



**Saudi EFL Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions Regarding
the Design of the Diploma of Education Programme**

Submitted By

Noura Muteb N Albadrani

To

The University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Education in
TESOL March 2018

This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

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

Signature:

Dedication

*I dedicate this thesis to my Parents, husband
and my three little angels (Jana, Lateen & Naif).*

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate how a better understanding of EFL student teachers views on the Diploma and Education programme can contribute to the evaluation of the process and indicate areas for future development. The need to learn about these two areas arises because the existing literature on teacher education in Saudi Arabia suggests that the quality of teacher education is poor and inadequate, and therefore that issues may be highlighted in this work are achieved with the view that there is an existing body of work regarding concerns about the quality of teacher education in the country. Discussing the issues related to English teaching with practising teachers also suggests that they find English teaching in Saudi classrooms very challenging. Some authors (for example, Al-Seghayer and Saud, 2014; Al-Nasser, 2015) blame the current teacher education system and the condensed-nature of the curriculum. However, no previous researchers have attempted to explore the issues pertaining to education of student teachers of English and the quality of the Diploma of Education from the student-teachers' perspective. Therefore, this study asks two research questions aiming to gain insights into understanding EFL student-teachers' perceptions of the Diploma; "*Which aspects of the Diploma of Education do the student-teachers identify as helping them to teach English in the classroom? and which ones do not?*" and "*What are the students' perceptions of the extent to which the Diploma of Education programme develops their English language proficiency?*" These two questions have been answered by collecting qualitative data from 15 student-teachers from two universities in Saudi Arabia. These research participants were interviewed to seek their opinions about the Diploma. The qualitative data was analysed using a thematic approach. This study has found that practical aspects such as teaching practice were very useful for teaching English in Saudi classroom. However, modules that inform student-teachers about the education system and overall awareness of teaching-related issues were

considered to be less useful. This study found that it was the perception of the student teachers of English that the Diploma did not contribute to a considerable extent to improving student-teachers' language proficiency. Based on the evidence, this study concludes that the Diploma programme should concentrate on modules that teach the student teachers of English how to use teaching methods to teach English effectively in actual classroom as well as teaching them language skills to improve their own language proficiency.

Acknowledgments

My first and foremost gratitude goes to Almighty Allah, for bestowing the ability and strength to complete my research throughout this four-year doctoral journey. My second gratitude goes to all those who have made this study possible. I would never have been able to finish my thesis without their help

I would like to express my great appreciation to Professor Vivienne Baumfield, my first supervisor, for her endless academic support, invaluable feedback and guidance. I'm also debt to my second supervisor, Dr. Karen Walshe, who has never been hesitant to support and guide me throughout her constructive feedback during my research journey. It has been my privilege to work with both of them.

My special gratitude is also extended to my parents who have always prayed for me, gave me all the spiritual support that I need and for their continuous encouragements. There are no words to express how much I appreciate their love and support they have given to me.

My appreciation extended to my beloved husband Saif for his endless encouragement, help and caring which empowered me whenever I faced difficulty throughout this long journey. Thanks are also due to all of my brothers, sisters, friends and colleagues.

My warmest appreciation goes to the EFL student- teachers who took part in this study, for without their participation, I would not have had the data for my study. They have been kindly co-operative and provided me with invaluable insights and perspectives.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	3
Acknowledgments	5
Table of Contents	6
List of Tables	12
List of Figures	12
List of Abbreviations	13
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction to the Study	14
1.1 Introduction	14
1.2 The Development of Interest in the Study	15
1.3 Diploma of Education Programme.....	15
1.4 Rationale of the Study	19
1.5 Significance of the Study	22
1.6 Research Aim, Objectives and Questions	22
1.7 Thesis Organisation.....	23
CHAPTER TWO: Context of the Study	25
2.1 Introduction	25
2.2 Teaching English in SA.....	25
2.3 Higher Education in SA	28
2.4 A Brief History of The Teacher Training Programme	29
2.4.1 Current Trends in EFL Teacher Preparation in Saudi Context.....	30
2.4.1.1 <i>Reforming The Education System</i>	30
2.4.1.2 <i>English Language Proficiency Testing</i>	31
2.4.1.3 <i>Textbooks</i>	31
2.4.1.4 <i>Professional Development for Teachers</i>	32
2.4.1.5 <i>Educational Technology</i>	32
2.5 The implementation of Diploma of Education programme: Efforts, Challenges and Limitations	33
2.6 Curriculum of the DoE programme	36
2.6.1 Requirements for a Diploma.....	36
CHAPTER THREE: Literature Review	39
3.1 Introduction	39
3.2 EFL Teacher Education.....	40
3.3 Approaches to Teacher Education.....	41
3.4 Necessary Characteristics for Effective EFL Teachers.....	44
3.5 Teacher Perceptions	46

3.5.1	Teacher Perceptions of Teacher Education	47
3.5.2	Perceptions on Language Skills.....	48
3.6	Pedagogical Aspects of EFL Teacher Preparation	51
3.6.1	Definition of pedagogy	52
3.6.2	English Language Teaching Methods.....	52
3.6.3	The importance of Pedagogical Awareness for English Language Teachers....	54
3.6.4	The Use of Traditional Methods	55
3.6.5	Difficulties in Applying Modern Language Teaching Methods.....	56
3.7	Teaching Practicum.....	58
3.7.1	Importance of Teaching Practice	58
3.7.2	Goals of Practicum.....	59
3.7.3	Approaches to Practicum	60
3.7.4	Challenges to Practicum	60
3.7.5	Teaching Practicum in Saudi Arabia	62
3.8	English Language Learning Materials	64
3.9	Approaches to Teacher Professional Development	66
3.9.1	Self-Reflection	66
3.9.2	Feedback	67
3.9.3	Teacher Observation	68
3.10	Summary and Research Questions.....	69
	CHAPTER FOUR: Methodology	71
4.1	Introduction	71
4.2	Interpretative Research Paradigm	71
4.3	Research Methodology.....	72
4.4	Research Methods	73
4.4.1	Semi-Structured Interviews	73
4.4.1.1	<i>Interview Location and Atmosphere</i>	75
4.4.1.2	<i>Recording Interviews</i>	75
4.4.2	Document Analysis.....	76
4.5	Participants.....	77
4.5.1	Sampling Methods	77
4.5.2	Gaining Access	78
4.6	Piloting the Study.....	79
4.7	Data Analysis	80
4.7.1	Interview Analysis	81
4.7.1.1	<i>Preparation and Organisation of Data</i>	81
4.7.1.2	<i>Stage 1: Data Preparation for Analysis</i>	81

4.7.1.3 Stage 2: Coding.....	83
4.7.1.4 Stage 3: Developing Themes.....	85
4.7.2 Interrater-Reliability	86
4.8 Research Trustworthiness – Validity and Credibility	86
4.8.1 Research Credibility	87
4.8.2 Confirmability	87
4.9. Ethical Considerations.....	87
4.10. Limitations	88
4.11. Conclusion.....	89
CHAPTER FIVE: Findings Chapter	90
1.1 Introduction	90
5.2 Finding the Key Themes	90
5.3 Emerged Themes.....	93
5.3.1 The Need to Improve English Proficiency.....	94
5.3.2 Developing English Proficiency	96
5.3.3 Inadequate Focus on Improving English Skills	97
5.3.4 Mismatch between what is Expected and what is Taught	98
5.3.5 A Major Barrier to Improving English	99
5.3.6 Most Important Modules in the Diploma.....	101
5.4 The Importance of Applicability	102
5.4.1 Applicability and Practice at all Levels of the Diploma	103
5.4.2 Focus on applicability	104
5.4.3 Barriers to Application.....	109
5.4.3.1 <i>Class Size and Classroom Management</i>	111
5.5 Suggestions for Diploma.....	112
5.5.1 Curriculum-Related Suggestions	113
5.5.1.1 <i>Teaching</i>	113
5.5.1.2 <i>Modules to be removed</i>	114
5.5.1.3 <i>Modules to add</i>	115
5.5.2 Language Skill-Related Suggestions	117
5.6 Structuring of Modules in the Diploma.....	117
5.7 General Programme Suggestions	118
5.7.1 Distribution of Students by Major	118
5.7.2 Quality of Teaching	119
5.7.3 Supervision and Guidance	119
5.8 Summary	121
5.9 Syllabus Analysis	122

5.9.1	Syllabus Analysis by Course Category	123
5.9.2	Curriculum-Related Courses.....	124
5.9.3	Teaching-Related Courses	125
5.9.4	Testing and Evaluation	125
5.9.5	Education-Related courses.....	126
5.9.6	Technology-Related Courses	127
5.9.7	Management-Related Courses	128
5.9.8	Practice-Related Courses	128
5.9.9	English Skill-Related Courses	129
5.10	Summary	130
CHAPTER SIX: Discussion		131
6.1	Introduction	131
6.2	Importance of English Language Skill Development	131
6.2.1	English Language Requirements	131
6.2.2	Importance of Language Fluency and Proficiency	132
6.2.3	Focusing on the Improvement of Language Skills	134
6.2.4	Barriers to Developing English Proficiency	136
6.2.4.1	<i>Teaching in Arabic</i>	136
6.2.4.2	<i>Inappropriate Teaching Materials</i>	138
6.2.4.3	<i>Lack of confidence</i>	139
6.3	Teaching Practice/Practicum.....	140
6.3.1	The Importance of Practicum.....	140
6.3.2	Perceived Benefits of Teaching Practice	142
6.3.3	Peer Teaching.....	144
6.3.4	Professional Development	145
6.3.4.1	<i>Reflection</i>	145
6.3.4.2	<i>Feedback</i>	146
6.3.4.3	<i>Observation</i>	147
6.3.5	Issues with Practicum	149
6.3.5.1	<i>Lack of Support for Student-Teachers</i>	149
6.3.5.2	<i>Inadequate Application of New Knowledge</i>	150
6.3.5.3	<i>Limitations of Educational Technology</i>	151
6.4	Pedagogical Issues.....	152
6.4.1	Teaching Strategies.....	153
6.4.2	Overdependence on the Traditional Methods	155
6.5	Perceived Usefulness of Course Modules	157
6.5.1	Useful Modules.....	157

6.5.2	Less Valuable Modules.....	160
6.6	Summary	162
CHAPTER SEVEN: Conclusion and Implications		164
7.1	Introduction	164
7.2	Conclusions	166
7.2.1	Improving English language proficiency is Necessary.....	166
7.2.2	There is a need to increase the knowledge of teaching four English language skills 167	
7.2.3	The use of Arabic in teaching is a significant obstacle for improving English proficiency	167
7.2.4	It is difficult to apply new theory into classroom practice.....	168
7.2.5	Education modules are highly valuable for pre-service teachers.....	169
7.2.6	Applying educational theory into classroom practice is the most important aspect 169	
7.2.7	Practice teaching is a part of teacher professional development	170
7.3	Implications for Practice	170
7.4	Limitations and Future research	173
7.5	Overall Conclusion.....	174
References.....		176
Appendix I: A Sample Interview		190
Appendix II: Sample of Data Analysis Stages		197
Appendix III: Ethical Research Approval Form		199
Appendix IV – NVivo Code Definition		201
Appendix V: Participant Consent Form		202
Appendix VI: Pen Portraits of Respondents		204
VI.I University A		204
	<i>Amal</i>	204
	<i>Hani</i>	204
	<i>Mohamed</i>	204
	<i>Muna</i>	205
	<i>Nouf</i>	205
	<i>Rehab</i>	205
	<i>Waleed</i>	205
VI.II University B.....		206
	<i>Ahlam</i>	206
	<i>Ahmed</i>	206
	<i>Farah</i>	206
	<i>Haifa</i>	206

<i>Hassan</i>	207
<i>Saeed</i>	207
<i>Saleh</i>	207
<i>Sara</i>	207
VI.III Summary	208
Appendix V: Participants' University Approval.....	209

List of Tables

Table 1 Syllabus Contents Offered by both the Universities.....	36
Table 2: Initial codes, themes and sub-themes	91
Table 3: Codes into themes.....	92
Table 4: Module ranking according to the importance for the student-teachers	101
Table 5 Syllabus Analysis by Course Category.....	123
Table 6 Main Coding Area Definitions	201

List of Figures

Figure 1: Qualitative data analysis process.....	80
Figure 2: The coding process	84
Figure 3: A snapshot of codes and themes using NVivo	93
Figure 4: Education-related course contents compared	127
Figure 5: Sequencing the language content course in the Diploma (author's own model) ...	130

List of Abbreviations

B.Ed	Bachelor of Education
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DoE	Diploma of Education
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FoE	Faculty of Education
ITE	Initial Teacher Training
KAU	King Abdulaziz University
MoE	Ministry of Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
TBL	Task-Based Learning
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL	Test of English in a Foreign Language
SA	Saudi Arabia
UAU	Umm Al-qura University

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction to the Study

1.1 Introduction

English teaching in Saudi Arabia has become very important. Not only is English a necessity for business dealings and international trade in Saudi Arabia (SA), but it is also an important part of the national human resource building strategy. As the Kingdom is increasing foreign trade, employing its own people in international companies, Saudi nationals are highly encouraged to learn English to be able to express themselves effectively in English. As a result of these factors the demand for qualified English teachers has increased as more and more Saudis come forward to learn English. Consequently, having English language competency has now become one of the key criteria to do well in many career paths chosen by Saudi nationals. While the importance of English has increased, some scholars (for example, Elyas and Picard, 2010; Alrabai, 2014) have reported low English language achievement among Saudi students. For example, many Saudi students undergoing university education in English speaking countries find it difficult to meet the requirements of academic writing and fulfil their course demands. For these reasons and others, some authors (for example, Faruk, 2013; Al-Saraj, 2014) have argued that there is a rapidly growing pressure for students in SA to learn English. The country needs competent English speakers for many reasons. One such reason is because of globalisation (Al-Saraj, 2014) while others include career advancement, nation development and spreading Islam (Faruk, 2013). In essence, for both personal and professional development reasons, students and employees need to have a good command of English language. Therefore, quality assurance of the Diploma of Education (DoE) is essential to produce successful English teachers in Saudi Arabia.

Having taught English in the Saudi public schools and seeing how new English teachers struggle teaching English in classroom, I have developed an interest in understanding what English as a Foreign Language (EFL) student-teachers think is the problem with the DoE. Is it their language competency that makes it difficult for them to deliver good English lessons? If it is so, then are they given separate English language development courses to improve English language competency? Have they received sufficient pedagogical knowledge specific to English teaching to enable them to become effective classroom teachers? Are they provided with sufficient hands on experience prior to giving them classroom teaching responsibilities? To what extent do the modules of the DoE focused on improving language competency of EFL student-teachers? At a personal level, I wish to answer these questions through an empirical

study rather than assuming the problems the EFL teachers are facing when they are preparing to take classroom responsibilities. From a professional and pedagogical perspective, given the need for effective teachers of English, these questions also have value in potentially contributing to understanding and improvement in the education and training of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia.

1.2 The Development of Interest in the Study

Having worked in public (state-run schools) and private (independent) schools as a teacher of English in SA since 2006 followed by a number of years, teaching English at a Public School and achieving my MA in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), I was promoted from teacher of English to work as part of the supervision team to guide the new EFL teachers at the public schools. At that time, I noticed the difficulties the new teachers faced: I observed how teachers of English struggle in speaking English and delivering lesson in English and I listened to them with concern. These teachers told me that their English needed to be improved. In order to be confident in teaching, along with a need for instruction in English teaching methods if they were to be effective teachers. My experience with these teachers led me to the view that there was a problem with the teacher training course they had undertaken as the programme did not seem to be preparing teachers well. What I also noticed was that a number of the new teachers were struggling to deliver an English lesson to the standards expected of them. The outcome of the few meetings with the new English teachers were complaints about the training they had as the reason for these failings. Therefore, my attention was drawn to understand EFL student-teachers' perceptions of the quality of the DoE and led to the decision to carry out further research as I could not find any study tackling this problem. Therefore, I endeavoured to explore the DoE programme by conducting the current study, although it was a big challenge for me in terms of the amount of reading required, handling data and interpreting them.

1.3 Diploma of Education Programme

The Diploma of Education programme became compulsory for all disciplines in Saudi Arabia, four years ago, in 2014, due to a change in the system of teacher education in SA. Prior to the introduction of this Diploma, one could become a teacher of English by doing a 4-year bachelor's degree programme that specialising in either English literature or translation. This

system was known as the ‘integrative system’ (Alzaydi, 2010; Jung, 2005; prospective teachers followed an educational preparation course along with their academic speciality, such as Arabic, English, History, Science, Chemistry and Art. However, the new ‘consecutive system’ (Alzaydi, 2010) adopted by SA has made it compulsory for those aiming to become teachers to join the Faculty of Education (FoE) and to undergo a one-year educational preparation course (Al-Hazmi, 2003). Therefore, Saudi students who are aiming to become a teacher will have to take the DoE, irrespective of their chosen teaching specialisation. According to King Abdulaziz University (KAU) (2009), the DoE is a programme for those people with a qualifying bachelor’s degree aiming to major in education and any other academic subjects, to start a teaching career.

Most of the state-run universities deliver this programme in SA, including Umm Alqura University (UAU), the oldest university, and KAU. Alzaydi (2010), and Elyas and Picard (2013) further note that there are many educational faculties where prospective teachers can prepare themselves to be future teachers. Although many faculties offer the DoE programme, there are still many teachers of English without English language qualifications, adequate training and enough teaching experience (Elyas, 2008). Part of the reason for this is that as ur Rahman, & Alhaisoni, (2013), note the need for teachers to increase English skills in the country has not extended into providing teacher training, which means that in many institutions, individuals who have some knowledge of English, but no formal qualifications in the language, or indeed teaching, are selected to provide lessons. However, this does not mean the teachers are not educated, indeed. many EFL teachers in SA may have obtained degrees in English literature or translation without having the knowledge of English teaching methods according to Alsubaie, (2014) and this has previously been deemed sufficient qualification to enable the teaching of English.

In addition, Alsubaie (2014) also points out that the structure of the DoE has some variations between the FoEs. In SA, male and female university students receive education in separate institutions because gender segregation is the norm in the country’s educational institutions. The common view of this practice is that women would feel more comfortable studying when gender is segregated. Therefore, it can be argued that female teachers may have received EFL education that was slightly different from male EFL teachers (Al-Seghayer, 2005). However, although there may be some variations in the teaching and instructional materials, the content hours of the DoE for both male and female students are the same.

There are two main objectives to the implementation of the DoE in SA (KAU, 2009). Firstly, it provides continuity of studies for the current students who have an ambition to start a teaching career apart from majoring in an academic subject. This does not necessarily mean students cannot graduate without completing the DoE. However, as the course is compulsory now, leaving higher education without completing the DoE means not being qualified to become a teacher. Secondly, it provides those personnel (teachers, teaching assistants, headmasters, supervisor and advisors) who are in service, but without an educational qualification with an opportunity to become qualified educational practitioners (KAU, 2009). The aim of these objectives as noted by Alsubaie, (2014) and Alzaydi (2010) is to improve the current standards and effectiveness of English language teaching knowledge for new and existing English language teachers in the country.

In his study, Alzaydi (2010) listed many aims of the DoE. Some very relevant aims include developing an awareness among the student-teachers of the importance of educational studies, providing them with knowledge related to educational processes, with historical, cultural, social and philosophical dimensions, and assisting them to become familiar with school management. In addition to educational knowledge, student-teachers are also provided with teaching methods, techniques of lesson delivery such as lesson planning, and how to choose teaching aids. It can further be potentially be argued that developing the necessary skills to teach and increase content knowledge in a specialised field of teaching, such as mathematics, English, Arabic and Sciences is an important aim of the DoE. Another central aim of the Diploma is to give student-teachers an opportunity to put their theoretical knowledge into practice through the practicum module. The application of knowledge in practice should be emphasised in a pre-service teacher training programme because teachers' main responsibility is to teach in classrooms and if they cannot do this, then the whole purpose of their preparation fails (Darling-Hammond, 2016). However, many researchers (for example, Al-Seghayer and Saud, 2014; Alzaydi, 2010) argue that these aims are not being fully accomplished in SA.

There is a potential therefore, that in order, to achieve an optimum outcome, the course deliverers have put together rigorous admission criteria. In this regard, the FoEs offering the DoE programme have outlined the conditions for admission. For example, KAU (2010), listed five conditions to be eligible for the admission of the Diploma programme. These are (1) to hold a bachelor's degree or a general Diploma in education if the applicant has no bachelor's degree, (2) the applicant's accumulated average from the degree should be 'good', (3) the

applicant's score in Test of English in a Foreign Language (TOEFL) should not be lower than 400, (4) the applicant should be able to attend advanced courses at least for six weeks, and (5) the applicant must pass the admission tests that KAU give them. Failing these conditions is likely to lead to rejection of the admission to the DoE in SA; however, it is not clear whether all these five criteria should be met by the applicant. Whilst these criteria are admirable, it does mean that some teachers, particularly those in practice already, may not be receiving the necessary training to ensure effectiveness in language instruction.

The Diploma programme covers 30 credit hours (Alzaydi, 2010). Although there are slight differences in the modules of the DoE in different FoEs, the same credit hours are provided. Teaching practice is the module that carries the highest credit hours (4 credits), while most of the teaching-related modules have a value of 2 credit hours. A few modules also have one credit hour given to them. This suggests that the most important module in the DoE is the practicum followed by teaching methods, educational psychology and tests and measurements. The importance of these modules, according to EFL student-teachers' perceptions, will be explored in the current research as the Diploma is designed to deliver knowledge and skills that can help them undertaking school-based work. School practice is an important part of their teacher education programme (Alzaydi, 2010). In more specific terms, the student-teachers taking the Diploma are required to enrol on a number of courses, including linguistics courses (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics), teaching methods courses, education courses and English literature. They also have to select some modules from the elective courses and pass them to be able to graduate. While these courses may be important for student-teachers of English, there is no empirical evidence showing its value to EFL student-teachers. It is also not very clear to what extent these courses can help student-teachers of English in their classroom practice. Therefore, more research into this topic is needed.

