibid, p.110) is transactional and subjective. According to them, the researcher and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the findings are created as the investigation proceeds. Epistemologically, interpretivists hold a subjectivist view and contend that subjective meanings and subjective interpretations are of paramount importance (Pring, 2000). Therefore, the relationship between the knower and the subject to be known is one of involvement. According to Crotty (1998), Pring (2000), and Grix (2004), meaning and knowledge are socially constructed and generate from the interaction between individuals and their context. I assume that exploring and understanding what teachers think about their participation in decision-making can be achieved by interacting with the participants. Therefore, the emphasis of my study will be on teachers' participation in decision-making through the eyes of the participants. The next sections describe the methodology that is best suited to address the aim of this study within the interpretive paradigm.

70

4.2 The research questions of the study

This study aims to investigate the issue of teachers' participation in decision-making from the point of view of English language teachers in the foundation program in my institute. It will try to explore what teachers think about their participation in assessment, curriculum development, and professional development activities. As far as research questions are concerned, Perry (2011) reiterates that exploratory researchers can use either qualitative-exploratory or quantitative- exploratory designs to answer the WHAT questions, a strategy that I followed in answering the research questions of this study. The following overarching research question which guides my investigation is:

What is the nature of teachers' professional participation in decision-making on assessment, curriculum development and professional development?

The following sub questions will help to answer the main research question:

1) What do English language teachers think about their participation in assessment activities?

2) What do English language teachers think about their participation in curriculum development activities?

3) What do English language teachers think about their participation in other professional development activities?

4.3 Methodology, research design and methods

In order to explore deeply what teachers think about their participation, I used the exploratory methodology which is best suited to address the aims of my research. According to Perry (2011, p. 86), a study can be exploratory as long as it attempts to "find out what was happening without trying to support any particular hypothesis". In the same line of argument, Brown (2006, p. 45) contends that exploratory research "tends to tackle new problems on which little or no previous research has been done" which grants the researcher freedom to define the scope of the research with the hope to expand the existing knowledge. In an attempt to enrich the debate, Singh (2007) explains that exploratory

research attempts to explore research issues in detail, provide significant insights, familiarize with the concepts without providing conclusive answers to research questions and therefore cannot generalize the findings. Using exploratory research enabled me to explore what teachers think about their participation in decision-making, allowed me to gain insight into and contribute to the understanding of this controversial issue in order to add to the research that has covered this issue in this region.

As far as research designs are concerned, Creswell and Plano Clark (2008, p. 159) highlight their importance because "they provide road maps for how to rigorously conduct studies to best meet certain objectives". For this study on teachers' views about their participation in decision-making, I used a sequential exploratory design consisting of interviews followed by questionnaires. In order to explore in depth what teachers think about their participation in decision-making, I decided to rely on qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection in a sequential way. For this reason, I first used interviews to explore in depth what some teachers think about their participation. I then used the findings from the content of the interviews to design a questionnaire about the nature of teachers' participation in decision-making (Appendix 5). The intention was to collect information from the teachers who were not involved in the interviews. My reliance on the sequential design can be justified by the contention of Creswell et al. (2003) that this strategy of using quantitative data to assist in the interpretation of qualitative findings can be useful to a researcher who wants to explore a phenomenon and expand on the qualitative findings. Brown (2001, pp. 78-79) argues that the "characteristics of the two types [questionnaires and interviews] of survey instruments are complementary in the sense that interviews are more suitable for exploring what the questions are and questionnaires are more suitable for answering those questions". The sequential exploratory design of my study is characterized, as explained by Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann and Hanson in Plano Clark and Creswell (2008, p. 180), by "an initial phase of qualitative data collection and analysis followed by a phase of quantitative data collection and analysis. Therefore the priority is given to the qualitative aspect of the study". Parallel to this, Morse in Creswell and Plano Clark (2008, p. 152), defines methodological triangulation as "the use of at least two methods, usually qualitative and quantitative, to address the same research problem" and further explains that sequential triangulation "is used if the results of one method are essential for planning the next method". Creswell (2009, p. 211) contends that "sequential exploratory strategy involves a

first phase of qualitative data collection and analysis, followed by a second phase of quantitative data collection and analysis that builds on the results of the first qualitative phase". To follow the QUAL-quan sequential implementation of data collection tools, I will start by discussing interviews, the qualitative research method of this study, before discussing questionnaires.

4.3.1 Interviews

According to Punch (2009, p. 144), the "interview is the most prominent data collection tool in qualitative research". The interviews' dialogical and emancipatory functions and their ability to build a trust-relationship between interviewers and interviewees is highlighted by Kvale (2006, p. 481) who states that "interviews give voice to common people, allowing them to freely present their life situations in their own words, and open for a close personal interaction between the researchers and their subjects". In addition to their ability to give opportunities to people to be heard, interviews, according to Wellington (2000, p. 71), allow researchers to investigate and "probe an interviewee's thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, views, feelings and perspectives".

Single or multiple session interviews, structured interviews, unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews are the main types of one-to-one interviews (Dornyei, 2007). I opted for semi-structured interviews with open ended questions that focus on the meaning that informants give to their participation in decision-making. In keeping with the exploratory approach of my study, semi-structured interviews helped me to explore the issue of teachers' participation in decision-making from their own perspectives, through their own description and diagnosis, and as experienced by them in their context as teachers. Brown (2001, p. 78) enumerates the advantages of interviews and their compatibility with exploratory research by stating that

> "The flexibility of interviews allows the interviewer to explore new avenues of opinion…thus interviews seem better suited to exploratory tasks. The personal nature of interviews may encourage interviewees to be more open and willing to express tentative or exploratory opinions".

The semi-structured interviews enabled me to establish rapport with the participants (Wellington, 2000; Brown, 2001), explore my research questions in depth and seek opinions by probing more information and maintain neutrality at the same time (Brown, 2001). The semi-structured face to face interviews allowed me to observe the body language of the participants, notice the tones and have a deeper understanding of participants' responses. In addition, asking informants for explanations and clarifications allowed me to avoid and remove ambiguity (Wellington, 2000).

Despite these advantages, interviews, as Dornyei highlights, are time-consuming "to set up and conduct, and…requires good communication skills on the part of the interviewer" (2007, p. 143). The process of interviewing requires creating an interview guide or classified list of topics, converting it to an interview schedule, securing the consent of interviewees to be interviewed and recorded, assuring informants of anonymity and confidentiality, informing interviewees about the research study and its aims, arranging an appropriate time and venue, and transcribing and analyzing interviews. Moreover, Brown (2001, p. 76) contends that "interview procedures are typically done with relatively small number of subjects, which leads to relatively small scale surveys." Lack of anonymity is another disadvantage of interviews because the face to face or telephone interviews "cannot be completely anonymous" (Brown, 2001). In addition to the above disadvantages, Brown draws our attention to the problem of bias in interviews by stating that "interviewers may introduce subconscious biases by the way they use tone, emphasis, register, facial expression, significant pauses, appearance, accent, evident boredom…" (2007, p. 76). Bias, ambiguity, the use of leading questions and distortion of truth can be minimised, if the interviewer is aware of errors that are likely to occur and take as many steps as possible to increase the quality of data such as adopting a critical approach to interviewing, formulating an interview schedule, piloting and revising the questions (Wellington, 2000). While preparing, conducting and analyzing my research interviews, I took these precautious and preventative steps as will be illuminated in the subsequent session.

4.3.1.1 Development of the interview schedule

My research questions, based on my interest in the issue of teachers' participation in decision-making and the reviewed literature informed the interview schedule. Deciding about the topics helped me to develop a semi-structured interview of eighteen questions.

Questions in the semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix 3) focus on the following broad areas of inquiry:

- The extent of teachers' participation in assessment, curriculum development and professional development activities.
- English language teachers' perceptions about their participation in assessment activities.
- English language teachers' perceptions about their participation in curriculum development.
- English language teachers' perceptions about their participation in other professional development activities.

A week ahead of the scheduled interviews, I informed the interviewees about the purpose of the interview and asked them to think and reflect on the areas of inquiry that we would discuss. I also informed them about my research, the reasons for choosing them, the length of the interview and the preservation of confidentiality and anonymity. Informing participants about the main ideas of the interview was meant to give them the chance to be well prepared to discuss the areas of inquiry, save time that could be spent in explaining questions during the interview and keep them focused on the areas of inquiry during the interview. I also prepared the recorder, practiced reading the questions to be familiar with the interview instrument and follow the exact wording of questions to obtain clarification or more details (Brown, 2001). The interview schedule was designed to last at least thirty minutes but not more than one hour.

4.3.2 Questionnaires

The adoption of the sequential exploratory design, discussed in section 4.4 enabled me to use questionnaires as the second method of data collection. According to Dornyei (2007), questionnaires can be used to test the findings emerging from the qualitative phase. In a similar way, Evans (2009, p. 114) believes that it "is acceptable for a qualitative study to include the use of quantitative instruments such as questionnaires, or tests, but the ultimate purpose of their use is as a contribution to understanding the particular constructions, beliefs and understandings of the subjects being researched". The findings of the interviews informed the content of the questionnaire (Appendix 4) which is defined as "any written

instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers" (Brown, 2001, p. 6). The questionnaire consisted of six sections related to the research questions of the study. The first section was intended to gather information about the qualifications, teaching experiences and the skills that participants teach. The second and third sections were about teachers' participation in weekly and exit tests respectively. The fourth and fifth sections addressed teachers' participation in curriculum and professional development activities. I ensured that the statements of the questionnaire about teachers' participation in decision-making correspond to the themes of the interviews (Appendix 5).The last section consisted of an open-ended question about issues that respondents would like to discuss and that were not addressed in the questionnaire. The use of closed and open-ended questions was intended to gather qualitative and quantitative data respectively (Nunan, 1992) and to give respondents the opportunity to address issues in the open-ended question that the statements in the closed questions failed to raise. The choice to use questionnaires was purposeful as they enabled me to gather as much data as possible about teachers' participation in decision-making in a very short period (Gillham, 2000). Moreover, the use of questionnaires assured anonymity and enabled me to handle sensitive issues and get the respondents' confidential views on their participation in decision-making (Brown, 2001).They also allowed me to gather quantitative data that can be easily classified and analysed. Dornyei (2007, p. 101-2) states that questionnaires are "relatively easy to construct, extremely versatile and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily processible". Moreover, the choice of multi-item scales was not accidental. I used more than one statement to address each identified content area. I used the Likert scales which "refer to a cluster of several differently worded items that focus on the same target" (ibid, p. 103). I preassigned numbers on the instrument to each response option as follows: 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3= no opinion, 4=disagree and 5= strongly disagree. While wording the items, I tried to use simple language, avoid ambiguous, loaded words and sentences and negative constructions. Dornyei (2007. p. 102) contends that "the actual wording of the items can assume an unexpected importance". I also had to pay special attention to avoid all the pitfalls that may lower the return rate (Brown, 2001). I considered making the questionnaire comprehensive and concise so that its completion should not exceed thirty minutes. I also made sure that the papers should not

appear crowded. Finally I used highlighting options such as bold characters and sequencing marking. Though time consuming, paying attention to tiny details enabled me to design a well organised questionnaire. Apart from its general features, it was easy for the respondents to recognize the different parts of the questionnaire. The title was clear and the instructions at the beginning were short and informative. Dornyei (2003) suggests that these may determine respondents' feelings toward the questionnaires. I started the introduction section by informing the respondents about the study and reasons for conducting the questionnaire. I promised them confidentiality and anonymity as I did not ask them to write their names. I highlighted the importance of their contribution to the research and assure them that there were no right or wrong answers. As they are colleagues working for the same institute, I encouraged them to ask for explanation and provided them with my email and mobile number for any clarification they may need.

4.4 Sampling and participants

Participants in the study were twenty eight English language teachers in the foundation program. They were from the following countries: the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom, Sudan, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria, Kenya, Iraq and Palestine. Most of them hold a Masters' degree. With the exception of one teacher, who has a teaching experience of less than five years, all other teachers have teaching experiences of more than fifteen years in different levels and various parts of the world. Previous professional participation in decision-making marked most interviewees as will be discussed in section (5.5.5.2).

Perry (2005, p. 55) defines the sample as "the source from which the data are drawn to answer the research question(s) and / or to test any hypothesis that might be made". My choice of the sequential exploratory strategy informed my sampling choices. As my research is interpretive and based on its qualitative strand, I used purposive sampling to choose participants for the interviews. Teddlie and Yu (2007, p. 200) contend that purposive sampling techniques are "primarily used in qualitative (QUAL) studies and may be defined as selecting units …based on specific purposes associated with answering a research study's question". The selection was based on the criteria that they were all English language teachers in the foundation program, highly qualified with at least an MA

degree and with a teaching experience no less than five years. The chosen sample comprised experienced and knowledgeable teachers from the United States of America, Sudan, Tunisia and Kenya who volunteered to participate in the study. Knowledge, qualification and experience were the main criteria I considered for selecting the participants in the interview as other variables such as age, gender, religion and ethnic group were considered irrelevant to my study.

For the questionnaires, which were meant to complement the data I received from the interviews, I targeted the English language teachers in the foundation programme who did not participate in the interviews, thus adopting convenience sampling. The sequential use of questionnaires after interviews in an exploratory study allowed me to target the English language teachers in the foundation programme who did not participate in the interviews. As the statements in the questionnaires were based on the results of interviews, involving interviewees in the questionnaires might mean repetition. The exemption of interviewees from participating in the questionnaires stems from my attempt to give an opportunity to other different participants to express themselves. Moreover, my intention to compare the results of interviews and questionnaires for convergence and divergence obliged me to restrict participation in questionnaires to teachers who did not participate in the interviews. Thus, the choice to exempt interviewees from participating in questionnaires was dictated by the necessity of using two different tools of collecting data from two different sources. Limiting the study to my workplace enabled me to adopt a purposive sampling approach while interviewing participants and convenience sampling while conducting questionnaires.

Research tool and stage	sampling	Selection criteria	Participants: 28
Semi-structured interviews: qualitative stage	Purposive sampling	Highly qualified and more experienced teachers	6
Questionnaires: quantitative stage	Non probability. Convenience sampling	English language teachers from the foundation programme who did not participate in interviews	22

Table 1: summary of participant selection

4.5 Procedures

4.5.1 Piloting

Piloting research instruments does not only allow researchers to have some practice in interviewing and conducting questionnaires but also informs them about the effectiveness of their research instruments in gathering information that answer their research questions. According to Merriam (1998, p. 75-6), piloting allows researchers to "learn which questions are confusing and need rewording, which questions yield useless data, and which questions, suggested by your respondents, you should have thought to include in the first place".

4.5.1.1 Piloting interviews

Before piloting the interviews and questionnaires, I agreed with a PhD holder and a doctoral candidate to act as auditors. Their familiarity with the context of research (Gulf area), research methods and processes qualifies them to provide feedback about the tools of data collection and the different processes of research. They volunteered to help and offer friendly but constructive criticism. I asked them to check if the questions of the interviews and questionnaires were representative of the areas of interest. They also helped with providing feedback about the compatibility between interview questions, questionnaire statements and research questions. Their contribution in the process of auditing was important as they helped with evaluating whether or not the findings, interpretations and conclusions were supported by the data.

My personal interest in teachers' participation in decision-making and the review of literature enabled me to identify the topics that I would like to address and explore in depth in the interviews. Before piloting the interviews, I gave the interview schedule to the two external audits to review the questions. They agreed that the questions in the interview schedule address my research questions. I piloted the interview with two workplace colleagues (English language teachers from the foundation program) who would not be interviewed a second time. According to Dornyei (2007, p. 137), "a few trial runs can ensure that the questions elicit sufficiently rich data". Careful adoption of a critical

approach to interviewing and "prior formulation of the interview schedule... piloting and consequent revision of questions" may increase the quality of data as suggested by Wellington (2000, p. 83). The two piloted interviews lasted 38 and 40 minutes respectively and enabled me to gain some practice of interviewing. Moreover, piloting unveiled some problems of wording that I had to solve. It also revealed a repetition problem and obliged me to delete general questions about interviewees' views of teacher participation in assessment, curriculum development and professional development activities as I realised the interviewees were repeating themselves. I also added the expression "in your workplace" as I noticed that both of them started talking about teachers' participation in general rather than specifically in the context of their workplace. I also modified the prompts by asking about a few points at a time as I felt that the points to be covered in prompts were numerous and the interviewees could not concentrate on all points at the same time and I had to repeat them during the interview (for example: co-teaching, mentoring, teachers networks, study groups, book clubs, group discussions, reflecting on lessons, co-planning, professional dialogue, collaborative action research).

4.5.1.2 Piloting questionnaires

After interviewing, categorizing and analyzing interviews' data, I designed a questionnaire based on the findings of the interview and gave it to the same two external audits, who reviewed the interview schedule previously, to check the content, layout, and the general features of the questionnaires. I asked them to check if the questions represent all the areas of the research questions. Both of them agreed that I had to simplify some of the statements and replace some technical terms that might hinder respondents' comprehension. They also suggested adding some demographic questions (such as qualifications) and omit one question about the place of work. One of them remarked that some of the ideas were repeated in the same statements and I explained that this repetition was purposeful as more than one item is needed to tackle the same content area (Dornyei, 2007). After modifying the questionnaire, I piloted it with two English language teachers from the technical program. My choice of two English language teachers from the technical program stems from my attempt to keep the remaining teachers of the foundation program away from piloting and preserve them for the real questionnaire. Moreover, the English language teachers from the technical program belong to the same institute and are familiar with the

context of research. I assumed that belonging to the same institute and abiding by the same rules and processes of implementing policies and practices would make the choice of the two English language teachers from the technical program to pilot the questionnaires a good choice. The results of the pilot study were encouraging as respondents answered without complaining about ambiguity or repetition.

4.5.2 Data collection

In this section, I will explain the data collection procedures of the two research instruments following their piloting.

4.5.2.1 Conducting interviews

Interviewing teachers could not have been possible without obtaining their consent and the consent of our workplace. Before starting the process of data collection, I obtained the consent of the administration of my workplace to conduct the research and involve the teachers in the foundation program (Appendix 8). I then provided all English language teachers in the foundation program with an information sheet informing them about the title and the topic of the project, the significance of their participation, the ethics of research, their right to withdraw at any stage and my personal contact details for further clarification (Appendix 6). I also provided them with the consent forms, bearing my signature, to read and sign (Appendix 7).

Following this, I agreed with the six interviewees about the timing and venue for conducting the interviews. We agreed to hold them during our common free periods. We also agreed to meet in a small store room where we keep the textbooks of the foundation program. It is a quiet room equipped with a table and chairs. I informed interviewees a week ahead of meeting them about the main areas of the interview to enable them to reflect on them. I was able to conduct the six interviews in different days which gave me time to reflect on the way interviews were conducted and therefore increase the quality of every new interview. While conducting interviews, I did not follow to the letter the pre-planned interview schedule as a lot of areas of interest emerged and I did not want to lose any given opportunity to explore my research topics to the maximum. The duration of the semi structured interviews varied from twenty five to forty minutes. I started to transcribe each

one of the recorded interviews right after conducting them and returned the transcribed versions with the recorded interview to participants to check (member check) that the transcribed version corresponds to what they intended to mean during the interviews. They all agreed that the transcriptions were accurate and correspond to what they intended to say.

4.5.2.2 Conducting questionnaires

The sequential design of my research study necessitated transcribing, coding and analysing the interview data before designing and conducting the questionnaires. The statements in the questionnaires were based on the outcome of the six different interviews conducted at the beginning of the data collection process.

The careful scrutiny of interviewees' transcripts helped me identify the elements of every topic in the questionnaires. Encouraged by the results of the pilot project, I distributed twenty four questionnaires to my colleagues in the foundation program. I gave them ample time to answer the questionnaires and asked them to put the completed questionnaires in a box that I put on my desk. The idea of the box helped me avoid identifying respondents and non-respondents and therefore minimize any type of pressure and obligation on the participants. Most of them responded and only two failed to answer and apologized for their decline. In general the number of returned responses was satisfactory as out of twenty four distributed questionnaires, only two failed to be returned.

4.6 Data analysis

My purpose with the data analysis was to understand and interpret participants' views as expressed in the interviews and questionnaires in order to help the reader understand the multiple and sometimes conflicting social realities that are the outcome of human intellects (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). I used Miles and Huberman's (1994) techniques to organise data which consists of data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and verification. In addition, I compared data from interviews and questionnaires for evidence of convergence and divergence.

4.6.1 Interview analysis

82

After conducting the interviews, I transcribed them, made several copies, kept the original in a safe place, and started reading them to make "sense out of text and image data" as suggested by Creswell (2009, p. 183). I read the transcripts for topic ordering to sort out the main topics that are related to the questions of my research study. I followed Creswell's model (2008) of coding pages from interview transcripts. I left margins to the left and to the right of transcript pages and started writing codes to the left and themes and other ideas in the right margin. This technique helped me to code the data, a process which involves "segmenting and labeling text to form description and broad themes in the data" (ibid, p. 251). This coding process helped me to reduce data and collapse these codes into broad themes. This inductive process of collapsing data into a few themes is the first component of Miles and Huberman's framework (1994) for qualitative data analysis which aims to reduce the data without losing depth of information. After reducing the data, I displayed them by assembling them in a table comprising the interviewees' responses to the questions according to the themes (Appendix 10). I then read the transcripts to identify quotes and align them with each category within the themes.

I then moved to drawing and verifying conclusions which are the last and most important component of Miles' and Huberman's framework. This cumbersome task of interpretation and conclusion could not have been possible without the two previous steps. Since the epistemological position in the interpretive paradigm assumes that knowledge is socially constructed and that the world consists of multiple and complex realities, it was my responsibility, as a researcher, at this stage, to be creative, analyse and interpret data by reviewing the major findings, how they answer the research questions and compare these findings with past studies in the literature to support or contradict the findings of my research study.

4.6.2 Questionnaire analysis

Although the weighting of the interviews in the sequential design of this research study is more important than questionnaires, the use of the latter instrument of data collection enabled me to gather more data, compare respondents' responses and therefore explain discrepancies or similarities among teachers' responses and confirm or reject the interview data. I organized the quantitative questionnaire data for analysis by scoring the data. I counted the number of participants' responses to questionnaire statements. After scoring the

data, I organised the results thematically according to each identified content area (Appendix 11). I started analyzing questionnaire data to address each of the research questions. I then compared this data with the interview data to highlight the similarities and discrepancies in teachers' perceptions of their participation in decision-making.

4.6.3. Documentary analysis

The teachers' job description (Appendix 1), which will be further analysed in section (5.2), will be used in the discussion of the findings to compare teachers' real participation in decision-making and the promised contribution in this document. Moreover, the strategic objectives (Appendix 2), which will also be further analysed in section (5.2), will be used in the discussion of the findings to compare the real support teachers obtain from the institute and the support they were promised in the strategic objectives document.