One significant intended impact of the Diploma is that it enables the preparation of more English teachers to relieve the English teacher shortage in public schools in SA. However, developing teachers without taking a rigorous approach to quality control may affect the entire education system in the country, in particular English language standard among the school leavers. Quality control in Saudi higher education is a newly introduced concept and Albaqami (2015, p.66) stated that "Saudi universities seem not to effectively implement quality assurance due to obstacles and challenges". These challenges include a lack of knowledge and understanding of how to manage quality and implement quality controls such as audit,

qualification requirements and similar (Al-Nasser, 2015). There have already been criticisms of the quality of teachers, adequacy of training and quality of teaching for student-teachers (see Al-Seghayer and Saud, 2014). What this suggests is that, preparing student teachers of English for the sake of increasing the number of teachers may not serve the purpose of the Diploma; instead there is an indication that the teacher shortage can only be addressed when quantity is coupled with preparing high quality teachers through quality teaching programmes. These constraints on the Diploma and indications about poor quality teaching in the Kingdom have contributed to the rationale for undertaking this work.

1.4 Rationale of the Study

The present research has been conducted with the aim of providing insight into understanding some issues related to the Diploma course conducted by Saudi teacher education institutions. This course aims to prepare EFL student-teachers who can teach English in SA as a foreign language. Some previous studies (for example, Al-Seghayer, 2011; Al-Seghayer and Saud, 2014) have concluded that teacher education in the SA was inadequate and therefore, teacher education needed reform. What is not clear from these earlier works is how those undertaking the Diploma feel about the content and its value to their teaching practice.

Al-Seghayer and Saud (2014) and Al-Nasser (2015) have raised concerns regarding the use of traditional teaching methods by English teachers in classroom teaching. Khan (2011) examined whether modern language teaching methods such as the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach (which encourages interaction between teacher and students as means of language learning) had a more positive outcome than the traditional methods, such as the Grammar Translation Method, the Audio-Lingual Method and the Total Physical Response Method. On the one hand the CLT approach has an emphasis on language use, while on the other hand, the traditional methods focus on transferring information to students and promote rote learning. However, without instruction on how to deliver these alternative methods, and indeed the traditional learning approaches, the student-teachers are not equipped for effective delivery of English language learning. These studies have confirmed that English teaching in SA has not achieved its intended outcomes and one issue is ineffective teaching skills. One problem that is identified in the literature is the lack of integrated approaches in teaching English focusing on the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners and student-teachers are heavily dependent on writing

skills (Fageeh, 2011). In language learning courses, writing skill is used more frequently than any other language skills when it comes to learning and assessing learners (Al-Nasser, 2015). Saudi researchers have argued that EFL student-teachers are overusing writing skills when teaching EFL learners. In tertiary education there is little research on identifying student-teachers' views on which language skill or skills are needed for them to be confident and effective English teachers in Saudi classrooms. Identifying learner views is therefore important for course developers to bring about changes to teacher education programmes to meet the needs of future student-teachers (Al-Bedaiwi, 2010). Therefore, there is a need to seek student-teachers' perceptions on whether the Diploma of Education helps them develop their language proficiency and which elements of the course provide them with the greatest benefits.

Firstly, there is very limited empirical evidence, if any, that relates to EFL student-teachers in SA on their perception of the quality of teacher education programmes (Al-Hazmi, 2003). As student-teachers have lived experience of what they have learned throughout the course and have started classroom practice as an EFL student-teacher, their input is vital to improve future teacher preparation courses (Alzaydi, 2010). This input can be gathered by empirical research, through interviewing them to find out how they view about the entire Diploma programme. This study aims provides the student-teacher voice, which may be useful for developers of Diploma programme. Academically, this study will fill the existing research gap of not having evidence of student-teachers voice in the field of teacher education in SA.

The adequacy of teacher education offered to student-teachers in their initial teacher education programmes has been questioned in multiple works as already noted. For example, Al-Seghayer and Saud (2014) argue that English teacher preparation programmes in the SA is inefficient and the knowledge on English teaching methods of English teachers is inadequate. Evidence from other countries, suggest that teacher education systems should give rigorous training during the initial teacher training (ITE) to begin providing professional development activities from the very beginning of their teaching career. For example, Singapore is one of the best education systems in the world, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Secondary Assessment (OECD, 2017), where teacher education is a top priority. Such teacher preparation programmes offer an 'acceptable' level of subject content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge because these two knowledge areas are essential for any effective EFL teacher who aims to have positive outcomes in student attainment (Al-Mohanna, 2010). Although researchers have

expressed concerned about the quality of teacher training programmes in SA, there is little empirical evidence to show where the real issues and failures of the programmes lie, particularly from the student-teachers' perspectives. Discovering student-teachers' point of view about the quality of their training is therefore important because their experiences can be vital evidence to bring about necessary changes to future teacher training programmes.

One of the aspects of an effective teacher education programme is its focus on practical knowledge and skills (Al-Bedaiwi, 2010; Al-Seghayer, 2014). In a previous research in the context of England, early work by Hobson *et al.* (2006) found that school-based activities were the most valuable for the student-teachers compared to other training experiences. This is a view also noted by Roberts (2016) and confirmed by a study undertaken by Reynolds *et al.*, (2016) which identified greater levels of confidence, and competence in those teachers who had undertaken in-classroom learning alongside their other training. The course syllabus in pre-service teacher education in the SA also consists of a practicum module which aims to provide opportunities for student-teachers to apply educational theory into classroom practice. However, the effectiveness and adequacy of this important practice-based module is not clearly known and there is not much empirical research explaining what student-teachers' think about the effectiveness of the Diploma programme. Therefore, this is an area that needs further research and underlines a further rationale for undertaking this work.

Lastly, in their study, Mahib-ur-Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) and Fareh (2010) have raised the issue that many college and tertiary students lack sufficient English language competency, including those who are enrolled in English teacher training programmes. In support of this claim, Al-Shumaimeri (2003) stated that school leavers were unable to conduct a short conversation in English having learned English for several years during their schooling. In such a situation, there may be a need to concentrate on improving English language proficiency among the prospective teachers of English. However, student teachers' perceptions towards this aspect is not clear (Al-Mohanna, 2010). Therefore, a need has risen to explore this area and to know whether the student-teachers have positive or negative perceptions towards how well they were prepared by the Diploma to teach English and how they feel about the level of the English language support offered to them.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Considering the importance of English language in today's Saudi society and the nation's overdependence on foreign workers and international companies, improving the quality of English teaching could benefit the whole society. In essence, being able to answer questions of the extent to which English teacher preparation courses provide adequate training by understanding whether the modules in the course reflect the needs expressed by the student-teachers. This research is expected to provide empirical evidence regarding the perceptions of student teachers as to their preparation to teach English through the completion of the DoE. Thus, the teacher education institutions may change their course syllabi based on the findings of this study in order to train and educate English teachers better than the other institutions. Lastly, as a researcher, this research project has helped me to enhance critical thinking ability and to improve reflective skills.

1.6 Research Aim, Objectives and Questions

The aim of this research is to identify student-teachers' perceptions of their training and to explore whether the Diploma has a positive impact on the student-teachers' English language competency. The objectives of the research are:

1. To identify the current issues pertaining to teacher education in general, in particular the Diploma of Education;
2. To conduct an empirical research to explore EFL student teachers' perceptions of their experiences of Diploma programme;
3. To report the most salient themes of EFL student teachers' perceptions of the training they have undergone as a teacher preparation programme;
4. To explore whether or not the Diploma has met EFL student teachers' expectations, and,
5. To suggest recommendations as to how the Diploma can better meet the needs of the students.

This research addresses the following research questions:

1. Which aspects of the Diploma of Education do the student-teachers identify as helping them to teach English in the classroom? And which do they identify as having not helped them?

2. What are the students' perceptions of the extent to which the Diploma of Education programme develops their English language proficiency?

1.7 Thesis Organisation

This thesis has been structured and organised in the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the dissertation to the reader. It outlines the purpose of the dissertation, with aims, objectives and the research questions.

Chapter 2: Context of the study

This chapter offers the historical context of the research and then the research problem. Moreover, it gives the academic context of the study.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

This chapter is dedicated to presenting a brief summary of the existing literature on the topic of the dissertation. It discusses some theories and models supporting teacher training. What is more, it reviews some previous research into English teacher education within SA. In doing so, it identifies some research gaps on which the current research is based.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This chapter gives information about how the research was conducted. It describes the research philosophy, approach and method used in this research. In doing so, it defines the research method and provides the reasons for choosing the semi-structured interview to collect data in order to address the research questions.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Findings

This chapter aims to present the data analysis and findings. It begins by providing some background information about each research participant and then goes on to presenting the key themes emerged from the research. This is followed by the identification of the most salient themes, and findings on these themes are then presented.

Chapter 6: Discussion of Findings

The aim of this chapter is to provide a discussion of the findings in relation to the existing literature. The discussion is focused on the three key themes identified in the previous chapter.

These themes are also related to the research questions and provide a short explanation about the reasons why the findings of this research are important.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations

This is the chapter where concluding remarks of the dissertation are presented. It gives a summary of how the research questions are answered, implications of findings and why the conclusions are important. It also discusses how the findings and conclusions contribute to the broader understanding of teacher education in SA. It ends with some recommendations and research limitations.

CHAPTER TWO: Context of the Study

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with some background information about the current study in order for them to understand the context in which this study is situated. The chapter is comprised of five sub-sections: 1. Teaching English in SA; 2. Higher education in SA; 3. A brief history about the teacher training programme; 4. The implementation of Diploma: efforts and challenges; and 5. Curriculum of the Diploma programme.

2.2 Teaching English in SA

Looking at the history, English teaching in Saudi has passed several phases. Earlier English teaching and learning were given little attention in the Kingdom's education system. English teaching began in 1936 with the establishment of Scholarship Preparation School (SPS) whose purpose was to prepare students for western education (Elyas, 2014). Therefore, English learning was restricted to those who received scholarships to gain education in an English-speaking country, but not for other Saudis. With the establishment of the SPS, the modern-day high school English teaching was introduced for the first time in the KSA (Al-Ghamdi and Al-Saddat, 2002).

In 1958, English teaching began in intermediate and secondary schools when both English and French were taught as foreign languages (Elyas, 2014). However, after 11 years, in 1969, the Ministry of Education decided to remove French from the secondary school (Grades 10, 11 and 12) curriculum (Al-Abdulkader, 1978). Although English was introduced in Saudi schools in 1969 from Class 7 (11-12year-olds) and it was not made a compulsory subject which meant that learners and society in general did not have a positive attitude towards learning English (Al-Nasser, 2015). During this period, English was considered by students as a subject to be passed in an examination rather than a language to be learnt that could be useful in professional life. (Mahib-ur-Rahman and Alhaisoni, 2013).

In Saudi Arabia, the first English language teaching framework was developed in 1970 (Mitchell and Alfuraih, 2017). This framework, with syllabus, was targeted at the secondary level. Thus, the EFL teacher preparation courses began some four decades ago and graduates from colleges and universities were recruited for teacher training programmes (Al-Hazmi,

2003). The general aim of the initial teacher training syllabus was to provide teacher candidates with “the opportunity to read science and arts literature in English, developing critical thinking and imagination, and providing students with the English proficiency to enter university and/or pursue their vocation” (Mitchell and Alfuraih, 2017, p.319). However, teaching in higher education institutions in the past was described as “rote learning” with a close focus on memorisation activities (Szyliowicz, 1973). This claim has been further supported by Smith and Abouammoh (2013, p.2) who stated that “rote learning is the dominant pedagogical approach for teaching and learning”. This is a major concern in EFL teacher education programmes because it leads to the mismatch between the theory and classroom practices. This is mainly because student-teachers spend most of their time learning theory during their teacher preparations, but not application of this theoretical knowledge in classroom teaching.

Saudi universities offer pre-service teachers bachelor’s and associate degrees in English and literature. While the former requires spending more time and receiving a comprehensive curriculum during teacher training, the latter is a shorter and more compressed course. They now offer students courses in English language skills, English literature, applied linguistics and translation. Colleges of education deliver English language courses with educational components, while colleges of arts provide training for student-teachers with opportunities to become either English-Arabic translators or EFL teaching. More recently, a Diploma programme has been introduced to those who have a bachelor’s degree from colleges of arts or colleges of education. However, there has been criticisms levelled against the teacher preparation activities in Saudi Arabia. Al-Hazmi (2003) argues that neither of these courses adequately prepare EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. This is mainly because they do not provide skills development courses, nor do they teach subject-specific teaching methods. Authors like Al-Hazmi (2003) describe teacher education in Saudi Arabia as ‘non-systematic’ and ‘inadequate’ in course design, teaching style and course assessments. One of the reasons for this is the use of outdated curriculum and syllabus. Al-Nasser (2015, p.1613) stated that “the curriculum and syllabus are not revised as per modern teaching approach”. Another reason is the use of old-fashioned teaching methods. Al-Nasser (2015, p.1613) described the common English teaching methods used in Saudi English classes as ‘outmoded’.

As stated earlier, the first initiative to train teachers came in 1970 and it was only in 2003, when English was included as a curriculum subject in public schools in Saudi Arabia, that the need for proficient English teachers was recognised. Prior to this, English was predominantly taught

in private schools for both girls and boys who started learning English from the first grade (Mitchell and Alfuraih, 2017) and those children attended to these private schools came from Royal Family and business elites (Commins, 2008). As a result the teachers were well paid and generally of a good standard. However, once the subject became compulsory, the need for teachers led to the current situation of under-trained, under-qualified teachers in many institutions, as noted above.

Teacher training in Saudi Arabia has seen many challenges. In their analysis of delivering high quality teaching in universities, Alnassar and Dow (2013) listed a number of problems with the Saudi higher education system, including a lack of training opportunities for teaching staff, a lack of encouragement to enhance the quality of teaching, the rigid curriculum that did not have sufficient focus on critical thinking, and a lack of attention to teaching ‘learning how to learn’ strategies. Consequently, recently, there has been pressure to Saudi higher education institutions where EFL teachers are trained to integrate more modern learning methods such as communicative language teaching and incorporate problem-based learning in teacher education programmes. Despite influence from neighbouring countries such as the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, the use of ‘authentic texts’ (Nunan, 1991), linking language learning to activities outside classroom and focusing on learning process became ideas that were incompatible with the Saudi style of teaching (Elyas and Picard, 2010), because the influence of traditional teaching methods where teacher-dominated teaching is widespread, In addition, teachers of English did not know how to deliver these new approaches in an effective way to achieve positive outcomes for their pupils (Alebaikan and Troudi, 2010). Therefore, effective teacher education becomes very important for improving the standard of English language in Saudi schools. Finding the aspects that will help student-teachers teaching English language in Saudi classroom can contribute to understanding what EFL student-teachers mean by effective teaching.

The four most important phases of institutionalised education in SA are primary, intermediate, secondary and higher education. In primary education, children start school at the age of 6 and continue learning in the system until the age of 12 (from class 1 to 6) (Alzaydi, 2010). English, in present day SA, is considered a very important school subject, and has been a compulsory subject since the 1970’s (Al-Nasser, 2015), from Class 6, and recently has been made a core curriculum subject from Class 4 onwards. The overall aim of the inclusion of English in the curriculum is to , with achieve higher English fluency among the school leavers, as part of the

government's firm commitment to raising the English standards among the students in public and private schools. Specific objectives of introducing English from grade 4 include:

1. To teach basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing).
2. To create awareness among students of the importance of the English language for international relations and communication.
3. To motivate students to learn English and develop positive attitudes towards English.
4. To help students to develop necessary English linguistic competence needed for different life situations.
5. To help students to acquire linguistic competence that will prepare them, in future, to talk about Islamic concept, principles, logic and issues, as well as help them to participate in promoting Islam (Mahib-ur-Rahman and Alhaisoni, 2013).

Children begin a three-year intermediate school at the age of 12 and continue their educational career in this phase until the age of 15 (Alzaydi, 2010). In this stage, English is taught as a foreign language along with other age-related subject content in different areas including Arabic Studies, Islamic Studies, Sciences and Social Studies. In the secondary phase of the education system, children spend another three years from the age of 15 to 18 years of age. In addition to curriculum subjects, in this phase, students learn Computer Studies as an important subject. The ongoing challenge however, despite the mandatory inclusion of English studies is that students entering higher education in the country frequently have inadequate English knowledge (Al-Nasser, 2015). As already noted, one of the factors cited for this is ineffective teacher delivery is due to the use of under-qualified, and under-prepared teachers.

2.3 Higher Education in SA

SA's higher education has undergone some key milestones leading to the current status. The first college in SA was established in 1949, which became the foundation for higher education in the country (Baghdadi, 1985). Although this college was opened, there was no government ministry dedicated to higher education until 1975 (Al Kuwaiti and Subbarayalu, 2015). According to Al Kuwaiti and Subbarayalu (2015), the Ministry of Education – higher education in SA, was established on the 19 May 1975. The establishment of higher education has received enormous support from the government and private sectors. At present, there are 26 registered government universities and 10 private universities. In addition, 41 registered private colleges have been in operation in SA (Ministry of Education, 2017). According to the MoE's official

website, both the MoE and the Ministry of Higher Education were merged into one ministry in 2015. Therefore, the responsibilities of regulating higher education is carried out by the MoE in SA and this ministry also has the duty to evaluate the quality of the educational provision in Saudi universities. This includes the development of the teacher training Diploma and its implementation and content; it is, therefore, pertinent to give a brief overview of teacher training in the Kingdom.

2.4A Brief History of The Teacher Training Programme

Faculties of education in SA began in the Universities in Riyadh, Jeddah and Mecca, with additional branches in Medina and Abha (Ahmed, 1979). From the very beginning, these faculties have been offering both undergraduate and post-graduate teaching programmes. The undergraduate programmes teach both pedagogical and academic subjects simultaneously. According to Ahmed (1979), the Mecca branch of the teacher education faculty began in 1957-1958, which was followed by the Riyadh faculty of education, whose operations started in 1966-1967. When these two faculties were opened, the Riyadh branch received only 31 students, while in the second year the enrolment was reduced to 21 students (Ahmed, 1979). However, the number of students was increased in 1969-1970 when 123 wanted to become teachers. In the subsequent years, the number of students rapidly increased and in 1970, the first faculty of education dedicated to female students was opened in Riyadh, followed by Jeddah (1974-75) and Mecca (1975-76). The statistics provided by Ahmed (1979, p.7) show that there were 999 Saudi students holding the B. Ed degree in 1977-1978. These teachers were prepared to teach the intermediate and secondary grades in Saudi schools. According to the statistics provided by the Ministry of Economy and Planning (2017), there were 527,030 teachers working in Saudi schools. Reviewing these developments, it is clear that there is a commitment to provision of teacher training in the country, but this does not appear to be backed up by effective content and management.

At present, preparing quality English teachers in the SA has been a policy of the Saudi government. This is partly because teachers are regarded as the lifeblood or the indispensable factor of an education system, because without adequate teachers, it would be difficult to achieve the government goals. At the same time, evidence from around the world indicates that the effectiveness of schools is greatly determined by the quality and commitments of its teachers (Mitchell and Alfuraih, 2017; Adnot *et al*, 2017; Ryan *et al*, 2015; Heinz, 2015). In

this context, effective schools aim to recruit the best talent available for them, who are knowledgeable and have adequate experience. This is also the case in the SA when they recruit English teachers because school leaders understand the importance of quality teachers to develop English standard in their schools. The head teachers want the most academically able people to be part of their teaching team. However, the shortage of effective, well-qualified and capable teachers has meant that frequently schools have had to take teachers who may not be able to deliver the necessary standards of teaching, due to the lack of instruction they themselves have received. It is as a result of this situation that the Diploma of Education was introduced, as noted in Section 1.3. However, the implementation of the DoE has faced multiple challenges and drawbacks. These can be highlighted by examining the current trends in teacher training in the country and the various influences which have impacted on its development.

2.4.1 Current Trends in EFL Teacher Preparation in Saudi Context

2.4.1.1 Reforming The Education System

The Saudi higher education has seen reforms as the government is investing more money towards the improvement of higher education system, which includes how EFL teachers are prepared. According to Smith and Abouammoh (2013), a significant amount of resources and funds have been allocated to teacher training, curriculum and textbook review and professional development. These changes have been introduced amid international criticism about the quality of the Saudi education system (Smith and Abouammoh, 2013). They were also brought about because in today's language classrooms, teachers need plenty of information to be effective EFL teachers. More importantly, the policy makers have recognised the importance of English language to nation building and economic development in Saudi Arabia. For instance, The King Abdullah Public Education Development Project, which is known as Tatweer project has recognized the importance of STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and English language teaching (ELT) in order to achieve the national ambition and developmental goals (Mitchell and Alfuraih, 2017). English has been seen to be the backbone to a knowledge economy, which Saudi aims to achieve in the future.

2.4.1.2 English Language Proficiency Testing

Candidates aiming for higher education, including pre-service teachers are required to take English language proficiency tests. For instance, according to Khan (2009), the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is one of the tests used by Saudi universities and colleges to test English language proficiency of those candidates applying to undertake English language teacher education courses. Despite these language proficiency tests many students in higher education have been reported having the need to develop their English language skills. In her examination of teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in Saudi Arabia, Tamran (2016) argues that most of the universities and colleges in Saudi Arabia provide English support courses for those students who struggle with their English language. Smith and Abouammoh (2013) have pointed out that higher education students face English language difficulties as they progress their studies because of inadequate reading and writing skills. These challenges mean that even before entering the DoE course, there may be a need to review the existing English skills of prospective student teachers. At the same time, the curriculum of the training courses also needs examination.

2.4.1.3 Textbooks

Apart from language proficiency development work, there has also been more attention to pedagogical skill development as well as attention to effective use of textbooks in teacher education (Mitchell and Alfuraih, 2017). In the past few years, some significant changes have been brought in the English textbooks, which were prescribed to be used in schools. The English language textbooks used by Saudi schools used to consist of simple texts depicting Saudi culture and themes showing Arab way of life. The new textbooks include more relevant cultural aspects such as celebrating Eids and Hajj. This change in textbooks is important because the primary goal of teaching English was to enable Saudi students to provide information to foreigners about Saudi culture. Another goal was to help students to learn some basic English that individuals can use for everyday life such as asking for direction, inviting someone to a gathering, greetings, booking an airline ticket or ordering from an eating house. However, being able to communicate effectively in English, requires learners to have more advanced commands of language in all four basic language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Apart from this, according to Aslam (2014), the old textbooks missed the cultural component of English language, which means that Islamic way of life was ignored in those textbooks, but instead western cultural norms were used in texts. Therefore, more recent

textbooks present the contents using modern language teaching approaches such as communicative language teaching and task-based language teaching. However, the selection of textbook to teach English language has raised some concerns among practitioners. For instance, Mahib-ur-Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013, p.115) state that “like many other countries, the syllabus designers and the higher authorities of various schools and universities of Saudi Arabia are also unable to choose an appropriate textbook for their students”, because still most of the books that are available in the market are authored by Western textbook writers. Therefore, this is an area that needs to be looked into in an empirical research such as the present one.

2.4.1.4 Professional Development for Teachers

The importance of teacher development has been recognised and as such teachers are being offered professional development opportunities. In Saudi Arabia, there are 45 centres spread across the country that provide teachers with continuous professional development (CPD) activities (Altrjmi, 2010). The Education Training Centres (ETCs) conduct three different teacher development activities: short-term CPD course, local CPD programmes, and refresher CPD activities such as how to assess students and write lesson plans. However, Mitchell and Alfuraih (2017, p.325) state that while “these programs have benefited thousands of participating teachers”, they “cannot be seen to be continuing professional development programs because to the CPDs are limited to a two or three workshop in a year and schools select different teachers for these training sessions. There is also not an established strategy to identify the individual teacher needs for the approximately 35,000 English language teachers across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia”.

2.4.1.5 Educational Technology

Furthermore, the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) has been integrated into teacher preparation as part of encouraging new and innovative methods of teaching in classrooms (Smith and Abouammoh, 2013). There exists a body of research on the use of technology in EFL classrooms in the Saudi context. One such study is done by Saqlain, Al-Qarni and Ghadi (2013), whose qualitative research was undertaken in Saudi Arabia. With the purpose to find out how schools integrated modern educational technology in teaching, the researchers interviewed 12 in-service English teachers. In this study, some structured and semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data, which were analysed using thematic

approach. This study found that all the teachers were willing to use the available technology in the EFL classroom teaching. The opportunity to use new educational technology improved learning outcomes (Saqlain, *et al.*, 2013) However, teachers reported that there was a lack of funding, inadequate training to use technology and poor infrastructure in schools to make effective use of educational technology. Probably for these reasons, the use of educational technology in EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia is regarded as ‘insufficiently employed’ (Al-Seghayer and Saud, 2014). This lack of use of improved language teaching technology means teachers are relying heavily on the traditional teaching methods such as grammar translation, rote learning and passive teaching as opposed to the use of modern classroom teaching methods such as communicative language learning. Much of the research findings on this area are related to teacher beliefs about teaching and learning practices, rather than school policies or general education policy in Saudi Arabia.

2.5 The implementation of Diploma of Education programme: Efforts, Challenges and Limitations

The introduction of the Diploma programme attracted many new people to education and teaching in SA. However, many scholars (for example, Al-Seghayer and Saud, 2014) have raised concerns about the quality of Diploma in Education and other teacher training courses. According to Alzaydi (2010), Saudi Arabia has implemented “the consecutive system” whereby student teachers first need to obtain a Bachelor’s degree in one of the academic subjects (English, Science, Chemistry and Arabic) then they are required to enrol on a one-year education programme, which is the Diploma of Education. This Diploma is the preferred route to classroom teaching. One of the challenges that teacher educators face is recruiting EFL students who have adequate language proficiency. Al-Seghayer and Saud (2014) argue that the EFL student-teachers who enrolled in English teacher training programmes did not qualify to become English teachers because of poor English language competency. In this context, there are many ‘qualified’ English teachers who can be identified as not having sufficient English proficiency. Programme administrators may also find it difficult to deliver the entire curriculum within the timeframe of the course, because extensive course content (Al-Seghayer and Saud, 2014).

In conjunction with the extensive course content, a further problem is that the course itself is the condensed as Al-Seghayer and Saud (2014) note. For example, students are required to compete between 7 and 9 courses in a semester, see Table 5 below in the subsection 5.9.1). According to Al-Seghayer and Saud (2014), as part of teacher education programme, prospective teachers are provided with courses in linguistics (phonology, morphology, and syntax), English literature, teaching methodology and education. Apart from these courses, universities offer ‘skill-building curriculum’ for pre-service teachers in order to ensure they develop language skills during the course of their preparation programme. This would suggest that there is wide range of instruction, but frequently due to the condensed nature of the course, the subjects are only covered superficially, and in insufficient depth to give the student-teachers the knowledge they need to be proficient.

Lastly, a lack of pedagogical awareness among English teachers has been reported (Al-Seghayer and Saud, 2014). Without adequate language teaching method knowledge, it would be a great challenge for teachers to teach in the classroom context. According to Alrashidi and Phan (2015), some language teaching problems include the use of grammar-focused strategies, memorisation and rote learning methods in EFL classrooms because they do not have much focus on use of language but have a significant emphasis on learning grammar. However, EFL trends around the world have indicated that a more student-centred approach, involving task based and contextual teaching leads to more effective outcomes (Luk & Lin, 2017; Calvert and Sheen, 2015). If the teaching content in the DoE does not provide student-teachers with the knowledge to deliver these new approaches, they will be unable to implement them when going into practice, perpetuating the poor outcomes in English achievement in the country. In addition, improving confidence among student-teachers on the delivery of alternative teaching methods is a challenge because it has often been reported that as a lack of students’ motivation to learn English affects the application of modern language teaching methods in Saudi classrooms. Confidence means having a belief in one’s ability to learn English and hence, the feeling of capability can increase the level of motivation to learn.

Fareh, 2010 and Mahib-ur-Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) have also pointed out a number of shortcomings associated with teacher education in SA. Fareh (2010) has looked at the reasons for poor English standards in Arab world. Her study examined the challenges faced by the Arab countries and how they could overcome these challenges. This study concluded that “inadequate preparation of teachers, lack of motivation on the part of the learners, teacher-

centred methods and inadequate assessment techniques are among the major problems that render EFL programs unable to deliver as expected” (Fareh, 2010, p. 3600). Elyas and Al Grigri (2014) also studied challenges faced by schools in teaching English in SA, but this study took both teachers’ and supervisors’ perceptions towards the obstacles they face in teaching English language. Taking the public schools as the unit of analysis, this study employed a mixed method approach to the study. The study used both close-ended questionnaire and open-ended interviews to collect data and reported the following challenges to teaching English:

1. a scarcity of development programmes;
2. a lack of in-service training programmes;
3. poor in-service training;
4. low level of students’ motivation;
5. overdependence on the traditional teaching methodology, and
6. inadequate use of teaching materials and modern educational technology.

In addition, in their analysis of the problems associated with English language teaching in SA, Al-Seghayer and Saud (2014) argue that there are many teaching problems linked to the lower level of student motivation to learn English. They summarised these issues as ‘belief constraints’, ‘pedagogical constraints’, ‘component constraints of curriculum’, and ‘administrative constraints’ (p. 18). These authors have argued that there are a “set of pedagogical constraints that contain demoralizing factors in the teaching-learning process of English in Saudi Arabia, including insufficiency of English teaching preparation programs and constraints that pertain to English teaching methods” (Al-Seghayer and Saud, 2014, p.21). This means that there is not sufficient focus on English skills teaching methods in English teacher preparation courses in Saudi Arabia.

Clearly from existing evidence there are multiple challenges for the DoE related to both content and course types, which have subsequent impacts on the teaching quality delivered in Saudi Arabia. What the evidence suggests is that the core focus of improving English acquisition in the country commences with the provision of robust teacher training. This underlines again the value of the current study in gaining the perceptions of current student-teachers regarding the efficacy of the DoE and how it could be improved. One potential factor for improvement could be in the overall curriculum content, and therefore it is relevant to examine in more detail the current DoE programme.

2.6 Curriculum of the DoE programme

The curriculum of the Diploma offers a number of subjects. These consist of subject content knowledge courses, methodology content knowledge modules and other teaching-related courses. The common subjects that all EFL student-teachers learn include theories of curriculum, child psychology, instructional psychology, teaching methods and school management courses (King Abdulaziz University, 2017). Although such common subjects are taught to all students in the general Diploma in Education, some subject specific modules are also taught. For example, teachers who are training to become teachers of English learn English teaching methods, while mathematics teaching methods are taught to mathematics teachers. While there are some common subjects taught by all the faculties that offer the Diploma, some additional modules are offered by individual faculties. For instance, the University B's Diploma gives a hygiene module, University A's Diploma does not. The full syllabus for each university can be seen in the table below.

2.6.1 Requirements for a Diploma

Table 1 show a comparison between the contents offered by the universities in their teaching Diploma courses.

Table 1 Syllabus Contents Offered by both the Universities

Table 1: Syllabus contents offered by both the universities

Semester	Syllabus Components	
	University A	University B
Semester 1	1. Language test	1. Developmental psychology
	2. Managing school activity,	2. Fundamental of Islamic Education
	3. Introduction in educational management,	3. Curriculum principles
	4. Introduction to Psychology	4. General teaching methods
	5. Formative psychology,	5. Fundamentals of Computer Science
	6. Educational psychology	6. Teaching Technology Learning Sources,
	7. Curriculum principles and their organisation	7. School Admissions
	8. English teaching methods	
	9. Teaching aids	
Semester 2	1. Introduction to Education,	1. Educational Psychology

	2. Fundamental of Islamic Education,	2. Mental hygiene
	3. National Education	3. Introduction to Educational Measurement and Evaluation
	4. Guidance	4. Education in Saudi Arabia
	5. Tests and standards,	5. Communication skills in Education
	6. Design school activity,	6. Practicum
	7. Education in Saudi Arabia,	7. Practical application in teaching
	8. Methods of teaching English	
	9. Practicum	

As Table 1 indicates, there are some similarities of the English Diploma between the two universities. They both offer teaching methods courses; however, the UA offers a general teaching methods course in semester 1 only, whereas the UB offers two English teaching-method courses (one in each semester). Both the universities also offer educational psychology courses, testing and evaluation courses as well as practicum modules. However, the UB has a specific course module focusing on practical application in teaching, which the UA does not offer.

As already mentioned, there are two main objectives of the Diploma, according to King Abdulaziz University (2017). There is no gender discrimination in providing graduates with the opportunity to enter into teaching sector; thus, female graduates can take advantage of the Diploma to fulfil their career goals. Taking an overview of the curriculum the modules appear to be sufficiently comprehensive to provide student-teachers with wide based instruction and knowledge. However, teaching, whether it is English or any other subject, is a profession that requires specialised education, qualification, passion and commitment. This view suggests that teachers should be educated and prepared with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach what they are trained for. Therefore, if the Diploma programme is to have a positive impact on the education system, it has to be designed to cater for the needs of schools and prospective teachers including development of personal motivation and confidence in delivering a range of teaching approaches. However, the decision to implement the Diploma programme by the government and universities does not seem to have achieved this goal as many scholars (for example, Elyas and Picard, 2010) have reported that the teacher training programmes such as English literature and translation courses were inadequate and not fit for the purpose.

Another area that needs consideration is teaching materials. Textbooks are widely used learning materials in teacher education programmes (Richards, 2001). While this is the case, commercial textbooks are often used in English language teaching in SA. Similarly, student-teachers who are enrolled in the Diploma programme also use course books that are commercially made by western publishers rather than local publishers. For example, there are no locally published textbooks for teachers who are preparing to become English teachers. This can make it much harder for the Diploma students as these textbooks may introduce concepts that are difficult to conceptualise in the context of teaching English in the Saudi school system. The language used in foreign textbooks is also often complex, making it hard for EFL learners and sometimes student-teachers to comprehend what they read (Al-Bedaiwi, 2010).

Lastly, the practices of students' assessment and evaluation need to change. Although the MoE has the responsibility for the evaluation of the quality of higher education in SA, the ministry does not dictate how to assess students' performance during their attendance at universities. The universities that offer the Diploma use more than one method of assessing the students' performance, which consist of mainly individualised assignments, essays, exams and classroom observations during teaching practicum. However, a study by Hamdan (2013) found that student-teachers preferred other methods to be used to assess their performance and progress in their course. EFL student-teachers preferred methods of assessments include a group assignment, oral presentation and written reports. Despite this, one of the aims of assessment is to evaluate what student-teachers have learned and as it is the responsibility of the teachers/tutors to assess, it does not really matter what student teachers prefer, but their involvement in making assessment decisions may make them feel more valued participants of the course.

CHAPTER THREE: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to report literature on the aspects of teacher education that would help EFL teachers to teach English effectively in Saudi classrooms. The chapter also identifies literature on student-teachers' perceptions of the extent to which teacher education programmes develop their English language proficiency. These two aims directly relate to the research questions set out in Section 1.6.

In the context of teaching EFL, researchers have debated the importance of understanding teachers' perceptions on their language proficiency, teachers' competency and instructional practices that would produce effective teachers (Barahona, 2016). Pedagogical knowledge (how to teach subject content well), subject content knowledge (Knowledge of subject matter, including facts, concepts, and theories) and familiarity with teaching materials have all been identified as important for pre-service or student-teachers (Muijs & Reynolds, 2017). Equally important are the knowledge of other tools that can be employed to help teachers develop themselves professionally such as continuing professional development, links to teaching resources and networks where teachers can share knowledge and resources (Kemmis *et al*, 2014).

In doing so, the literature review will look at issues pertaining EFL teacher preparation. It will also identify some teacher education models that enable understanding broad principles of teacher education. As the obvious aim of teacher education is to equip future teachers with the necessary skills and behaviour, this review will discuss the necessary characteristics of an effective teacher. The current study is located in Saudi context; hence, an overview of EFL teacher education in Saudi Arabia will be reviewed. A large body of teacher education research is on teacher beliefs. For this reason, this review will look at teacher beliefs about different issues related to teaching and learning, including the importance of language competency for English teachers. A brief overview of the existing research on the limitations of teacher education will also be presented. A discussion will be presented about pedagogical aspects of teacher education as the knowledge of English language teaching methods is important to become effective teachers. Teaching practicum is a major component in a teacher education programme. For this reason, there is a focus on this area in relation to English language teaching.

Furthermore, helping teachers to teach English in classroom will require them using language learning materials. Thus, a review on this area will be included in this chapter. In addition, some theories of teacher professional development will inform ways in which teachers can develop themselves and improve their classroom practices. Lastly, the chapter ends with a summary of the literature review and restating the research questions.

3.2 EFL Teacher Education

Success or failure of an education system depends on the quality of teachers, with competent teachers being associated with successful teaching, while incompetent teachers with failure in delivering effective teaching (Sallis, 2002). Teacher competency means having the ability to deliver effective lessons, with which teachers are able to increase student academic achievements. Teacher education is about learning to teach and gaining professional knowledge of how to teach. Loughran (1997, p. 4) argues that pre-service teachers not only need “a knowledge of pedagogy” (methods and techniques of teaching), but also “a knowledge of the content matter”. This view is also taken by later authors, notably Rao & Yuan, (2016), and as Darling-Hammond (2016) indicates, these requirements are also influenced by political involvement and changes to policy. Furthermore, Darling-Hammond and Branson (2005) identify that there are conditions for practice for teachers, which are related to the political situation and context in which they are teaching. This is particularly important in the Saudi context as the nation state is a theocracy. In other words the rule of law is heavily influenced by religion and religious codes.

This means that teaching in the country requires understanding of these impacts and crucially how a teacher is seen in the country. For example, teachers are seen as imparters of wisdom, which means that they should be given appropriate status. As such, teaching is a popular profession but as already note the preparation for the role, particularly in an EFL context is currently not delivering required standards. Given the changes that have occurred in SA policy for teaching, the suggestion is that the achievement of professional knowledge requires understanding of the teaching context, curriculums, delivery strategies and that these need to be combined with the development of other more general teaching skills such as classroom management, student motivation and more often, knowledge of IT and its role in the EFL classroom (Hunter-Quartz *et al*, 2016; Kelchtermans *et al*, 2018).

Generally, the primary purpose of teacher education is recognised as being to equip teachers with the necessary skills, behaviours, attitudes and knowledge in order to deliver curriculum content in a way that interests and engages learners (Cochran-Smith *et al*, 2015). In the context of EFL teacher preparation, these factors are equally important, but in addition there is a need to provide them with language teaching specific skills so that they can deliver the right teaching to can improve the learning outcomes for their students (Lengkanawati (2015).

Competent language teachers are needed for many countries and in relation to this need, Nguyen and Hudson (2012) state that there is an increased demand for competent EFL teachers but also a need for effective ways to educate future teachers. This is particularly true in the context of Saudi Arabia. This is because while Arabic is still a medium of instruction in most of schools and universities, and despite Governmental desires to improve standards of English in the country, the subject is frequently given low priority in schools. There are a number of reasons for this, firstly there are a cultural influences that may affect motivation to learn English, particularly post 9/11.as Elyas and Picard (2018) note. In addition, the structural differences between English and Arabic also poses significant challenges to students when learning English language (Dajani and Omari, 2013). The lower level of student motivation towards learning English language is continuously reported as a difficulty for teachers to teach English in Saudi Arabia (Abu-Melhim, 2009; Ushioda, 2009). In such a situation, quality EFL teachers are required to learn how to motivate students to increase the learning opportunities for students in Saudi Arabia but also crucially be able to motivate the students to learn the language, a situation which means effective preparation for teachers is vital. To understand how EFL teachers in Saudi can be supported to deliver effective teaching, it is therefore relevant to examine theoretical perspectives on teacher education before considering the key characteristics of a good EFL teacher.

3.3 Approaches to Teacher Education

The existing literature shows that there are many teacher education models that aim to explain how teacher education should be carried out. Some of these models include the Applied Science Mode (Wallace, 1991), the Craft Model (Randall and Thornton, 2001) and the Reflective Model (Dewey, 1933).

The Applied Science Model posits that teaching is a science rather than an art and as such teachers have to treat teaching objectively. In order to produce effective teachers, they should

be taught research-based theories, which must be delivered by the ‘experts’ in their professional field. The aim of such an education should be to enable the prospective teachers to have adequate skills to apply the learned theories in practice (Crandall, 2000). However, a major criticism of this model is that it gives greater prominence to teaching subject content knowledge than how to teach a subject (Mehlmauer-Larcher, 2012). If the ultimate objective of teacher preparation is to take full classroom responsibility, then one can argue that putting theoretical knowledge into practice is important. Certainly this is the view of Darling-Hammond (2010), Dicke *et al.*, (2015) and others. Achieving this vital element of teaching ability can be improved by providing EFL student-teachers with as many opportunities as possible to apply what they learn during their teacher preparation programme to English teaching in real-life situations (Alnassar and Dow, 2013).

On the other hand, **the Craft Model** assumes that to produce good and effective teachers, the pre-service teachers should be working closely with more senior, experienced or ‘expert’ teachers to develop knowledge of how to teach a subject. This theory argues that it is perfectly alright for novice teachers to learn from experienced teachers by imitating the methods and techniques they use in their teaching. It is also a key assumption of this model that knowledge can be acquired through observation, feedback and practice. As opposed to the applied science model, the craft model has greater emphasis on learning by doing and learning through experience (Roberts, 2016). One problem with this model is that not all ‘experienced’ teachers teach well, but rather they merely cope and fill timetabled lessons (Darling-Hammond, 2010). If such a teacher becomes a mentor or cooperating teacher of some student-teachers, then they may not learn and develop professionally as expected from their teacher education programme.

The Reflective Model, by contrast, argues that teachers can develop their professionalism and skills if they reflect on their own behaviour, actions and decisions. This means that reflecting on a teaching experience, one can evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and improve weak areas in the future through planning and action. This model has received some criticisms from some researchers; for example, Erlandson (2005) and Beverley and Worsley (2007) have pointed out its overemphasis on individualist thinking and the lack of attention to an emancipatory (liberating) dimension of teacher preparation. Reflection on practice and knowledge is however recognised as an important element of becoming an effective teacher, but without support from mentors and supervisors, the reflection process alone is insufficient

to achieve the necessary improvements as Toom *et al*, (2015) and Achugar & Carpenter (2018) note.

These three (the applied science, the craft, and the reflective) models have increased understanding of how teachers can be prepared, and teacher training programmes seem purposely to adopt one these approaches to teacher education. However, there are other emerging approaches that have started influencing the way teachers are trained. For example, the idea of learning communities (increasing co-operation between schools and universities, working together to generate new ideas and put them in practice) has been suggested as a means of developing professional experiences for student-teachers (Le Cornu and Ewing, 2008). For Le Cornu and Ewing (2008), one of the advantages of learning communities is that it has the potential to support student-teachers to work with their colleagues as well as their teacher educators in a reciprocal manner a view earlier identified by Lave and Wagner (1990). Similarly, Hou (2015) notes that learning communities also support the sharing of best practice which may be a crucial factor in encouraging development of teaching practice in a country such as Saudi Arabia.

More recent theories have combined the above traditional models of teacher education aiming at shifting the skills-targeted transmission to a **holistic approach** to teacher preparation (Sleeter, 2004). A holistic view of teacher education encompasses social constructivist approaches and has an emphasis on individual development with an aim to offer a broader understanding and awareness of education, community and world. Sleeter (2004) argues that this approach integrates teacher education pedagogy to create the ‘whole teacher’ with reflective practice, engagement in schools and other learning communities and encourage critical inquiry to education. Such an approach offers a wide range of support to pre-service teachers, including mentored course assignments, the opportunity to question about the teaching profession, challenge the assumptions about teaching, and deconstruct their ideas about teaching. In other words, the holistic approach takes elements of all the other three models, but integrates them into a much more broad-based approach to preparing teachers. University partnership can also play a critical role in closing the gap between what is taught as part of teacher education and classroom practice through consistent communication with schools and practicum offices (Sandholtz, 2002; Bartholomew and Sandholtz, 2009; Eddy, 2010).