4.7 Quality criteria

In the interpretive paradigm, the concepts of reliability and validity are replaced by dependability and credibility. Since there is no single reality in the interpretive paradigm, replication of results or scores (reliability) is not of as great importance as in the positivist paradigm. Unlike the stable results of the experimental designs and the possibility of checking reliability by testing and retesting, diversity in the interpretive paradigm is sought. Instead of the statistical techniques of checking consistency of scores such as the repeated surveys method, the equivalent surveys method and the internal consistency method in experimental designs (Brown, 2001), interpretive researchers rely on tracking the research process by external audits. As far as questionnaire validity is concerned, I tried to establish content validity by asking the two audits, A PhD holder and a doctoral candidate, to check if the questions are representative of the areas of interest (Creswell, 2008) before piloting the questionnaire. My intention was to know how well the questions represent all of the possibilities of questions available and how well the questions address the research questions.

In order to make my research findings convincing and trustworthy, I considered the issues of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability while conducting interviews (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). To ensure credibility, which can replace internal validity, I

recorded the interviews for accurate interpretations and used member checks techniques as suggested by Teddie and Tashakkori (1998). After transcribing the interviews, I provided each interviewee with the transcribed version and the corresponding recorded interview to check that the transcriptions are identical to what they said in their interviews. Transferability, which should replace external validity, was addressed by providing thick description of the situation studied and documenting all steps of research. The explicit description of my research process, methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation highlights the detailed steps of my research and provides a thick description of the whole research process. Dependability or reliability was increased in my study in two different ways. First, I used the same interview schedule that has been carefully designed, worded and piloted while conducting interviews. Second, I transcribed the interviews accurately and provided interviewees with the transcribed versions for verification. Confirmability, which should replace objectivity, was achieved by auditing and triangulation. Two external audits examined both the process and product of the research study. In addition to reviewing questionnaires and interview schedules before and after piloting, they helped with evaluating whether or not the findings, interpretations and conclusions are supported by data. While acknowledging the subjective nature of interpretive research, I tried to present a detailed, accurate and non biased account of participants' perceptions.

Because of the exploratory nature of this research, transferability or generalization of findings is not a target (Singh, 2007). As a researcher, my main concern was to explore research issues in detail and collect data from participants, which would form the subjective reality of the participants. Familiarising myself with the concepts of teachers' participation in decision-making and exploring the subjective meanings that participants give to their participation in making decisions can help to provide significant insights and lead to a better understanding of the nature of teachers' participation in decision-making.

4.8 Role of the researcher

The role of researchers differs from one research paradigm to another. In the positivist paradigm, the researcher is an outsider whose main interest is developing a cause effect relationship. This role differs in the interpretive and critical paradigms. If the main role of the researcher in the critical approach consists of questioning and raising awareness, the

major role of the researcher in the interpretive paradigm consists of exploring and understanding the phenomenon under investigation. Moreover, researchers in the interpretive paradigm, affirm Edge and Richards (1998, p. 336), "see themselves as participants in the situation they investigate". This involvement enables researchers to provide a thick description of the situation (Holliday, 2007).

In my quest to explore the issue of teachers' participation in decision-making, I experienced the dual roles of researcher and colleague. The research was conducted in my workplace and the participants were my colleagues with whom I have been working for many years. Working together in the same department for the same institute for many years and keeping good rapport with all teachers in the foundation program enabled me to build a relationship of trust with my interviewees and therefore reinforced their willingness to participate, share information and be recorded. Despite this advantage, being their colleague and a researcher at the same time engendered some challenges. To some of the interviewees, and at certain points during the interviews, I was their colleague rather than a researcher. They treated me as an insider, who knew about everything in the workplace and who should be aware of all their problems, beliefs and perceptions. The whole experience of interviewing participants from my workplace echoed Cohen et al.'s (2003, p. 54) warning that "when a researcher is normally a member of the organization where the research is taking place, … it is generally unwise to take cooperation for granted".

Facing difficulties and experiencing dilemmas were part of my research project. As a researcher, I felt that my objective was "to strike a balance between the rights of investigators to seek an understanding of human behaviour, and the rights and welfare of individuals who participate in the research" (Cohen et al, p. 58). As a researcher, I felt that I have a responsibility not only to my role in the quest for knowledge, but also for the subjects whose interests should not be threatened. During all the steps of research, issues of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality were of paramount importance and measures were taken from my part to protect the privacy of participants, keep their true identities unrevealed, and avoid any connection between the participants and the data provided. As pointed out by Cohen et al. (2003, p. 60), "individual right to privacy is usually contrasted with public right to know". Diener and Crandall in Cohen et al. (2003) considered privacy from three different perspectives. They are: the sensitivity of the information being given,

the setting being observed, and the dissemination of information. As far as the sensitivity of information is concerned, it is argued that "the greater the sensitivity of the information, the more safeguards are called for to protect the privacy of the research participant" (ibid, p. 61). According to Cohen et al., the observed settings may vary from private to completely public. They claim that "intrusions into people's homes without their consent are forbidden by law" (ibid, p. 61). Dissemination of information concerns "the ability to match personal information with the identity of the research participants" (ibid, p. 61). In addition to privacy, participants were assured of anonymity. The consent forms, which I distributed to all participants, state that interviewees would be given pseudonyms and that the participants in questionnaires do not have to write their names. They were also asked to put the completed questionnaires in a special box that I put on my desk in the staff room. According to Cohen et al. (2003, p. 61), "a participant or subject is therefore considered anonymous when the researcher or another person cannot identify the participant or subject from the information provided". As far as confidentiality is concerned, I promised interviewees that I would in no way make the connection publicly known between the information and the provider.

4.9 Ethical issues

According to Cohen et al. (2003), ethical problems may arise from the nature of the research project, the context for the research, the procedures to be adopted, the methods of data collection, the nature of participants and what is to be done with the data. In a quest to obtain valid and reliable data, researchers should "strike a balance between the demands placed on them as professional scientists in pursuit of truth, and their subjects' rights and values potentially threatened by the research" (ibid, p. 49). Although the nature of my research does not present any type of ethical harm to participants, the research procedures I adopted as well as the possibility of publishing my work in the future offered me guideline principles to abide by ethical rules as a measure to avoid potential ethical problems. As a consequence of these guidelines, I took the following preventative steps.

4.9.1 Ethical approval and informed consent

Before collecting data, I obtained a certificate of ethical approval from Exeter University's Chair of the Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee to conduct my research and

collect data (Appendix 9). The form that I submitted to the committee contained the title and a brief description of the project, the context and participants in the study, details about the voluntary and informed nature of participation and procedures of data collection and protection.

In addition, I wrote consent form to be signed by the manager of the institute, where the research would be conducted (Appendix 8). Bell (1987, p. 42) contends that as soon as a researcher has "an agreed project outline and [has] read enough…it is advisable to make a formal, written approach to the individuals and organizations concerned, outlining [his/her] plans". As the research was conducted in my workplace, access and acceptance did not present a problem. Working for the institute for more than ten years helped me build relations of trust with all different stakeholders. Moreover, conducting many research studies about the institute before this one and abiding by ethical measures assured me easy access and acceptance.

After receiving the certificate of ethical approval from the university and the consent of my workplace, I distributed an information sheet (see Appendix 6) and the consent forms (see Appendix 7) to my colleagues in the foundation program. In the information sheet, I informed them about the aims of my research. I also informed them that they may take part in this research either by completing a short questionnaire or by being interviewed. I explained that the questionnaires would be short and that they would not need more than thirty minutes to complete. I also informed them that the interview would not last more than one hour, would take place at a time and venue convenient to them and would be audio-recorded and transcribed. I assured them anonymity and confidentiality as they would be given pseudonyms so as not to disclose their true identity. Finally, I informed them that their participation is entirely voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw from the research at any time.

4.10 Limitations

Experiencing difficulties and discovering limitations are parts of the research process and potential sources of learning from one's own mistakes. First, despite piloting the questionnaire, the number of written responses to the open-ended question was very low and most of the respondents did not write down their opinions. The responses of the

respondents who answered the open-ended question did not add to the data as their answers were either not clear or a repetition to the statements of the questionnaires. This failure to provide clear data reflects one of the disadvantages of questionnaires which consist of the impossibility to probe and ask respondents for clarification as it is the case in interviews (Greener, 2011). Moreover, failing to answer some questions is another disadvantage that I discovered while analysing the open-ended question in the questionnaire data (Brown, 2001).

Second, the main conspicuous limitation that marked the process of data collection emerged while interviewing participants. To some of them, my status as a colleague dominated my role as a researcher. In more than one instance during interviews, they treated me as an insider, who knew about everything in the workplace and who should be aware of all their perceptions. Phrases such as "because as you know", "you know" were repeated more than once by participants. Contrary to this general trend in participants, one interviewee's short and dry responses reflected a desire to keep silent. The duration of the interview (23 minutes), his tone and the low pitch in his voice reflected the minimal responses of this participant. Although we have been colleagues for more than ten years and despite his agreeing to be interviewed, this particular interviewee provided me with very short answers and I found myself probing and reformulating questions again and again.

The findings of my investigation along with their discussion will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter Five

Findings and Discussion

5.1 Data presentation and illustration

In this chapter, I present the findings of my study, describe the way in which the data from my study is presented and discuss the findings. Basically, I present, analyse and discuss data that address each of the research questions.

Data from interviews and questionnaires have been arranged under themes that appear as sub headings in each section. The themes are also used as sub headings in the discussion section. I used tables and quotations to support the interpretation of my data. My data analysis is my own interpretation of participants' responses and understanding of teachers' participation in decision-making. In the tables illustrated in this chapter, I gave the six interviewees pseudonyms: Antony, Victor, Charles, Edward, Andy and George. The total number of interviewees (6) and respondents to the questionnaire (22) is indicated by the letter '*n*' and the corresponding percentage is indicated by the symbol '%'.This chapter consists of 4 main sections. Each of the first three sections addresses one of the three research questions. The last section is a discussion of the findings.

5.2 Results of the documentary analysis

The analysis of the teachers' job description document (Appendix 1) reveals that teachers should be involved in assessment, curriculum and professional development activities. According to this document, teachers should prepare daily lessons and deliver them to a range of classes, provide a positive learning environment in which students are encouraged to be actively involved in the learning process and support students through academic or personal difficulties. Moreover, instructors are expected to take part in producing and implementing a variety of tests and assessment tools, mark students' work, give appropriate feedback and maintain records of students' progress and development. As far as curriculum development is concerned, English language instructors, according to the same document, are expected to select and use effective instructional learning materials, assist in assessing changing curricular needs and offer plans for improvement. In addition to their involvement

in assessment and curriculum development activities, English language instructors should conduct regular peer observations, participate in regular in-service training as part of continuing professional development, review approved professional development standards, prepare an individual professional development plan in coordination with the senior instructor and participate in professional development program in local conferences in coordination with the senior instructor. In order to achieve the previous objectives, English language instructors should collaborate with fellow instructors and other stakeholders to enhance the learning and teaching environment, keep daily contact with senior instructors, meet deadlines and professional obligations through efficient work, honour schedules and coordinate with other colleagues and report to the concerned senior instructor. Success in meeting the previous requirements in the teachers' job description is the criteria against which the teachers are evaluated, ranked and classified as professionals. Those who fail to meet the standards are first notified and provided with a guidance program. They may be sanctioned if they fail to show progress.

In addition to the job description document, the analysis of the strategic objectives of the institute (Appendix 2) reveals the extent of support that the institute is ready to offer to the students and employees. According to this document, the institute should function as a center for training for employees in the oil and gaz industry. The document states that the institute is committed to provide quality training for students and employees to develop them as qualified and skilled technicians. The analysis of this document reveals that the objectives of the institute were initially tailored to meet mainly the needs of students and technical employees. English language teachers seem to be marginalised. Except for the two general statements about the provision of quality professional development services to its personnel to ensure high standard of training for instructors and other employees and developing an educational research and assessment center, the strategic plan does not seem to consider the needs of English language teachers. Despite promising them quality professional development services, the strategic plan does not explicitly state the frequency, type of professional development and the extent of support that the institute may offer to the English language teachers. It does not also state the extent of teachers' participation in these professional development opportunities. This ambiguity in the policy document may be the main cause of the absence of a professional development plan and the unsystematic

selective support of the institute to English language teachers as will be discussed in section (5.6.2).

5.3 Teachers' participation in assessment activities

This section addresses the first research question, which asked the participants to consider their participation in assessment processes in the institute. The findings on teachers' participation in assessment activities are presented in three subsections: participation in weekly tests, participation in exit tests and teachers' satisfaction with their participation in assessment activities.

5.3.1 Teachers' participation in weekly tests

Three themes are revealed for participation in weekly tests: restricted contribution to design, participation limited to invigilation and participation in test analysis based on personal initiatives.

5.3.2.1 Restricted contribution to design weekly tests

The findings of the study show that not all teachers are participating in designing weekly tests as illustrated in the table below.

Area of participation	Level / extent of participation	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
Designing weekly tests	exclusion	**Antony**: I do not participate **Charles**: from coordinator **Edward**: already been prepared **Andy**: test prepared by someone else	4
	Active participation	**Victor**: creating question banks **George**: autonomy in assigning the quizzes	2

Table 2: participation in designing weekly tests (interviews)

The findings shown in the table above indicate that only one third of the interviewees contributed to the efforts of designing weekly tests whereas two thirds reported their exclusion. This was clear when Antony stated:

"The weekly tests, I do not participate in designing or developing the weekly tests. What I participate in is invigilating when students are doing the tests…but in terms

of the participation and planning and other matters related to the general designing of the test, I don't participate" (Antony, Int.).

Charles agreed with Antony and attributed his exclusion to the top-down approach of imposing decisions by declaring:

"Ok, the weekly tests; we do not know... No, at my level at least, no teacher contributes to the designing of the tests itself, no, absolutely nothing. It comes from the coordinator" (Charles, Int.).

Edward reinforced the opinion of the two previous interviewees about their exclusion and explained: "we did not participate in designing or preparing the tests. It has already been prepared". Finally, Andy summed up his participation in designing weekly tests, highlighted teachers' limited participation and hinted at the development of tests by a selected group of teachers by explaining:

"The tests are prepared by someone else rather than..., as a teacher, no, I am not creating my own assessment and of course that gives me a bit of separation from how I interact with the students" (Andy, Int.).

Contrary to the four interviewees who highlighted their exclusion from designing weekly tests, two interviewees acknowledged their participation. Victor explained that he was involved in developing a computerised testing system and stated:

"Usually we try to identify the particular standards that are needed to be met. Sometimes this has been based on the material but it should really be driven from the standards and then designing appropriate computer based testing. So, creating question banks and questions, and then inputting all that into a computerized system" (Victor, Int.).

In addition to Victor, George felt that he had a lot of autonomy in terms of designing the quizzes and commented:

"The administration asks us for prompts that are thematically related to whatever unit we are teaching and so myself as well as the level two writing team are asked

for input and we give that to the administration and they usually take from whatever pool of questions" (George, Int.).

The questionnaire results confirm the interview findings and the limited participation of teachers in designing weekly tests as shown in the table below:

	Questionnaires: n=22				
Area of participation	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
Full Responsibility to design weekly tests.	5 (23%)	4 (18%)		5 (22%)	8 (36%)
	41%			59%	
Chance to participate in designing weekly tests.	8 (36%)	5 (23%)	1 (5%)	3 (14%)	5 (23%)
	59%			36%	

Table 3: participation in designing weekly tests (questionnaires)

The findings of the study show that 59% of teachers think that they do not have full responsibility to design weekly tests independently. The results also indicate that thirteen teachers (59%) think that they have the chance to participate in designing these tests.

5.3.1.2 Implementing weekly tests: participation limited to invigilation

The findings of the study reveal that teachers' participation in implementing weekly tests is mainly restricted to invigilation. This limited participation was evident from the interviews as shown in the table below.

Area of participation	Level / extent of participation	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
Implementing weekly tests	invigilating	**Andy**: an invigilator. **Antony**: invigilating students. **Charles**: administer according to a schedule	3

Table 4: participation in implementing weekly tests (interviews)

Half of the interviewees stated that their role was restricted to being invigilators. Andy declared: "when it comes to the testing itself, I am merely an invigilator". Charles was more explicit and attributed his limited participation to the highly centralised invigilation procedure. He stated:

"We always receive, what is it? a table, two days or one day ahead of the exam. We receive a schedule and everybody assigned a class or two classes" (Charles, Int.).

This participation limited to invigilation was less obvious in the questionnaire as shown in the table below.

Area of participation	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
Deciding about the venue of invigilation.	0	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	4 (18%)	16 (73%)
	5%			91%	
Control over the invigilation schedule	0	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	19 (86%)
	15%			90.%	
Deciding about the way of implementing the weekly tests.	2 (9%)	4 (18%)	3(14%)	6 (27%)	7 (32%)
	27%			59%	

Table 5: participation in implementing weekly tests (questionnaires)

The results of the questionnaire show that the level of teachers' participation in deciding about the way, the time and the venue of implementing weekly tests is higher than the involvement of interviewees. Six teachers (two strongly agree and four agree) think that they decide about the way the weekly tests are implemented. However, thirteen teachers agree with Charles that they do not decide about the way of implementing the weekly tests. Moreover, only one teacher representing 5 % thinks that he decides about the venue or timing of invigilation.

5.3.1.3 Individual initiatives to analyse weekly test items and results

The findings of the study show that teachers' participation in analysing weekly test items and results is rare and based on individual initiatives as illustrated in the table below.

Area of participation	Level / extent of participation	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
Analysing weekly test items and results	No contribution because of computerised tests and correction	**Antony**: I don't contribute. **Edward**: I don't participate: tests automatically graded **Victor**: I don't do much of that **George**: no time to statistical analysis **Andy**: computer based tests or Scranton	5
	Classroom level	**Victor**: some analysis: classroom level **Charles**: I share this with the students	2
	Individual initiatives	**Andy**: yes I've asked for that **Victor**: individual classroom level: not institutional level	2

Table 6: participation in analysing weekly test items and results (interviews)

This limited participation was clear from the interviews as explained by Antony:

> "I don't contribute to any form of analysis and I am not even sure of what this analysis is based on. I don't get direct feedback on results" (Antony, Int.).

Four interviewees agree with Antony that they do not participate in analysing test items and results. Edward attributed his exclusion from analyzing test items and results to the computerized approach since the tests are automatically graded: "No I don't have to participate because that is automatically graded". The same reason is expressed by Andy who stated that weekly tests are "either computer based tests or Scranton [machines that can read bubble sheets on which students mark answers to test questions]. So I never see anything but the results". Moreover, two interviewees explained that their participation was based on personal initiatives rather than on an institutional or a systematic process. Andy highlighted his individual initiative and stated: "I have asked for that. It's possible but it's not something I guess other teachers have asked for or many teachers have asked for". In addition, Victor and Charles reported that their analysis of results was restricted to classroom level.

This low participation in analysing test items and results was also obvious in the questionnaire results as tabulated below:

Area of participation	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
Involvement in analysing weekly test items.	3 (14%)	4 (18%)	0%	5 (23%)	10 (45%)
	32%			68%	
Involvement in analysing weekly test results.	4 (18%)	3 (14%)	0%	6 (27%)	9 (41%)
	32%			68%	

Table 7: participation in analysing weekly test items and results (questionnaires)

The results of the questionnaires confirm the findings of the interviews as a majority of 15 teachers think that they were not involved in analysing weekly test items and results. The findings also show that only 3 teachers (14%) strongly agree that they were involved in analysing weekly test items and 4 teachers (18%) strongly agree that they were involved in analysing weekly test results.

5.3.2 Teachers' participation in exit tests

The presentation of the findings about teachers' participation in exit tests will follow the same organisation of presenting the weekly test results. Similar to teachers' participation in the weekly tests, three themes are revealed for participation in exit tests: restricted contribution to design, participation limited to invigilation and exclusion from analysing exit test items and results. These themes will appear as subheadings to the next three sections.

5.3.2.1 Restricted contribution to design exit tests

The findings of the study show that the majority of teachers are excluded from designing exit tests as tabulated below:

Area of participation	Level / extent of participation	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
Designing exit tests	**exclusion**	**Antony**: no designing or developing **Victor**: no input. Administrative decision to control tests. **Charles**: never been asked **Edward**: no participation. The testing centre design tests. **Andy**: no participation in designing	5
	Partial participation	**George**: they ask us for questions	1

Table 8: participation in designing exit tests (interviews)

The findings of the interviews show that five teachers were totally excluded from designing exit tests. George was the only exception as he stated that the administration assigned him a role to propose a number of questions that they would choose from for inclusion in the exit test. What is noticeable is that George was the only interviewee who was involved in designing both types of tests: the weekly and the exit tests. In essence, George's participation in designing exit tests consisted only of proposing potential questions and prompts while the decision to include these questions in the exit tests lies in the hands of top decision makers other than teachers. The following quote from George's interview explains that security reasons were behind this policy:

> "In terms of the writing prompts for the writing test…they ask us for a variety of questions that they can choose from and then they use for the exit test and in

97

addition to that they use it for retest, so that they have a pool of questions that they can run and I guess the thought is that they, eh... there won't be a leak" (George, Int.).

Contrary to George, the remaining five interviewees stated that they had no participation in designing exit tests as explained by Antony: "it does not exist in terms of developing or designing all the different levels of exit tests that we conduct". In the same line of thought, Victor explained that excluding teachers from designing exit tests was an administrative choice and stated:

"Oh, the final exams. I have almost no input into that role. Unfortunately our institute has decided to keep that particular aspect very close to their chest and not give any opportunity for input or design" (Victor, Int.).

Charles went through the same experience of exclusion and stated:

"The exit tests...none. Honestly in this institute I've never been asked to write an exit test and I know absolutely nothing. Nobody has asked me to do an exit test" (Charles, Int.).

Edward was more explicit and tried to justify his exclusion by explaining that the responsibility of designing exit tests was assigned to the testing center and commented:

"We don't participate in designing because they are set by the testing center and the testing center shoulders the responsibility of deciding the tests and implementing these tests" (Edward, Int.).

The results of the questionnaire confirm those of the interviews as shown in the table below.

Area of participation	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
Full responsibility to design exit tests.	2(9%)	4(18%)	0%	2(9%)	14(64%)
	(27%)			73%	
Chance to participate in designing the exit tests.	3(14%)	4(18%)	0%	2(%)9	13(59%)
	32%			68%	

Table 9: participation in designing exit tests (questionnaires)

The questionnaire results confirm the interview findings since the majority of teachers (73%) think that they were not given the full responsibility to design exit tests. However, seven teachers (32%) think that they were given the chance to participate in designing exit tests.

5.3.2.2 Participation limited to invigilation in implementing exit tests

The findings of the study show that teachers' participation in implementing exit tests is mainly restricted to invigilation as shown in the table below.

Area of participation	Level / extent of participation	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
Implementing exit tests	invigilating	**Antony:** invigilating as an assignment **Andy**: no participation... invigilating. **Charles**: assigned as an invigilator.	3

Table 10: participation in implementing exit tests (interviews)

Similar to their passive role in implementing weekly tests, interviewees explained that their role in the exit tests was limited to invigilation. Antony explained that invigilation is part of his duties as it "comes as an assignment from the supervisors where they tell us in advance in which room I will invigilate". He reminded us that his "role as a teacher is limited to that of invigilating". Charles and Andy shared Antony's opinions and reiterated that their role in the exit tests was restricted to invigilation and that this role was assigned by supervisors. Charles commented: "implementing the tests, everybody including myself is assigned a role as usual". Andy was very explicit and highlighted the similarities of the nature of participation between weekly and exit tests procedures by stating:

> "I would say the exact thing that I said about the weekly tests because we have no participation, really, in the design, implementation, obviously prepare the students and invigilating" (Andy, Int.).