Examining the models in the context of which may be the most beneficial in the Saudi context, it appears that currently the Craft Model seems to dominate in EFL teacher preparation in SA. There is a clear focus on applying the learned skills in classroom teaching, although its effectiveness is arguable. Student-teachers also work with classroom teachers during their practicum module and co-operating teachers are appointed to guide student-teachers. However, it is not regarded as the model for the entire teacher preparation programme and the programme does contain elements of the others. The challenge however is that without a clear model to follow, the course content, and thus its effectiveness leads to inconsistent outcomes. The model for the course is however not the only factor that contributes to effective teaching, there are also some identified characteristics of effective EFL teachers which also have a role to play and therefore these are discussed below.

3.4 Necessary Characteristics for Effective EFL Teachers

Several characteristics have been identified to be associated with effective teaching in the EFL contexts. The term ‘teaching effectiveness’ is a highly contested one, with many attributes and dimension (Toussi *et al.* 2011). Effective teaching means different things for different authors. For Kyriakides, Campbell and Christofidou (2002), it is providing enough quantity of instruction, which means student-teachers need to have more contact time with their tutors; however, ‘enough’ for one person may not be ‘enough’ for the other.

An effective teacher needs not only to be equipped with teaching skills and content knowledge, (Ackan, 2011) but they also should have many other characteristics. For instance, Ghanizadeh and Moafian (2010) found emotional intelligence to be important trait for effective EFL teachers as well as teachers in general. This means teachers should be able to control their emotions and handle interpersonal relationships with their EFL students during difficult times. In their subsequent study, Ghanizadeh and Moafian (2011) revealed that self-efficacy also plays a critical role in teacher effectiveness. In an EFL context, self-efficacy can be demonstrated through showing how effective teachers can be in improving learners’ language performance despite their diverse learning needs. The construct refers to teachers’ ability to succeed in teaching in the face of hurdles and barriers they face in today’s classrooms. This is important for teacher motivation, confidence and retention. Effective teaching also means being able to meet course objectives (learners achieving almost all the learning outcomes in a learning programme as well as creating and maintaining positive learning conditions (Yesim,

Sungur and Uzuntiryaki, 2009). A few decades ago, Gadzella (1977) theorised that an effective teacher is one who is interested in and has knowledge in subject matter along with being flexible in delivering learning materials. This may be true; however, effective teachers should be much more than Gadzella (1977) has suggested as there are other activities they perform such as assessing students' performance, (Alnassar,., and Dow, 2013). designing remedial and enrichment activities and having close relationship with parents. More recently, teacher success has been associated with planning lessons with specific goals, assessing learners to know if the learning goals are achieved, giving feedback to learners and teacher's ability to critically reflect on teaching and quality of learning in the classroom environment (Hiebert *et al.*, 2007).

Furthermore, personal characteristics (for example, level of motivation of teachers) have also been linked to effective teaching literature. For instance, Toussi *et al.* (2011) argue that both intrinsic (for example, love for teaching) and emotional (for example, the ability to deal with stress) factors are significant in teacher effectiveness. In their qualitative study involving 76 EFL teachers, Toussi *et al.*, (2011) discovered that self-regulated learning was an effective strategy in teacher education programmes, which student-teachers may need to be successful learners while they are on teacher education programme. In a Turkish study, Yüce *et al.* (2013) studied different types of motivations in choosing teaching as a career. This quantitative study analysed a sample of 283 Turkish pre-service teachers to conclude that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations influenced people choosing a career in teaching. Therefore, preparation of pre-service teachers cannot be completed by only looking at the course design and content of the teacher preparation programmes, but also teachers' personal characteristics including their attitude, motivation and beliefs about teaching because perseverance and determination derive more from personal attributes than external forces.

Lastly, teacher resilience has become an important element in teacher efficacy literature (Day and Gu, 2007). Resilience means "the ability to withstand difficulty and bounce back" from the difficulties (Estaji and Rahimi, 2014, p.453). Teachers with the characteristics of resilience are more likely to persevere in highly difficult situations (Estaji and Rahimi, 2014, p.453). They are also more likely to stay in the profession even though they need to pursue difficult challenges (Day and Gu, 2007) and they become more flexible to change (Beltman, Mansfield and Price, 2011). As teaching English in SA is regarded as a difficult task, having resilience is important for EFL teachers and this trait needs to be highlighted and nurtured in student-teachers preparing to become teachers of English in SA. Clearly there are a range of factors

that impact on the effectiveness of teaching training, integrating the personal characteristics of teachers, and the course content. Indeed, understanding how student-teachers view the preparation they are given is a key focus of this work, and therefore examining existing works in the area can provide a foundation of understanding for the primary data collection.

3.5 Teacher Perceptions

One of the two research questions of the present study is finding about EFL student-teachers' perceptions of the extent to which teacher education programmes develop their English language proficiency. The Oxford Dictionary cited in Benade (2017) defines perception as a way of understanding and interpreting something. In essence perception is all about interpretation and teacher attitudes (Wendt, 2003). Taking into consideration pre-service teachers' perceptions in any teacher education course is important because it will help to evaluate the effectiveness of a teaching programme (Sheridan, 2011). Teachers' thoughts about their students and teaching ability are developed based on their previous experiences and backgrounds (Murphy, Delli and Edwards, 2004). Many scholars that support constructivism (for example, Joram and Gabriele, 1998; Murphy *et al*, 2004) argue that student-teachers come to learn with a set of firm beliefs, influenced by their schooling and upbringing, and strong resistance to change. The existing literature suggests that teachers of EFL demonstrate that there has been a significant focus on investigating teachers' beliefs about language teaching and learning (Farrell and Ives, 2015).

While some authors argue that pre-service teachers' beliefs are 'inflexible' (Cabaroglu and Roberts, 2000), others (for example, Ng, Nicholas and Williams, 2010) argue that their beliefs about teaching change over time. The overall view appears to be that during training there are one set of beliefs about teaching practice, but that as experience increases some of these preconceptions evolve and change (Kayi-Aydar, 2015). Indeed, there is also evidence that involvement in communities of learning can also lead to changes in these views, as members share their own experiences, challenges and achievements, (Aykac *et al*, 2017; Kraut *et al*, 2017). Some of these views are shaped initially by the perceptions of students teachers on their teacher education processes and course.

3.5.1 Teacher Perceptions of Teacher Education

Identifying teacher perceptions of teacher education is important because their views can contribute to develop the quality of teacher education. According to Sheridan, (2011), perceptions are not fixed, but they are developmental and can differ with new learning. Although some researchers have conducted research looking at Arab pre-service teachers' perceptions of teacher education, there is little empirical knowledge pertaining to Saudi pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions of EFL teacher education. However, there are some studies that have examined teachers' perceptions of teacher preparation in Saudi Arabia including science and mathematics teachers.

For example, El-Deghaidy and Mansour (2015) examined science teachers' perceptions of science, technology, engineering and mathematics education in Saudi Arabia. This qualitative study took data from 21 science teachers working in Saudi secondary schools and having analysed the data, concluded that teachers needed a non-Western partnership-based professional development model to be used in teacher education in order to develop both subject content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge.

Research conducted by Al-Asmari (2013) investigated the perceptions of 176 Saudi students undergoing undergraduate programmes in English language at Taif University (English Language Centre). The research aimed at finding out what these students thought about a number of dynamics of English language, such as the language itself and the cultural aspects of English-speaking countries. The researcher discovered a strong positive attitude from the Saudi students towards English and its native cultures.

In addition to this, the same study also showed that the students were interested in learning English because of extrinsic (for example, finding jobs easily) and intrinsic (for example, for the love of learning the language) reasons. Other researchers (for example, Faruk, 2013) also found similar results. For instance, Faruk (2013) reported that the majority of Saudi students had highly positive attitudes towards learning English and had realised that English was a vital language for them in their future.

These few recent studies on teachers' beliefs about EFL teaching suggest that there is positive attitude towards learning English language in Saudi Arabia as opposed the traditional views

about English and its culture. What is less clear is how the actual teacher training programmes are viewed and how they may contribute or otherwise to the effectiveness of teacher practice once qualified. One of the issues already highlighted is that of the basic language skills of teachers of English.

3.5.2 Perceptions on Language Skills

There have been concerns over the current teaching-learning processes being unable to achieve greater fluency in English learning within Saudi Arabia. The term ‘fluency’ derives from a Latin word, *fluentem*, which means flowing, fluidity and relaxed (Lems, Miller and Soro, 2017). Lems *et al.*, (2017, p. 172) pointed out that a fluent speaker has “the ability to simultaneously decode and construct meaning from print”. Thus, a fluent English teacher is able to speak in English without difficulties and provide instructions with ease and comfort. With this in mind, English teachers are expected to have a native-like proficiency in order to be considered a good teacher (Al-Asmari, 2013). Language proficiency, on the other hand, is referred to as the “overall knowledge of target language” or sometimes known as language ‘competence’ (Carrasquillo, 1994, p.65). Therefore, the main difference between fluency and proficiency is that the former is determined based on the ability to use a language, while the latter is about knowing correct way of constructing speech. To have a high level of language proficiency, one needs to have communicative competence, linguistic competence and sociolinguistic competence.

Apart from all these competencies, in the context of language teaching, an effective English teacher should be able to know how to teach different English skills to their students. However, the present research has found that EFL student-teachers were not satisfied with the amount of time and knowledge they received from the Diploma of Education that specifically targeted teaching English skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking. Recent research by Al-Ahdal *et al.* (2014) investigated Saudi EFL students speaking and writing. This study took samples of college level students to collect data and the findings of the research showed that students’ writing ability was better than their oral language proficiency. This may be true of most people in relation to the languages they learn. This suggests that students are not confident in speaking English, potentially because of their lack of confidence and attitude towards using English for daily communicative purposes. This may however also be due to teaching practice used in EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia. According to Al-Seghayer and Saud (2014), teacher

education programmes specialise individuals for English literature and translation, not to teach English using modern language methods. Therefore, there is a conflict between different perspectives on learning a language. If this the case, then the future English language teachers would have deficiency in the knowledge of lesson delivery, particularly in regards to encouraging speaking practice and development of oral proficiency in the language.

Indeed, research has shown that oral fluency of teachers can have a positive impact on student learning. For instance, research that examined the relationship between teachers' ability to ask questions and students' responses by Boyd (2016) found that teachers' "willingness to listen, and wield questioning to follow and selectively support student ideas, purposes, and lines of reasoning, supports dialogic talk for thinking and learning" (p. 370). However, teacher education in Saudi Arabia has been influenced by a centralised system of teaching where teacher-fronted teaching is the dominant way of lesson delivery. This leads to a scarcity of meaningful learning tasks in EFL classrooms, not helping teachers to carry out dialogic talk when teaching. In addition, it is also a commonplace to see the use of Arabic language as the dominant medium of instruction, undermining the importance of English language fluency. These practices do not improve students' confidence but discourage them from asking questions in English lessons. There is also insufficient interaction between teacher and students during the implementation of EFL classroom activities.

Although language proficiency is important for effective language teaching, a lack of it has been reported by some previous researchers. According to Mahib-ur-Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) having proper knowledge of English language is a pre-requisite to become an effective English teacher. However, Al-Seghayer and Saud (2014) provided the following observation about the language proficiency of the students enrolling in to pre-service teacher education programmes in Saudi Arabia:

Most students who join English departments or TEFL programs are not proficient in English and a significant proportion of them graduate from programs at colleges of languages and translation or colleges of arts that prepare them to specialize in translation or English literature. This lack of proficiency is especially true of graduates of colleges of arts, who neither take courses in English teaching methods nor go

through a practicum teaching course for a semester in public schools (Al-Seghayer and Saud, 2014 p.21).

To overcome the existing incompetency of EFL teachers, there are other authors (for example, Başıyurt-Tüzel and Akcan, 2009) who argue that raising language awareness of EFL teacher candidates is important, because this awareness can help improve the effectiveness of their teaching. Başıyurt-Tüzel and Akcan (2009) conducted a descriptive case study in which five pre-service language teachers provided information. The researchers collected their data using different data collection methods, including semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, discussions and feedback sessions and retrospective protocols. The data were collected during a 12-week period. The purpose of the study was to investigate the challenges that non-native teacher candidates of English experience when using English in teaching English during their practicum in real language classrooms.

The researchers observed that the research participants were provided with English language awareness training (grammatical knowledge, applying this knowledge correctly to appropriate contexts and knowledge of teaching English) sessions by supervisors of the teacher education institution in order to help the candidates to improve their English language usages in the classroom teaching (Başıyurt-Tüzel and Akcan, 2009). Although this support was offered to the candidates, the researchers found that the non-native English teacher candidates experienced several challenges during the practicum. According to Başıyurt-Tüzel and Akcan (2009), the candidates found difficulty in conveying the meaning of a word to students in English. The research participants also had some difficulties in certain English grammatical structures and were weak in using English for classroom management. As the research participants had the opportunity to find, analyse and reflect on their English language difficulties, Başıyurt-Tüzel and Akcan (2009) observed that the pre-service teachers became more aware of their needs as English teachers. This suggests that there is a need to provide English language awareness to student teachers in EFL teacher preparation programmes for non-native English speakers.

The findings of this study are very interesting as they represent an important work in the field of TEFL courses because of its focus on language skills. I agree with the author about the importance of including language improvement component for non-native English teachers to

ensure they obtain an advanced level of language proficiency. This idea seems to be highly valuable for Saudi EFL teacher candidates. However, the question remains, who will teach in this type of courses; native or non-native speakers? How long should the course be and what language skills should contain in such as programme? One issue with this area of research is that there is a lack of empirical evidence showing the extent to which teacher candidates are provided with English language skills development activities during the course of their initial teacher training.

Even if a separate module is offered to future English teachers, it is, however, understandable that Saudi students may not be able to achieve native like fluency in English language. This does not mean they cannot be English language teachers. On the contrary, most of the English teachers around the world are non-native English speakers. For instance, Liu (2009) has pointed out that in the case of teaching English as a foreign language, most of teachers are non-native speakers. In a global economy, the number of NNSs is increasing and their role in teaching English has become significant (Liu, 2009). For example, in the USA where most of Saudi students study, according to Liu (2009), nearly 40 per cent of the individuals enrolled in the TESL/TESOL courses were NNSs. EFL teachers being NNSs in Saudi Arabia may not be a problem, but they become ineffective in achieving student outcomes when these teachers are incompetent and do not have sufficient proficiency in English language, which they are trained to teach.

3.6 Pedagogical Aspects of EFL Teacher Preparation

In this section, two key areas of the research questions will be addressed: aspects that help teachers to teach; and aspects that act as difficulties for teachers in applying the teaching methods taught in the teacher preparation courses. This part begins by defining what pedagogy is and goes on to review the existing literature on English language teaching methods, which will be followed by the importance of pedagogical awareness for English language teachers. The chapter then will aim to identify some issues that may not help classroom teaching, including the use of traditional methods, and difficulties in applying modern language teaching methods.

3.6.1 Definition of pedagogy

Defining the term ‘pedagogy’ is a difficult task as it can mean different things to different researchers and authors. For functionalists, pedagogy is about “teaching in schools” (Anderson, 2005, p.53). For others, it may mean many different responsibilities such as classroom teaching, lesson preparation and evaluation of student learning. The style of teaching and the methods used by teachers may affect students’ lives, their academic achievements and expectations (Al-Ahdal, & Al-Awaid,2014).. Thus, pedagogy here is defined as knowledge of how to teach, an element of teacher training which is important for language teachers.

3.6.2 English Language Teaching Methods

Pedagogical aspects have been identified as determining effective classroom teaching. The primary purpose of knowing pedagogical information is to have awareness of how to teach English as part of EFL teacher preparation (Mahib-ur-Rahman and Alhaisoni, 2013). Thus, some researchers argue that pedagogical knowledge is one of the most important aspects of teacher education. For instance, Zhan (2008) investigated the changes to a pre-service language teacher preparation course in China. The researcher collected data from a sample of 490 primary and secondary teachers and conducted a survey questionnaire and follow up interviews during the data gathering process. Of this sample, over 90 percent of the respondents had undertaken a pre-service language teacher education. The researcher was interested in finding out the views of language teaching, the strategies and methods used in English teaching, discovering challenges to teachers own understanding of teaching knowledge and skills, and how to improve pre-service teacher preparation practice. Zhan’s (2008) study discovered three key kinds of teaching skills and knowledge.

1. Pedagogical content knowledge – the researcher found that it was important to improve the knowledge of teaching methods and techniques with new ideas, theories and skills enhancing English teaching abilities.
2. In-depth subject matter knowledge – improving current level of English language competency, developing fluency in spoken language, increasing proficiency in all four language skills, and developing cultural understanding of English-speaking countries.

3. Availability of resources and materials – this is to enable teachers to learn about recent theories and research on the aspects of students, styles of individual learning, strategies and techniques of English language teaching.

Louws *et al.* (2017) also agree with these skills but have an emphasis on teachers being innovative and aiming for continuous learning. However, as Zhan's (2008) study was conducted in the Chinese context, these findings may have little application to English language teacher preparation practices in Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, Zhan's (2008) study is very interesting and relevant to the current research because it renders to ask the question, to what extent do the teacher preparation courses in Saudi Arabia contribute to the development of the three areas the researcher has identified. As found by Zhan (2008), developing the professionalism of teachers is important to provide them with opportunities to improve their understanding and to create awareness of theoretical knowledge of how to teach and improving their classroom practice when it comes teaching English language. These 'other means' may be being able to critically reflect their own practice or develop their capabilities through continuous professional development activities.

Another study that has examined pedagogical aspects of English language teacher preparation is Akcan (2011). This research explored pre-service teachers' learning experiences of English teaching methodology programme in Turkey. In this research, 36 pre-service teachers took part in the research voluntarily among a cohort of teacher candidates taking "English Teaching Methods". The researcher used a multi method approach to data collection and integrated data from class observations, teaching philosophy papers, semi-structured interviews and other materials such as lesson plans and teaching and learning aids used in peer teaching sessions. This study found that the course improved the participants' understanding of different language teaching methodologies. It also found that peer teaching sessions provided them with most value of the course because they allowed them to put theoretical knowledge of different methods into practice. Moreover, this research discovered that methodology sessions provided them with opportunities to find solutions to some potential classroom problems. Lastly, the "English Teaching Methods" course improved the research participants' awareness and understanding of different methods that may be applied in EFL classrooms.

It may be true that methodology courses would create interactive and a reflective learning contexts that may be helpful for would-be teachers' future teaching performance. As found in

Akcan's (2011) study, the course focusing on English teaching methodology was highly valuable to the teacher candidates. However, the question remains, is the "methodology course" applicable in Saudi TEFL programmes? Learning English teaching methods might be useful for Saudi EFL teachers because it would provide them with procedures and techniques of lesson delivery. However, if EFL teachers do not apply the learned methods in classroom, teaching, then learning a diverse set of English teaching methods might not be very useful for them. If it is suitable, then it would be helpful for student-teachers to be effective English teachers, but if not, then they may find the teacher education course partially adequate. Or does this course meet Saudi teacher candidates' needs without the necessary changes to the module? Akcan's (2011) study was conducted in Turkey and for this reason, the findings of this particular study may not be relevant to Saudi EFL context. This is because the school systems in both these countries are different and the attitude towards learning English may also be dissimilar. One of the things that might be different in teacher education in these two countries is the curriculum. While Turkish teacher education programmes offer more time on how to teach language, the Saudi system has modules that have little relevance to English teaching such as mental hygiene and Education in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, it is important to carry out further research on this particular area taking into account the Saudi EFL environment.

3.6.3 The importance of Pedagogical Awareness for English Language Teachers

A language teacher preparation course, without teaching methods course, would be ineffective (Evans *et al.*, 2008). Kiely and Askham (2012, p.496) argue that future English teachers need "the combination of knowledge, procedural awareness and skills, dispositions, and identity which the teachers take from the course as the conceptual toolkit for work in TESOL" (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). Therefore, both subject content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge are necessary to enable teachers to teach in classroom environments.

However, the existing research coming from the Saudi context suggests that there is a large gap between the content provided to English teachers and what future teachers need to teach English language in Saudi classrooms. For instance, Al-Seghayer and Saud (2014) observed

that future teachers were provided with no more than three English-teaching methods courses because the courses were condensed and not fit for the purpose. Furthermore, Shehdeh (2010) and Khan (2011) pointed out that the EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia were not qualified enough to be English teachers because they did not have adequate pedagogical preparation during their initial training. Agreeing with this observation, Al-Seghayer and Saud (2014, p.21) state that the pre-service teacher preparation courses “produce a substantial number of Saudi EFL teachers who are professionally and linguistically incompetent” and these teachers “do not possess enough theoretical background knowledge pertaining to the main factors that affect second-language learning, such as motivation, attitudes, aptitude, and age” of English learners in Saudi schools (Al-Seghayer and Saud, 2014, p.21 - 22).

Apart from linguistic incompetence, it has been reported that Saudi English teachers lacked the knowledge of modern language-teaching methods as well as language testing knowledge, skills and experience. Part of the reason as Alresheed *et al*, (2017) note, is a lack of IT knowledge and the traditional focus of Saudi teaching on teacher centred, rather student-centred approaches. Al-Seghayer and Saud (2014) contend that this incompetence is clearly evident in the teaching of the four language skills, vocabulary and grammar, a view supported by Allam & Elyas (2016). This suggests that EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia have insufficient knowledge of how to teach language skills and the knowledge of most effective language teaching strategies (Mitchell and Alfuraih, 2017). Therefore, there is a need to understand the extent to which pre-service teachers in Saudi Arabia are aware of English language teaching methodology course and its importance to them in their future career. One of the key factors highlighted by the authors above who have identified concerns regarding teaching efficacy in the Kingdom is the teaching approaches used.

3.6.4 The Use of Traditional Methods

Many researchers and authors (for example, Shehdeh, 2010; Khan, 2011; Al-Seghayer and Saud 2014) have expressed their concerns about the methods teachers used in teaching English language. Although EFL teacher preparation courses provide candidates with a wide range of language teaching methods, teachers were observed using traditional teacher-fronted language teaching methods. According to Al-Mohanna (2010) one of the most common methods used by Saudi EFL teachers is the audio-lingual method, in which teachers focus on stimulus-

response approaches to language teaching. This method requires teachers to constantly involve learners in drills of grammatical rules, encourage memorisation of singles words and phrases.

Another traditional language teaching method often used by Saudi EFL teachers is the grammar translation method (Al-Seghayer and Saud 2014). This method requires teachers giving information to learners about English language and its grammatical structures (Al-Seghayer, 2011) and it encourages learners to memorise language elements such as vocabulary and grammatical rules. The targeted outcome of the learning process is to help Saudi learners to translate verbatim a piece of text from Arabic to English language. Therefore, EFL teachers' entire focus of teaching is on the language skill of writing at a sentence-level rather than listening, speaking or reading skills, which are very important for language learning (Al-Ahdal *et al.*, 2014).

Although the traditional language teaching methods are commonly used in Saudi classrooms, it does not mean that the teacher preparation courses only teach these methods. However, the literature suggests that EFL teachers find it difficult to apply modern English language methods in practice in the Saudi classrooms. Therefore, it is important to find out what makes the teachers to rely heavily on the traditional methods in language teaching rather than the modern methods.

3.6.5 Difficulties in Applying Modern Language Teaching Methods

The modern language teaching methods such as the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach and the task-based learning (TBL) seem to be impractical in Saudi EFL environments. The CLT approach theorises that learning a language become effective when learners are offered opportunities to communicate real meaning in context. However, a study by Abahussain (2016) found that Saudi EFL teachers were incapable of implementing the CLT approach to their classroom teaching. Similarly, TBL has a focus on the use of authentic input for language acquisition and providing learners with meaningful materials using the target language. For instance, Nishino (2012) conducted research to investigate the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practice and CLT. Another aim of this research was to find out what socio-educational factors have an impact on the use of CLT. This multimethod research was carried out in Japan, involving high school teachers and taking data from a survey, interviews and class observations. Some 139 randomly selected teachers for the

questionnaires, 12 class observations which focused on how teachers used CLT and 4 interviews provided the data for this particular study. This research found that student-related communicative factors had a positive impact on classroom practices. Findings from the observations and interviews indicated that teachers' beliefs of language learning, teachers' professional development and other contextual factors such as perceived value of teachers and university entrance tests played a significant role in teachers' classroom practices.

In another study, Shawer (2013) wanted to examine the reasons for the failure of CLT to improve student learning in some contexts. This study employed qualitative case studies of two adult educators, interview as well as participant observations. The researcher's assessment of the two educators' practices indicated that there was no inherent CLT problems that should discourage teachers' learning and understanding CLT theory and putting its principles into classroom practices. Shawer (2013) concluded that "communicative classroom practices lead to significant improvements in student communicative competence and four skills, whereas non-communicative practices bring about poor student learning outcomes. Moreover, non-communicative teaching incurs negative consequences for teachers and students more than traditional pattern drill instruction" (p.431).

The lack of application of CLT is, therefore, not restricted to the difficulty in understanding the theory. Shawer (2013) argues that many teachers know what CLT is all about; however, they are reluctant to put it into practice due to the fact that teacher preparation programmes have a greater focus on dispositions and mastery of content knowledge than learning skills that enable pre-service teachers to apply the theoretical knowledge in classroom practice (Orafi and Borg, 2009). This view was also supported by Shawer (2010). More time on applying CLT means less time for transmitting theoretical knowledge to teacher candidates. Increased attention to CLT, with its focus on classroom application, may raise questions about the quality of teacher education and the credibility of teacher training institutions. However, according to Darling-Hammond (2010), more and more teacher education institutions have directed their attention on assessing the quality of pre-service training by increasing time to put their theoretical knowledge and skills into classroom practice. Whether this is the case has not been researched widely in relation to in Saudi EFL teacher education programmes.

Some Saudi commentators (for example, Mahib-ur-Rahman and Alhaisoni, 2013) have appreciated the enormity of changes that took place in language teaching over the last couple of decades. They argue that Saudi EFL teachers should keep abreast with these changes in

language teaching. One of these changes is giving autonomy to language learners rather than transmitting information about English language using such methods as grammar translation method or audio-lingual method. Ellis (2008), for instance, has suggested that the importance of using language teaching methodologies that would enable teacher to give learners opportunity to communicate in the target language. It is the responsibility of teachers to motivate learners and use interactive methodologies that make students engaged and active in learning English will be more useful and meaningful for learners rather than transmitting information in a teacher-controlled environment. The question remains, is there a positive environment in Saudi schools for teachers to use techniques to engage learners? or are teachers willing to integrate and implement new ideas and theories into their teaching practice?. These are issues that need to be explored empirically; however, there seems to be scant research coming from Saudi EFL literature. Therefore, more research needs to be conducted on this topic. In a similar vein, the role of teaching practicum, giving students real classroom experience is recognised as a key element in providing quality teaching, post qualification.

3.7 Teaching Practicum

This section reviews literature on the importance of teaching practice, goals of practicum, approaches to practicum, challenges to practicum and teaching practicum practices in Saudi Arabia. The purpose of reviewing literature on these areas is that practice teaching is one key module of EFL teacher preparation course.

3.7.1 Importance of Teaching Practice

A Teaching practicum is a highly significant component of a teacher education programme. As pointed out by Stimpson *et al.* (2000, p.8), it is “one part of a whole teacher education programme”. Generally referred to as ‘teaching practice’, practicum is a major component in the last segment of a teacher training course. For Richards and Crookes (1988), it is a compulsory course and for Farrell (2007), it is the most important course of any teacher training programme. In this context, Farrell (2008, p.226) offers the following observation: “the practicum has come to be recognized as one of the most important aspects of a learner teacher’s education during their language teaching training program”. Therefore, several authors have recognized the significance of teaching practice for pre-service teachers. The importance of teaching practice has also been expressed by Saudi authors. For instance, in their research article, Mahib-ur-Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013, p. 116) state that “many a times, it has been

observed that people have been selected for English language program with no professional training, no classroom experience, and little or no knowledge of the subject.” In such a situation, practice teaching may be necessary as an important step for English language teachers’ professional development in Saudi Arabia.

However, it is an area that needs more research. For instance, Crookes (2003, p. xi) stated that “while the practicum is considered a core course in most TESOL teacher education programs, compared to many other areas of professional theory and activity it has received relatively little serious study, in terms of conceptual orientation, content, or practice”. Canh, (2014) argues that EFL teaching practice is an ‘underexplored’ area and most of those studies already done in the TESOL practicum come from either some Asian contexts (significantly from Hong Kong) or North America. Thus, learning about teaching practice in EFL teacher preparation in Saudi Arabia is needed.

3.7.2 Goals of Practicum

Teaching practice should be conducted with some clear purpose in mind. Gebhard (2009) provided a list of goals of teaching practicum for initial teacher training programmes.

1. To gain practical classroom experience,
2. Applying theory into classroom actions,
3. Observing and learning from more experienced teachers,
4. Developing skills on how to set classroom objectives, and
5. Challenging, talking about and reflecting on pre-service teachers’ own teaching and learning beliefs.

Achieving these goals is important for people who do not have classroom teaching experience as teaching a number of children can be overwhelming for novice teachers. According to Richards and Crookes (1988, p.9), practice teaching provides pre-service teachers with an opportunity “to acquire the practical skills and knowledge needed to function as an effective language teacher”. However, how to achieve the effectiveness is a question that needs to be answered.

3.7.3 Approaches to Practicum

The inclusion of practice teaching in teacher education programmes is influenced by such theories as sociocultural approaches to learning (Gebhard, 2009), the Craft Model (Randall and Thornton, 2001) and the Reflective Model (Dewey, 1933). According to Gebhard (2009), learning is a socially mediated process which enables people to acquire new knowledge. Inspired by the sociocultural theory of learning, Johnson (2009, p.13) points out that “learning to teach is based on the assumption that knowing, thinking, and understanding come from participating in the social practices of learning and teaching in specific classrooms and social situations”. This theory, therefore, clearly suggests that classroom practice is necessary for pre-service teachers before they are appointed as qualified teachers.

The Craft model (focus on practical experience, student-teachers work in classroom teachers, an involvement of co-operating teacher) also has a strong emphasis on seeking support from experienced teachers, observing their lessons, classroom management and preparation of lessons. What is more, the Craft Model relates to the training perspective of practicum (Gebhard, 2009). This means focusing on learning specific behaviours by pre-service teachers, such as teacher talk, questioning techniques, how to praise students, wait time and classroom actions for inactive learners. Apart from the training element of teaching practice, there is also the developmental perspective to practicum (Canh, 2014). In this perspective, teaching practice is seen as a vital process for pre-service teachers to acquire skills and experiences in order to form an opinion about their own beliefs about teaching and learning. This is possible by reflecting on their own practices of teaching during the course of practicum. Canh (2014) argues that these learning activities and new experiences for pre-service teachers will help them understand about teaching, increase their knowledge about teaching, continue to grow professionally and explore teaching as career. However, teacher education institutions are faced with some challenges to conduct practice teaching.

3.7.4 Challenges to Practicum

Out of the developmental perspective, Canh (2014) has identified two key challenges to teaching practice as important to consider. The first challenge is the issue of maintaining quality of supervision by senior teachers and teacher educators (Ochieng’Ong’ondo and Borg, 2011;

Youngs and Bird, 2010). The second one is about how to increase professional growth of pre-service teachers through practice teaching (Richards, 1998).

Several studies have been conducted around the world which were interested in identifying challenges to the practicum module of teaching programmes. Richards and Crookes' (1988) study examined the role of supervision in practicum. This study used questionnaire survey of TESOL teachers and researchers wanted to know how the teaching practice was conducted in US graduate TESOL courses. Having analysed the questionnaires, the researchers revealed that "the practice teaching typically begins with observation of the cooperating teacher, with the student gradually taking over responsibility for teaching part of a lesson, under the supervision of the cooperating teacher" (Richards and Crookes 1988, p. 20). These researchers also confirmed that there were no particular criteria to select supervisors for monitoring the pre-service teachers' teaching.

This begs the question, how can the quality of supervision be assured if any teacher is attached to student-teachers. In his study, Farrell (2008) discovered that the support and guidance received by pre-service teachers from their attached teachers were minimal. In a more recent Kenyan study, Ochieng'Ong'ondo and Borg (2011) found that supervision of pre-service teachers was uncoordinated. The same study also revealed that the student teachers received very general feedback, which was directive and evaluative. This means the preservice teachers did not receive subject-specific pedagogy, which they were supposed to receive from the coordinated teachers (Ochieng'Ong'ondo and Borg, 2011).

There may also be cultural variations that have an impact, for example Canh's (2014) study aimed at investigating pre-service teachers' experience during their 6-week practice teaching period. The researcher collected data from five Vietnamese EFL pre-service teachers by recording information in a diary. The analysis of the data in this study revealed that the teachers did not want to adapt the new theories they learned from the teacher education programme but rather they were strongly inclined to use the cooperative models of teaching (cooperating teachers). This study also found that teachers failed to reflect critically on their classroom teaching. If this is the case, then an important part of teacher education is missed because reflective teaching has been promoted as a means of teacher professional development (Pollard, 2008). The outcomes from Canh's work in relation to approaches to teaching may have

implications for the Saudi context as the Vietnamese model of teaching and views of teachers as instructors rather than collaborators in learning is similar to that historically seen in Saudi. Although Canh's (2014) study has contributed to the current research in terms of providing insights into the challenges to the developmental perspective of practicum, it was conducted in Vietnam, a culture that is different from Saudi's and hence, EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia may or may not have similar problems.

Similar views exist in Turkey, and indeed in a study undertaken in 2006 Seferoğlu explored EFL pre-service teachers' reflection on methodology and practicum aspects of English teacher education programme. This qualitative case study collected data from 176 senior year students at the Middle East Technical University in Turkey, who provided information about their evaluation on all methodology and practice teaching modules of the teacher education course. The data were collected a few days prior to the participants' graduation. This study showed that pre-service teachers thought that there should be a close link between practical application of what they had learned and classroom practice but that they had not experienced this link during their teacher training (Seferoğlu, 2006).

Additionally, the pre-service teachers who participated in this study unanimously agreed that teaching practice module was the most valuable and beneficial for them from the whole teacher preparation programme. This probably because it would give them confidence to use teaching methods knowledge into practice in order to become effective teachers. Therefore, the researcher recommends to focusing on language teaching methods and putting them into practice in English language teacher education programmes. Seferoğlu's (2006) message seems to be very relevant to Saudi context, given the challenges of increasing quality of teaching in the country, and indeed this is a primary argument of the current research; that is there is a need to change the curriculum of the existing EFL teacher education programme in Saudi Arabia to have a strong emphasis on what kind of English teaching methods and to provide more opportunities for pre-service teachers to put theoretical knowledge into classroom action and practice.

3.7.5 Teaching Practicum in Saudi Arabia

Like many other countries, practicum is a vital component of Saudi teacher education courses. Teacher education institutions like the English Language Institute of the King Abdul Aziz University publish guidance about how teaching practicum should be conducted. Such

guidelines offer criteria (for example, the definition of an ideal mentor) to select cooperating teachers/mentors for student teachers. For instance, the handbook titled “The Practicum in TESOL: The Role of the Mentor” describes that a mentor should have at least three years of teaching experience and this experience should be in teaching the same content area. However, such guidance is not always followed in practice.

As already noted, many researchers (for example, Al-Seghayer, 2011; Mahib-ur-Rahman and Alhaisoni, 2013) have reported problems associated with English teaching in Saudi Arabia. Describing the common style of teaching, Alrabai (2014) states that teachers of Saudi English language are authoritative and dominant in classrooms. The primary role of these teachers is to transmit knowledge rather than helping children learn and facilitating the learning process. As a result, children are made passive receivers of knowledge rather than giving them opportunities to use English language in classrooms (Alkubaidi, 2014). The overwhelming support for this view suggests that teaching practice would have developmental challenges for student teachers. The pre-service teachers may have new ideas about teaching language and they may be willing to try new methods during their practice teaching such as task based learning or other more student-centred approaches indicated above. However, the influence of a cooperating teacher may have a significant impact on pre-service teachers when it comes to applying new ideas and modern language teaching methods, they learned from the teacher preparation programme.

Most often the novice teachers would not receive support or further guidance from school on classroom practice nor can they contact their educators (Farrell, 2012). According to Farrell (2012), new teachers would require assistance from senior teachers and school on lesson planning, classroom management and lesson delivery. If such assistance demands the old style of teaching and the application of traditional methods, then practice teaching may not deliver its intended purpose and goals in the Saudi context at present. However, on the other hand, creating conditions for student teachers to apply new ideas and language teaching methods, then they may develop their understanding of the benefits of the modern language teaching approaches such as CLT. While this may be the case, it is less clear the extent to which Saudi pre-service teachers are given the opportunity to apply new language theory into practice during their practice teaching. Therefore, there is an urgent need to carry out further research on teaching practicum practices in English language teaching environment in Saudi Arabia.

3.8 English Language Learning Materials

Teaching English requires teachers to make important decisions to select or make learning aids that will enable students to learn English. According to the Input Hypothesis of second language acquisition (Krashen, 1985), ‘comprehensible input’ can facilitate language acquisition. This type of input means providing learners with language items that are a bit more than their present level of language competence. To do this, learning materials teachers provide to their students play an essential role in the language learning process.

The term ‘language learning materials’ is used to refer to the textbooks and other resources used by teachers to deliver their lesson (Tomlinson, 2011, p.2). For Al-Bedaiwi (2010), any materials used by teachers in their teaching are regarded as language learning materials. These materials included textbooks, DVDs, flash cards, photographs, maps and even some social media networks such as YouTube (Tomlinson, 2011). However, it is often reported that Saudi EFL teachers heavily depend on textbooks. The textbooks used by Saudi schools are not produced nationally or locally, but they are developed and produced by international publishers (Mitchell and Alfuraih, 2017). However, these materials are rigorously reviewed by the Ministry of Education before they are distributed for student use. According to Mitchell and Alfuraih (2017), this procedure is being followed even today in Saudi Arabia for new editions of learning materials. This practice has enabled the Ministry of Education to provide English language teaching materials that are standardised and closely linked to the national curriculum and Saudi culture (Mitchell and Alfuraih, 2017).

However, concerns have been raised on the extent to which the textbooks and student’s workbooks have met the needs of students. In their research paper, Mahib-ur-Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) provided the following observation pertaining to learning materials:

The mushrooming growth of ELT around the world creates a condition to develop a large and varied number of textbooks and materials in the markets. As a result, many of the writers and publishers start writing and publishing ELT textbooks and materials for the commercial purpose with minimum level of linguistic features. Hence, these textbooks and materials fail to meet the learners’ needs and baffled the syllabus

designers and other administrative bodies to find out the best textbook from the market. Like many other countries, the syllabus designers and the higher authorities of various schools and universities of Saudi Arabia are also unable to choose an appropriate textbook for their students. Therefore, selection of appropriate ELT textbooks and materials is another point of concern (p. 115).

Mahib-ur-Rahman and Alhaisoni's (2013) analysis suggests that there is a need for teachers to develop materials that meet the needs of learners and the skills and knowledge of making such materials should be included in teacher preparation courses. Some authors (for example, Lockwood, 1998) point out the importance of producing self-instructional materials (individualised learning) as a means to helping teachers to meet the needs of their students. Self-instructional materials are designed for individuals or small groups as learning activities. One difference between self-instructional materials and textbooks is that the former arouse interest while the latter assume interest (Lockwood, 1998). If materials can be produced by teachers taking into consideration the learners' needs, then it would be easier for teachers to achieve the learning objectives, whereas if the textbooks are used, then it would save teachers time and money, but effective learning may not take place.

In his research, Albedaiwi (2011) investigated the engagement of Saudi teachers in the development and the production of EFL learning materials to cater for the needs of the students. Data were collected from six male EFL teachers through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. This study found that the teachers responded differently to adapt the learning materials based on learners needs. Al-Seghayer and Saud (2014) have commented on the status of material production in English language context in Saudi Arabia. They pointed out that English teachers in Saudi schools have limited practical experience in producing materials, evaluating and implementing them in ways that increase learning in English language classrooms. Albedaiwi (2011) argues that more research on this area is needed to know Saudi EFL teachers' practices on the development of English learning materials.

3.9 Approaches to Teacher Professional Development

A number of modern approaches are available that may help Saudi EFL teachers to teach English in the classroom. To understand how these may be of benefit, the constructs of self-reflection, feedback and teacher observations are briefly considered.

3.9.1 Self-Reflection

Dewey (1933) popularised the idea of reflection and stated that it was a specialised way of thinking. Subsequently, Schon (1983) put forward the theories of ‘reflection in action’ (thinking about an action while doing it) and ‘reflection on action’ (thinking about action afterwards). According to Schon (1983, p.26), “we reflect on action, thinking back on what we have done in order to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome”.

These ideas have now found their way into education and teaching. Pollard (2008) argues that the reflective teaching is a process in which a teacher reflects on their classroom practices. It is now seen as a process that not only supports the development of teaching professionals but also a means of maintaining their professional expertise (Pollard, 2008). Reflective teaching is regarded as an important practice that “should be personally fulfilling for teachers” and a gradual “increase in the quality of the education provided for children” (Pollard, 2008, p.5). Pollard (2008) also argues that reflective practice is an evidence-based activity which allows the development of teachers at initial training, in their first year of practice, those who assist in classroom teaching and experienced professionals.

Recognising the value of reflective teaching, many educational authorities have integrated the idea of reflective practice into different teacher development activities, including performance management and continuous professional development (Sibahi, 2015). For instance, in England, the performance management for teachers now require teachers to be reflective practitioners “to think about what they do well, to reflect on what they could share with colleagues, as well as identifying their own learning needs” (DfEE, 2001 cited in Pollard, 2008, p. 4).

Recently there has been increased academic attention on the continuous professional development of Saudi teachers, including EFL teachers. For instance, Sibahi (2015) conducted a study to explore reflective practice among college EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. This qualitative study used four semi-structured interviews to collect data. The analysis of the narrative data revealed that these teachers were aware of reflective practices and understood the value of it. The study also indicated that the research participants used different models of reflection on their daily teaching practice. Despite this, the researcher found uncertainty regarding reflective practice being used as a tool for teacher development due to a lack of professional development support.

In addition, in their research, Al-Ahdal and Al-Awaid (2014) explored reflective practice in language teacher education programmes in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. The authors reported a number of limitations for teachers becoming reflective practitioners, including teachers prior teaching models, lack of time, the demands of teacher education courses, reluctance to reflect and the influence of pre-service teacher education institutions. Therefore, there is a need to know whether reflective teaching has gained any further attention in Saudi EFL teacher education programmes at present.

3.9.2 Feedback

Giving feedback to student-teachers is another way they can learn and develop their teaching practice. Ramaprasad (1983, p.4) defined feedback as “information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system parameter which is used to alter the gap in some way”. Thus, the emphasis on feedback, according to this definition, should be on modifying the learning gap through effective means. Laurillard (2002) pointed out the need for feedback by stating that “action without feedback is completely unproductive for a learner” (p.55). White (2017) notes how feedback facilitates learning. He says that “giving feedback to students on how we view information, with the aim of helping improve their understanding, knowledge and abilities, is fundamental part of the teaching process” (p. 163). Therefore, feedback plays a key role in teacher education and student-teacher development.