This restriction of participation to mere invigilation was also evident from the results of the questionnaire as illustrated in the table below.

Area of participation	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
Deciding about the place where I invigilate.	1 (5%) 5%	0	1 (5%)	2 (9%) 91%	18 (82%)
Control over the invigilation schedule.	1 (5%)	0	0%	2 (9%)	19 (86%)

Deciding about the way of implementing the exit tests.	5%			95%	
	1 (5%)	0	0%	3 (14%)	18 (82%)
	5%			95%	

Table 11: participation in implementing exit tests (questionnaires)

The results of the questionnaire confirm the interview findings when twenty-one teachers (95%) think that they do not make decisions about the way of implementing the exit tests. Results of the questionnaire also reveal that only one teacher representing 5% was involved in deciding about the implementation of the exit tests or deciding the timing or the venue of invigilation. This low rate correlates with the interviewees' declarations that their participation in implementing exit tests was limited to invigilation.

5.3.2.3 Exclusion from participation in analysing exit test items and results

The interview findings show that teachers' participation in analysing exit tests items and results is non-existent and controlled by supervisors as shown in the table below.

Area of participation	Level / extent of participation	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
Analysing exit test items and results	No contribution: controlled by supervisors	**Antony:** I don't see actually the results **Edward**: No chance to analyse **Victor**: Not at all **George**: coordinators will look at scores **Andy**: important but not done **Charles**: not something I do.	6

Table 12: Teachers' participation in analysing exit test items and results (interviews)

The findings of the interviews reveal that all interviewees have no participation in analyzing exit test items and results. Victor, for example, explained his exclusion from analysing results by the administrative desire to hide results to make the decisions about promoting students without consulting teachers. He commented:

 "I have limited input to the final results because, due to the particular bureaucratic nature of the institute that I work at, they tend to make some arbitrary decisions regarding pass and fail" (Victor, Int.).

George confirmed Victor's claim about arbitrary promotion of students and stated: "for some guys it's been mathematically impossible for them to advance...somebody is making a decision there, right". George, as stated in the table, confirmed his exclusion from analyzing test items and results by stating that these two activities were carried out by

coordinators. Charles also disclaimed any involvement in analysing exit test items and results and reconfirmed George's opinion that these two activities are exclusively controlled by coordinators. According to Charles,

> "The analysis of test items... that's not something I do. It's something done by the coordinators and most of the time when we have a meeting they showed us the students' performance...I don't have access to the students' performance" (Charles, Int.).

In addition, Edward confirmed exclusion and explained that the analysis of exit tests results was the responsibility of a selected body. He stated:

> "I don't know; I don't have the chance to analyse these tests or results because they are already the responsibility of the testing center. So, we are not involved in these issues" (Edward, Int.).

Andy acknowledged the importance of analysing exit test items and highlighted the similarity between his participation in the analysis of exit tests and his participation in the analysis of the weekly tests. He stated: "I would say the exact same thing that I said about the weekly tests because we have no participation".

The results of the questionnaire, tabulated below, confirm teachers' exclusion from analysing exit test items and results.

Area of participation	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4= disagree	5= strongly disagree
Involvement in analysing exit test items.	2 (9%)	3 (14%)		2 (9%)	15 (68%)
	23%			77%	
Involvement in analysing exit test results.	2 (9%)	1 (5%)		4 (18%)	15 (68%)
	14%			86%	

Table 13: participation in analysing exit test items and results (questionnaires)

The findings highlight the fact that the number of teachers participating in the analysis of exit test items (5 teachers) and exit test results (3) is low. The results also show that seventeen teachers representing (77%) and nineteen teachers (86%) think that they were not involved in analysing exit test items and results respectively.

5.3.2.4 Reading and writing skills teachers' participation in designing tests

The findings of the study demonstrate that the reading and writing skills teachers have unequal chances to participate in designing tests as illustrated below.

	Writing skill teachers n= 10					Reading skill teachers n=9					Teaching both skills n=3
Area of participation	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	disagree	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	disagree	Strongly disagree	
participation in designing weekly tests	5 (50%)	2 (20%)	0	2 (20%)	1(10%)	1 (11%)	4 (44%)	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	2 (22%)	-
	70%			30%		55%			33%		
participation in designing exit tests	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	0	0	5 (50%)	0	2 (22%)	0	0	7 (78%)	-
	50%			50%		22%			78%		

Table 14: comparison between the participation of the writing and the reading skills teachers in designing tests (questionnaires).

The number of the writing skill teachers participating in designing weekly and exit tests is higher than the number of the reading skill teachers as 70 % of the writing skill teachers think that they participate in designing weekly tests whereas only 55% of the reading skill teachers think that they contribute to this effort. As for participation in designing exit tests, 50% of the writing skill teachers think that they participate whereas only 22% of the reading skill teachers think that they are involved in designing exit tests. The findings also show that teachers' involvement in the weekly tests is higher than their participation in exit tests. This difference in the extent of participation between the reading and the writing skills teachers was also obvious from interviews as stated by George and Victor, the two interviewees who are involved in designing weekly tests. Victor stated, "I was able to create some assessment for the writing side of things. I also created some computer based testing". In his elaboration, George remarked,

> "Because I am a writing sort of teaching, we are given the freedom to play with those [quizzes]...I am not sure how it's been in other courses like you fellows teaching the reading side" (George, Int.).

This active role of George and Victor, the two writing skill teachers, implies that they were given freedom to design tests, a chance that was not offered to other interviewees teaching the reading skill. Antony, a reading skill teacher, stated, "for the reading skill that I teach, my role as a teacher is limited to invigilation...we are not considered for any discussions or

contribution". Edward confirmed Antony's claim and explained that the reading skill teachers "do not participate in designing because [tests] are designed by the testing center and the testing center shoulders the responsibility of deciding the tests and implementing these tests". Thus, the direct involvement of the testing center may be a reason of excluding the reading skill teachers. It may also be a reason for the discrepancy between the reading and writing teachers in the extent of involvement in designing tests. Except for the above reason as provided by Edward, the gathered data did not provide any justification for the discrepancy in the extent of the writing and the reading teachers' participation in designing tests. Contrary to the reading skill teachers, the writing skill teachers did not talk about the involvement of the testing center in designing tests. Although the reading and writing teachers belong to the same department and have the same decision makers, the writing skill teachers are more involved in designing tests. This discrepancy may also be attributed to the fact that designing reading tests is more complex and more time consuming than designing writing tests which may consist only of preparing grammar quizzes or prompts for paragraph writing. The absence of sufficient data explaining the reasons for this discrepancy signals a complex picture of the situation.

5.3.3 Teachers' dissatisfaction with their participation in assessment activities

The findings of the study show that interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with their lack of participation in assessment activities and their exclusion from designing tests as illustrated below.

Area of participation	Extent of satisfaction	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
Assessment	Dissatisfaction	**Antony**: Feeling sidelined. **Charles**: No authority. **Edward**: set by testing center **Andy**: tests...prefabricated for us. **Victor:** very little on higher strategic point	5
	satisfaction	**Victor**: Some success **George**: quite happy	2

Table 15: satisfaction with participation in assessment activities (interviews)

The participation limited to invigilation, the exclusion from designing and analysing tests may justify teachers' dissatisfaction with their participation in assessment activities. The recorded interviews revealed that interviewees' participation in weekly and exit tests was mainly restricted to mere invigilating. Most interviewees agreed that exclusion was a fact

and that they do not make any decisions as most tests are computerized, graded automatically and have been previously prepared by other experts. Except for Victor who, on the one hand, reported satisfaction with his "success discussing with the lower level coordinators and team leaders" but, on the other hand, expressed dissatisfaction "in terms of the higher strategic point" and George who felt "a lot of freedom" to decide more than "you fellows teaching the reading side", most interviewees expressed dissatisfaction. Antony declared that he did not participate in setting exams or tests and expressed bitterness by stating: "we have been sidelined and we are not considered for any discussions or any contribution". Charles confirmed Antony's feeling of exclusion and stated:

> "I have no authority or no saying in…discussing the weight of each assessment item. I have no saying in deciding the number of assessment that should be carried out in each module" (Charles, Int.).

Edward provided explanation for this exclusion on the basis that tests were "set by the testing center and the testing center shoulders the responsibility of deciding the tests and implementing the tests". Andy confirmed this top-down approach and stated "weekly tests, other assessments and final exams they are really prefabricated for us". This top-down approach to assessment adding to the computer based tests caused teachers' exclusion and therefore dissatisfaction as teachers are not only deprived from designing tests but also from correcting, analyzing and reflecting on test items and results. This dissatisfaction with their limited participation was confirmed by the questionnaire results as tabulated below.

Area of participation	Level of satisfaction	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
Weekly tests	Satisfaction with participation in analysing weekly test items.	2 (9%)	3 (14%)	1 (5%)	8 (36%)	8 (36%)
		23%			73%	
	Satisfaction with participation in analysing weekly test results.	3 (14%)	1 (5%)	2 (9%)	7 (32%)	9 (41%)
		18%			73%	
	Satisfaction with participation in designing weekly tests.	3 (14%)	4 (18%)	1 (5%)	5 (23%)	9 (41%)
		32%			64%	
Exit tests	Satisfaction with participation	0	4 (18%)	0%	3 (14%)	15 (68%)
		18%			82%	

	in analysing exit test items.				
	Satisfaction with participation in analysing exit test results.	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0%	6 (27%)	14 (64%)
		9%			91%	
	Satisfaction with participation in designing exit tests.	0	3 (14%)	0%	5 (23%)	14 (64%)
		14%			86%	

Table 16: satisfaction with participation in assessment activities (questionnaires)

A scrutiny of the table above confirms teachers' dissatisfaction with their participation in assessment activities as the findings reveal that teachers are not satisfied with their participation in designing and analysing exit and weekly test items and results. The table above also reveals that the extent of dissatisfaction with their participation in the exit tests is higher than their dissatisfaction with their participation in weekly tests. The results show that only a minority of 3 teachers (14%) expressed satisfaction with their participation in designing exit tests and a majority of 19 teachers (86%) expressed dissatisfaction. Moreover, seven teachers (32%) expressed satisfaction and 14 teachers (64%) expressed dissatisfaction with their participation in designing weekly tests. This low level of teachers' involvement in assessment activities and dissatisfaction with their participation did not prevent them from expressing willingness to be more involved as their wishes in the next section indicate.

5.3.3.1 Teachers' wishes: more contribution

The findings of the study reveal that teachers' wishes to contribute to the efforts of assessment activities exceed their actual participation. Despite exclusion and dissatisfaction, interviewees expressed desire to be more involved in assessment activities as exhibited in the table below.

Area of participation	wishes	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
Assessment	More contribution	**Antony**: contribute more. **Victor**: Having input in the exit test- Standardizing computerized tests **Charles**:- Systematic test design team **Edward**: deciding about promoting students **Andy**: More involved **George**: continue designing tests	6

Table 17: wishes for future participation in assessment activities (interviews)

Teachers' dissatisfaction with their participation did not compromise their willingness for a more active role in the assessment activities, a wish that was noticed in interview findings. Antony, who felt sidelined, wished to offer more contribution to the assessment activities: "I will contribute more validity to the assessment process if we participate". Similarly, Victor would like "to have at least some input into the final exams" and expressed his understanding of the exclusion as stakeholders, who according to him, "are trying to keep test safety and security as a factor". Charles would like to have

> "a systematic test designing team or there is test designing strategy …things have to be systematic rather than accidentally so to speak; I mean there should be an assessment team in place that is in charge of assessment, that should be keeping in touch with the classroom teachers…and this team has to make sure that the assessment conform to the teaching curriculum" (Charles, Int.).

In a similar way, Edward and Andy expressed their desire to be involved in assessment activities. Edward stated that he would like to make decisions about promoting students. He stated that he should "be given the chance to decide whether students can be promoted to other levels or not", airing an expression of dissatisfaction about arbitrary decisions of pass and fail. George agreed with Edward and stated:

> "It doesn't happen every day, but occasionally, it happens; so somebody is making a decision there, right! And I know for some guys [students] it's been mathematically impossible for them to advance" (George, Int.).

Despite expressing satisfaction with his involvement previously, George, longs for continuity of his involvement when he asserted, "well, I like to continue designing test".

This strong consensus among interviewees about their desire for more involvement was also noticed in the questionnaire as illustrated below.

Area of participation	wishes	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
weekly	More involvement in deciding about the weekly tests. 91%	16 (73%)	4 (18%)	2 (9%)	0	0
Wishes: tests	Full involvement in deciding about 100%	14 (64%)	8 (36%)		0	0

106

Wishes: exit tests						
	weekly tests					
	More involvement in deciding about the exit tests.	10 (45%) 95%	11 (50%)		1(5%)	1 (5%)
	Full involvement in deciding about exit tests	9 (41%) 86%	10 (45%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%) 9%	1 (5%)

Table 18: wishes for future participation in assessment activities (questionnaires)

All teachers (14 strongly agree and 8 agree) expressed their wish to be fully involved in deciding about weekly tests. Contrary to their limited participation to invigilation, all teachers expressed their desire to be fully involved in deciding about the content, the time, the venue and the way of implementing weekly tests. In a similar way, a majority of 19 teachers representing 86% (9 strongly agree and 10 agree) wanted full involvement in deciding about exit tests. Furthermore, twenty teachers representing 91% (16 strongly agree and 4 agree) expressed their wish to be more involved in weekly tests and an overwhelming majority of 95 % (10 strongly agree and 11 agree) expressed their desire to be more involved in deciding about exit tests.

5.4 Teachers' participation in curriculum development activities

This section addresses the second research question, which asked the participants to consider their participation in curriculum development activities. The findings are presented in two subsections: marginalised participation in curriculum development activities and teachers' dissatisfaction with their participation.

5.4.1 Teachers' marginalised participation in curriculum development

Five themes are revealed for teachers' marginalised participation in curriculum development: limited to no participation in the needs analysis, low participation in deciding the goals and objectives of the curriculum, absence of participation in deciding about the skills, restricted participation in adapting teaching materials and decision makers' negative reaction to teachers' evaluation of the curriculum.

5.4.1.1 Limited to no participation in the needs analysis

The findings of the study, tabulated below, show that teachers' participation in providing information about students' needs is very low. Needs analysis in this context means finding

out what the students in the institute know and can do and what they need to learn so that the curriculum can bridge this gap.

Area of participation	Level / extent of participation	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
Needs analysis	From limited to no participation	**Antony**: no needs analysis just curriculum mapping. **Victor**: very limited to nil **Charles**: no participation **George**: no participation: decided by team leaders.	4

Table 19: participation in needs analysis (interviews)

As highlighted in the table above, most interviewees declared that they had no or very limited role in the needs analysis. Antony explained that his participation in the needs analysis was restricted to curriculum mapping and commented: "needs analysis... not needs analysis as we say but it was curriculum mapping". He added that this activity was intended to "just improving the syllabus that we had". Victor stated that his participation in the needs analysis was "very limited to nil". He also added that he had been assigned to improve the curriculum but not to analyse the needs. He noticed:

> "There are some difficulties with that new level that I've been assigned to and there is now a group of instructors who are being asked to look at the curriculum and to design from the standards" (Victor, Int.).

The other two participants who discussed the area, Charles and George, disclaimed any involvement. Charles explained:

> "Needs analysis of students...I don't participate in the needs analysis of students. There is no prior analysis and I think it's the case for everyone else" (Charles, Int.).

George was more assertive by explaining that the coordinators analysed the needs and created everything according to the standards. He stated:

> "Eh, that's interesting in terms of the curriculum development side. You know, when I came in, M was the lead teacher and he basically created everything from scratch, he got his needs and also from the standards. He's looking for the standards" (George, Int.).

The results of the questionnaire indicate discrepancy about teachers' participation in the needs analysis as tabulated below.

Area of participation	Strongly agree	agree	No opinion	disagree	Strongly disagree
Needs analysis.	2 (9%)	7 (32%)	2 (9%)	6 (27%)	5 (23%)
	41%			50%	

Table 20: participation in needs analysis (questionnaires)

The results of the questionnaire show that 41% of teachers (2 strongly agree and 7 agree) think that they participate in the needs analysis. However, eleven teachers (50%) think that they have no participation.

5.4.1.2 Low participation in deciding the goals and objectives

The findings of the interviews show that teachers' participation in deciding the goals and objectives of the curriculum is very low as illustrated in the table below.

Area of participation	Level / extent of participation	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
Deciding goals and objectives	No participation because of top-down approach	**Antony**: I don't decide about this **Victor**: I have no participation. **Charles**: nobody sets them except for decision makers **Andy**: predesigned. Handed to us **George**: decided by administration	5
	Team work	**Edward**: has been done as a team	1

Table 21: participation in deciding the goals and objectives of the curriculum (interviews)

Interviewees attribute this low rate of participation to the top-down approach. With the exception of one interviewee, Edward, who declared that he was involved in a team to decide about goals and objectives, the remaining five interviewees agreed that they do not decide about the goals and objectives of the curriculum. Antony explained that his participation was restricted to implementing a top-down imposed curriculum and stated:

> "I don't decide about this. This comes as tailor made thing that has already been designed at top level management and it's brought down and I participate in implementing" (Antony, Int.).

Victor did not only confirm exclusion but also provided an explanation for this marginalization and confirmed Antony's assertion of the top-down approach:

"I have no participation in terms of deciding as to goals and objectives. Those, unfortunately, were set many years ago and were done by an outside team of advisors, from what I heard, long before I ever came to this institute, so I have no input into that" (Victor, Int.).

Charles agreed with Antony and Victor that the goals and objectives were decided by decision makers and stated the following:

"The goals and objectives of the curriculum are not, they don't come from us…we have instructional, what is it? Criteria that [have] already been set and we only design or tailor our curriculum according to those instructional criteria. We do not have. I don't think as a teacher or anybody else has the right to go beyond those... Nobody sets the objectives of the development except for the, probably the coordinators and then decision makers". (Charles, Int.).

Andy confirmed exclusion and stated: "in the current set up that has been predesigned". Finally, George explained that the goals and objectives were dictated by the administration: "the overall goals are kind of, you know these guys, the administration kind of has an idea of what they want students be able to do".

The results of the questionnaire, tabulated below, confirm the interviewees' statements as fourteen teachers representing 63% think that they are not involved in deciding about the goals and objectives of the curriculum whereas only seven teachers (32%) think that they participate to decide about the goals and objectives of the curriculum with 5% undecided.

Area of participation	Strongly agree	agree	No opinion	disagree	Strongly disagree
deciding about the goals and objectives of the curriculum	0	7(32%)	1(5%)	8(36%)	6(27%)
	32%			63%	

Table 22: participation in deciding the goals and objectives of the curriculum (questionnaires)

5.4.1.3 Absence of participation in deciding about the skills

The findings of the study show that teachers' participation in deciding the skills which are taught is non-existent as shown in the table below.

Area of participation	Level / extent of participation	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
Deciding about the skills which are taught	Imposed decision	**Antony**: based on the book. **Victor**: I have no role. **Andy**: I have the textbook **Edward**: selecting instructors **Charles**: assigned to teach a skill	5

Table 23: participation in deciding about the skills (interviews)

The findings of the interviews indicate that teachers' participation in deciding about the skills which are taught is non-existent and that these decisions are dictated either by the content of textbooks or imposed by supervisors. Edward explained that he "didn't choose but it was a matter of selecting instructors…so I didn't choose to teach reading or whatever". Charles agreed with Edward and stated "every teacher is assigned to teach a different skill". Moreover, three interviewees think that they do not decide about the skills which are taught. They assert that the content of the textbooks determine the skills that they should teach. Andy explained that his participation is very limited and stated: "I have the textbook and the scheme of work so that pretty much determined what's gonna be taught". Victor agreed with Antony and explained: "I have no role in deciding that. The skills are basically set". Antony agreed with Andy and Victor and stated: "I don't make decision on the skills to be taught but this comes as a result of the syllabus that was given based on the book that I have".

The absence of participation in deciding about the skills noticed in interviews was not totally confirmed in the questionnaire as illustrated in the table below.

Area of participation	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
Making decisions on what is taught	1 (5%)	6 (27%)	2 (9%)	4 (18%)	9 (41%)
	32%			59%	
Involvement in deciding about the skills to be taught	0	3 (14%)	3 (14%)	6 (27%)	10 (45%)
	14%			73%	

Table 24: participation in deciding about the skills (questionnaires)

The results of the questionnaire indicate that most teachers do not have any sort of involvement in deciding about the skills as 73% of teachers believe that they were not involved in deciding about the skills to be taught and 59% think that they did not make decisions on what is taught.

5.4.1.4 Restricted participation in adapting teaching materials

The findings of the interviews show that teachers' participation in adapting teaching materials is restricted and should conform to the existing themes of the units as shown in the table below.

Area of participation	Level / extent of participation	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
Deciding about the teaching materials	Restricted and conforming to existing themes	**Antony**: very minimum. I recommended the book but the book was part of what existed before. **Victor**: I have had very limited ability to do that. **Charles:** Anything we have to contribute has to conform thematically. **Edward**: omitted topics. **Andy**: very little say in the standard track. **George**: develop within a particular theme	6

Table 25: participating in choosing themes and materials (interviews)

The findings of the interviews reveal that teachers have active participation in deciding about the teaching materials and almost no participation in deciding about the themes of the units. Most interviewees declared that their participation should be thematically related to the units that had been decided by decision makers. Except for Edward who was the only interviewee to claim real participation in deciding about the themes, other interviewees' participation was restricted to adapting teaching materials to the existing themes. Edward stated:

"We omitted some topics and we added others which we considered suitable to our students so we had the opportunity to participate in it as a team in adapting reading passages, vocabulary, so that they can match the needs of our students" (Edward, Int.).

Despite participation, most interviewees highlighted restrictions while adapting teaching materials. Victor, for example, stated:

"I have had very limited ability to do that. I adapted some newspaper articles and altered the language. I've done some modification of existing chart" (Victor, Int.).

Charles was more explicit and explained that their participation should be related to the themes that had been previously decided as stated in this extract:

"The department has already developed basic curriculum that reflects the objectives. We are contributing to the supplementary folders but still anything we have to contribute has to conform to the objectives and also have to match thematically what the, what is it? What the topic is about, the module is about" (Charles, Int.).

George confirmed Charles' explanation and stated: "most of the units are thematic based. We've been to... let's say, develop within a particular theme but the themes are already set out for us". Andy agreed with George and Charles and explained that he had been given a lot of freedom to choose materials "but again in the standard track we have very little say in that... themes are already set out for us".

The results of the questionnaire confirm the findings of the interviews as teachers' participation was more active in adapting teaching materials than deciding about the themes as illustrated below.

Area of participation	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
involvement in choosing and adapting teaching materials	1 (5%)	10 (45%)	1 (5%)	5 (23%)	5 (23%)
	50%			45%	
Involvement in deciding about the themes.	0	3 (14%)	4 (13%)	8 (36%)	8 (36%)
	14%			73%	

Table 26: participating in choosing themes and materials (questionnaires)

The findings tabulated above reveal that the number of teachers participating in deciding the themes is very low as only three teachers representing (14%) contributed to this effort. This contribution is low compared to teachers' participation in choosing and adapting teaching materials as eleven teachers representing 50% (one strongly agrees and ten agree) think that they are involved in deciding about the teaching materials.

5.4.1.5 Negative reaction to teachers' evaluation of the curriculum

The findings of the interviews reveal that decision makers do not react in a positive way to teachers' evaluation of the curriculum as shown in the table below.

113

Area of participation	Level / extent of participation	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
Impact of teachers' feedback about the curriculum	Limited reaction	**Antony**: I don't have a role in evaluating the curriculum....listening to the voice is one thing, you know, and implementing that voice is another thing. **Victor**: limited to one level. **Charles**: the coordinator gave me the book. **Edward**: we participate in assessing the curriculum **Andy**: not a lot of reaction **George**: they don't have anybody that can develop a different stuff.	6

Table 27: participation in evaluating the curriculum (interviews)

Despite the fact that some interviewees acknowledged involvement in evaluating the curriculum, most of them agreed that the reaction to their feedback leaves a lot to be desired. Antony, as seen in the table, denied any role in evaluating the curriculum and attributed this exclusion to the negative reaction to his feedback. He stated:

> "We may raise some issues of concerns sometimes but having them implemented or followed is a different matter. I don't see my reactions or my suggestions been followed...I can't see that whatever views I give are taken" (Antony, Int.).

Andy agreed with Antony and commented: "There hasn't been a lot of opportunity to give feedback but not a lot of reaction to what limited feedback we have given". Victor agreed with Antony and explained that the positive reaction to his feedback was restricted to direct supervisors rather than upper decision makers. According to him,

> "There is some positive reaction to feedback and some attempts to make changes on that feedback. On a higher level, up to recently, there is no ability to set a positive reaction" (Victor, Int.).

Charles also remarked that his supervisor sought his feedback and stated:

> "... The coordinator gave me the book and told me to have one week to look at it from page to page and I did revaluate the text and then gave my suggestions" (Charles, Int.).

Finally, George explained that he provided feedback to decision makers but they failed to react and introduce changes to curriculum. He thought that their negative reaction might be

attributed to the shortage of staff to introduce his suggestions and to the heavy workload of teachers. He explained:

> "I've pointed that before and you know I think it just comes down to that they don't have anybody that can go and develop a different stuff. If they do ...hey...we are working full time, we're teaching ...we have a full teaching load. Who is gonna do that?" (George, Int.).

The results of the questionnaire confirm the interview findings that decision makers do not react positively to teachers' feedback.

Area of participation	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
I am asked to provide feedback about the curriculum	0	11 (50%)	4 (18%)	4 (18%)	3 (14%)
	50%			32%	
Decision makers use my feedback about curriculum to introduce changes.	0	7 (32%)	6 (27%)	6 (27%)	3 (14%)
	32%			40%	
Decision makers take my feedback into consideration.	0	5 (23%)	9 (41%)	7 (32%)	1 (5%)
	23%			36%	

Table 28: participation in evaluating the curriculum (questionnaires)

The results of the questionnaire confirm Charles' contention that supervisors sought his feedback as eleven teachers representing 50% agree that they were asked to provide feedback about the curriculum. However, seven teachers representing 32% (4 disagree and 3 strongly disagree) think that they were not asked to provide feedback about the curriculum.

Moreover, the results of the questionnaires show that only five teachers (23%) agree that decision makers consider their feedback and only seven teachers (32%) believe that decision makers react to their feedback to introduce changes to the curriculum. This low rate of decision makers' reaction to teachers' feedback about the curriculum corresponds to the findings of interviews. What is noticeable in teachers' responses to the questionnaire statements about the reaction of supervisors to their feedback is the high percentage of undecided teachers. Six teachers representing 27% were unable to react to the statement about using their feedback by decision makers to introduce change to the curriculum and nine teachers representing 41% were also unable to react to a statement about their feedback being considered by decision makers.

5.4.2 Teachers' dissatisfaction with their participation in curriculum development

The findings indicate that the majority of interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with their participation in curriculum development activities and only one third expressed satisfaction as illustrated below.

Area of participation	Extent of satisfaction	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
curriculum	Dissatisfaction	**Antony**: I don't participate... **Victor**: frustrated for the most part **Charles**: I think if I had time I would participate more. **Andy**: very limited...no collective work	4
	satisfaction	**Edward**: I think it was positive **George**: I think it's good.	2

Table 29: satisfaction with participation in curriculum development activities (interviews)

Andy expressed his dissatisfaction with the absence of collective work on curriculum development and explained that his participation has "been very limited so far, you know, we have in house designed materials and those were created before I came in...some participation in fixing things in house design curriculum but not... really no collective work on curriculum development". In addition to Andy, other interviewees expressed their dissatisfaction with their participation in curriculum development activities. Antony reiterated exclusion and attributed it to the top-down policy adopted by decision makers. He declared:

> "I don't participate in curriculum development. I don't participate. In the institute there are people who have especially been assigned to work on development of curriculum. The teachers...I don't think have anything to do with curriculum development because the teachers implement the curriculum rather than have a word...regarding what the curriculum should look like". (Antony, Int.).

Contrary to the above dissatisfied interviewees, Edward and George, who had previously acknowledged involvement in deciding about different aspects of curriculum development, expressed their satisfaction with their participation. Edward stated: "I think it was positive and we contributed to that in a way which help develop the curriculum and the syllabus we teach to our students". George confirmed Edward's position and explained "I think it's

good. Personally like I said, the only thing I feel limited in terms of the units, the themes are already set out, I didn't really have influence over that".

The results of the questionnaire confirm the interview findings as tabulated below.

Level of satisfaction	Strongly agree	agree	No opinion	disagree	Strongly disagree
No participation in deciding about the curriculum.	4 (18%)	6 (27%)	4 (18%)	6 (27%)	2 (9%)
	45%			36%	
Limited participation in deciding about the curriculum.	6 (27%)	10 (45%)	1 (5%)	4 (18%)	1 (5%)
	72%			23%	
Major participation in deciding about the curriculum.	1 (5%)	3 (14%)	0%	11 (50%)	7 (32%)
	18%			82%	
Satisfaction with participation in deciding about the curriculum.	2 (9%)	4 (18%)	2 (9%)	7 (32%)	7 (32%)
	27%			64%	

Table 30: satisfaction with participation in curriculum development activities (questionnaires)

The questionnaire results reveal that ten teachers representing 45% (4 strongly agree and 6 agree) feel that they have no participation in deciding about the curriculum. Moreover, 16 teachers (6 strongly agree and ten agree) feel that they have limited participation. Furthermore, only four teachers (18%) think that they have major participation. This low rate of participation may justify teachers' dissatisfaction since fourteen teachers representing 64% expressed dissatisfaction with their participation in deciding about the curriculum.

5.4.2.1 Teachers' wishes: More contribution within teams

Teachers' dissatisfaction with their participation in curriculum development activities did not prevent them from expressing their wishes to be more involved as illustrated in the table below.

Area of participation	wishes	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
curriculum	- More contribution -Team work	**Antony**: it would be good if I participate **Victor**: I would like to be the person giving feedback and helping make changes not necessarily designing. **Charles**: I... love to take part. **Edward**: I prefer to be working in a team **Andy**: get involved **George**: I'd like to continue.	6

Table 31: wishes for future participation in curriculum development activities (interviews)

The interview findings reveal teachers' strong desire to be more active in deciding about the curriculum and to work in teams. Despite feeling frustrated with his participation, Victor expressed his wish to contribute to the efforts of curriculum development and indicated:

> "I would like to have some input or some feedback to a dedicated curriculum team...that would be my preferred team. I would like to see a holistic approach taken to curriculum development with the focus on building up a successful curriculum...one of the problems that we have at that particular institute that I work for is a lack of an overall wide vision as opposed to narrow vision" (Victor, Int.).

The idea of teamwork in curriculum development was also proposed by Edward who preferred to work in "a team because we can exchange ideas, points of view, so as teamwork. You know it is difficult to talk about certain roles since the whole work is a group work". Team engagement was also proposed, along with administrative support, by Charles who stated:

> "I really love to take part in curriculum design. We would like to have a little administrative flexibility, stronger communication among the team" (Charles, Int.).

Furthermore, Antony and Andy expressed their wish to be involved in curriculum development. Andy expressed his wish to participate "as much as [I] can get involved in it, the better." Antony justified his wish to be more involved by the impact he could have, as a classroom teacher on the performance of students, "If, as a teacher, I participate in curriculum development, it would enhance, it would make things easier, it would kind of contribute to having very well graded materials...but I don't think that is happening". George, who was partially involved in deciding about the curriculum, would also like to have a more active role. Although George expressed this desire by pointing out: "I'd like to continue that it's more just finishing something you start... I'd like to continue with doing kind of revising", he drew attention to the difficulty of developing a curriculum with a full teaching load: "if you want to have a fully developed, nice curriculum, you need a guy on half load ...I'd really like to do that but I can't because I am busy marking papers".

The questionnaire results confirm teachers' strong desire to be more involved in curriculum activities as tabulated below.

Area of participation	Wishes: level of involvement	Strongly agree	agree	No opinion	disagree	Strongly disagree
Deciding about the curriculum	More involvement in deciding about the curriculum.	10 (45%)	9 (41%)	2 (9%)	1 (5%)	0
		86%			5%	
	Full involvement in deciding about the curriculum.	9 (41%)	8 (36%)	3 (14%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)
		77%			9%	

Table 32: wishes for future participation in curriculum development activities (questionnaires)

The results of the questionnaires correlate with the interview findings as 19 teachers (ten strongly agree and nine agree) representing 86% expressed their wish to be more involved in deciding about the curriculum. 17 teachers (nine strongly agree and eight agree) representing 77% wished to be fully involved in deciding about the curriculum.

5.5 Teachers' participation in professional development activities

This section addresses the third research question, which explored teachers' participation in professional development activities. Four themes are revealed for this: passive participation in deciding about professional development policies, unsystematic and individualised participation in professional development activities, the absence of professional tools and the lack of support.

5.5.1 Passive participation in deciding about professional development policies

The findings of the study show that teachers' participation in deciding about professional development policies is very passive as shown below.

Area of participation	Level / extent of participation	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
Deciding about professional development policy	Passive participation	**Antony**: No I don't participate because discussions do not come to us. **Charles**: I would love to be involved. **Edward**: restricted to attending	3

Table 33: participation in deciding about professional development policies (interviews)

This passive role of deciding about professional development in the institute was conspicuous in interviews when Antony, as seen in the table, explained that he does not

participate because teachers are excluded from discussions. Antony explained the way professional development days were implemented in the workplace and how they were imposed on teachers. He stated:

> "Professional development in the institute, it is when teachers are not given vacation while the students are on vacation. Teachers are kept in and as a result to make them busy. We come for what they call professional development" (Antony, Int.).

Charles highlighted his exclusion from deciding about professional development policy by expressing a strong desire to be more "involved in my institutional professional development either as an organiser... or... hopefully as a decision maker". Edward explained that his participation in professional development did not involve any decision-making and was very limited. He remarked: "my participation is just restricted to attending different workshops within...the institute". Andy was the only exception as he acknowledged his involvement in a committee preparing a conference in the institute. He explained that his involvement was based on personal initiative and specified:

> "Here I got involved with...on a committee now, for the, I guess, I don't know exactly what committee is about, but jumping feet first. It has to do with venue, I think, for the next convention" (Andy, Int.).

The results of the questionnaire confirm the findings of the interviews as tabulated below.

Area of participation	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
Involvement in deciding about the professional development activities in my workplace.	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	2 (9%)	6 (27%)	12 (55%)
	9%			82%	
Involvement in deciding about the themes and procedures of the professional development days in the institute.	1 (5%)	0	3 (14%)	8 (36%)	10 (45%)
	5%			82%	

Table 34: participation in deciding about professional development policies (questionnaires)

The results indicate that eighteen teachers representing 82% (6 disagree and 12 strongly disagree) think that they were not involved in deciding about the professional development activities in the institute. Moreover, a similar percentage of 82% (8 disagree and 10 strongly disagree) believe that they were not involved in deciding about the themes and procedures of the professional development days in the institute.

5.5.2 Unsystematic and individualised participation in professional development activities

The interview findings show that teachers' participation in many professional development activities is either non-existent, individualised or not systematic as shown in the table below.

Area of participation	Level of participation	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
Group discussions	-Absence of participation -unsystematic	**Antony**: not existing **Victor**: things like that don't exist **Charles**: little discussion but not systematic **George**: sometimes... spontaneously **Edward**: yes, [while] reflecting on lessons	5
reflection sessions on lessons	-Unsystematic -individualised	**Antony**: that does not exist **Victor**: among the specific teams **Charles**: on individual level. **Edward**: reflecting on lessons within groups **Andy**: I keep a journal- individual **George**: Spontaneous	6
Co-planning	Absence of co-planning	**Antony**: that does not exist **Victor**: that does not really happen **Charles**: no co-planning **Andy**: .Usually I don't	4
Collaborative action research	-Absence of collaborative action research -Individual initiatives	**Antony**: at personal level **Victor**: never **Charles**: collaborative...no. we don't do research. **Edward**: I didn't have the chance to do an action research **Andy**: my own research. **George**: individual in my classroom.	6
Co-teaching	Absence of co-teaching	**Antony:** does not exist **Victor:** zero capability for co-teaching **Charles:** no co-teaching going on **Edward:** just attending others' classes. **Andy:** no opportunity **George:** no. Never done it	6
mentoring	Unsystematic	**Antony**: on friendly basis, not institutional **Victor**: been mentored by others **Charles**: I am not doing mentoring **George**: observation more than mentoring	4
Professional dialogue	Individualised Unsystematic	**Antony**: At personal level **Victor**: No other than this particular instance and few others [this interview] **Edward**: professional dialogue takes place	3

		spontaneously	

Table 35: Participation in professional development activities (interviews)

The interview findings reveal that teachers' participation in professional development activities was either individualised, unsystematic or non-existent. These levels of teachers' participation in professional development activities were clear in interviews, when most interviewees' responses revealed a lack of participation in systematic and well structured professional development activities such as co-planning, co-teaching, mentoring, reflecting on lessons, group discussions, professional dialogue and collaborative action research. Charles, for example explained that his participation in group discussions is rare and unsystematic. He stated: "we don't have this unless there is a meeting and so had a little discussion about that. It's not systematic". This point of view was shared by George who explained that group discussions occur spontaneously rather than in an organised and systematic way. He declared: "that sometimes happens, you know, spontaneously". Edward reinforced the idea of unsystematic occurrence of professional activities by stating that "professional dialogue takes place spontaneously but not as a pre-planned process". Finally, Antony explained that mentoring is not a systematic or an institutional activity but rather based on informal ground by stating:

> "[mentoring] does not exist unless otherwise on friendly basis. I can seek sometimes advice on an area where a friend is good...I discuss, well, like I discuss with you about things and you tell me, you advise me. Mentoring in that sense, it helps me but when it comes to mentoring at institutional level...no that does not exist" (Antony, Int.).

In addition to the unsystematic professional development activities, most interviewees highlighted their absence. Antony thinks that professional development activities such as group discussions, reflection sessions on lessons, co-planning and co-teaching do not exist. This position is reinforced by other interviewees such as Victor who confirmed the absence of co-planning by stating: "in terms of co-planning, no that does not really happen". Charles agreed with Antony and Victor and confirmed the absence of co-planning by stating: "there is no co-planning, unfortunately". Moreover, other interviewees confirmed Antony's claim about the absence of co-teaching. Victor spoke about the "zero capability

for co-teaching for scheduling issues" and Charles confirmed by stating that "presently, there is absolutely no co-teaching going on". In addition to the absence of co-teaching, other interviewees drew attention to the absence of collaborative action research. Charles attributed this absence to the immature belief in research and explained: "collaborative, no...We don't do research. I think the belief in research is not fully matured yet". Andy was more explicit and explained that "it is difficult to coordinate with others to do collaborative action research so I have independent, you know, my own research."

Andy's quotation brings into focus the individualised approach to professional development of most teachers in the institute. The interview findings did not only reveal the absence of systematic professional development activities but also illustrated the individual initiatives of teachers. The interview findings show that teachers relied on individualised approaches to professional development in the absence of institutional and systematic systems. Charles, for example, explained that "reflecting on lessons is done on individual level. It's not there is not group reflection". Although all interviewees denied the existence of systematic professional dialogue and collaborative action research in their workplace, Antony explained the individualised aspect of participation in professional dialogue and collaborative action research by stating:

"At personal level yes, not at institutional level. In the institute we don't have professional development program and we don't have research teams in the sense of having cooperative or collaborative work implemented" (Antony, Int.).

Andy attributed his decision to conduct his own individual research to the impossibility of coordinating with others to do collective action research.

The results of the questionnaire confirm the interview findings as illustrated in the table below.

Area of participation	strongly agree	agree	no opinion	disagree	strongly disagree
Involvement in the systematic and organised group discussions.	1 (5%)	4 (18%)	4 (18%)	8 (36%)	5 (23%)
	23%			59%	
Involvement in the systematic and organised reflection sessions on lessons.	1 (5%)	3 (14%)	1 (5%)	11 (50%)	6 (27%)
	18%			77%	
Involvement in co-planning.	1 (5%)	2 (9%)	2 (9%)	13 (59%)	4 (18%)

	14%			77%	
Involvement in conducting collaborative action research.	1 (5%)	0	23%	10 (45%)	6 (27%)
	4.5%			72%	
Involvement in professional dialogue.	0	7 (32%)	4 (18%)	5 (23%)	6 (27%)
	32%			50%	

Table 36: Participation in professional development activities (questionnaires)

As shown above, teachers' responses confirm interviewees' perceptions about their participation in professional development activities. The results show that not all teachers were involved in systematic professional development activities. Only one teacher (5%) strongly agrees and 4 teachers (18%) agree that they were involved in systematic and organised group discussions in their workplace. Moreover, just one teacher strongly agrees and two teachers agree that that they were involved in the systematic co-planning. Furthermore, four teachers (one strongly agrees and three agree) think that they were involved in reflecting on lessons in their workplace. In addition, only one teacher thinks that he was involved in conducting collaborative action research in his workplace. Finally, eleven teachers representing 50% (5 disagree and 6 strongly disagree) believe that they were not involved in professional dialogue.

5.5.3 The absence of professional tools

The findings of the interviews reveal the absence of tools which may help teachers develop professionally as illustrated below.

Area of participation	Existence of tool + type of participation	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
teacher network	Absence of teacher networks Unsystematic and Individualised participation	**Antony**: that does not exist **Charles**: done on individual level. It's not systematic. **Edward**: I am a member...teachers on line. **Andy**: No opportunity for that. **George**: no...but teachers involved in TESOL	5
study groups	Absence of study groups Unsystematic participation	**Antony**: that does not exist **Victor**: study groups, things like that don't exist either for lack of funding, lack of interest, lack of space, time, allocate instructors to develop it. **Charles**: It's not systematic. **George**: study groups? Occasionally	4
book club	Absence of book clubs Individualised initiatives	**Antony**: we don't even have books in the library. **Victor**: book clubs, things like that don't exist. **Andy**: I am trying to get a book club. **George**: I don't really think we have a book club here.	4

Table 37: the absence of professional tools (interviews)

In a reaction to a question about book clubs in his workplace, Antony replied:

> "That does not exist. I don't do that because I don't see it exist. We don't even have books in the library. So how can you have a reading club when you don't have a library in your institution?" (Antony, Int.).

Victor confirmed Antony's statement and explained the potential reasons for the absence of certain tools by stating:

> "Again, the workplace here, study groups, book clubs, things like that don't exist either for lack of funding, lack of interest, lack of space, time, allocate instructors to develop it" (Victor, Int.).

The absence of tools to develop professionally did not prevent other interviewees such as Charles and Edward to take personal and individualised initiatives: "teacher networks, well, it's only done on individual levels" explained Charles, "I am a member in one of the online teacher network groups", added Edward. Andy was more active and took the personal initiative to establish a book club for students by explaining: "I am trying to get...a somewhat book club for my students on the ground. It's of course very difficult actually".

The absence of professional tools highlighted by interviewees was confirmed by the conviction of most teachers responding to the questionnaire about the necessity of having these tools as illustrated in the table below.

Necessity of professional tools	strongly agree	agree	no opinion	disagree	strongly disagree
We should have a teacher network in my workplace.	10 (45%)	10 (45%)	1 (5%)	0	1 (5%)
	91%			5%	
Teachers should have study groups in their workplace.	6 (27%)	13 (59%)	2 (9%)	0	1 (5%)
	86%			5%	
Teachers should have a book club in their workplace.	7 (32%)	10 (45%)	2 (9%)	1 (5%)	2 (9%)
	77%			14%	

Table 38: the absence of professional tools (questionnaires)

The results of the questionnaire show that seventeen teachers representing 77% (seven strongly agree and ten agree) think that teachers should have book clubs in their workplace and nineteen teachers representing 86% (six strongly agree and thirteen agree) think that there should be study groups for teachers in their workplace. Moreover, twenty teachers

(ten strongly agree and ten agree) representing 91% think that they should have teacher networks. Teachers' wish to have these professional tools confirms interviewees' statements about the absence of essential tools to develop professionally.

5.5.4 Lack of support

The findings of the interviews show that the institute's financial and administrative support is selective and unsystematic as highlighted in the table below.

Area of support	type of support from the institute	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
fees	-Unsystematic -Selective -Individualised initiatives	**Antony**: no nothing, I either sponsor myself or I get my own sponsors from outside. **Victor**: the institute offered reimbursement of fees. **Charles**: it's not a systematic thing. **Andy**: I paid out of my pocket. **George**: stand on my own pocket.	5
transportation	-unsystematic	**Antony**: No nothing. **Victor**: the institute provided travel for the conference **Edward**: there is transportation **George**: none , never	4
Flexibility of teaching schedule	Support provided	**Edward**: yes there is flexibility of teaching **Andy**: I was given the day **George**: able to get time off	3

Table 39: Teachers' opinion about the support from stakeholders (interviews)

The findings of the interviews reveal that the financial support to help teachers develop professionally was unsystematic. Despite the absence of systematic financial support, teachers' personal initiatives to develop professionally emerged. Antony, for example, indicated that his institute did not provide any financial support and that he either sponsors himself or looks for sponsors. In a similar way, Andy reported that he was denied support from the institute to pay for conferences and workshops fees and stated: "I paid out of my pocket, I put receipts and I was not reimbursed". George agreed with Antony and Andy that the institute did not sponsor their attendance of conferences and workshops and explained: "None, never. You're not supporting me...[I] go every year, stand on my own pocket". Contrary to Antony, Andy and George, other interviewees acknowledged their institute's support but highlighted the different experiences they had with this support. Victor, for example, admitted receiving financial support and declared that the: "the institute offered

reimbursement of fees". Charles highlighted the selective and unsystematic approach of providing support adopted by the institute and stated:

> "Well the institute does fund, doesn't do this for everybody but sometimes they pick up a little group and then they fund them. It's not systematic. This is not, unfortunately, done on a regular basis...as for the institute, they don't pay most of the time, you try to go but they were not allowed unless one is going to go really fight for it" (Charles, Int.).