Feedback has been researched taking two theoretical perspectives; behavioural and cognitive. In terms of behavioural feedback, providing and reinforcing the right answer has been suggested (Contijoch-Escontria, Burns and Candlin, 2012). From a cognitive viewpoint,

feedback is seen as important for concept development, verification and elaboration of information (Contijoch-Escontria *et al.*, 2012). Both these ways of feedback are important for learning.

In the context of teacher education, instructor feedback, cooperating teacher feedback and peer feedback have been suggested as important contributors to continued improvement. The cooperating teacher feedback is based on their supervision of student-teacher performance during their practicum. This type of supervision may take different forms. For instance, according to prescriptive models of supervision, the purpose of feedback is to inform the student-teacher about their weaknesses and deficiencies (Bailey, 2006). On the other hand, Bailey (2006) points out that a reflective model of supervision puts feedback as a vehicle to inform the teacher an alternative view of classroom practice. Most often it is the prescriptive models that the cooperating teachers would use when giving feedback during practicum in teacher education in Saudi Arabia. However, more research needs to be undertaken in order to be better informed about the feedback practice used by Saudi schools.

3.9.3 Teacher Observation

An alternative model that may help English teachers in their classroom practice is observing other more effective teachers' teaching. The rationale for this is that it has been argued that one valuable activity that teachers can engage in to improve their future teaching is to see how others teach. While applied linguistics, literature and education are important knowledge for a prospective teacher, general educational theory and practice have become more influential in teacher training in recent times in English language teacher education (Crandall, 2000). According to Crandall (2000), there has been more emphasis on gaining practical experiences through practice teaching, observation and material development.

Peer observation has been regarded as an important way to improve teaching, including English language. According to Blackwell and McLean (1996), peer observation of teaching is a tool for the improvement of teaching as well as stimulating reflection on action. For Peel (2005), peer observation can provide professional support and it plays a key role in "quality monitoring processes' (p.489). Furthermore, it is a process of giving critical feedback to teachers in a non-threatening manner as most of the feedback aims for developmental rather than evaluative goals. This aspect of peer observation is important because, according to Le and Vásquez (2011),

feedback itself is a highly delicate and complex process. Le and Vásquez (2011) argue that most of the research on teacher observation relates to cooperating teachers. Thus, a very few studies have looked at the features of lesson observation and feedback in relation to pre-service teachers (Le, 2007). In particular, the effectiveness of teacher observation on teacher learning and how it helps to teach English in Saudi EFL context is not clearly understood. Therefore, more research is needed in this area to find out the extent that observation can help facilitate in improving teaching practices in EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia.

3.10 Summary and Research Questions

The current research attempts to answer two research questions, set out in Section 1.6 relating to pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions of the preparation and training they receive in Saudi Arabia. The literature review has suggested that there are a number of ways in which English teachers can improve their classroom practice. It has looked at the current trends of EFL teacher education in Saudi Arabia, approaches to teacher education, some important characteristics of effective teachers, teacher perceptions towards language proficiency and confidence in teaching. What is already known is that both subject knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge are necessary and acquiring knowledge in applied linguistics, education, literature, and teaching methods is vital for teachers to become effective EFL teachers. However, there are many other areas that teachers need to consider in order to help them grow professionally and build careers as English teachers.

In this context, teaching practice and educational theory are as important as other components of teacher education. Finding ways in which student-teachers can apply theory into practice seems to be very important for pre-service teachers. The existing research from Asia, North America and other parts of the world shows that there is an urgent need for pre-service teachers to have opportunities to apply what they learn from the teacher preparation programme in the real classroom practice. Literature also suggests that student-teachers believe that they need more time for practice teaching under more competent experienced teachers. However, in the context of Saudi Arabia and other non-native speaking English teachers expressed that there is a need for them to develop language skills, in particular in the four language skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing. Apart from the language proficiency and competence, student-teachers can have other tools that would help them develop their classroom practice. These include reflective teaching and becoming reflective practitioners, developmental feedback, and

peer observation and feedback. Although this information is available in the literature, what is not known is what aspects of EFL teacher education in Saudi Arabia are perceived to be helping student-teachers to teach what do not. Whether the Diploma programme provides the student-teachers' expected level of language development is also not known. Furthermore, most of the literature on these areas come from outside the Saudi context and therefore there is a need to explore ways in which teachers can develop their teaching skills within the context of Saudi Arabia. The next chapter will outline the research methodology, which will be used to address the research questions stated above.

CHAPTER FOUR: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to justify the methodological considerations that have been adopted to answer the above questions. As stated earlier, the aim of the research is to explore EFL student-teachers' perceptions of the Diploma to find out which aspects help them teach English in the classroom and to explore the extent to which it has contributed to developing their English language proficiency. Therefore, this research will be a qualitative study rather than a quantitative one because the former enables collecting people's perceptions (Punch, 2009), and the researcher is interested in finding out student-teachers' perceptions of the Diploma, whilst the latter can be used to collect numerical data for statistical analysis (Creswell, 1998). The primary research question is "*How well do the pre-service EFL teachers think the Diploma of Education has prepared them to be EFL teachers?*" and the following two questions have guided the researcher in the present study.

1. Which aspects of the Diploma of Education do the EFL student-teachers identify as helping them to teach English in the classroom? And which do they identify as having not helped them?
2. What are the EFL student-teachers' perceptions of the extent to which the Diploma of Education programme develops their English language proficiency?

A qualitative study follows an interpretative research philosophy, as discussed below.

4.2 Interpretative Research Paradigm

The current research will be carried out based on a belief that a researcher aiming to understand people's (in this case pre-service teachers) views, opinions and attitudes would require adopting an interpretive research paradigm. This line of thinking is considered appropriate for the current research because of its exploratory nature. The researcher does not intend to generalise any particular hypothesis about human phenomena. Rather, as Radnor (2002, p. 29) states, the aim of interpretive research is "to come to an understanding of the world of the research participants and what that world means to them" by considering their subjective knowledge and contextual understanding of the situation (Cohen, Manion and Morison, 2007, p. 21). Similarly, Punch (2009) has pointed out the importance of focusing on understanding individuals' views in an interpretive study. Therefore, the interpretative researcher is interested

in reflecting on individuals' views in relation to the research questions being answered (Creswell, 1998).

From the educational research perspective, the interpretative approach to research regards research participants as having multiple views, perceptions and interpretations of a given situation; hence, their views cannot be generalised meaningfully. For this reason, according to Cohen *et al.* (2007), the research questions need to be explored through the lens of the research participants rather than the stance adopted by the researcher alone. This line of enquiry will be adopted in the current study as it seeks subjective views held by the pre-service teachers regarding the potential value of the Diploma programme to help them teach English in EFL classrooms.

Interpretivists generally conduct qualitative studies (Creswell, 2014). Creswell (1998, p. 15) defines it as “an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem”. Creswell (1998) goes on stating that a qualitative researcher is interested in building a holistic picture of the situation by analysing words that explain the views of participants and situating their research in a genuine setting. As for the current study, a qualitative approach will enable the researcher to allow the research participants to give their opinions and views about the Diploma. It also will offer an opportunity to understanding subjective meanings associated with the value of the Diploma programme and to know the views and perceptions of student-teachers on the aspects that are useful for them to teach English in classrooms.

4.3 Research Methodology

Many terms are used to define a methodology of a study, including ‘a strategy’, ‘a plan of action’, ‘a process’ or ‘a design’ (Crotty (1998, p.30). Whichever term is used, it refers to the use of research choice and methods to find answers to research question(s). The primary purpose of research methodology is to select and justify the choice and methods of research (Wellington, 2015). The selection of a specific methodology is influenced by many factors, including the research context, the aim and objectives of the research and the availability of resources (Creswell, 2014).

As stated above (section 4.1.), the present research has adopted an explorative methodology. The decision to use this methodology was informed by the current study's epistemological

stance and interpretative position as the researcher believed that reality can be ascertain through considering multiple views and examining knowledge in the research area rather than examining the situation from a single point of view (Creswell, 2014). Taking a multiple-perspective approach might have provided conflicting views pertaining to the reality of the Diploma in question; however, these views have contributed to the richness of the present study as the researcher attempted to understand why the informants expressed opposing views.

4.4 Research Methods

Many authors (for example, Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Creswell 1998; Crotty, 1998; Silverman, 2013) hold the view that qualitative studies involve collecting data using qualitative methods, such as interviews, participant observations, and focused-group discussions. As Denzin and Lincoln (2011) have pointed out, these qualitative methods provide qualitative data, which can be used to interpret, to reflect upon them and to make sense from people's experiences. In many educational studies, the research question(s) guide the researcher to determine the most appropriate research methods to be employed in their research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

The research questions in the current study require the use of qualitative methods rather than quantitative methods as they aim to explore perceived value of the Diploma in question. Whilst quantitative data (i.e. numerical, statistical information) has advantages, for this study which is examining perceptions and beliefs of pre-service EFL teachers, the gathering of statistical information would not have provided sufficient depth of information to clearly understand the issues and meet the research objectives. However, the selection of specific methods is influenced by many factors, including the research context, the aim and objectives of the research and the availability of resources (Wellington, 2015).

After giving consideration to these issues, two research methods will be chosen for qualitative data collection; namely, semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

4.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Due to the need to find out student-teachers' perceptions of the value of Diploma, the researcher will consider semi-structured interviews to seek qualitative data. One of the advantages of it will be that it allows the researcher to ask the research participants about the general themes previously identified. This will encourage the interviewees to respond to the specific areas

related to the Diploma and to provide sufficient room to explain their opinions and views (Radnor, 2002) about the value of the Diploma. Semi-structured interviews will also be flexible, enabling for collection and analysis of data simultaneously. Although quantitative researchers can also follow a simultaneous approach to collecting and analysing data, a quantitative design is highly inflexible and structured (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). According to Daymon and Holloway (2010), increased flexibility becomes an important value for qualitative researchers as it allows participants to provide information using their ‘own trains of thought’ (p.224). In this context, semi-structured interviews will give the interviewees an opportunity to express their views freely, raising their concerns about the Diploma (Dörnyei, 2007). This aspect will particularly be beneficial to this study as it seeks insights into understanding the value of the Diploma for ELF teachers. In addition, with regard to this study, the semi-structured interview was used for the following reasons listed by Wisker (2001):

1. **It addresses the need for comparable responses:** subjects interviewed for this research need to be asked the same questions. Therefore, if unstructured interviews were used, the researcher would not have the opportunity to ask the same questions, as each interview would develop differently and there would be no room to compare data among different subjects.
2. **The need to go in-depth with the interviewee’s responses:** the researcher is not after specific limited answers from the subjects. For example, they are going to need to go in-depth with the EFL students-teachers’ answers.

If only structured interviews were used, it is very likely that the chance of going into detailed answers would disappear. Whilst self-reporting by the participants is very useful to know what they thought about the issues in hand, it is not possible to check whether what they had told the researcher matches with what they actually did and happened in schools. The fact that there is nothing that the researcher can do to check the validity of the responses will be a limitation of the semi-structured method (Bryman, 2012). The researcher will not measure the participants’ English competence using any tests for their English standard. Therefore, it will not be possible for the researcher to know whether the student-teachers’ English competence is the actual problem that makes teaching English difficult for them. However, what is important in this study is to find out the perceptions of the EFL student-teachers on the aspects that help them

teach English and those that do not. Another limitation of the research will be that interviews can provide very subjective perceptions of the student-teachers, increasing bias (Bryman, 2012). These interviewees may not provide an accurate picture of what is actually happening in the ground. Despite this, the current study is considered to be important because if this study is not to be carried out, there will not be a way to find out what the students-teachers actually think about the Diploma programme. As the researcher sees it, it is important to know EFL student-teachers' perceptions of the Diploma in order to improve its effectiveness in the future. Therefore, this study is valuable.

4.4.1.1 *Interview Location and Atmosphere*

The interviews for the current research will take place in different places such as meeting rooms and university classrooms. The main reason for doing this will be because the researcher wants to make it convenient and comfortable for the research participants to provide information. This arrangement will be important because when participants have no worries about the place, they will feel at ease when they express their views pertaining to the Diploma (Bryman, 2012). The environment in which the interviews is conducted can best be described as conducive, informal and convenient. The interviewees will also be provided with refreshments in order to make the atmosphere suitable for social interaction and friendly. The researcher will spend about 10 minutes having informal discussions to get to know the interviewees before starting the interview questions. However, the main risk of pre-interview meetings will be that it may influence the respondents' answers to the research questions, if the meeting happens to outline the main topics of the interviews (Bryman, 2012).

4.4.1.2 *Recording Interviews*

All scholars (for example, Maykut and Morehouse, 2002; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011) hold the opinion that recording interviews without the consent of the research participants is unethical. Following this guidance, the researcher will obtain participants' permission before taking part

in the study to record his\her interview digitally. With the informed consent, the interviews will be recorded using digital recorder and each recorded interview is expected to last between thirty to fifty minutes. (See Appendix V) Another ethical issue related to recording will be about the storage of the recorded interviews. The researcher will give assurance to the participants that the recorded interviews will be kept securely by using password protected laptop and will be transcribed digitally by the researcher. (See Appendix I for a sample of a fully transcribed interview)

4.4.2 Document Analysis

In addition to semi-structured interviews, a sample of which can be seen in Appendix II. the researcher will also collect some information for this study using documents, in relation to the Diploma. Document analysis is one of the methods used by qualitative researchers (Bryman, 2012). The documents will be obtained from the universities in question and they are expected to reveal contents of the Diploma. The documents analysis will follow a three-stage approach as described below:

- a. Preparation - in this stage, Diploma syllabus will be identified and collected for analysis
- b. Review – in this stage, the documents will be studied, taking notes and pinpointing the relevant information. The aim of this stage is to uncover any mismatch between the Diploma syllabus and what the participants expected of the course.
- c. Wrap-up – in this stage, the curriculum contents will be categorised under different headings such as ‘education-related courses’, ‘technology-related courses’, and ‘teaching-related courses’ ((Bryman, 2012)).

The analysis of modules taught by each University will help the researcher to draw some conclusions of the differences between the content areas of the Diploma. It will also be useful in identifying where the focus of the Diploma is in terms of taught contents. The primary

purpose of analysing the documents will be to see whether there is a mismatch between the existing syllabi of the EFL teacher preparation Diploma and what is expected of the course by the EFL student-teachers who will become English teachers. The researcher will compare the curriculum contents with the perceptions expressed by the research participants in the interviews to draw conclusions on the aspects that will help and those that do not help student-teachers teach in Saudi English classrooms.

Although this method will be useful in identifying the curriculum content of the Diploma in question, the documents may not offer any explanations why those modules will be included, and others may have been excluded, nor will it explain how they are delivered and assessed. Despite the limited use of these documents in the current study, they will provide evidence to prove that there is no separate module focusing on improving student-teachers' English language skills.

4.5 Participants

A total of fifteen (7 males and 8 females) pre-service EFL teachers will take part in this study. They are undertaking the Diploma of two different universities in Saudi Arabia. The participants' ages ranged from 25 to 28 years and seven of them do not have any previous teaching experience, while five have only a year experience. Only three of them have two years' of teaching experience prior to attending the Diploma programme (see Appendix VI for pen portraits of respondents). The inclusion of participants with a diverse range of teaching experience will enable the researcher to explore differences of opinion between inexperienced and experienced teachers.

4.5.1 Sampling Methods

The choice of sampling strategy will have a profound impact on the quality of qualitative research findings (Silverman, 2013). Therefore, it is very important to select an appropriate

sampling method (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Although qualitative researchers have many sampling methods available for them such as convenience sampling, snowball sampling and self-selection sampling, the current research will use a purposive sampling method. While the above sampling methods may be used by quantitative researchers, a purposive one is more likely to be used by qualitative researchers (Silverman, 2013). One reason for this is because a small number of sample in qualitative research is required while a large sample size is needed in quantitative studies (Silverman, 2013). The decision to use a purposive sampling procedure will be made following the guidance offered by scholars (for example, Cohen *et al.*, 2007, Creswell, 2009) as they argue that purposive sampling is suitable for small-scale interpretative research.

Taking this sampling method, the selection of the research participants will be decided based on the criterion that the informants must have studied the Diploma to provide any useful information about the value of the course. The main benefit of this sampling method will be its flexibility as it enables the researcher to select the EFL student-teachers who are willing to participate in the current study. This can also be a potential limitation as the selection of research participants by the researcher may lead to researcher biases (Silverman, 2013). To avoid this, an even balance of recruits was taken, and numerically coded then randomly selected for participation in the final study and to engage in the interviews. However, it will help to “ensure strength and richness to the data” (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p. 114). Thus, the purposive sampling method will be the most appropriate for the current study.

4.5.2 Gaining Access

Having decided the sampling method, the researcher will contact the universities where the research participants will be selected. A meeting with the university administration will be arranged to get permission to access the research participants and interview them.

A list of EFL student-teachers will be collected from the two universities, which will enable the researcher to contact the research participants. Initially, the research participants will be contacted through emails to find willing participants who wish to contribute to the current study. Having identified individuals who are willing to take part in the study, separate meetings will be held to introduce the researcher and to provide information about the research. Subsequently, the researcher and the individuals will have telephone communications to organise interview sessions. It will be culturally difficult to interview the opposite sex in Saudi Arabia; hence, telephone interviews will be carried out for this group of EFL student-teachers. The importance of considering cultural sensitivity is pointed out by Shaw (1994). Therefore, the approach taken to have access to research participants in Saudi Arabia may be different from one that can be applied in the western world.

4.6 Piloting the Study

As Silverman (2001) pointed out, it is necessary to pilot the research instruments before the actual research is conducted if its validity and practicability is to be increased. Following the guidance of Silverman (2001), the researcher will pilot the interview schedule (the pre-planned questions) in order to ensure the questions are clear and valid. The testing of the questions will also help to remove any problems related to the wording of the questions, particularly as the interviews were conducted in Arabic and then translated to English during analysis. The piloting of the questions will be carried out with the assistance from the researcher's two colleagues. The comments, amendments and suggestions offered by them will be taken on board before the actual interviewing will be carried out with the research participants; particular attention will be given to make sure the research questions provided information about EFL student-teachers perceptions of the Diploma, which will be used to address the research questions.

4.7 Data Analysis

The collected qualitative data will be analysed using a thematic analysis approach. According to Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012), both exploratory (content-driven) and confirmatory (hypothesis-driven) approaches can be used to analyse qualitative data. However, for the current study, the former will be chosen rather than latter because, as noted by Guest *et al.*, (2012), content-driven approach is most appropriate to answer questions such as ‘what aspects of Diploma do EFL student-teachers think are the most helpful for them to teach English?’.

Figure 1 below illustrates the procedure used to analyse the qualitative data.

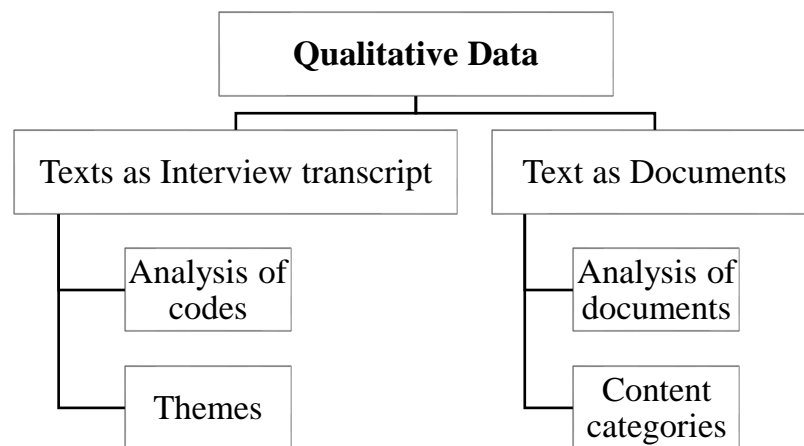


Figure 1: Qualitative data analysis process

One of the problems with the thematic analysis is that the process will be very time consuming.

The researcher will have to transcribe the 15 interviews before meaningful interpretations can be drawn. The generation of themes will require reading and re-reading the transcripts for many times to familiarise with the data and summarise the contents in the interview transcripts.

However, the thematic analysis approach will have a significant advantage for the current research. It will provide detailed descriptions of what aspects of the Diploma can help EFL student-teachers to teach English in the classroom. It will enable categorising curriculum contents into meaningful categories. Moreover, it will give an in-depth analysis of the interview transcripts to find out EFL student-teachers’ perceptions of the extent to which the Diploma is

expected to develop their English language proficiency. Therefore, thematic analysis will be the most appropriate analysis tool for the current study.

4.7.1 Interview Analysis

As shown in Figure 1, a two-stage approach will be used to analyse the interview data. The first stage will involve the organisation and preparation of the data analysis. According to Creswell (2007), the process of qualitative data analysis involves preparing and organising the data for analysis. The stage two will involve coding , summarising and finding themes, which then will be presented as findings (Creswell, 2007).

4.7.1.1 Preparation and Organisation of Data

I will follow a three-stage approach to analyse the data based on the guidance provided by Creswell (2009). Firstly, having conducted the interviews, all the interviews will be recorded using a digital recording equipment to ensure that all data will be safe and not lost. Next, I will transcribe, translate and then code them using Nvivo11 software. The value of using this software is that as King (2004) notes, the tool is a form of data management that enables a research to index segments of text according to themes, but also to link notes to coding and undertake search and retrieve operations to examine and explore relationships between themes in a study such as this. The process of using NVIVO for this work required preparing the data and identifying key themes as indicated in the staged process below.

4.7.1.2 Stage 1: Data Preparation for Analysis

Stage 1 of the data analysis will entirely be on transcribing then translating the interviews to prepare the data for analysis. Having recorded the interviews, I will transcribe them using the Microsoft Word processor. All transcriptions will be in the Arabic language and I will translate everything into English, to ensure that the translation is accurate I will use a “Back-translations” approach by asking a PhD bilingual friend to translate some parts of my

interviews into Arabic and 95% is expected to be correctly matched up with the original transcripts. I will spend over two months transcribing and translating my 15 interviews. Once the data have been transcribed and translated, the transcripts will be fed into the NVivo 11. The decision to use NVivo is for both as a personal preference to learn how to deal with large set of qualitative data and because my university makes it available. An advantage of using NVivo will be it generates a large amount of information to find patterns and themes common among the transcripts (King, 2004). The use of the software to analyse a large amount unstructured wordy data is expected to be much more convenient than analysing them manually because it will save both time and effort. According to Bryman (2008), software can increase efficiency in data analysis and save time for the researcher to explore for more issues and ideas from the data.