As far as transportation is concerned, Edward and Victor affirmed being supported from the institute. Victor stated that "the institute provided travel for the conference". Although Edward agreed that "there is transportation", he complained about the absence of accommodation fees.

In addition to the unsystematic financial support, some interviewees drew attention to the nature of administrative support they receive during professional events. They agree that they were supported to have flexible teaching schedule during conferences. Despite the fact that George did not receive any financial support, he acknowledged being helped to have a flexible timetable during one of the conferences. He explained that he was helped because he was promoting the institute and stated:

> "The only support that I've had before was you know I was able to get time off to go to present and you know they were good enough because kind of promoting the place itself because you say, you say, where you're from and you talk about the work that you've done" (George, Int.).

Victor agreed with George about the pragmatic policy of the institute and explained that despite the fact that the management's support was somewhat lacking during one of the professional events, "the institute was happy enough to put their name on it but pretty much nothing else".

The results of the questionnaire confirm the interview findings and illustrate the lack of support from the institute as shown in the table below.

Area of support	strongly agree	agree	no opinion	disagree	strongly disagree
Financial support: paying for	0	1 (5%)	4 (18%)	4 (18%)	13 (59%)

conference fees.	5%			77%	
Financial support: paying for transportation fees.	0	1 (5%)	4(18%)	5 (23%)	12 (55%)
	5%			77%	
Administrative support: exempting teachers from teaching during workshop and conference days.	1 (5%)	5 (23%)	4 (18%)	4 (18%)	8 (36%)
	27%			55%	
The institute should be more supportive to teachers.	13 (59%)	7 (32%)	0	2 (91%)	0
	91%			9%	

Table 40: Teachers' opinion about the support from stakeholders (questionnaires)

The results of the questionnaire illustrate that twenty teachers representing 91% (thirteen strongly agree and seven agree) think that the institute must be more supportive to teachers. The findings also indicate that only one teacher (5%) acknowledged receiving financial support to pay for conference and workshop fees whereas 77% stated that the institute did not pay for their conference fees. Moreover, only one teacher affirmed being helped with transportation fees for conferences and workshops whereas 77% stated that the institute did not pay for transportation fees. As for exempting teachers from teaching and giving them the day off during conferences and workshops, only 6 teachers (one strongly agrees and five agree) representing 27% stated that they had benefited from this privilege.

5.5.5 Teachers' dissatisfaction with their participation in professional development activities.

The findings of the interviews show that two thirds of the teachers were not satisfied with their participation in professional development activities as tabulated below.

Area of participation	Extent of satisfaction	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
Professional development	Dissatisfaction	**Victor**: dissatisfied. **Charles**: I don't think I am doing much. **George**: restricted in terms of ...time and... finances. **Antony**: there isn't any policy that accords them the opportunity	4
	satisfaction	**Edward**: frankly speaking it is not excellent but you can say it is fair. **Andy**: eh great, I'd like to say	2

Table 41: satisfaction with participation in professional development activities (interviews)

Except for Andy who rated his participation "great, I'd like to say", and Edward who considered his participation fair, other interviewees expressed their dissatisfaction. Victor, for example, explained that his participation in professional development activities was "extremely bitter" and stated: "dissatisfied I would have to say...small. I would say that

here is negligible professional development". The other interviewees agreed with Victor and highlighted their personal initiatives to develop professionally in the absence of systematic institutional support. Antony even raised the issue of exclusion based on discrimination:

> "Well I participate in development, professional development activities when these have been identified by me but at institutional level. I don't go for professional development programmes because there isn't any policy that particularly expatriate teachers, that, you know, accords them the opportunity" (Antony, Int.).

In addition, the other interviewees, Charles and George think that their participation was not satisfactory. Charles thinks that his participation was below his expectations and attributed this to the lack of time and support and explained: "I don't think I am doing much. I wish I had the time to do enough. I wish I had the support to do enough from my institution". In a similar way, George expressed his dissatisfaction and his desire to have more participation but felt restricted in terms of time and money.

The results of the questionnaire correlate with the interview findings and indicate teachers' dissatisfaction with their participation as tabulated below:

	strongly agree	agree	no opinion	disagree	strongly disagree
Satisfaction with the professional development activities.	0	5 (23%)	2 (9%)	6 (27%)	9 (41%)
	23%			68%	
I function in a professional environment.	4 (18%)	6 (27%)	5 (23%)	5 (23%)	2 (9%)
	45%			32%	

Table 42: satisfaction with participation in professional development activities (questionnaires)

Although the results presented in the table above show that ten teachers (four strongly agree and six agree) representing 45% feel that they function in a professional environment, only five teachers (23%) expressed their satisfaction with the professional development activities in their workplace whereas 68% expressed their dissatisfaction.

5.5.5.1 Teachers' wishes: more involvement

The interview findings reveal that teachers' dissatisfaction with their participation in professional development activities did not prevent them from expressing their wishes to be more involved as illustrated below.

129

Area of participation	wishes	Sample extracts /reasons	Number of mentions
Professional development	-Good, active and positive participation -Sharing experience -Having professional decision makers -Support -More involvement	**Antony**: setting the policy. **Victor**: as a participant, nothing more than this. I'll rather be the one learning some things. **Charles**: I would like to share my experience and to learn from my colleagues. I wish we had professional decision makers. **Edward**: .the role I am looking for is to have the chance to participate positively or better than it is now. The institute [should] provide accommodation [to] facilitate things to me so that I can join such professional development sessions. **Andy**: I'd like to have more professional development in general...I'd love to be more involved. **George**: I'd like to do more but I am restricted...you have to be your own advocate...if I see something interesting I go and explore	6

Table 43: wishes for future participation in professional development activities (interviews)

As tabulated above, all interviewees longed for more active roles in professional development activities. Antony expressed his desire to be more involved in deciding about the policy of professional development in his workplace and explained: "I would like to have a good participation in terms of setting the policy for professional development". As seen in the table above, Andy and George longed for more involvement and more active participation in professional development. Charles was critical of the unprofessionalism of decision makers in his workplace and stated:

> "I wish we had professional decision makers. We need somebody who understands what education is like, what is the necessity of education and then who keeps in touch, who keeps being fed by the infrastructure, I mean the teachers and students" (Charles, Int.).

Moreover, Charles expressed his desire to share his experience and to learn from his colleagues. Victor shared Charles' wish as he longed to be just a participant who could learn new things. Finally, Edward wanted more positive participation and more financial support from the institute to be able to attend professional development events.

Interviewees' wishes for more involvement and active participation in professional development were also noticed in questionnaires. Participants wished more involvement in deciding about policies, more involvement in professional activities and more provision of professional tools. These wishes are presented in the table below.

Area of participation	Wishes: more involvement and provision of tools	strongly agree	agree	no opinion	disagree	strongly disagree
Professional tools	Have teacher networks.	10 (45%)	10 (45%)	1 (5%)	0	1 (5%)
		91%			5%	
	Having study groups.	6 (27%)	13 (59%)	2 (9%)	0	1 (5%)
		86%			5%	
	Having book clubs.	7 (32%)	10 (45%)	2 (9%)	1 (5%)	2 (9%)
		77%			14%	
Professional activities	Involvement in mentoring new teachers.	6 (27%)	9 (41%)	3 (14%)	2 (9%)	2 (9%)
		68%			18%	
	Encouraging co-teaching.	5 (23%)	10 (45%)	2 (9%)	4 (18%)	1 (5%)
		68%			23%	
Decision-making	More involvement in deciding about the professional development activities.	12 (55%)	7 (32%)	2 (9%)	1 (5%)	0
		86%			5%	
	Full involvement in deciding about professional development activities.	8 (36%)	7 (32%)	6 (27%)	1 (5%)	0
		68%			5%	

Table 44: wishes for future participation in professional development activities (questionnaires)

The results of the questionnaire confirm the interview findings and teachers' wish to be more involved and to develop professionally. As far as decision-making is concerned, fifteen teachers representing 68% (8 strongly agree and 7 agree) think that they should be fully involved in deciding about professional development activities and nineteen teachers representing 86% (12 strongly agree and 7 agree) believe that they should be more involved in deciding about professional development activities. In addition to decision-making, the questionnaire results reflect teachers' strong desire to be equipped with the tools which may help them develop professionally as seventeen teachers (seven strongly agree and ten agree) representing 78% think that they should have book clubs in their workplace and nineteen teachers (six strongly agree and thirteen agree) think that they should have study groups. Moreover, twenty teachers (ten strongly agree and ten agree) representing 91%, think that they should have teacher networks. Finally, fifteen teachers (five strongly agree and ten agree) representing 68% think that decision makers should encourage co-teaching and a similar percentage of 68% (6 strongly agree and 9 agree) think that experienced teachers should be involved in mentoring new teachers.

5.5.5.2 Nostalgia for previous teaching experiences

It was obvious from the interviews that previous professional experiences in other educational institutions marked some of the interviewees' personality and influenced their responses. Four out of six interviewees referred to their previous teaching experiences in different workplaces and compared their current and previous participation in decision-making. The emergence of previous experiences as benchmarks against which interviewees gauged their current participation in decision-making may reflect their dissatisfaction with their current participation. This escape to history and the comparison between the two situations was noticed when Victor reacted to a question about his participation in the study groups and referred to his previous teaching experience in one of the universities and remembered:

> " My experience at university... we had study groups for speaking practice which worked out very well for those students because they were highly motivated to practice their speaking basically, sort of black, brown bag lunch group where they can freely come and speak for each other as well to instructors and practice that" (Victor, Int.).

 Victor's nostalgic moments recurred when he evaluated his whole participation in decision-making and explained:

> "I would say that in my current position I have a miniscule role in decision-making whereas in previous work experiences, I had a much greater role as I mentioned before. I did work at university in Afghanistan, and, well the team there was rather to be small, they were very good about adopting, improving, sharing improvements, working together to develop the best curriculum that they possibly could because they had limited resources, they knew that, so everyone was drawn upon to make stuff happen" (Victor, Int.).

In addition to Victor, Charles referred to his previous experience with co-teaching and stated:

> "I remember when I had a job, I did, we did exactly this. Co-teach, my job was this, sit with the teachers, plan, I was part of a group of New Zealand, South African teachers in one of the English schools in the UAE. At the beginning, there was so

much prejudice but then teachers enjoyed it and students enjoyed it. You walk in... it is funny, students oh students are shocked to see two teachers coming to the class but later it becomes, it eases monitoring, you are able to help more students when you are two, it is one support, but zero at the present time" (Charles, Int.).

Charles' comparison between his current and previous experiences with professional development activities continues to involve the importance of group discussion and he explained:

"Eh, if I may say, in one of the institutions I taught before... we had something called, what is it? the title, a kind of committee no, it is a daily, every day, for example, we finish half an hour before going home, and, we have 15 minutes where a teacher, for example, sends a message and says, ok since we have ipads, since we have lots of software, lots of ideas, and one teachers says: I explored this app if you are interested to show you what the advantages and disadvantages of this app and how you use, come for ten minutes, and whoever is interested will go on daily basis , just ten minutes at the end of the day, you watch somebody who tells you how to use app, the benefits of this app or this program in class and it is really great" (Charles, Int.).

Andy, another interviewee, compared his current and previous participation in professional development activities and noted:

"Sure, I try to be as active, actively involved in professional development as possible... I am, in my last job, I was on a team that provided several professional development days... were organized and I led several professional development days based on learning and technology in the classroom... and since coming here, I have got involved with TESOL and so on, you know, on a committee now, for the, I guess, I do not know exactly what committee is about, but jumping feet first" (Andy, Int.).

George was the last interviewee to resort to previous experiences in a previous working workplace to express his dissatisfaction with his current participation. He compared the

support he used to receive in his previous workplace and the support he is receiving in his current job and remarked:

> "Then in terms of finance... financial support, you know, my previous job, we used to get paid membership but I cannot for TESOL Arabia, we used to get the conference paid for, and we used to get the hotel paid for. Now... that was a given, you know what I mean" (George, Int.).

5.6 Discussion

In this part of the chapter, I discuss the findings of my study in light of the literature in chapter three and attempt to construct an understanding of the nature of teachers' participation in decision-making, the main research question. Through the discussion I attempt to highlight teachers' limited participation in decision-making, the top-down approach as a major cause of their marginalised participation and the absence of professional environment within which teachers can develop. Finally, I discuss the emergence of individualised approaches and teachers' dissatisfaction with their limited participation in decision-making.

5.6.1 Teachers' limited participation

The findings of the study indicate that teachers' actual participation in assessment, curriculum and professional development activities do not correspond to the duties stated in their job description document (Appendix 1) and to the promises of high professional development in the strategic plan (Appendix 2) as reviewed in section 5.2. This limited participation may be attributed to the top-down approach as will be discussed below.

As far as assessment is concerned, the findings reveal teachers' restricted contribution to designing tests, participation limited to invigilation, and participation in test analysis that ranged from personal initiatives in the weekly tests to total exclusion in exit tests. These three aspects are further discussed below. The results thus seem to offer an answer to a question posed by Rea-Dickins (1997, p. 307): "how much control do teachers have of the assessment procedures and the tests they administer?" The findings of this study do not only reveal a difference in the nature of teachers' participation in designing, implementing and analysing tests but also indicate that exclusion is a reality. This would seem to confirm

the conclusions of previous studies discussed in chapter three that assessment is an area where decision makers would like to control and exclude teachers from (Shohamy, 2001; Rea-Dikins, 1997; Troudi et al., 2009; Tahmasebi and Yamini, 2013; McNamara, 2000, Bourke et al., 2015; and Dammak, 2017).

The first area showing limited participation is teachers' exclusion from designing both weekly and exit tests, a finding that concurs, not unexpectedly, with the results of a previous study I undertook in the same context (Dammak, 2017). The findings of the current study also reveal that teachers' chances to be fully responsible for designing tests independently are low which may imply that their participation is restricted to suggesting potential questions to tests, as stated by one of the interviewees (George), rather than assuming the full responsibility of designing the whole test. The reliance on selected teachers to be involved in designing tests in this study echoes Shohamy's discussion of teachers' participation and its relation to the democratisation of the educational system revolving around power, trust and trustworthiness (2001). Shohamy argues that the selection of the testing body can reflect the extent to which the educational system trusts the teaching staff and is ready to grant teachers professional authority. In the current study, decision makers did not grant equal chances to all teachers to be involved in the assessment process since the findings revealed that the writing skill teachers were more involved than the reading skill teachers.

In addition to their restricted contribution to designing tests, participants in the study agreed that their role in the assessment process was restricted to mere invigilation and that the invigilation procedures were highly centralised in the hands of decision makers. This policy of centralisation is in sharp contrast with what Rea-Dickins (1997) advocated to involve teachers, empower them and democratise the assessment processes. Despite their participation being limited to mere invigilation, teachers' contribution in this study seems to be more active than the participation of teachers in Shohamy's study (2001) who were denied even the chance to invigilate.

The third area from which participants were excluded is analysing weekly and exit test items and results. Their ability to rely on their personal initiatives in analysing results of weekly tests faded away with the exit tests as they were not allowed to see the final results. They attributed this exclusion to the reliance on computerised tests, automatic grading and

to the willingness of decision makers to keep this area away from the reach of classroom teachers to decide about the pass or failure of certain students. The monopoly of the decision-making in this study is similar to what the studies of Troudi et al. (2009) and Dammak (2017) concluded. In both studies, decision makers and powerful stakeholders insist that assessment should be centralised for reasons of practicality, efficacy and reliability. Depriving teachers from deciding about testing and controlling the whole assessment process allowed decision makers to perpetuate their dominance and enforce their policies (Bourke et al., 2015). The marginalisation of teachers in the current study is comparable to the experience of excluding teachers during the introduction of new reading comprehension tests discussed by Shohamy (2001). The exclusion of teachers in Shohamy (2001) and in this study reflects the type of roles that decision makers assign to teachers. In both instances, teachers are denied professional authority. They are subservient to the system and viewed as bureaucrats implementing decision makers' testing policies. The results of the current study confirm that tests are ideologically loaded to favour decision makers (McNamara, 2000; Shohamy, 2001 and Tahmasebi & Yamini, 2013) and enforce their dominance on assessment procedures. The findings of this study confirm the conclusions of previous studies conducted in the Gulf region (Troudi et al., 2009 and Dammak, 2017) that the marginalised roles given to teachers in the assessment process can be attributed to the top-down managerial approaches to education and a policy to perpetuate the status quo.

In addition to their marginalised role in assessment activities, the findings of the study indicate that teachers' participation in curriculum activities is also very limited. The findings reveal limited to no teacher participation in needs analysis, low participation in deciding about goals and objectives, absence of participation in deciding about the skills which are taught, participation restricted to adapting some teaching materials and negative reactions to teachers' evaluation of the curriculum. These results reveal the limited participation of some selected teachers in curriculum development activities and the exclusion of the majority of teachers. Moreover, the nature of participation of the selected individuals in curriculum development in this study is restricted to certain areas as most of the interviewees reiterated the idea that the standards, benchmarks and textbooks were set by outsiders or experts and that their role consists of mapping the curriculum or adapting teaching materials within the scope already decided by real decision makers. In addition,

exclusion from evaluating the curriculum might be understood as a logical result of teachers' exclusion from assessment activities as suggested by Antony: "I don't think it would be possible for someone to evaluate a program when they don't see the results first hand". Most participants' answers reveal a partial agreement that teachers' feedback on the curriculum was either not sought by decision makers or just listened to without being really considered. Restricting participation to a limited number of teachers, relying on outsiders to design the curriculum and excluding the majority of the teaching staff from making decisions about the curriculum may reflect the policy of marginalisation adopted by the decision makers. Teachers' limited participation in this study may reflect a tendency of regarding them as mere recipients of the curriculum that is designed by experts, a practice which may be "detrimental to the process of taking ownership of the curriculum" as highlighted by Carl (2005, p. 223). Such a view falls under the umbrella of top-down imposed approaches to curriculum activities (Horsley, 1989; Evetts, 2012; Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992; Breen, 2007; Troudi and Alwan, 2010; Carl, 2005, Shilling, 2013; and Ho, 2010). Furthermore, prescribing centralised curricula can be considered as one of the causes of weakening the position of teachers (Hargreaves 2000) while deciding about the content and the context of the curriculum is an instance of managerial interference that serves to de-professionalise teachers (Day, 1999). Restricting teachers' participation in curriculum activities in the present study to mere implementation is comparable to the role of teachers in Ho's study (2010). Moreover, the absence of teachers' voice and participation in curriculum development in this exploratory study is congruent with the findings of other studies previously conducted in the Gulf area (Mullik, 2013; AL kaabi et al., 2013; and Troudi & Alwan, 2010) all of which concluded that teachers were not involved in the planning of curriculum development, processes of needs analysis and modification of materials because of the adoption of a top-down approach to curriculum. This top-down approach to curriculum development is in sharp contrast with the bottom-up approach which strives to give an opportunity to teachers' voice to be heard before the actual implementation of any curriculum (Carl 2005). This marginalisation of teachers' roles in curriculum development engendered feelings of dissatisfaction with their participation in decision-making as will be highlighted in section (5.6.4).

In addition to their limited participation in assessment and curriculum activities, the findings of the study reveal that teachers were excluded from making decisions about

professional development policies as a majority of 82% stated that they were not involved in deciding about the themes and procedures of the professional development events in the institute. The marginalisation of teachers' roles in deciding professional development policies in this study is congruent with the findings of Badri's et al. (2016) study which reported a similar lack of teachers' involvement in professional development planning, implementation and evaluation. The marginalisation of teachers' roles in this area may reflect the top-down approach to professionalism in this institute (Burbank and Kauchak, 2003; Patton et al, 2015; Buczunski and Hansen, 2010; and Butler et al., 2004). The findings of the study reveal that the professional development days in this institute are imposed by the decision makers, results which are congruent with the findings of Buckner's et al study (2016) about the compulsory aspect of attending these professional events. Burbank and Kauchak (2003, p. 500) illuminated the drawbacks of such approaches by arguing that "one of the major limitations of traditional models of professional development is the passive role imposed upon teachers, who find it difficult to implement ideas that are often conceptually and practically far removed from their classrooms". The top-down imposed professional development events in this study are pretexts to deny teachers a vacation, as they often fall on days when students are away, as explained by Antony, an interviewee. More importantly, the questionnaires' results confirm interviewees' awareness of the top-down imposed policies adopted in their workplace. Victor complained about this policy and the one-size-fits-all workshops and explained: "instead of doing things like co-teaching or let's record some demonstrable lessons and see how to teach better...some people choose to look for, I would say, shooting for the stars where they discuss things like ipad classrooms where an institute [has] an extraordinary limited number of ipads". The findings reveal that the professional development events in the institute are divorced from teachers' needs and interests, a divorce often depicted by many theorists (Patton et al., 2015; Dumulder and Rigsby, 2003; Guskey, 2009 and Butler et al., 2004). This traditional imposed top-down model of professional development is in sharp contrast with the more collaborative models of professional development activities suggested by Burbank and Kauchak (2003), Burns (1995), Demulder and Rigsby (2003), Butler et al. (2004), Patton et al. (2015) and Guskey (2009) in which teachers' participation is more conspicuous and even a cornerstone of professional development activities. Patton et al. (2015), for example, contend that professional development should be based mainly on teachers' needs and

interests, a requirement which is not available in the current way of implementing and planning the professional development days despite the promises in the teachers' job description and the strategic objectives of the institute (Appendices 1 and 2).

5.6.2 The absence of professional environment

Teachers' limited participation and the adoption of a top-down approach may reflect the absence of a professional environment. The findings of the study reveal the absence of a systematic plan for professional development, the absence of professional development tools and the lack of financial and administrative support. The absence of these three aspects, which are further discussed below, do not correspond to the duties of teachers (Appendix1), the promises in the strategic objectives (Appendix 2) and the calls for providing teachers with collegial and supporting environments (Hargreaves and Fullan,1992; Burbank and Kauchak, 2003;Du Four 2004; Wood, 2007; and Stoll and Lewis, 2007).

The first aspect showing the absence of professional environment is the non-existence of systematic plan for professional development. Promises to teachers of high quality professional development services and developing educational research and research center (Appendix 2) seem to have failed. Despite the fact that the teachers' job description (Appendix 1) states clearly that teachers should prepare professional development plans in coordination with their supervisors, the findings of the study show that most teachers rely on their personal initiatives to participate in professional development events. Except for the in-house professional development, which some of the interviewees criticised, the findings of the study reveal the non-existence of systematic plan for professional development. In addition to excluding teachers from decision-making, the findings of this study reveal the absence of a systematic plan to implement professional development activities. The absence of clear professional development program philosophy in this study confirms the findings of Badri's et al. (2016) study. The results of this study reveal that professional development is not systematic and lacks consistency and continuity, requirements that Patton et al. (2015) and Stodolsky et al. (2006) consider essential for effective professional development. In this study, the majority of teachers were denied involvement in a systematic and organised group discussion, in systematic co-planning, in reflecting on lessons and in conducting collaborative action research in their workplace.

The failure to provide teachers with a learning environment within which they can systematically discuss, co-plan, co-teach, reflect and conduct collaborative action research is a failure to respond to the rudimentary requirements of successful and effective professional development environments as discussed in the literature. Butler et al (2004), Burton (2009), DeMulder and Rigsby (2003), Dessimone (2010-2011), Tam (2015), and Harris and Antony (2001) discussed the importance of reflection as a major component of collaborative learning activity that may lead to more teachers' participation and empowerment. In addition to reflection, discussion as reviewed by Wood (2007), Stodolsky et al. (2006), Breen (2007), Tam (2014), Dessimone (2010-2011) and Harris and Antony (2001) is a cornerstone of collaborative professional development activities that should prevail in professional development environments. Moreover, Planning as discussed by Harris and Antony (2001) and collaborative action research (Wood, 2007; Burns, 1995; Glatthorn, 1987; and Tam, 2015) are among the collaborative learning activities that may enhance teachers' participation and empower them. The insistence of theorists on collaboration as a cornerstone of professional development activities such as reflection, discussion, planning and action research to provide teachers with ideal professional development environments stems from the conviction that these activities, once conducted, will enhance collegial relationships among teachers and raise topics for investigation. The denial of involving the majority of respondents in this study in a systematic and organised group discussion, in systematic co-planning, in reflecting on lessons and in conducting collaborative action research may be considered a failure to provide them with a collegial environment. Such a denial may also reflect the absence of a professional environment and a clear professional development program philosophy. The current working atmosphere, as described by most interviewees and confirmed by questionnaires, may reflect the dominating culture of exclusion, marginalisation and the absence of the concepts of collegiality and collaboration. This working environment is in sharp contrast with the collaborative professional development settings that many theorists advocated (Tam, 2015; Du Four, 2004; Yendol Silva and Dana, 2004; Wood, 2007; and Burns, 1995). As a result, participants relied on their personal initiatives to attain these concepts as discussed in section (5.6.3).

The second aspect showing the absence of a professional environment is the non-existence of professional development tools. This absence runs counter to the promises of developing

an educational research center (Appendix 2). Contrary to the necessity of conducting regular peer observation, participating in regular in-service training and enhancing the learning and teaching environment as stated in the teachers' job description (Appendix 1), the results of the study reveal the absence of the educational research center which could be an effective and necessary tool for systematic professional development. In addition to marginalising teachers' participation in deciding about the policies of professional development and depriving them from having a systematic professional plan to implement professional development activities, the study unravels the absence of professional development tools that may promote the institute as a learning community and may enhance teachers' participation. Teachers' responses to questionnaires confirmed interviewees' statements which reported the lack of teacher networks, study groups and book clubs for teachers, requirements that theorists consider as the pillars of ideal professional development environments. This absence does not help to provide teachers with embedded professional development activities such co-teaching, study groups, co-planning, group discussion, or reflecting on lessons, as suggested by Dessimone (2010-2011) and Harris and Antony (2001, p. 386) who highlighted the importance of teacher networks and suggested them as "legitimate forum to promote teacher development".

The lack of support is the third aspect showing the absence of a professional environment. Although providing professional development opportunities to students and employees seems to be one of the major objectives of the institute (Appendix 2), the findings of the study demonstrate that this support was selective and unsystematic as stated by most interviewees. The analysis of the strategic objectives document in section (5.2) revealed that students and technical employees were the main targets of professional development opportunities which may imply the marginalisation of English language teachers and their chances to participate in professional opportunities. Limiting this support mainly to students and technical employees may explain the reason for the unsystematic support that the institute offers to English language teachers. The findings of the study do not only reveal the lack of financial and administrative support but also its inconsistency and unfair distribution. Moreover, the findings of the study reveal that twenty teachers (thirteen strongly agree and seven agree) think that the institute must be more supportive to teachers. The call for more support was also noticed in Borg's study (2014) when teachers demanded more support before and after attending conferences. Moreover, the findings of this study

are congruent with the findings of studies which were conducted in the Gulf region about the lack of support (Buckner et, al. 2016; Al Taneiji, 2014; and Badri et, al., 2016). The results of the study show that the financial support to attend workshops and conferences is not systematic. It was granted to just some selected teachers who were offered reimbursement of fees as stated by Victor. However, the majority of teachers were never supported financially as explained by three interviewees, Andy, George and Antony. Furthermore, the administrative support seems to be based on pragmatic grounds since teachers' participation and presenting in conferences serve as a free advertising for the institute without really investing financially as reported by Victor and George, two interviewees (see section 5.5.4). This pragmatic support is in sharp contrast with the effective support that decision makers should provide teachers with (Davis and Wison, 2000; Wang,2016; Edwards et al., 2002). The lack of stakeholders' financial and administrative support in this study may reflect the weak position of teachers and their subordination to decision makers who select the teachers whose participation in conferences and workshops is to be funded. Moreover, the conflict between professional development and teachers' work schedule in this study is similar to the same challenge faced by other teachers in other studies (Badri et, al., 2016 and Buckner, et al., 2016). Furthermore, the lack of financial and administrative support from decision makers in this study contradicts the promises of support in the two documents (Appendices 1 and 2) and is not in harmony with the calls for the decisive supportive roles of powerful stakeholders as suggested by Davis and Wilson (2000), Bogler and Someh (2004) and Edwards et al. (2002).

5.6.3 Individualized approach and personal initiatives

The discrepancy between teachers' actual and desired participation in decision-making, the dissatisfaction with their involvement in professional development activities and the lack of a systematic and consistent institutional support urged some teachers to take personal initiatives and adopt an individualised approach to professional development. The absence of institutional and systematic process to analyse test results did not prevent some interviewees (Andy and Victor) from stating that they relied on their personal initiatives to analyse and share the results of weekly tests with the students. Moreover, in the absence of book clubs for students, Andy, for example stated: "I am trying to get a somewhat book

club for my students on the ground." The individualised approach was also more evident when most teachers explained that their participation in conferences and workshops stemmed from personal initiatives rather than from an institutional and systematic policy of support to professional development. Antony was very clear and declared: "the ones I go, usually, are the ones that I personally have identified and thought I have some interest." Despite personal initiatives, teachers showed awareness about the importance of sharing and developing a culture of professional development in the institute as explained by Charles, "I think we need to build a culture of what is it? professional development for teachers and across the institute". The call to build a new culture of professional development was a reaction to the absence of a professional environment and the emergence of an individualised, isolationist approach to professional development in the institute. Despite teachers' consciousness about the importance of teamwork, the individualised approach, which is in sharp contrast with the ideal learning communities that theorists advocate for, was prevailing. The notions of Professional Development Schools (Burbank and Kauchak, 2003 and Yendol-Silva & Dana, 2004), Professional Learning Communities (Stoll and Lewis, 2007; Du Four, 2004; Green and Allen, 2015; and Tam, 2015), Professional School Cultures (Stodolsky et al., 2006), Teacher Learning Communities (Wood, 2007), Collaborative Institutional Models (Burns, 1995), and Communities of Practice (Butler et al., 2004) were inexistent settings in the institute. The findings of the study show that embedded professional development forms that embody collaboration such as co-teaching, mentoring, teachers' networks, study groups, book clubs, group discussions and reflecting on lessons (Dessimone, 2010-2011) were not part of the institutional professional development culture. In a similar way, the findings of the study highlight the absence of the pillars of cooperative professional development activities such as professional dialogue, peer supervision, peer coaching (Glatthorn, 1987) and collaborative action research (Glatthorn, 1987; Burbank and Kauchak, 2003; and Butler et al., 2004).

5.6.4 Teachers' dissatisfaction with their participation in decision-making

Teachers' actual participation in decision-making in this study does not correspond to the duties stated in their job description document (Appendix 1). The centralisation of decision-making, the prescription of centralised curricula (Hargreaves, 2000) and the adoption of a

traditional view of teachers' decision-making power advocating for top-down managerial models (Ingersoll, 1996) restricted the scope of teachers' participation in decision-making in the institute and created a feeling of dissatisfaction among teachers of the English language foundation program. This feeling of dissatisfaction is opposite to teachers' satisfaction in Al Taneiji's study (2014). The findings of the study show the unsystematic participation of teachers in decision-making, the use of selective criteria to grant support and the adoption of a centralised top-down approach to decision-making. Proven to be advantageous, the decentralised view of teachers' decision- making policy, as highlighted by Somech (2010), was non-existent in this study. Instead, the findings of the study report the existence of a traditional top-down bureaucratic structure that restricted the scope of teachers' participation and therefore may be a cause of their dissatisfaction with their limited participation in decision-making. The findings of the study show that teachers were not satisfied with their participation in assessment activities, curriculum development activities and professional development activities. Teachers' wishes illustrate the discrepancy between their actual and desired participation in decision-making. According to Alutto and Belasco (1972), decisionally deprived individuals evidenced a clear preference for more participation, a wish shared by most participants in the study. According to the findings, teachers perceive themselves to be in a state of decisional deprivation in decision-making (Alutto and Belasco, 1972), similar to the perceptions of teachers in the studies of Cheng (2008), Ho (2010) and Lau (2004). This state of decisional deprivation refers to a condition where the actual participation in decision-making is less than desired and does not reach the state of equilibrium or saturation. With few exceptions, the majority of teachers in this study were not satisfied with their participation in decision-making.

As far as assessment activities are concerned, the gap between teachers' actual participation and their wishes is wide. The findings of the study reveal that the majority of teachers are excluded from designing weekly and exit tests and deciding about the timing and venue of these tests. The results also show that most teachers are excluded from analysing the results of these tests. This exclusion is in sharp contrast with the teachers' job description document (Appendix 1). The findings also reveal that teachers' roles were restricted to invigilating according to imposed top-down invigilation schedules. Moreover, decisions of pass and fail were at the hand of decision makers. This state of exclusion and deprivation

was also reported in the different studies of Shohamy (2001), Troudi et al. (2009), Mcnamara (2010), Rea Dickins (1997) and Dammak (2017).

In a similar way, this state of decisional deprivation was also noticed in teachers' dissatisfaction with their participation in curriculum development activities. Teachers' wishes to be more involved in curriculum development activities illustrate their failure to achieve the status of equilibrium, where their actual participation in decision-making is as much as desired, or the status of saturation, the condition whereby actual participation in decision-making exceeds their desired contribution (Alutto and Belasco, 1972). Despite being among their duties in the job description (Appendix 1), most teachers reported their exclusion from decisions about the different aspects of curriculum development. They reported that their roles were restricted to implementing the top-down imposed curriculum. As a result, the feeling of dissatisfaction with their participation in curriculum development activities was prevailing. This feeling of dissatisfaction is similar to the feelings of the participants in the study of Troudi and Alwan (2010, p. 107) who reported that "a considerable number of the participants had low morale as they perceived their role in curriculum change as marginal, inferior and passive". This similar feeling of dissatisfaction was also reported by teachers in Ho's study when they defined "their role and functions as being limited to the area of curriculum implementation" (2010, p. 619). In a similar way, Mullik reiterated that participants' statements about their participation in curriculum development "show a sense of imprisonment as teachers experience subordination through an imposed assimilation policy" (2013, p. 44).

The feeling of teachers' dissatisfaction with their participation exceeds assessment and curriculum development to involve their participation in professional development activities. In this study, the findings show that teachers are not satisfied with their participation in the different aspects of professional development. Teachers' wishes to be more involved in designing policies is congruent with the findings of Alutto and Belasco (1972) who claimed that decisionaly deprived persons long for more participation. Moreover, teachers' desires to act in a more collaborative and professional environment reflect the disparity between their actual working environment and the desired one. Teachers' participation in professional development activities falls within the category of decisional deprivation (Alutto and Belasco, 1972), a dissatisfactory condition similar to

their feelings towards their participation in assessment and curriculum development activities. As with their participation in assessment and curriculum development activities, their actual participation in professional development activities reaches neither the state of equilibrium nor that of saturation. This state of decisional deprivation was also experienced by other teachers in other studies (Lau, 2004; Cheng, 2008; and Ho, 2010). The findings of the study show that teachers were excluded from deciding about professional development policies and activities. The findings also reveal the absence of a professional environment. The existing environment lacks the essential tools within which teachers can develop professionally. Teachers reported the absence of group studies, discussion groups, teacher networks, book clubs and collaborative action research. In addition, the findings also show that the financial and administrative support to teachers was very selective and unsystematic. Moreover, teachers' wishes to be more involved in decision-making may illustrate their longing for a redistribution of power (Gray, 2013 and Ingersoll & Merrill, 2011) and the adoption of a partnership between teachers and administrators that may "promise a fusion or integration of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up strategies for education" (Kirk and MacDonald, 2001, p. 353). Active teachers' participation in decision-making may empower teachers, increase the scope of democratic participation and provide them with a community of camaraderie, professionalism and stress-free environments (Picower, 2015). In such democratic environments, teachers may have central roles and can be active, effective and professional (Picower, 2015).

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented and discussed the findings of my study and tried to answer the research questions. I used tables and quotations to support the interpretation of the findings. I discussed teachers' participation in assessment, curriculum development and professional development activities. I also discussed teachers' satisfaction with their participation in decision-making. The analysis and discussion of the findings of this study were compared with the findings in other studies about teachers' participation in decision-making. The participants in this study experienced the state of decisional deprivation, which other teachers have previously experienced in other studies. Comparing the findings of this study with the findings of previous studies enabled me to position this research in the large discursive literature about teachers' participation in decision-making. In the final chapter, I

will discuss the implications and recommendations for future research about teachers' participation in decision-making. Finally, I will end the thesis with some personal reflections on my experiences through the thesis.

Chapter Six

Implications and Conclusions

In this final chapter, I will briefly summarise in section 6.1 the findings of the study. Based on the findings of the study, section 6.2 presents a discussion of implications and recommendations. Following this, I will highlight, in section 6.3, how this study contributes to the existing knowledge. Section 6.4 will consist of suggestions for future research. Finally, I will end my chapter with personal reflections on my research experience.

6.1 Summary of the findings of the research question

6.1.1 What do English language teachers think about their participation in assessment activities?

The findings of the study show that the majority of English teachers in the foundation program in my institute have no active participation in the assessment activities. Most teachers reported their exclusion from deciding about weekly and exit tests and acknowledged that their participation is restricted to invigilation during the administration of these tests. They also highlighted their exclusion from systematic analysis of test items and results. Moreover, some teachers expressed concerns about decisions to promote some students without consulting teachers. The fact that only a small group of teachers are selected to contribute to test design may reflect the selective practice of the institute, which grants greater authority to some teachers and allows them more involvement. Although the gathered data did not offer explanations for the criteria of selecting some teachers to grant them greater authority, the results of the study indicate that this selective practice is a fact. The adoption of a top-down approach to assessment and the limited participation of a selected body of teachers in the assessment activities engendered teachers' feelings of dissatisfaction with their lack of participation in decision-making.

6.1.2 What do English language teachers think about their participation in curriculum development activities?

The findings of the study indicate that teachers' participation in curriculum activities is limited to implementing the policy of decision makers. The great majority of English

language teachers think that their participation in deciding about the needs analysis, the goals and objectives, the skills to be taught, the themes and materials and the evaluation of the curriculum is very limited. The involvement of a very limited number of teachers in deciding about curriculum development is another instance of the institute's policy to restrict the role of teachers to mere implementers of the curriculum designed by experts and imposed by decision makers. The adoption of a top-down approach to curriculum development and the systematic exclusion of teachers from active participation in decision-making may be interpreted as a continuation of a policy of exclusion previously noticed in assessment activities. As a result of exclusion, most teachers expressed their dissatisfaction with their lack of participation in curriculum development activities.

6.1.3 What do English language teachers think about their participation in professional development activities?

According to the findings of the study, English language teachers have no participation in deciding about the professional development policies of the institute. The decisions about professional development events in the institute are made by decision makers without considering teachers needs and interests. Moreover, the findings show that these events, which are held in the institute, are scheduled during students' vacation to deny teachers a holiday and to merely keep them busy. Moreover, the findings also reveal the absence of a professional development environment. Teachers reported the absence of discussion groups, reflection on lessons, co-planning, book clubs, teacher networks, collaborative action research and study groups. The findings reveal the selective approach of granting support to certain teachers to attend workshops and conferences and not to others. Funding teachers' attendance to professional events and exempting them from teaching during these events is unsystematic and granted to a few teachers. The absence of a professional environment and systematic support to develop professionally urged teachers to express their dissatisfaction with their participation in professional development activities.

6.2 Implications

The limited participation of English language teachers in decision-making in my workplace may imply the necessity of reconsidering the managerial policy and the obligation of providing all teachers with the rudimentary opportunities to be more involved. The chances

of teachers' active participation in decision-making may be enhanced by providing them with a professional working environment, a systematic professional development program, the revocation of the top-down imposed policies and the adoption of a more democratic, collegial and professional approach to decision-making.

6.2.1 The need for professional environment

The findings of the study reveal teachers' dissatisfaction with their rare opportunities for participation in decision-making in their workplace and the state of decisional deprivation (Alutto and Belasco, 1972) that they are experiencing. The findings show that teachers' participation in assessment and curriculum development activities is very limited. The findings also unveil the absence of collaborative and collegial professional activities. The failure of the institute to provide teachers with a learning environment within which they can systematically discuss, co-plan, analyse test items and results, evaluate the curriculum, adapt teaching materials, decide about goals and objectives, reflect and conduct collaborative action research is a failure to respond to the rudimentary requirements of successful and effective professional development environments as discussed in the literature. Despite the failure of the institute to provide teachers with chances to develop professionally, the findings of the study show that some teachers relied on individual initiatives for personal professional development plans and activities. Teachers' individual initiatives and their wishes to be more involved in decision-making may seem a reflection of the working environment that teachers would like to have in their institute as compared to the current situation. Instead of withdrawing from the responsibility to support teachers to develop professionally, the institute should reconsider its role and consider providing teachers with the working environment they are longing for. It is a working atmosphere based on reflection (Butler et al., 2004; Burton, 2009; DeMulder and Rigsby, 2003; Dessimone, 2011; Tam, 2015; and Harris & Antony, 2001), discussion (Wood ,2007; Stodolsky et al., 2006; Breen, 2007; Tam, 2015; Dessimone, 2011; and Harris & Antony , 2001), planning (Harris and Antony, 2001) and collaborative action research (Wood, 2007; Burns, 1995; Glatthorn, 1987; and Tam, 2015). Teachers' dissatisfaction with their actual working environment and their wishes for more involvement in professional development activities may imply their longing for a professional setting similar to Professional Development Schools (Burbank &Kauchak, 2003 and Yendol-Silva & Dana, 2004),

150

Professional Learning Communities (Stoll and Lewis, 2007; Du Four, 2004; Green and Allen, 2015; and Tam, 2015), Professional School Cultures (Stodolsky et al., 2006), Teacher Learning Communities (Wood, 2007), Collaborative Institutional Models (Burns, 1995), and Communities of Practice (Butler et al., 2004). Providing teachers with a collaborative environment may imply founding a new but more conducive culture of professional development, enhancing collegial relationships among teachers, raising topics for investigation and divorcing the individualised and isolationist approach to professional development currently prevailing in the institute.

6.2.2 The need for systematic participation

The findings of the study show that teachers' participation in the different professional development activities is not systematic. Teachers reported that their participation in analysing test items and results is based on personal initiatives rather than on institutional and systematic policy. Moreover, teachers' participation in designing weekly and exit tests is not systematic as this involvement is granted to a limited number of teachers by decision makers. Furthermore, the findings of the study indicate that teachers' participation in study groups, group discussions, reflections and co-planning is not systematic and occur spontaneously without prior planning. The professional development days are reported to be planned and imposed without consulting teachers and enquiring about their needs and interests. In addition, teachers complained about the lack of financial and administrative support to attend conferences and workshops as only a minority of teachers benefit from financial and administrative support. Teachers' dissatisfaction with the lack of systematic participation in decision-making urged some of them to act individually and rely on personal initiatives to develop professionally. The adoption of an individualistic approach to professional development may not help to establish cultures of collegiality and collaboration advocated by Hargreaves (2000), Breen (2007), Day (1999 and Hargreaves and Fullan (1992). The prevailing unsystematic and ad hoc participation in decision-making in this study is in sharp contrast with the notions of sustained, intensive and ongoing professional development (Stodolsky et al., 2006). In this study, teachers' dissatisfaction with the unsystematic and ad hoc participation, their resort to individualised initiatives and their wishes for more involvement in deciding about professional development activities may imply their desire for pre-planned, sustained, intensive and systematic professional

development activities. Providing teachers with sustained and systematic professional development may be warranted in a professional environment within which a balance of power between top-down and bottom-up approaches to decision-making is adopted, as discussed in the next section.

6.2.3 The need for partnership

Kirk and MacDonald (2001, p. 353) propose the notion of partnership that promises "a fusion or integration of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' strategies for reform in education." The call for an equilibrium in decision-making between decision makers and teachers stems from the findings of this study that illuminate the decisional deprivation (Alutto and Belasco, 1972) that teachers are experiencing. The findings of this study show that teachers are mere implementers of the top-down imposed decisions. They are excluded from deciding about assessment, curriculum and professional development policies. The partial involvement of some writing skill teachers in proposing potential test items still masks the fact that the real decision of incorporating these suggestions in the exit tests are still in the hands of decision makers. Moreover, providing feedback about the curriculum does not automatically mean, as highlighted by some interviewees, that teachers' feedback will be considered by decision makers. Furthermore, decisions about the events of professional days are made by an appointed committee without considering teachers' needs and interests. The drawbacks of top-down imposed approaches as discussed by Evetts, (2012), Hargreaves, (2000), Day (1999) and Hargreaves and Fullan, (1992) generated feelings of dissatisfaction among the participants in the study. Teachers' wishes to be more involved in decision-making are a call for a decisional equilibrium (Alutto and Belasco, 1972) between teachers' actual and desired participation. Teachers' active participation in decision-making may have an impact on their job satisfaction and morale (Ho, 2010). It may also contribute to increasing their commitment to their workplace and free them from deprivation by giving them voice (Lin, 2014). Moreover, teachers' active participation in decision-making may satisfy their self-esteem (Cheng, 2008). Teachers' active participation and the status of decisional equilibrium cannot be achieved in the presence of an imbalanced power relationship between teachers and decision makers. Providing teachers with an environment within which they feel satisfied with their participation in decision-making necessitates a new distribution of power between teachers and decision makers (Ingersoll and Merrill,

2011; Picower, 2015; and Gray, 2013). Empowering teachers and adopting a supportive attitude towards them (Davis and Wilson, 2000; Bogler and Somech, 2004; and Edwards, et al., 2002) requires help if not concessions on the part of principals. Teachers' active participation in decision-making also necessitates an environment, within which they do not only feel that their voices are heard but also considered and acted upon.

6.3 Contributions to existing knowledge.

The present study has contributed to the existing literature on teachers' participation in decision-making in two ways. First, it adds to the existing research about teachers' participation in the different areas of professional development in the Gulf area. It adds to the existing research on teachers' participation in assessment (Troudi et al., 2009; Dammak, 2017), curriculum activities (Troudi and Alwan, 2010; Mullick, 2013; and Al Kaabi et al., 2013) and professional development policies and activities (Borg, 2014; Buckner et, al. 2016; Al Taneiji, 2014; and Badri et, al., 2016). Hence, the current study has built on the existing literature and tried to add to the previous studies conducted in the Gulf area about teachers' participation in decision-making. Second, the present study has attempted to explore the three most important areas of teachers' participation in decision-making in one research study: assessment, curriculum and professional development activities. Contrary to the previous studies, mentioned in the section above, which researched areas of teachers' participation in a segmented way, the present study has contributed to the existing literature by exploring teachers' participation in assessment, curriculum and professional development activities simultaneously. It has presented a thorough analysis and discussion of teachers' participation in decision-making and the reasons for their dissatisfaction.