The analysis of data will begin bearing in mind the primary research question, which is to find out the EFL teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of the Diploma of Education in preparing them to be EFL teachers. Thus, the research participants will be asked questions on the following five areas. These were selected following examination of existing literature in the area which identified these areas as the main focus of discontent and dissatisfaction with the DoE and thus the potential areas of greater impact on how the overall course was seen in terms of preparing the student-teachers for practice:

1. Syllabus
2. Language proficiency
3. Teaching practices
4. Assessment
5. Overall evaluation

The next stage involves coding the responses given by the research participants on the above areas.

4.7.1.3 Stage 2: Coding

Bryman (2008) described coding as a process of dividing the data into different parts by giving names. According to Zacharias (2012), a significant part of qualitative data analysis is to code information and look for different concepts and themes. A code is essentially a way of identifying significant parts of data describing the contents from the transcripts and in this context, it refers to single words and phrases as shown in a snapshot of my main codes and themes below in (figure 1) and any click on a particular “node” will open up its contents of the themes and sub-themes

Two techniques will be used in the data analysis: word repletion and key-words-in-context, although there are many more techniques for qualitative data coding (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). These two techniques will be preferred to others because the aim of using coding is to identify the most frequently occurring perceptions of the research participants regarding the value of Diploma and the use of these two techniques is sufficient for achieving this purpose. I will start the coding process by preparing the “nodes” using Nvivo software and I will categorise my codes under the big five nodes which represent the main areas the participants’ responses to as shown in Table 1 (Syllabus, Language proficiency, Teaching practice, Assessment and overall evaluation). I will then re-read each node separately and start to create sub-nodes under each of the five categories. After the categorising process, I will finally group the initial codes into three categories which facilitate the analysis according to my three research questions. However, initially, the following process will be applied to generate codes and themes (Figure 2).

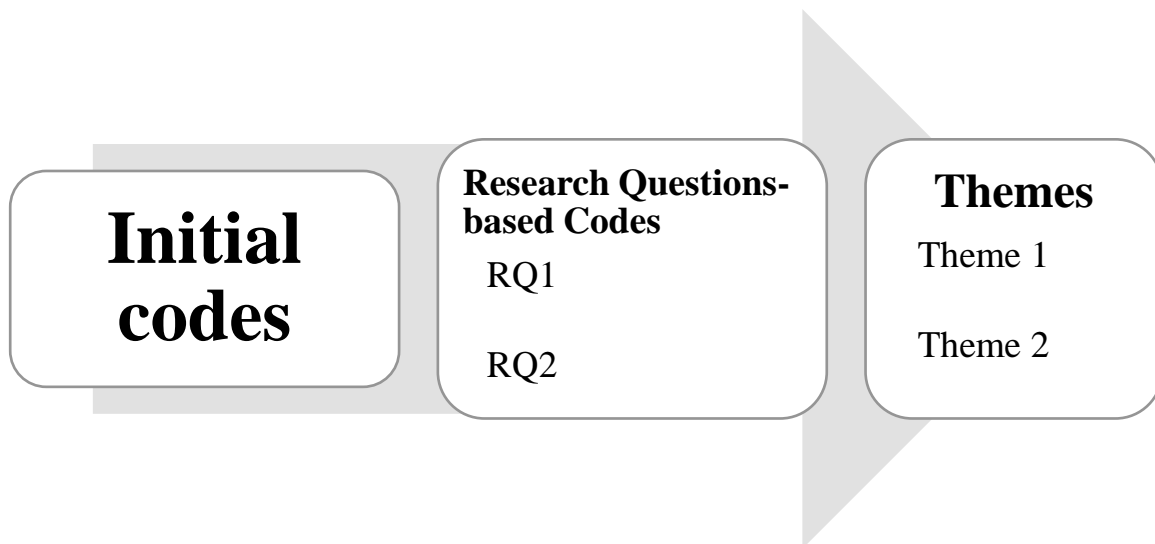


Figure 2: The coding process

Subsequent definition of the codes and themes will then be undertaken and a breakdown of the themes, and their definitions, can be found in Appendix IV and are further explored and explained in Section 5.2. An open-ended research question requires a number of ways to think and angles to look at needing to answer several sub-questions before it is fully or partially answered (Booth, Colomb, and Williams, 2008). Therefore, research questions need more than one theme to have a good answer. The process of coding will involve thorough reading of the entire transcripts many times. There will be a need to re-read the transcripts (only the interviewees' answers without the researcher's voice) to ensure that I understand what they are trying to say, also to make sure that all the information is correctly put together. The coding process, which followed guidelines in Bazeley and Jackson (2016) for use of Nvivo, also requires examination of potential codes within the transcripts, and subsequent categorisation of these within the five core areas of the research, i.e. (Syllabus, Language proficiency, Teaching practices, Assessment, Overall evaluation). The process will be commenced through application of Nvivo software and preparation of nodes. Following multiple readings of the transcripts, excerpts which match the initial nodes will be selected, before sub-nodes are created in each category. In essence, as an example, should an excerpt show a match to the

syllabus node, this will be categorized under this main node and excerpts discussing training will be categorized under teaching practice. The same process will be employed for all transcripts, applying the initially identified nodes. Following this the initial nodes (and therefore their sub-nodes) will be separated into two categories that relate to the two research questions of the study.

In arriving at the themes, the selected codes will be copied into Microsoft word file to facilitate further analysis to identify final potential themes (See Appendix II) . As shown in (Table 2) the key phrases will be highlighted and the key words such as language proficiency, Arabic and speaking skills will enable completing the themes. Memos will assist me with the “thematic analysis” process since under each node I will state my reflections and understanding thus will be the basis for my thematic analysis.

4.7.1.4 Stage 3: Developing Themes

In this stage, the aim of the data analysis will be to develop the data analysis based on thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Bryman (2008, p.700) defines thematic analysis as “a term used in connection with the analysis of qualitative data to refer to the extraction of key themes in one’s data”. The researcher will be interested to answer the question, “What is the most important themes for the research?” There are several phases that need to be followed when carrying out a thematic analysis, and Braun and Clarke (2006) listed these as follows; Firstly, the data will be thoroughly read repeatedly to get familiar with the contents in the transcripts. Then, I will develop the initial codes by using Nvivo 11 and with the guidance of the research questions, which will be followed by searching for more themes. This will lead to reviewing the themes and refining them to ensure they are important for findings. The next step, then, will be to define and name the themes, which will be emerged from the responses. Lastly, these themes will be reported as the final themes. As already stated, I got 15 transcripts which I coded into nodes. Using the NVivo software really helped me in developing my themes. I will have

coded my data based on Nodes in NVivo11 I will coded my work thoroughly and I assume the nodes as my preliminary themes (See Appendix II for a sample of data analysis stages example)

4.7.2 Interrater-Reliability

Interrater-reliability is the degree of agreement achieved in a study. It is a way of establishing a degree of reliability by checking that others will have interpreted the text in the same way and agreed on the same themes the researcher identified. According to Stemler and Tsai (2003), there are three aspects to be considered in conducting interrater-reliability tests: purpose, nature of data, and resources available. The purpose of conducting the interrater reliability in this study will be to ensure that others can also deduce similar themes from the data. As the collected data will be non-numeric and written texts, there may be many different interpretations and meanings and thus, there is a need to check whether a high level of agreement to the themes identified by the researcher. However, the degree of interrater involvement in qualitative data analysis will depend on their experience, available time and the researcher's ability to pay for their services (Stemler and Tsai, 2003).

In the case of this study, two of the researcher's friends will help to establish the degree of reliability. The researcher will give those parts of the transcripts and jumbled up codes and get them to match them up with the transcripts. In this way, interrater-reliability will be established.

4.8 Research Trustworthiness – Validity and Credibility

Guba and Lincoln's (1989) framework for maintaining quality standards of interpretive research requires the researcher to consider trustworthiness of the research. Bryman (2008, p. 700) defined trustworthiness as "a set of criteria advocated by some writers for assessing the quality of qualitative research". Two elements of the trustworthiness criteria are discussed here.

4.8.1 Research Credibility

Research credibility concerns about checking the researcher's interpretations with the research participants (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). To meet the criterion of credibility, the researcher conducted informants' validation procedure, following the recommendation of scholars in this field like Guba and Lincoln (1989). The validity of the Diploma course was confirmed by the universities in question and the performance of these universities is monitored and evaluated by the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the information used in the current study was verified and hence, credible.

4.8.2 Confirmability

The confirmability criterion is concerned about asking whether or not the research data can be identifiable and tracked to its primary source (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). According to Bryman (2008), the researcher must act in good faith in order to ensure confirmability of the research. To meet this criterion of trustworthiness, the researcher has provided the views expressed by the pre-service EFL teachers, eliminating any researcher biases and preferences. Lastly, an independent reviewer has helped the researcher to ensure reliability of the information, giving confidence that the findings reflected the views expressed by the research participants.

4.9. Ethical Considerations

The importance of ethical considerations in educational research cannot be overstated. For example, Wellington (2000, p. 54) stated that "the main criterion for educational research is that it should be ethical". To maintain trustworthiness of this research, the following ethical issues will be considered.

Firstly, the researcher will ensure that the participants will not be harmed in anyway during the process of the research. Denzin and Giardina (2007) point out that a significant responsibility of a researcher is to ensure that his/her research participants are free from any harm, including

psychological, social and physical harm. The researcher will also arrange the interview locations and times after considering this issue; thus, no harm is expected to be done for the research participants. Another ethical consideration will be to inform fully the research participants about the research objectives and its purpose. The informed consent will be obtained from the Universities and the pre-service EFL teachers who will take part in this study. In addition, the participants' privacy and confidentiality will be respected. In this context, names of the university and the research participants will be removed from the research report to anonymise and to maintain public confidentiality. Lastly, the researcher will seek voluntary participation from the research participants, because only those pre-service EFL teachers who are willing to contribute to this research will be invited to be interviewed by the researcher.

Before the data collection process, a Certificate of Ethical Research Approval form has been submitted to the ethics committee at University (See Appendix III) and approved from the first time. Then, I will be able to gain the final permission from two universities in Saudi Arabia in order to interview their EFL students-teachers. (See Appendix V).

4.10. Limitations

Recognition of research limitation does not weaken the research and affects its trustworthiness (Iphofen, 2009). Like other studies, the current research will have some limitations. Firstly, the use of two methods with a small number of cases to collect data may be seen as a limitation because it put barrier in collecting data from other sources such as classroom observations or collecting data from lecturers. Perhaps data could have been collected from schools, where the pre-service teachers did their practical teaching. However, as an overseas student, the resources for collecting data from these other sources may not be available. Most significantly, time constraints will become a major factor in data collection.

The collection of data from the said interviewees will not be as easy as previously thought. A significant amount of resources and time will be spent on organising the interviews, recording and transcribing them. Contacting participants of the opposite sex will pose many more difficulties. If the process of data collection and analysis is proved to be an easier task than what has been suggested, the researcher will use multiple methods to arrive at the research findings. However, the amount of data available from the interviews and document analysis are expected to be sufficient to answer the research questions. Despite this, the insider-view used in this research will likely contribute to biases because the researcher has previous knowledge about the Diploma programme as well as has the experience of being an English teacher in Saudi Arabia. Even then, this background knowledge will contribute to interpret the data and to draw an informed conclusion based on the data.

4.11. Conclusion

This chapter has provided a description of the research design used in the current study. It has discussed the research philosophy, approach, strategy, choices and method of data collection in relation to the research questions. The sampling strategy, the selection of research participants, the procedure of data collection and analysis has been discussed. Furthermore, the chapter has considered the ethical issues and how these have been addressed and lastly, it has discussed the most significant limitation of the study. The next chapter will be dedicated to reporting the analysis of the data and presenting the findings.

CHAPTER FIVE: Findings Chapter

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the findings on Saudi EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions regarding the Diploma of education program. As already mentioned in the methodology chapter, qualitative data was collected through interviews from University A and University B. The study examined five key areas of a teacher training Diploma course in Saudi Arabia; i.e. the syllabus, English proficiency, teaching practice, and assessment. The focus of this chapter is to present the most salient themes that emerged from the interviews.

The main research question that the research aimed to answer is how well do pre-service EFL teachers think the Diploma of Education has prepared them to be EFL teachers? Along with this core aim, there were two sub-questions as indicated in Section 1.6.

To answer these research questions, the passages and texts from the interview transcripts, with similar ideas and concepts, were grouped together to find what patterns were emerging. Having analysed the data and undertaken continuous coding, many more themes emerged. For example, under the major theme, "The need to improve English proficiency", the following sub-themes emerged:

- a. Developing four language skills,
- b. Developing English proficiency
- c. Inadequate focus on improving English skills

5.2 Finding the Key Themes

As reported in the preceding chapter, a two-stage approach – (1) organisation and preparation of the data analysis, and (2) coding, summarising and finding themes – was employed to arrive at the findings. Using the qualitative data, the following codes, themes and sub-themes were identified (Table 2).

Table 2: Initial codes, themes and sub-themes

Main Areas	Codes	Themes and sub-themes	Frequency of occurrence
Syllabus	Modules	Most useful modules	28
		Language improvement	22
	Connections	Connection between Diploma and bachelor's degree	16
		Improving language skills	15
	Instructions	The use of Arabic in teaching	16
	Literature	Value of teaching literature in bachelor's degree	15
		Reasons why literature modules are irrelevant	2
		The need to link literature to school curriculum	2
		Unimportance of literature for ELT	3
	Teaching	Improving Language Skills	15
		Lack of focus on improving language skills	23
		More emphasis on theory than practice	47
		Traditional methods of teaching	30
	Suggestions	Perceived changes to Diploma	10
Adding new modules		5	
English skills development modules/English proficiency		8	
How to teach young children		7	
2. Removing module to increase language skills courses		27	
Language proficiency	CLT	Importance of CLT	3
		Application of CLT in classroom teaching	7
	Proficiency	The need to improve English proficiency (section:5.3.1)	59
		Developing four language skills	25
		Developing English proficiency (section:5.3.2)	44
		Inadequate focus on improving English skills (section:5.3.3)	32
	Benefits	Benefits of English modules	11
		Increase vocabulary	2
		Confidence	9
	Barriers	Obstacles to language development	5
Lack of teacher preparation		9	
Inadequate focus on English skills development		7	
The use of Arabic in teaching		6	
Teaching Practice	Experience	Teaching experience	57
		Peer teaching	14
		Application of theory into practice	23
		Evaluation	19
	Approaches	The use of CLT in classrooms	17
		The use of Arabic in teaching	3
		Practical classroom teaching	20
		ELT material preparation	17

	Self-evaluation	Reflection and self-evaluation	2
		Giving feedback	15
	Observations	Experienced-teacher observations	8
Assessment	Methods	The use of multi-methods	5
	Criteria	Awareness of assessment criteria	18
Overall course evaluation	Evaluation	Overall effectiveness	11
	Reasons	Reasons why the course is useful/not useful	7

The codes then were used to develop themes. Table 3 show how the transcripts were used to find the emerging themes.

Table 3: Codes into themes

Codes	Parts of the transcripts	How themes were emerged	Emerged Theme
English Proficiency	...they do not care about our interest or understanding... I cannot say that this Diploma has prepared me to teach English Language improvement ..I do not think the bachelor has prepared us very well in the area of language proficiency have not got the chance to practice the language	key-words-in context Repetition of the same idea	The Need to Improve English Proficiency
Syllabus	...It did not focus on how to teach English... I do not see the communicative approach effective with our Saudi students	key-words-in context Repetition of the same idea	Lack of Language Teaching Methods
Teaching practice	I do believe that we have not had any chance to practice the language there was not any focus on How to teach English	key-words-in context Repetition of the same idea	Applicability (putting theory into practice)

Figure 3 below gives an illustration of how qualitative data were used to develop codes and themes using NVivo.

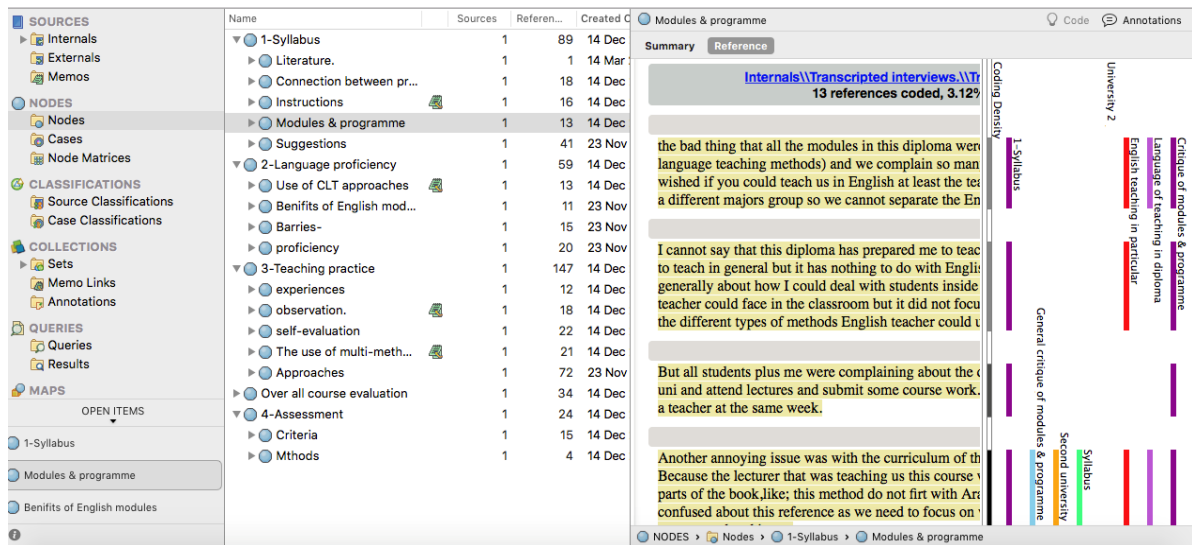


Figure 3: A snapshot of codes and themes using NVivo

Having analysed the qualitative data, this section reports the findings in two parts. Initial pen portraits of the respondents were given, and these can be found in Appendix VI.

5.3 Emerged Themes

A number of themes and sub-themes have emerged out of the data analysis about 26 themes and 17 sub-themes, shown in Table 2. These themes were refined using the six-step approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006) described in the subsection 4.7.1.4 above. The refinement of the data led to two key themes based on their occurrence as already indicated in section 5.2 above. Reading through the interview transcriptions, one can find these themes being repeated several times, although they are said in different ways. Thus, other themes and categories of information were rejected.

Although there were a number of themes, the following two themes the following two themes appeared multiple times (as shown in table 1, frequency of occurrence) , suggesting a high level of importance in relation to the student-teacher’s perceptions.

1. The need to improve English proficiency
2. The importance of putting theoretical knowledge into classroom practice

These two themes have been selected among all the other themes because they occurred most often in the responses. For example, as shown in Table 3, the need to improve English skills have been recognised by the majority (11 the participants, although it was expressed differently. Some examples include “they do not care about our interest”, “I cannot say that this Diploma has prepared me to teach English” and the most important module is “language improvement”. Similarly, on putting theoretical knowledge into practice, participants have repeatedly mentioned on the importance of practice. For example, “there was not any focus on how to teach English” and “I do not believe that we have not had any chance to practice the language”.

These two themes will be discussed below in details with the relevant sub-themes and supporting evidence from the respondents. The sub-themes covered here are those which appeared to have the largest impact on the overall perceptions of the students. Other sub-themes, which were identified in Section 5.2 were deemed to have less significant impact on perceptions. This does not mean that they are not important, but the key themes covered in this section are those which it was felt would have the largest influence on how the overall DoE was seen by the students.

5.3.1 The Need to Improve English Proficiency

The current study has found that there was a mismatch between what the Diploma offered to the students and what they expected from it. One of the expectations was that the learners’ English language proficiency would be improved by taking the course.

A point that some of the participants stressed was that teaching English as a foreign language has specific skills and corresponding teaching methods that need to be learned and practiced. Specifically, a foreign language teacher needs to learn how to teach reading, writing, listening and speaking, which are each linked with his or her own methods. This view is reflected in Saleh's comment:

In English there are four skills to be taught and each one has a specific strategy for delivery. For me, the Diploma has not prepared me, or provided me with effective strategies for each skill. (Saleh, University B)

If this were the case, then the English language teachers currently undergoing the Diploma course and those who had graduated would have underdeveloped language teaching skills. This would mean that the quality of teaching in schools would be compromised although many resources are spent by the government on producing competent England language teachers in Saudi Arabia.

Some of the participants have recognised the importance of preparing English teachers separately from other university students who are being trained to teach subjects such as Arts, Science and Mathematics. Farah has explained it as follows:

We need a well-qualified spoken English teacher for us alone without getting mixed up with other majors, answering our questions, training us in the first term before the practicum, teaching us how to teach reading, writing, speaking and listening. I found online that there are special approaches and procedures for teaching each skill, so why has it not been mentioned to us in this Diploma? (Farah, University B)

As Farah has stated, there are technologies that could be used by teachers to develop students teaching skills. However, focusing the methodology courses specifically on English language

teaching can only be done if the Diploma participants of English language are separated from the rest of the students, with other majors. However, a significant barrier to such an arrangement is the difficulty of finding a suitable lecturer. Hassan from University B expressed this issue clearly as follows:

We have tried to find a lecturer from the English department to instruct us teaching methods because we need someone specialist in our major and he will teach us in English also. He would help us, for example, on how to teach each skill (reading, writing, listening and speaking). But there was no response from the Diploma department. Finally, they taught this module which I think the most important one in the whole Diploma in Arabic and with a doctor whose major is math! (Hassan, University B)

Therefore, the limitations of resources, most importantly the lack of availability of qualified teachers, may be the main reason for the Diploma Department to deliver common teaching methodology courses to students who are specialising to teach different subjects. This can also limit the amount of concentration on language teaching methods. Al-Seghayer (2014) argues that only 10 per cent of the total courses taught by English departments in Saudi universities represent English teaching-methods.