6.4 Recommendations for future research

Reflecting on the process of conducting this research with a critical eye illuminated two main issues which can be considered in future research. First, the use of a sequential design enabled me to triangulate data and use questionnaires, the second tool of data collection, to complement the previously collected data from face-to-face interviews. Despite the statistical and quantitative data that questionnaires provided, they were unable to go beyond participants' responses and dig into their opinions to unveil what they were really thinking. Although I provided teachers with an open ended question at the end of the questionnaire to

write any comments about their participation in decision-making, their responses did not yield any new themes. One teacher wrote the following comment: "Nothing to be added. The questionnaire has covered the three areas thoroughly and definitely the answers will give a full account about each area". Many teachers (8) did not provide any answer and did not write any word while others wished more involvement in decision-making. Therefore, teachers' answers to the open-ended question were more or less repetitions of statements in the questionnaires. Instead of questionnaires, the use of focus group interviews, as a second tool of data collection, could have been more productive of qualitative data. They could have enabled me to probe, ask for clarifications and justifications for their opinions. The use of focus group interviews could have provided me with the possibility to discuss reasons for the participants' choices and gain a deeper understanding of their experiences with participation in decision-making. Second, this study explored English language teachers' participation in decision-making in a single educational institution and can be considered as a starting point to conduct research in wider settings. Future research can build on the findings of this study and explore the issue of teachers' participation in many educational settings in this area of the world. Exploring teachers' participation in several educational institutions with a bigger number of participants in the different countries of the Gulf region can be a promising project for future research that can add to the discursive literature about teachers' participation in decision-making.

6.5 Personal reflections

Before conducting the study, which intended to explore teachers' participation in decision-making in my workplace, I was worried that the participants, my colleagues, would decline to express their opinions about their participation in decision-making. Specifically, I was worried that they would not give their consent to participate in the study and consider that giving opinions about their participation in decision-making implies probing into power relationships in their workplace, an issue regarded as a taboo in this context. My worries faded away with the distribution of the information sheets and the informed consent and were clearly wrong during the conducting of interviews. Most interviewees expressed their opinions freely and found interviews a good opportunity to talk openly about their feelings and perceptions about the discrepancy between their actual and desired participation. Interviews gave me the opportunity to listen to the hidden voices of my colleague teachers.

During the conducting of interviews, I had the feeling that my questions triggered their interests, worries and hopes. Answering interview questions and responding to questionnaire statements were opportunities to make teachers' voices heard. After collecting data from both research tools, I was bewildered with the amount of the gathered data and it took me a long time to organise, interpret and compare findings for convergence or divergence. As I conclude this study, I feel that my quest to explore the issue of teachers' participation in decision-making in my workplace was fruitful. At the end of this study, I feel more informed and aware than I was at the outset of this quest.

This exploratory study has provided me with the opportunity to study the issue of teachers' participation in decision-making. It has unveiled the existence of a power struggle between top-down and bottom-up approaches to teachers' participation. After exploring this issue, this study can also be a good starting point for a critical study that questions the disequilibrium in the power relationship between stakeholders, a project that I will seriously consider in the near future and probably for my postdoctoral research.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Teachers' Job Description

Job Title: Instructor, English Language	Directorate:
Division:	Section: Academic Services

1. BASIC FUNCTION

The basic functions of 'English Language Instructor' are:

- Teaches one or more of the ATI English language courses to students in the Basic, Foundation and / or Technical programs.

- Uses a variety of resources in order to develop schemes of work and lesson plans that foster a healthy learning culture in the classroom and generate the most effective interactions with students.

2. WORK PERFORMED

Duties include, but are not limited to the following:

2.1	Prepares daily lesson plans and delivers lessons to a range of classes.
2.2	Provides a positive environment in which students are encouraged to be actively engaged in the learning process.
2.3	Selects and uses effective instructional methods and learning materials.
2.4	Takes part in producing and implementing a variety of tests and assessment tools.

2.5	Marks students' work, gives appropriate feedback and maintains records of students' progress and development.
2.6	Uploads records of students' grades on LMS (Learning Management System) and keeps backup copies of these grades.
2.7	Establishes and maintains a cooperative relationship with all students, fellow instructors, direct supervisors, and administrative personnel.
2.8	Supports students on an individual basis through academic or personal difficulties.
2.9	Manages students' behavior in the classroom and on ATI premises and applies appropriate and effective measures in cases of misbehavior.
2.10	Participates in departmental and whole-institute meetings.
2.11	Conducts regular peer observations and participates in regular in-service training as part of continuing professional development.
2.12	Organizes and participates in extracurricular activities.
2.13	Assists in assessing changing curricular needs and offers plans for improvement.
2.14	Collaborates with fellow instructors and other stakeholders in order to enhance the learning and teaching environment.
2.15	Meets professional obligations through efficient work habits such as meeting deadlines, honoring schedules, and coordinating with other colleagues.
2.16	Reports any problems, challenges, malfunctions or HSE hazards to the Senior Instructor.
2.17	Performs other professional duties as assigned by Senior Instructor as required.

3. WORK CONTACTS

3.1	Daily contacts with students, fellow instructors, and Senior Instructor.
3.2	Occasional contacts with counselors in respect of students' behavior, attitude and academic performance.

4. INDEPENDENCE OF OPERATION

4.1	Reports to the concerned Senior Instructor, English Language.

5. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1	Reviews approved Professional Development Standards of English language instructors.
5.2	Prepares an individual Professional Development plan in coordination with the concerned Senior Instructor.
5.3	Participates and takes part in professional development programs and attends local conferences, in coordination with the Senior Instructor.

6. PHYSICAL EFFORT

6.1	Minimal - 40% of working time.
6.2	Exposed to eye strain - 30% of working time when using PC.

7. WORK ENVIRONMENT

7.1	Agreeable work surroundings.

8. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

8.1	MA in TESOL or a related field.
8.2	Five years of experience in teaching English as a second language.
8.3	Advanced computer skills (especially using MS Word, PowerPoint and Excel) and familiarity with using Learning Management System (LMS) and Student Information System (SIS).
8.4	Native or near-native proficiency of the English language.

Compiled By :	Reviewed By :
Approved By :	Approved By :

Appendix 2

Strategic Objectives (2016 - 2020)

Global Center of Excellence in Training and Development for the Oil and Gas Industry

The institute will fully function as a center of excellence for training and development of UAE Nationals planned for employment in the Oil and Gas Industry.

Quality Training to Students and Employees

The institute is strongly committed to achieving its mission of providing quality training for students and employees to fully develop them as qualified process operators and technicians.

Promote Excellent Education and Training, Physical Well-Being and Exemplary Ethics

The institute will maintain its commitment to promoting excellent education and training, physical well-being and exemplary work ethics for all enrolled in any program.

Expansion of Facilities

The institute's expansion projects will increase training and development capacity at the campus in order to better optimize its training facilities and training domains.

HSE

The institute will continue to comply with HSE standards and strive to achieve an incident-free, safe and healthy environment for anyone present on the campus.

Division Manager

Implementation of Strategic Objectives (2016 - 2020)

Global Center of Excellence in Training *and Development for the* Oil *and Gas Industry*

The institute will continue its drive to become a Centre of Excellence in Oil and Gas training by:

- Developing its relationship with international organizations of similar interest.
- Continuing its relationship with international accreditation agencies to assure the quality of its technical and academic curricula.
- Providing quality professional development services to its personnel to ensure high standard of training for instructors and administrators and other employees.
- Developing an Educational Research and Assessment Centre to assess and evaluate the quality effectiveness of its educational and training services, and to share research findings with similar institutions both locally and internationally.
- Ensuring its Admin. Support operations encompassing Student Support Services, Registration, H.R and I.T. are both effective and efficient through compliance with the company's Quality Assurance parameters.

Quality Training to Students and Employees

The institute will attempt to meet the training needs of all its stakeholders by:

- Expanding the training program, to provide improved training services to new employees.
- Participating in training procedures by sharing its facilities, including the new Pilot Training Process Plants.
- Gathering information about former students by means of the Graduate Performance Feedback System (GPFS) and using live data to feedback into the enhancement of training programs.
- Extending its International Language Testing facilities, and English language Training courses, in cooperation with Cambridge University (Cambridge English Language Assessment), with a view to provide language training and testing services to the company.

Promote Excellent Education and Training, Physical Well-Being and Exemplary Ethics

The Institute is responsible for the training and education of young Emiratis in academic and technical expertise. It also strives to develop responsible and mature individuals, loyal to their nation and to their employer, and who value hard work and commitment. Students will be encouraged to be productive and responsible in the work place and to act as good citizens in the community.

Expansion of Facilities

The institute will continue its expansion programme to meet the company's demands for the recruitment of trained technicians for the oil and gas industry in the UAE.

HSE

The principles of HSE are a fundamental concern of the Company. In line with HSE policy, the institute intends to:

- Minimise Lost Time Injuries to staff and students, with a target benchmark of zero LTls.
- Promote the physical and mental well-being of students and staff by encouraging participation in physical activity, using the new sports and fitness facilities at the Institute.

- To promote an awareness of environmental concerns among staff and students, by staging events and activities related to conservation, sustainability and environmental protection.

Appendix 3

Semi-structured Interview Schedule

Thank you for accepting to be interviewed. I am exploring what English language teachers think about their participation in decision-making. Our interview should not last more than one hour. Please feel free to ask for any clarification.

Number	Main question	Prompts
1.	Can you tell me about yourself as an English language teacher?	Tell me about your: - Experience - Qualifications. - Current job
Teacher participation This question is about your participation in decision-making in general		
2	Can you tell me about your participation in decision-making in your workplace?	
Interviewee's participation in assessment The following questions are about your participation in assessment activities in your institute.		
3	Can you inform me about your participation in the assessment process in your workplace?	
4	Tell me about your participation in the weekly tests?	Tell me more about: - Designing tests - Implementing tests - Analysis of test items - Analysis of results
5	Can you describe your participation in the exit tests?	Tell me more about: - Designing tests - Implementing tests - Analysis of test items - Analysis of results
6	What do you think of your participation in assessment activities?	
7	What would you like your role to be in assessment?	

Interviewee's participation in curriculum development

The following questions are about your participation in curriculum development activities in your institute.

8	Can you describe your participation in the needs analysis?	
9	Can you tell me about your participation in deciding about goals and objectives of the curriculum?	What is your role in evaluating the curriculum?
10	Tell me about your role in choosing and adapting materials and activities	Tell me more about your role in deciding the skills to be taught.
11	How do you feel about your participation in curriculum development?	Tell me about the reaction to your feedback
12	What would you like your role to be in curriculum development?	

Interviewee's participation in professional development activities

The following questions are about your participation in professional development activities in your institute.

13	Can you inform me about your participation in professional development activities?	Tell me about your participation in: - Co-teaching, mentoring, teacher networks, - study groups, book club, group discussion, - reflecting on lessons, co-planning
14	Do you participate in professional dialogue and collaborative action research?	
15	Can you tell me about your participation in workshops and conferences	Tell me about the role of the institute in these activities: funding, transportation, flexibility of teaching schedule
16	How do you feel about your participation in professional development activities?	
17	What would you like your role to be in professional development activities?	
18	Do you have anything to add about your participation in decision-making?	

Thank you very much for your time. I will transcribe the interview and give you a copy of the transcription to check that it corresponds to what you intended to say.

Appendix 4

Questionnaire

Dear colleagues

I kindly request you to help me by answering the following questions concerning teachers' perceptions about their participation in decision-making. This questionnaire is conducted for the purpose of research as part of my doctoral studies at the University of Exeter. This is not a test so there are no "right" or "wrong" answers and you don't even have to write your name. The outcome of this questionnaire will be used for research purposes. I am interested in your personal opinion. Please give your answers sincerely as only this will guarantee the success of the investigation. I will collect the questionnaires next week. In case you need any help, you can contact me at: damarazak66@gmail.com; Tel: 0551611205

Thank you very much in anticipation.

Section 1: Demographic Information.

Please, put (X) where you think appropriate

1. What is your highest qualification?

DIPLOMA	B.A	M.A	PHD	OTHER

2. How many years have you been teaching?

1 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	11-15 years	16 to 20 years	More than 20 years

3. What skill do you teach?

reading	writing

4. I teach...

Basic	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	No answer

5. I am a...

Teacher	Focal teacher

Teachers' participation in decision-making

In sections 2-5, please indicate the extent of your agreement with each item by ticking the box that most indicates your opinion.

Section 2: my participation in the weekly tests

Key:

1=strongly agree   2=agree   3= no opinion   4=disagree   5=   strongly disagree

item		1	2	3	4	5
6	I am given the responsibility to design weekly tests.					
7	I am given the chance to participate in designing weekly tests.					
8	I decide about the place where I invigilate.					
9	I am involved in the process of analysing weekly test items.					
10	I am satisfied with my participation in analysing weekly test items.					
11	I am involved in the process of analysing weekly test results.					
12	I am satisfied with my participation in analysing weekly test results.					
13	I am satisfied with my participation in designing weekly tests.					
14	I have control over the invigilation schedule.					
15	I make decisions about the implementation of weekly tests.					
16	I would like to be more involved in deciding about the weekly tests.					
17	I would like to be fully involved in deciding about weekly tests.					

Section 3: my participation in the exit tests

Key:

1=strongly agree   2=agree   3= no opinion   4=disagree   5=   strongly disagree

item		1	2	3	4	5
18	I am given the responsibility to design exit tests.					
19	I am given the chance to participate in designing the exit tests.					
20	I decide about the place where I invigilate.					
21	I am involved in the process of analysing exit test items.					
22	I am satisfied with my participation in analysing exit test items.					
23	I am involved in the process of analysing exit test results.					
24	I am satisfied with my participation in analysing exit test results.					
25	I am satisfied with my participation in designing exit tests.					
26	I have control over the invigilation schedule.					
27	I make decisions about the implementation of exit tests.					
28	I would like to be more involved in deciding about the exit tests.					
29	I would like to be fully involved in deciding about exit tests.					

Section 4: my participation in curriculum development

Key:

1=strongly agree   2=agree   3= no opinion   4=disagree   5=   strongly disagree

item		1	2	3	4	5
30	I make decisions about					

	curriculum.					
31	I participate in the needs analysis for curriculum development.					
32	I choose the skills I teach.					
33	I am involved in deciding about the goals and objectives of the curriculum.					
34	I am involved in deciding about the themes to be taught.					
35	I am involved in choosing and adapting teaching materials.					
36	I have the freedom to make decisions on what is taught.					
37	I am involved in deciding about the skills to be taught.					
38	I am asked to provide feedback about the curriculum.					
39	My feedback is considered by decision makers.					
40	Decision makers use my feedback about curriculum to introduce changes.					
41	Decision makers ask for my feedback.					
42	Decision makers take my feedback into consideration.					
43	My advice is sought by decision makers.					
44	I feel that I have no participation in deciding about the curriculum.					
45	I feel that I have a limited participation in deciding about the curriculum.					
46	I feel that I have a major participation in deciding about the curriculum.					
47	I am satisfied with my participation in deciding about the curriculum.					
48	I would like be more involved in deciding about the curriculum.					
49	I would like to be fully involved in deciding about the curriculum.					

Section 5: my participation in professional development activities

Key:

1=strongly agree   2=agree   3= no opinion   4=disagree   5=   strongly disagree

item		1	2	3	4	5
50	I am involved in deciding about the professional development activities in my workplace.					
51	Decision makers should encourage co-teaching.					
52	We should have a teacher network in my workplace.					
53	I am given the support to develop professionally.					
54	We should have study groups in my workplace.					
55	We should have a book club in my workplace.					
56	As an experienced teacher, I should be involved in mentoring new teachers.					
57	I am involved in the systematic and organised group discussions in my workplace.					
58	I am involved in the systematic and organised reflection sessions on lessons in my workplace.					
59	I am involved in co-planning in my workplace.					
60	I am involved in conducting collaborative action research in my workplace.					
61	I am involved in professional dialogue in my workplace.					
62	I participate in workshops and conferences under the sponsorship of the institute.					
63	The institute pays for conference fees.					
64	The institute pays for transportation fees.					
65	The institute encourages me to participate by exempting me from teaching during workshop and conference days.					
66	I am satisfied with the professional development activities in my workplace.					
67	I think that I function in a professional environment.					
68	I am involved in deciding					

	about the themes and procedures of the professional development days in the institute.					
69	I think that the institute should be more supportive to teachers.					
70	I would like to be more involved in deciding about the professional development activities in my workplace.					
71	I would like to be fully involved in deciding about professional development activities.					

Section 6 : Participation in decision-making: further thoughts

This questionnaire has asked for your views on participation in three major areas of a teacher's work: assessment, curriculum development and professional development activities. Please add anything here about these or other aspects of decision-making in your workplace

----

Thank you very much for devoting time to answer this questionnaire. I will provide you with a brief summary of the findings if you are interested.

Appendix 5: relationship between interview themes and questionnaires

Section 2: Teachers' Participation in weekly tests

Interview themes→ Questionnaire statements ↓		Participation in designing	Participation in implementation	Participation in analysis	satisfaction	wishes
6	I am given the responsibility to design weekly tests.	√				
7	I am given the chance to participate in designing weekly tests.	√				
8	I decide about the place where I invigilate.		√			
9	I am involved in the process of analysing weekly test items.			√		
10	I am satisfied with my participation in analysing weekly test items.			√	√	
11	I am involved in the process of analysing weekly test results.			√		
12	I am satisfied with my participation in analysing weekly test results.			√	√	
13	I am satisfied with my participation in designing weekly tests.	√			√	
14	I have control over the invigilation schedule		√			
15	I make	√	√			

	decisions about the implementation of weekly tests.				
16	I would like to be more involved in deciding about the weekly tests.				√
17	I would like to be fully involved in deciding about weekly tests				√

Section 3: teachers' participation in the exit tests

Interview themes → / Questionnaire statements ↓		Participation in designing	Participation in implementation	Participation in analysis	satisfaction	wishes
18	I am given the responsibility to design exit tests.	√				
19	I am given the chance to participate in designing the exit tests.	√				
20	I decide about the place where I invigilate.		√			
21	I am involved in the process of analysing exit test items.			√		
22	I am satisfied with my participation in analysing exit test items.			√	√	
23	I am involved in the process of analysing exit test results.			√		
24	I am satisfied with my participation in analysing exit test results.			√	√	
25	I am satisfied	√			√	

	with my participation in designing exit tests.					
26	I have control over the invigilation schedule.		√			
27	I make decisions about the implementation of exit tests.		√			
28	I would like to be more involved in deciding about the exit tests.					√
29	I would like to be totally/ fully involved in deciding about exit tests					√

Section 4: teachers' participation in curriculum development

Interview themes → Questionnaire statements ↓		Participation in deciding		Participation in feedback	satisfaction	wishes
30	I make decisions about curriculum	√				
31	I participate in the needs analysis for curriculum development.	√				
32	I choose the skills I teach	√				
33	I am involved in deciding about the goals and objectives of the curriculum	√				
34	I am involved in deciding about the themes to be taught.	√				
35	I am involved in choosing and adapting teaching materials	√				
36	I have the freedom to make decisions on what is taught	√				
37	I am involved in deciding about the	√				

		Participation in deciding	Participation in activities	support	satisfaction	wishes
	skills to be taught					
38	I am asked to provide feedback about the curriculum			√		
39	My feedback is considered by decision makers.			√		
40	Decision makers use my feedback about curriculum to introduce changes.			√		
41	Decision makers ask for my feedback.			√		
42	Decision makers take my feedback into consideration.			√		
43	My advice is sought by decision makers.			√		
44	I feel that I have no participation in deciding about the curriculum.	√			√	
45	I feel that I have a limited participation in deciding about the curriculum.	√			√	
46	I feel that I have a major participation in deciding about the curriculum.	√			√	
47	I am satisfied with my participation in deciding about the curriculum.	√			√	
48	I would like be more involved in deciding about the curriculum.					√
49	I would like to be fully involved in deciding about the curriculum.					√

Section 5: teachers' participation in professional development

Interview themes → Questionnaire statements ↓	Participation in deciding	Participation in activities	support	satisfaction	wishes
50	I am involved in	√				

188

	deciding about the professional development activities in my workplace.				
51	Decision makers should encourage co-teaching.				√
52	We should have a teacher network in my workplace.				√
53	I am given the support to develop professionally.			√	
54	We should have study groups in my workplace.				√
55	We should have a book club in my workplace.				√
56	As an experienced teacher, I should be involved in mentoring new teachers.				√
57	I am involved in the systematic and organised group discussions in my workplace.		√		
58	I am involved in the systematic and organised reflection sessions on lessons in my workplace.		√		
59	I am involved in co-planning in my workplace.		√		
60	I am involved in conducting collaborative action research in my workplace.		√		
61	I am involved in professional dialogue in my workplace.		√		
62	I participate in		√		

	workshop and conferences under the sponsorship of the institute.					
63	The institute pays for conference fees.			√		
64	The institute pays for transportation fees.			√		
65	The institute encourages me to participate by exempting me from teaching during workshop and conference days.			√		
66	I am satisfied with the professional development activities in my workplace.				√	
67	I function in a professional environment.				√	
68	I am involved in deciding about the themes and procedures of the professional development days in the institute.	√				
69	I think that the institute should be more supportive to teachers.				√	
70	I would like to be more involved in deciding about the professional development activities in my workplace.					√
71	I would like to be fully involved in deciding about professional development activities.					√

Appendix 6

Information sheet for research

Title of Research Project

Exploring English Language Teachers' Perceptions of their Participation in Decision-Making on Assessment, Curriculum Development and Professional Development Activities.

Dear Teacher,

I am currently conducting a research study as part of my EdD thesis with the University of Exeter. I am inviting you to take part in this research. Before giving your consent to participate, it is important that you understand the nature of your participation.

The aim of this research is to explore what English language teachers in the foundation programme think about their participation in decision-making. The research will involve English language teachers in the foundation programme.

I would like you to take part in this research either by completing a short questionnaire or by being interviewed. The questionnaires will be short and it will not take you more than thirty minutes to complete. I am planning to conduct interviews with a number of teachers and would like you to agree to an interview if possible. The interview will not last more than one hour and will take place at a time and venue convenient to you. It will be audio-recorded and transcribed. If you wish, a copy of the transcribed interview can be provided for reading, commenting and amending.

Anonymity and confidentiality of participants will be assured as you will be given pseudonyms and your true identity will not be disclosed. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. If you decide to participate, I will provide you with a consent form.

I confirm that I have read and understood the content of this information sheet.

Signature:... 　　　　　Date: ..../..../.......

Thank you very much for taking part in this study.

Abderrazak Dammak

EdD researcher

University of Exeter.

Appendix 7

Consent form for research

Title of Research Project

Exploring English Language Teachers' Perceptions of their Participation in Decision-Making on Assessment, Curriculum Development and Professional Development Activities.

Consent

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

I understand that:

- there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may withdraw at any stage;

- I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me;

- any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications or academic conference or seminar presentations;

- If applicable, the information, which I give, may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project in an anonymised form;

- all information I give will be treated as confidential; the researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

(Signature of participant):………………. 	(Date):………………

(Printed name of participant):……………………..

(Printed name of researcher):……………….. 	(Signature of researcher):…………….

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s).

Contact phone number of researcher:

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

Dr. Susan Riley

Lecturer: EdD and PhD TESOL

Graduate School of Education

University of Exeter

Email: s.m.riley@exeter.ac.uk

Appendix 8

CONSENT FORM FOR A RESEARCH STUDY

Dear Sir,

        I am conducting a study about teachers' participation in curriculum development, assessment, and professional development activities at the Institute. I would very much like to work with English language teachers in the foundation programme to investigate their participation in decision-making. This study is a private research I am conducting in pursuit of an EdD Degree with Exeter University.

Background Information:

The purpose of the research study is to explore what English language teachers think about their participation in decision-making at the Institute, which could inform the English language teaching department and future plans and activities.

Procedures:

- Semi-Structured interviews: participants will take part in an interview which will be audio-recorded

- Questionnaires: participants will be asked to answer questions.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

The participation in this study is strictly voluntary. The decision of the teachers whether or not to participate will not affect their current or future relations with their institute or the people carrying out the research.

Confidentiality:

For educational purposes, the administration will have access to the results of this study. However, in any sort of report I publish, I will not include information that will make it possible to identify the participants or the institute.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have questions, you may contact me at 0551611205, or email me at damarazak66@gmail.com

Statement of Consent:

As the Manager of the Institute, I grant my permission for the researcher named above to conduct this research study. I fully understand that the data will be kept completely confidential, and will be used only for the purposes of the research study.

        Manager's name and signature   Date

Thank you for your cooperation.

Abderrazak Dammak.

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

St Luke's Campus

Heavitree Road

Exeter UK EX1 2LU

http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/education/

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Title of Project: Exploring English Language Teachers' Perceptions of their Participation in Decision-Making on Assessment, Curriculum Development and Professional Development Activities
Researcher(s) name: Abderrazak Dammak

Supervisor(s): Susan Riley

This project has been approved for the period

From: 26/04/2016   To: 30/12/2016

Ethics Committee approval reference:

D/15/16/44

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(Dr Philip Durrant, Chair, Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee)

Appendix 10

Interview Analysis

	T 1 Antony	T 2 Victor	T 3 Charles	T 4 Edward	T 5 Andy	T 6 George	Themes
Experience	+30	7	18	20	20	20	
Qualifications.	Phd; MA TESOL	MA educ CELTA	MA	MA	MA	MA	
Current job	English language teacher	English language INSTRUCTOR	English language teacher	English language instructor	English language instructor	English language teacher	
Participation in assessment							
participation in the assessment process	No participation in exam setting Correction	Creating some assessment Some computer based testing Invigilate	No decision about the kind, weight, value-centrally decided-directives of coordinators and administration- if I write I should abide by the set criteria	Assessing students on a weekly basis	Tests already prepared. Not creating my own assessment	Computer based. We were asked for input (by admin)and they choose what they like	LIMITED PARTICIPATION
participation in the weekly tests	just Invigilating	Identifying standards and designing computerised tests	No- from the coordinator	Computerized based. No participation in designing. Already been prepared.	invigilator	Autonomy in terms of assigning quizzes, number , content..	LIMITED PARTICIPATION
Designing tests	I don't participate	Designing computerized tests. Creating question banks.	We don't know, no contribution. It comes from coordinators	No participation. Computerized. It has already been prepared.	No participation: tests already prepared	Yes but based on the content	LIMITED PARTICIPATION
Implementing tests	Just Invigilating	-no information	Administering. Directed by coordinators	No information	invigilation	No clear answer: implementing computer based	ROLE RESTRICTED TO INVIGILATION
Analysis of test items	I don't contribute	I don't do very much of that: classroom level	show students' performance per item	No participation. automatically graded. Instructors don't have the chance to to analyse	Don't have time to statistical analysis	PERSONAL INITIATIVES	
Analysis of results	I have no idea	Personal: in my classroom	No information	No chance to analyse	Showing students their results	Don't have time to statistical analysis	TOP-DOWN Personal initiatives
participation in the exit tests	Very minimum and may be does not exist.	I have no input into that role	I've never been asked to write an exit test	No participation because already set by testing center	No participation in the design	Yes the admin asks us to design , they form a bank of questions and they pull from (they have multiple possibilities to avoid leakage)	LIMITED PARTICIPATION
Designing tests	No designing or development	No input: administrative decision to control tests	I've never been asked to write an exit test	No participation: testing is the responsibility of the testing center.	No participation in designing	Yes the admin asks us to design ,	EXCLUSION FROM DESIGNING
Implementing tests	Just invigilation	No information	Invigilator	No information	Invigilating	No information	Limited participation
Analysis of test items	No information	Not at all	That's not something I do.	No chance to analyse	Important but not done	Done by coordinators	Limited participation +TOP-DOWN
Analysis of results	I don't see results	Not at all	No- no access to results	No chance to analyse	Important but not done.	Done by coordinators	
What do you think of your participation in assessment activities?	Minimum -Feeling of being sidelined Not considered -I can contribute more validity -No direct contact with the persons designing exit tests	Some success discussing with lower level coordinators -very little on higher strategic point	I have no authority or saying	Mainly assessing students. Responsibility of testing center	Outside exams in the classroom - exams are prefabricated for us	I feel a lot of freedom so I've been quite happy	dissatisfaction with participation
wishes	More contribution	-Having input in the exit test -would like to see Standardizing computerized tests	There should be systematic test design team rather than adhoc measures- team in touch with classroom teachers- updating tests	A chance to decide about promoting students	More involved because assessment can be instructive. Have more continuous feedback	Like to continue designing tests	MORE INVOLVEMENT
Curriculum development							
participation in the needs analysis	No needs analysis but curriculum mapping	Very limited to nil	I don't participate in the needs analysis	No information	No information	No participation. decided by team leader and he created	LIMITED PARTICIPATION

							everything according to standards	
participation in deciding about goals and objectives of the curriculum	No decision Designed at a top level	No input. already set many years ago	No . imposed top down. We don't go beyond the instructional criteria. Nobody sets the objectives except for coordinators and decision makers.	The work of the team: sharing ideas	-Predesigned -handed to us -Working on a personal project	There in terms of standards. I can make suggestions. goals decided by admin	TOP-DOWN
evaluating the curriculum	No role at evaluating curriculum	Limited to one level -not coherent or holistic	Participate but after directives from coordinator	We participate in assessing the curriculum	Not a lot of feedback	Make suggestions , have some influence but minor.	LIMITED participation
role in choosing and adapting materials and activities	Minimum Selected by supervisors and team leaders	Very limited Adapting some articles and altering language- more educational videos	Any contribution should conform to the objectives and be related to the theme taught. We are contributing with supplementary materials	Again as a team: participated in preparing materials -omitting and adapting topics	In the standard truck, very little say. Predesigned. I've been given a leeway to choose materials.	Units are thematic. Able to develop within a particular theme but the themes are already set out for us	
role in deciding the skills to be taught.	-No decisions They come as a result of the taught syllabus -Top down decision	No, I have no role . basically set	Imposed: every teacher is assigned to teach a definite skill	I don't choose. A matter of selecting instructors	Very limited and according to the textbook	Look at what the students need and be able to do by the end of the level	TOP-DOWN Limited participation
Feeling about participation in curriculum development	-NO PARTICIPATION -A team to develop the curriculum -Teachers Just implementers	-Frustrated for the most part - seeing a holistic approach - lack of overall wide vision	We don't have time to do enough. There should be a special curriculum development team with mitigated schedule	Positive: contribute to curriculum development	Limited so far because everything was predesigned No collective work Individual project	I think it's good. Feel limited in terms of the units the themes that are already set out. No influence over that	DISSATISFACTION
the reaction to feedback	They may listen but not implemented	Very limited to low level (positive)- higher level (no ability)	Coordinators gave me the book to look at.	We participate in assessing the curriculum.	Not a lot of feedback. Not a lot of reaction to the feedback we have given Coordinators are supporting me	They listen but don't react because they don't have people to do the changes	:LIMITED TO LISTENING TO FEEDBACK
wishes	More participation	Have some input.- giving feedback and help making changes	I really love to take part – would like to have little administrative flexibility , stronger communication	Prefer to be working in a team	Get involved	Continue in the revising process but difficult with full load schedule. Very busy teaching, marking…	More involvement
Professional development								
participation in professional development activities	Not systematic or organized by the institute -own PD and self based PD week: teachers are kept to be denied a vacation	Limited to understanding a standardized test(PET).- dramatically slow. – institutionalized tendency not to push	-	Doing some research , PD sessions	Trying to be active. Not as active as before joining nostalgia	Personal initiatives	Personal initiative+ nostalgia (Nostalgia t2. Nostalgia T5) unsystematic	
Co-teaching	Don't exist	Zero capability for co-teaching	No co-teaching going on nostalgia	NO. just attending others' classes.	No opportunity	No. never done it	Nostalgia/t2 Nostalgia T 3	Unsystematic Individualised Not institutional
mentoring,	No but on friendly basis Not institutional	Been mentored by others	I am not doing mentoring	No information	No information	Observation more than mentoring		
teacher networks,	That does not exist		Done on individual level Not systematic	On line membership	No opportunity for that	No but teachers are involved in tesol		
study groups	Don't exist	Don't exist(lack of funding, interest, time space)	We don't have this. It's not systematic.	No information	No information	study groups? Occasionally	Nostalgia T2	

book club	Don't exist	Don't exist (lack of funding, interest, time space)	We wish we had a wall paper or magazine	No information	Trying to have one	No book club		
group discussion	Don't exist	Do not exist nostalgia	NOT SYSTEMATIC	While reflecting on lessons	No information	Sometimes spontaneously	Not systematic	
reflecting on lessons	Don't exist	Within teams	Individual- not group reflection	Reflecting on lessons	Keeping my own journal	spontaneous		-Individualised -unsystematic
co-planning	Don't exist	Does not really happen	No co-planning	No information	I don't	No information		
participation in collaborative action research	-yes at personal level but not at institutional level. No research team at institute	never	No collaborative No encouragement	. No collaborative research. individual	Difficult to coordinate with others. So independent , my initiative	No collaborative research. Individual in the classroom.		
professional dialogue	Antony: At personal level	Rare (this interview is an instance)	No information	Spontaneous professional dialogue	No information	No information		
participation in workshops and conferences	I haven't seen teachers going fr workshops or seminars	Yes. Don't meet my needs	Personal	Restricted to Tesol and in house PD	Attend some	Yes personal		Not institutional individual
Support: funding	No funding	The institute offered reimbursement.	Not systematic	Not active as we aspire	I paid of my own pocket	Stand on my own pocket	support	
Support: transportation	personal	The institute provided travel	No information	There is transportation	No information	None, never		
Support: flexibility of teaching schedule	No information	No information	No information	There is flexibility of teaching	Given the day	Yes because I mentioned the name of the institute		
feeling about participation in professional development activities	Personal level satisfied Institutional level: not policy for expats	extremely bitter and dissatisfied	Not doing much-wishing more support	Not excellent but fair	Great, I'd like to say .PD activities are essential	Like to do more Nost algia T6	dissatisfaction More involvement	
wishes	Good participation in setting the policy based on teachers reflections More participation in PDs	As a participant I'll rather be the one learning some things.	I would like to build a new culture.- learn and share. More involved in organizing PD Nostalgia T3 Charles: I would like to share my experience and to learn from my colleagues.	Given the opportunity to participate -more support the institute [should] provide accommodation [to] facilitate things to me so that I can join such professional development sessions.	Like to do more PDs. Get more involved	Like to do more. Should be your own advocate		
anything to add about participation in decision-making	Teachers should be listened to: syllabus , curriculum, assessment	Miniscule role in decision-making	Have professional decision makers.- open communication.- building new culture of learning from mistakes.- decision makers from the educational field- avoid top down decision-making. More systematic organized work	My role is limited to assessing sts. More say on promoting sts. More financial support from institute	Very limited role in decision-making Support when there is initiative	They give you autonomy in terms of local level but promoting sts is a problem: get more involved in deciding about promoting students. There should be more quality control so if I could do anything that affect decision-making: let's look at the grades and let them speak for themselves	Limited role and participation More involvement nostalgia	
Participation in decision-making	Top-down Low level: at teacher level	Very limited to lower level: coordinators do listen	Indirect participation: channelled top down	Restricted to my team. No chance in broader sense	Limited participation. Adapt decisions made by others. Smaller scale in classroom.	Autonomy in terms of assigning quizzes, number, content...	Top-down approach	

Appendix 11

Questionnaire analysis

A- Assessment

WEEKLY TESTS

Participation in implementing weekly tests

STATEMENT	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
I decide about the place where I invigilate.	0	1(5%)	1(5%)	4(18%)	16(73%)
	5%			91%	
I have control over the invigilation schedule	0	1(5%)	1(5%)	1(5%)	19(86%)
	1(5%)			90.86%	
I make decisions about the implementation of weekly tests.	2(9%)	4(18%)	3(14%)	6(27%)	7(32%)
	27%			59%	

Participation in designing weekly tests

STATEMENT	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
I am given the responsibility to design weekly tests.	5 (23%)	4(18%)		5(22%)	8(36%)
	41%			59%	
I am given the chance to participate in designing weekly tests.	8(36%)	5(23%)	1(5%)	3(14%)	5:(23%)
	59%			36%	

Participation in analysing weekly tests

STATEMENT	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
I am involved in the process of analysing weekly test items.	3(14%)	4(18%)	0%	5(23%)	(1045%)
	32%			68%	
I am involved in the process of analysing weekly test results.	4(18%)	3(14%)	0%	(727%)	9(41%)
	32%			68%	

Satisfaction with participation in weekly tests

statement	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
I am satisfied with my participation in analysing weekly test items.	2(9%)	3(14%)	1(5%)	8(36%)	8(36%)
	23%			73%	
I am satisfied with my participation in analysing weekly test results.	3(14%)	1(5%)	2(9%)	7(32%)	9(41%)
	18%			73%	
I am satisfied with my participation in designing weekly tests.	3(14%)	4(18%)	1(5%)	5(23%)	9(41%)
	32%			64%	

EXIT TESTS

Participation in designing exit tests

STATEMENT	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
I am given the responsibility to design exit tests.	2(9%)	4(18%)	0%	2(9%)	14(64%)
	(27%)			73%	
I am given the chance to participate in designing the exit tests.	3(14%)	4(18%)	0%	2(%)9	13(59%)
	32%			68%	

Participation in implementing exit tests

STATEMENT	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
I decide about the place where I invigilate.	1(5%)	0	1(5%)	2(9%)	18(82%)
	1(5%)			91%	
I have control over the invigilation schedule.	1(5%)	0	0%	2(%)9	19(86%)
	1(5%)			95.36%	
I make decisions about the implementation of exit tests.	1(5%)	0	0%	3(14%)	18(82%)
	1(5%)			95%	

Participation in analysing exit tests

STATEMENT	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4= disagree	5= strongly disagree

I am involved in the process of analysing exit test items.	2(9%)	3(14%)		2(9%)	15(68%)
	(23%)			77%	

I am involved in the process of analysing exit test results.	2(9%)	1(5%)		4(18%)	15(68%)
	14%			86%	

Satisfaction: exit tests

statement	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
I am satisfied with my participation in analysing exit test items.	0	4(18%)	0%	3(14%)	15(68%)
	18%			82%	
I am satisfied with my participation in analysing exit test results.	1(5%)	1(5%)	0%	6(27%)	14(64%)
	9%			91%	
I am satisfied with my participation in designing exit tests.	0	3(14%)	0%	5(23%)	14(64%)
	14%			86%	

Wishes: Assessment

	Key	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
Wishes: weekly tests	I would like to be more involved in deciding about the weekly tests.	16(73%)	4(18%)	9%	0	0
		91%				
	I would like to be fully involved in deciding about weekly tests	14(64%)	8(36%)		0	0
		100%				
Wishes: exit tests	I would like to be more involved in deciding about the exit tests.	10(45%)	11(50%)			1(5%)

	95%			1(5%)	
I would like to be totally/ fully involved in deciding about exit tests	9(41%)	1(5%)	1(5%)	1(5%)	1(5%)
	86%			9%	

Reading and writing teachers' participation in designing tests

	Writing skills teachers n= 10					Reading skills teachers n=9					Teaching both skills n=3
Area of participation	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	disagree	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	disagree	Strongly disagree	
participation in designing weekly tests	5 (50%)	2 (20%)	0	2 (20%)	1(10%)	1 (11%)	4 (44%)	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	2 (22%)	-
	70%			30%		55%			33%		
participation in designing exit tests	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	0	0	5 (50%)	0	2 (22%)	0	0	7 (78%)	-
	50%			50%		22%			78%		

B- Curriculum development

Participation in deciding about the curriculum

Key	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
I make decisions about curriculum	3(14%)	7(32%)	1(5%)	4(18%)	7(32%)
	45%			50%	

I participate in the needs analysis for curriculum development.	2(9%)	(732%)	2(9%)	6(27%)	5(23%)
	41%			50%	
I am involved in deciding about the goals and objectives of the curriculum	0	7(32%)	1(5%)	8(36%)	6(27%)
	32%			63%	
I choose the skills I teach	0	4(18%)	3(14%)	8(36%)	8(32%)
	18.18%			68.17%	
I am involved in deciding about the skills to be	0	3(14%)	3(14%)	6(27%)	10(45%)

taught	14%			73%	

I am involved in choosing and adapting teaching materials	1(5%)	10(45%)	1(5%)	5(23%)	5(23%)
	50%			45%	

I have the freedom to make decisions on what is taught	1(5%)	6(27%)	2(9%)	4(18%)	9(41%)
	32%			59%	

I am involved in deciding about the themes to be taught.	0	3(14%)	4(13%)	8(36%)	8(36%)
	14%			73%	

Participation in feedback

I am asked to provide feedback about the curriculum	0	11(50%)	4(18%)	4(18%)	3(14%)
	50%			32%	

My feedback is considered by decision makers.	0	7(32%)	6(27%)	7(32%)	2(9%)
	32%			41%	

Decision makers use my feedback about curriculum to introduce changes.	0	7(32%)	6(27%)	6(27%)	3(14%)
	7(32%)			40%	

Decision makers ask for my feedback.	0	10(45%)	3(14%)	6(27%)	3(14%)
	45%			40%	

Decision makers take my feedback into consideration.	0	5(23%)	9(41%)	7(32%)	1(5%)
	23%			36%	

My advice is sought by decision makers.	0	4(18%)	9(41%)	5(23%)	4(18%)
	4(18%)			40%	

Satisfaction with participation in curriculum development

I feel that I have no participation in deciding about the curriculum.	4(18%)	6(27%)	4(18%)	6(27%)	2(9%)
	45%			36%	
I feel that I have a limited participation in deciding about the curriculum.	6(27%)	10(45%)	1(5%)	4(18%)	1(5%)
	73%			23%	
I feel that I have a major participation in deciding about the curriculum.	1(5%)	3(14%)	0%	11(50%)	7(32%)
	18%			82%	
I am satisfied with my participation in deciding about the curriculum.	2(9%)	4(18%)	2(9%)	7(32%)	7(32%)
	27%			64%	

Wishes: curriculum development

I would like to be more involved in deciding about the curriculum.	10(45%)	9(41%)	2(9%)	1(5%)	0
	86%			1(5%)	
I would like to be totally/ fully involved in deciding about the curriculum.	9(41%)	8(36%)	3(14%)	1(5%)	1(5%)
	77%			9%	

C- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Participation in deciding professional policies

Key	1=strongly agree	2=agree	3= no opinion	4=disagree	5= strongly disagree
I am involved in deciding about the professional development activities in my workplace.	1(5%)	1(5%)	2(9%)	6(27%)	12(55%)
	9%			82%	
I am involved in deciding about the themes and procedures of the professional development days in the institute.	1(5%)	0	3(14%)	8(36%)	10(45%)
	1(5%)			82%	

Participation in professional development activities

I am involved in the systematic and organised group discussions in my workplace.	1(5%)	4(18%)	4(18%)	8(36%)	5(23%)
	23%			59%	
I am involved in the systematic and organised reflection sessions on lessons in my workplace.	1(5%)	3(14%)	1(5%)	11(50%)	6(27%)
	18%			77%	
I am involved in co-planning in my workplace.	1(5%)	2(9%)	2(9%)	13(59%)	4(18%)
	14%			77.18%	
I am involved in conducting collaborative action research in my workplace.	1(5%)	0	23%	10(45%)	6(27%)
	4.5%			72.72%	
I am involved in professional dialogue in my workplace.	0	7(32%)	4(18%)	5(23%)	6(27%)
	32%			50%	

Support from the institute

I am given the support to develop professionally.	0	(523%)	4(18%)	8(36%)	(523%)
	23%			59%	
I participate in workshop and conferences under the sponsorship of the institute.	2(9%)	8(36%)	1(5%)	3(14%)	8(36%)
	45%			50%	
The institute pays for conference fees.	0	1(5%)	4(18%)	4(18%)	13(59%)
	1(5%)			77%	
The institute pays for transportation fees.	0	1(5%)	4(18%)	5(23%)	12(55%)
	1(5%)			77%	

The institute encourages me to participate by exempting me from teaching during workshop and conference days.	1(5%)	5(23%)	4(18%)	4(18%)	8(36%)
	27%			55%	

Satisfaction with professional development

I am satisfied with the professional development activities in my workplace.	0	5(23%)	2(9%)	6(27%)	9(41%)
	23%			68%	
I function in a professional environment.	4(18%)	6(27%)	5(23%)	5(23%)	2(9%)
	45%			32%	
I think that the institute should be more supportive to teachers.	13(59%)	7(32%)	0%	2(9%)	0
	91%			9%	

Wishes for professional development

Decision makers should encourage co-teaching.	5(23%)	10(45%)	2(9%)	4(18%)	1(5%)
	68%			23%	
We should have a teacher network in my workplace.	10(45%)	10(45%)	1(5%)	0	1(5%)
	91%			5%	
We should have study groups in my workplace.	6(27%)	13(59%)	2(9%)	0	1(5%)
	86%			5%	
We should have a book club in my workplace.	7(32%)	10(45%)	2(9%)	1(5)	2(9%)
	77%			14%	
As an experienced teacher, I should	6(27%)	9(41%)	3(14%)	2(9%)	2(9%)

be involved in mentoring new teachers.	68%			18%	
I would like to be more involved in deciding about the professional development activities in my workplace.	12(55%)	7(32%)	2(9%)	1(5%)	0
	86%			5%	
I would like to be fully involved in deciding about professional development activities.	8(36%)	7(32%)	6(27%)	1(5%)	0
	68%			5%	

Open-ended question

Total:	No answers	Themes	Best quotation
22 questionnaires	8	-More involvement in decision-making -More freedom for teachers -Involving all staff -Unsystematic support -More support	"Nothing to be added. The questionnaire has covered the three areas thoroughly and definitely the answers will give a full account about each area".