5.3.2 Developing English Proficiency

There is a greater necessity to develop proficiency in English language skills, which teachers of other disciplines such as science, technology and mathematics do not face in Saudi Arabia. Concerns about developing and maintaining English language proficiency were not only present, but pressing, to all participants. It was an important lens through which they evaluated their experience in the Diploma. These concerns bridge through the bachelors, the period before the Diploma, the Diploma itself, and their experiences after.

All participants, with the exception of one from University B, considered that mastering the English language is a key element for teaching English, and that mastering the methods for

teaching is not enough: “*otherwise how he could teach something that he could not master?*” (Haifa, University B). This suggests the importance of teachers of English being proficient in the language itself in addition to having teaching skills. Such responses echo some of the previous researchers’ arguments on the English standard of the participants who took EFL courses. For example, Al-Seghayer and Saud (2014) stated that most of the students who enrolled in EFL courses at both English Departments and Arts colleges lacked proficiency in English, but a large majority of them still graduated from these courses. “This lack of proficiency is especially true of graduates of colleges of arts, who neither take courses in English teaching methods nor go through a practicum teaching course for a semester in public schools” (Al-Seghayer and Saud, 2014, p. 21). The need to have a high level of language proficiency is expressed one of the participants as follows:

I do think it’s essential for any English teacher to be proficient in speaking, reading and writing. How could he teach the language that he couldn’t master? He would be ashamed!! (Amal, University A)

Some Saudi EFL researchers (for example, Shehadeh, 2010; Khan, 2011) associate the lack of English proficiency among teachers as the main reason for the teacher training institutions failing to provide English teachers with sufficient pedagogical preparation. Although Saudi English teachers were qualified, Khan (2011) contends that they should not be given qualified status to teach EFL in Saudi Arabia. Thus, teachers’ quality is linked to low level of students’ motivation and engagement and holding negative attitudes towards learning English language in Saudi classrooms.

5.3.3 Inadequate Focus on Improving English Skills

The participants’ responses indicate that the Diploma programme did not focus on improving the students’ English language competency. Hani (University A) said, “We’ve missed the

language in this Diploma”. Despite this importance of developing English language proficiency as part of being an EFL teacher, participants indicated that neither the bachelors nor the Diploma provided them with the necessary information and instruction in this regard. They did not find that the bachelor or the Diploma provided them with opportunities to practice English language skills. This has been exemplified from Rehab’s response:

I think there was not a good speaking practice during our bachelor, because our lecturers were not trying to engage us in any discussion, we were just listeners. (Rehab, University A)

When asked how they perceived their own language proficiency to be, participants indicated that they wished it was better. When prompted regarding the source of their language proficiency, participants stressed that neither their bachelor nor the Diploma were supportive in improving their English. In fact, some participants from University B shared that it is through outside sources (e.g.: educational videos) that they were able to improve their English

I used to watch movies a lot, even though I’m graduated from English department as I’m still not that confident when it comes to speaking because there was not much focus on our speaking skills in the bachelor degree. (Ahlam, University B)

5.3.4 Mismatch between what is Expected and what is Taught

The data analysis also suggests that there was a mismatch between what the EFL students expected to achieve from the Diploma course and the instruction that they have received. Many respondents said that the Diploma did not give them the English language proficiency that they felt was needed to be an English language teacher. For example, Muna (University A) said, “...it’s so important for English teacher to be proficient in the language that she is trying to

teach". In addition, Amal (University A) expressed her view about the failure of achieving the expected results as follows:

...it was a very general Diploma - we were expecting to focus more on our subject which is English but there were only two courses (English teaching methods 1&2) and it not taught in English (Amal, University A).

The failure of not providing sufficient language practice in the Diploma may be attributed to the fact that students are made passive in the classrooms and did not take any responsibilities for their own learning. More importantly, those who were responsible for delivering the course should also take some responsibilities of not delivering the quality of education expected by the learners. Therefore, it is about the responsibilities of both the provider and the receivers that have led to the mismatch between what is delivered and what is expected.

5.3.5 A Major Barrier to Improving English

One key obstacle that negatively affected the improvement of students' English language proficiency is the use of Arabic as a medium of instruction at the universities. Most of the participants reported that the Diploma was taught fully in Arabic, which they found problematic since they were preparing to become EFL teachers. However, English language courses are taught by teachers trained to teach English as a foreign language in Saudi universities. There was a sense that the Diploma should have addressed the issue of how to improve spoken English in particular, for which there were minimal opportunities (the practicum was the single exception, when applicable). Some participants reported that no classes were taught in English during the Diploma programme; others said that only one or two classes (English teaching methods) were in English, but not in full.

This Diploma lacked the use of the language while teaching; like we were wishing for the methodology modules to be taught in English rather than Arabic for all teachers. (Waleed, University A)

Even in those few modules that were taught in English, participants felt that there was teacher-oriented teaching leading to the students being simply passive learners. They thought the learners' involvement should be increased, providing them with more opportunities to speak English during the methodology lessons. Nouf's response reflected this view as he says:

Even though a few lecturers were using English language in their teaching we have not gotten the chance to practice the language. We were just listeners. I wish that our lecturers had used different approaches and strategies to engage us. (Nouf, University A)

Such an approach to teaching at universities contributed to having insufficient opportunities to practice language skills during the Diploma. From the responses, it is clear that students were made passive learners, implying that lecturers used teacher-centred teaching and traditional methods to deliver their lessons. This reduced the students' ability to involve and take charge of learning in the classroom situations. For example, Farah echoed that the students were made passive listeners because she gave the following response:

We did not practice the language in the bachelor. I could say we were listeners, and in the Diploma we have not even heard the English language. (Farah, University B)

Thus, the traditional style of "chalk and talk" method was dominant in the course delivery and there was a belief that the tutors' role was to transfer information rather than ensuring that learning has taken place. Probably for this reason and obviously delivering the teaching-method modules in Arabic, two participants, one from each University, even expressed having raised their complaints to the University, asking for changes in teaching style but no changes were made, re-emphasising the view of Darling-Hammond and Branson (2005) regarding the context of teaching:

The bad thing is that many modules in this Diploma were taught in Arabic even [English language teaching methods]. And we complained so many times about this point, that we wished they could teach us in English at least the teaching methods, but they said we have a different majors group so we cannot separate the English ones for just one module. (Mohamad, University A)

The educational situation and system in Saudi is informed by the overall law of the country, and as such, the flexibility of adopting a new student centred approach to teacher training could be highly challenging. On the other hand, teaching a foreign language requires specific skills and methods that should be addressed in the Diploma, because effective language teaching can be achieved with the knowledge of various approaches to teaching as well as linguistic knowledge of English language. As Al-Seghayer (2014) points out, one or two teaching methodology courses to EFL teachers would not give them sufficient knowledge of teaching skills, but rather English teachers should be offered more courses in English language teaching methodology and other relevant areas of teaching English as a second or foreign language. Thus, the current research finds that English language proficiency, teaching skills and knowledge of English language are needed for Saudi EFL teachers.

5.3.6 Most Important Modules in the Diploma

The respondents were asked to rank the Diploma modules according to the most important for them to be English language teachers. Table 4 show the summary of the data analysis.

Table 4: Module ranking according to the importance for the student-teachers

Ranks	Modules			
	Educational courses	Language Improvement courses	Knowledge courses	Literature courses
1	4	11		
2	10	4	1	
3	1		7	7
4			7	8

Total	15	15	15	15
--------------	-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------

As shown in Table 4, 11 out of 15 respondents (73%) ranked language improvement courses as the most important for them in the Diploma course. This means that only 4 out of 15 (27%) thought educational courses were more important than courses that aim to improve language proficiency and language skills.

However, according to the general view of the respondents in the current study, presented above, the participants were unhappy about the lack of focus on improving language skills as part of teacher preparation programme as expected by them. Like many other teacher-training programmes across the world, teacher training in the UK delivers general learning theories as part of instructional psychology, which will develop into more subject specific teaching methods. For example, English language teaching courses offered by the University of East London, leading teacher training institution offers pedagogic grammar, theories of second language learning, different methods of language teaching (eg. communicative approach, direct method or task-based teaching) and preparing English language teaching materials (University of East London, 2017). As an example of best practice in developing effective courses therefore, this institution could be a good model for the Saudi context because it appears that teacher training in the UK aim to teach generic pedagogy as well as subject-specific knowledge rather than focusing on improving language proficiency.

5.4 The Importance of Applicability

The practice of what is learned in the Diploma, and the applicability of that knowledge in practice, were key issues in participants' understanding and evaluation of the program and the individual modules. Some researchers (for example, Lave and Wenger, 1990) contend that trainees should be able to apply what they have learned from a course and act appropriately in a 'community of practice' (schools). In the case of teacher education, student teachers are

expected to demonstrate the applicability of the theoretical knowledge they gained from a teaching course by putting the theoretical knowledge and reflective capabilities into practical knowledge and skills.

Overall, the opportunity to observe others and exchange feedback was a valuable experience when available. For one student, even though there was peer observation activity, it seemed that more benefit was derived from observing the experienced teacher than observing a novice: “I’ve benefited greatly from observing the experienced teacher, more than my colleagues.” (Hassan, University B).

Therefore, these responses indicate that there are many advantages and disadvantages of working with students from other subjects and also between peers and students to more experienced teachers pairing. As this aspect of EFL teacher preparation is important, the author will revisit and further explore it in the discussion section.

5.4.1 Applicability and Practice at all Levels of the Diploma

The second main theme that emerged from this study was the emphasis that participants put on applicability and practice as they evaluated the quality of the Diploma. The term ‘applicability’ can be defined as the quality of theoretical knowledge being appropriate to the needs of teaching conditions (Fry, Ketteridge and Stephanie, 2015). This included English language practice, which was already presented above, but went beyond this single aspect of EFL formation. “Practice” was the eleventh most frequently used word (length 4+) from all the interview data with 79 counts, only behind words that were to be expected due to the nature of this inquiry (the first ten most common words were: teaching, English, modules, teacher, language, methods, courses, Diploma, students, and think).

5.4.2 Focus on applicability

When asked to identify the most and least useful modules, putting theory into practice is a key consideration. For instance, Hassan's (University B) comments on the modules he found most useful are reflective of the general way in which participants approached this assessment, emphasizing the usefulness of what was learned in actual teaching practice.

English language teaching methods 1&2 helped us on how to prepare a good lesson plan with its objectives, aims and how to choose the best approach that fit perfectly with your lesson. (Hassan, University B)

As a matter of fact, some participants even went further in their expectations for these courses and referred to a greater desire regarding what was being taught in the Diploma. Referring to the same modules, and just after praising them as the favourite ones, one participant added although the modules were useful,

“we were looking for deeper understanding on the approaches and methods that we could use in our teaching” (Haifa, University B).

This same criterion was used to identify the least favourite modules in the Diploma. Overwhelmingly, courses that were perceived as not useful or applicable were in this category.

We did not notice any application for these [literature] modules in the real practice at classrooms. (Mohamad, University A)

The only module that I could say is useless is Education in Saudi Arabia (...) because it has nothing to do with teaching. It was all about the establishments of each university in Saudi Arabia and I do not care. (Nouf, University A)

I will change the way that some of the courses have been taught. For example, courses like counselling and guidance, educational psychology and mental hygiene (Rehab, University A)

Participants' focus on the application of theoretical knowledge spread to all areas of the Diploma. These include knowledge about teaching methods, increasing the opportunities to put the new teaching methods into classroom practice and enhancing relevance of teaching methods to student teachers' experience. In addition to being used to evaluate individual modules from the Diploma, it was also important when thinking about the assessments used by lecturers, and their experience in the practicum.

For the participants, they felt that the assessments should be focused on developing skills. The few complaints that were expressed about these assessments, different from not having clarity about them, was that some were not useful.

The assessment for [test and measurements] could be more practical rather than just theoretical, for example they could do a workshop on how the English teacher could design an exam. (Waleed, University A)

The lecturer said, I need you to do big project that she could invite all the department's people and the dean of the departments as well, even if this project was not that useful for the students. And we worked hard and paid lots of money on the project and on the hospitality, including food and drinks for her guests. In the end she gave us the full mark, but we learned nothing of this show off project. I do prefer if we had an assignment about how we could design school activities and everybody could be encouraged to design something that we could practice later on at school. (Muna, University A)

As the last reference, in particular, illustrates, participants are more concerned with gaining actual skills, rather than just getting good grades and receiving the certificate. The expectation

is that the Diploma should provide them with all the required skills to be an EFL teacher, which includes mastery of the language and completion of the measurement test, as detailed in the previous section, as well as specific skills such as lesson development, identification of appropriate methods. What this suggests is the previously highlighted issues of teaching emanate more from the courses provided than a lack of desire or motivation on the part of the student-teachers. This has ramifications for the future design of the course and its delivery to prospective teachers.

In a teaching course, the mastery of language skills may be less important as a certain level of English proficiency is often a pre-requisite for the Diploma programme just as subjective knowledge is for subjects such as Mathematics, Science of Technology. However, the student teachers doing the Diploma course to become EFL teachers in Saudi schools seem to suggest that they felt there was a benefit in the provision of improving English language skills in addition to teaching methods courses. This idea has been a common theme across the analysis of the qualitative data thus far, suggesting that it would be an important addition to the Diploma syllabus.

Dissatisfaction was often the result of not meeting the expectation of developing one or more of these skills. The strongest critique of the Diploma provides a good illustration:

Regarding the modules in this Diploma, actually I regret taking this Diploma as I notice that I have learned more teaching methods from the international school than what they taught us in this Diploma. Even the language they used in teaching us these modules was Arabic. From my point of view if it wasn't one of the certificates that you need to have to apply for a teaching position at public school, I would not bother myself to get it. (Saleh, University B)

Given the importance given to applicability and the development of the necessary skills, it is not surprising that for all participants who had the opportunity, the practicum was one of the main components of the Diploma, that they viewed as most useful, and one that some hoped had been longer. Many of the references regarding what was learned and positive about the Diploma refer to the practicum.

Good experience that we had to teach real students in the classroom and I think it was a very useful experience, but I think 2-3 months is not enough for a new teacher to equip her as an English teacher. (Farah, University B)

Some participants expressed how it was at the practicum where the knowledge accumulated in lecture could be translated into the actual task of teaching.

I really love it because I practice the language at school all the time in and outside the classroom, I get the chance to put all the new knowledge of methods into practice. (Nouf, University A)

I was trying to remember all the teaching methods that my lecturers at university and school taught me and apply them on my students like: 5 minute exploring any reading text before starting. (Hassan, University B)

For some students who were on different teaching degree programmes, however, there was no practicum opportunity. Despite having some other activities being built in, namely what they called a “micro-teaching,” experience, participants found it was not comparable and that the benefits of having an actual practicum are qualitatively different.

[The micro –teaching was] a very basic English lesson and it was not that helpful because you are not in a real classroom. (Mohamad, University A)

[The micro teaching] was a good experience even though we had a chance to get evaluated from our lecturer. But we do not like the stress that we had because, being in front of our colleagues, it was difficult to imagine them as a student. I was just thinking of how not to do any silly mistakes because I'm being judged by both my supervisor and my friends. (Hani, University A)

Part of what made the practicum so positive for the participants was that they were able to experience for themselves how their skills were improving class after class: “the good one was how I saw myself improving in teaching after teaching in a real classroom” (Sara, University B). The practicum, and practice in general when available, helped build confidence in the participants on their skills. Some of the confidence came from being aware of their knowledge and confirming their capacity of applying it in the actual teaching:

I was so confident because I knew what to do and I think teaching methods prepared me so well to teach in the classroom. Before applying any new method that I had learned from this Diploma I used to google it and I watched some videos on how to apply this method successfully into your classroom. Then I modified the activities to fit with my students' level and interest. I think I succeeded to achieve the lesson objectives. (Muna, University A)

I thought it would be difficult to teach them in English but I tried and I succeeded. It was a tough job but I'm proud of myself that I could achieve what their experienced teacher could not. (Ahlam, University B)

It was a very useful experience, even my university supervisor noticed the difference between the micro-teaching that we had in the university and the classroom teaching, and she was amazed by the students' participation (Ahlam, University B)

Other participants seemed to put more emphasis on the actual strengthening of skills, and development of new ones, as teaching is practised in reality:

I think from my experience that I do believe that the students could motivate the teacher to build this confidence, because I have been teaching English in international school and the students are already English native speakers. I teach them Islamic and I really found it useful to communicate with native speakers and expand my English. (Mohamad, University A)

I do feel more confident in teaching and I could say this is after I got used to the system and student level. (Hassan, University B)

5.4.3 Barriers to Application

Some key barriers to application of the theoretical knowledge was found to be due to the lack of language-specific pedagogical knowledge and inadequate spoken language. Some of the participants thought that the level of pedagogical knowledge specific to teaching English language in the Diploma was inadequate. This was reflected from the responses given by *Nouf, Haifa* and *Hassan*:

I cannot say that this Diploma has prepared me to teach English but instead it's prepared me to teach in general, but it has nothing to do with English. (Nouf, University A)

As English teacher I could say this Diploma of education is very poor. But as a religious or history teacher I could say it is very good preparation. (Haifa, University B)

This Diploma was beneficial to those whose majors were in Arabic like geography, Arabic, history, religion teachers. But for me as an English teacher it was not that helpful. (Hassan, University B)

Thus, *Nouf, Haifa* and *Hassan* seemed to have been disappointed because the contents in the Diploma did not meet their expectations. One of the problems of this disappointment seems to relate to the need analysis of the designing stage of the Diploma. *Hani* and *Ahmed*, two participants of the study, have expressed this view as follows:

We do not feel that they do care about what we do need as English teachers. (Hani, University A)

What has been taught to us was not in and for English teachers it was just general methods that could be applied by all teachers and all major except English. (Ahmad, University B)

On the other hand, *Amal* thought the course would teach her both language skills and English language teaching skills, but it was not the case. Similarly, both *Amal* and *Mohamed* wanted to receive the pedagogical part of the course in English, but complained about the fact that it was delivered in Arabic. The following quotations are the responses given by *Amal* and *Mohamed*.

It was a very general Diploma. We were expecting to focus more on our subject which is English but there were only 2 courses, English teaching methods 1&2, and they were not taught fully in English. (Amal, University A)

Good as a general basic knowledge for all teachers but it's not designed for English teachers so its missing the focus on the language itself. (...) Because as English teacher I wished if they could teach us the methods part in English and I think we have not had a good practicum at school like other universities. (Mohamad, University A)

Additionally, many participants raised the issue of inadequate spoken language skill, which has been seen from many responses. *Amal (University A)* states:

I do think it's essential for any English teacher to be proficient in speaking, reading and writing. How could he teach the language that he couldn't master? He would be ashamed!! (Amal, University A)

Ahlam also echoed similar concerns as she observed classroom teaching during her practicum;

I was shocked when I observed the experienced school English teacher at the first week in the school. She was teaching in Arabic an English class. She did not bother herself with using modern teaching strategies; she just stuck with the traditional methods. I thought it would be difficult to teach them in English but I tried and I succeed. It was a tough job but I'm proud of myself that I could achieve what their experienced teacher could not. (Ahlam, University B)

This has been exemplified from Rehab's response:

I think there was not a good speaking practice during our bachelor, because our lecturers were not trying to engage us in any discussion, we were just listeners. (Rehab, University A)

5.4.3.1 Class Size and Classroom Management

The practicum, and in general all opportunities to practice teaching (within the Diploma or outside of it) also had the importance of allowing participants to compare the expectations they had built from their lessons and modules with the reality of teaching in a classroom. As was the case in some of the quotes above, sometimes this is very positive, and participants were able to confirm the usefulness of the methods learned in lecture. However, there were some instances in which reality did not fit exact expectations. Some of the issues in which reality was challenging to participants included group sizes, controlling the groups, the students' level, and time constraints.

On group sizes:

I was keen to use the communicative approach but when I went to school I found some issues prevented me, like the large classroom. The students' ratio was between 40 and 50 and with this large number it was difficult to conduct CLT, also I do not know actually how to deal with students' errors. (Amal, University A)

On successful monitoring, control and evaluation of students:

I never used [CLT] in the teaching practice, I think I was afraid of how to monitor all the groups and get them involved with the activity that I gave. So, I just stuck to pair and individual activities. (Amal, University A)

At the beginning no, I just followed the traditional ways because I was not so confident to use the modern ones, like using groups. I was not sure how I could control the classroom while they were in groups. (Farah, University B)

5.5 Suggestions for Diploma

Closely related to the two main themes already discussed in detail, participants offered multiple suggestions on how to improve the Diploma programme. Some of these suggestions have already been indicated above, but will be presented in this section again, as a summary report of the specific issues that participants think could be changed or maintained to better the quality of the Diploma education for EFL teachers. The first part will present some of the suggestions directly related with the curriculum, such as modules to keep or drop, modules to add, and changes for the to the course structure. The second part will present broader issues that the participants thought should be addressed to improve the quality of the program, such as language for teaching the program, teaching quality, provision of guidance and supervision, and distribution of students by major.

5.5.1 Curriculum-Related Suggestions

Many of participants' comments and suggestions about the Diploma were directly related to the curriculum, including the quality of the available modules, suggestions for new modules, and the structure of the program.

5.5.1.1 Teaching

One major concern of the research participants were about how the modules were taught. Thus, *Rehab* from the University A suggested to integrate practical activities in teaching some modules such as Mental Hygiene and Counselling and Guidance. The construct of mental hygiene refers to the practice of positive thinking and management of negative thoughts and feelings. Not all universities offer this module, and it is not currently a core facet of the overall school curriculum. However, as Besley (2015) notes, citing the original work of Redl and Wattenberg from the 1950's, having practical understanding of mental hygiene techniques can be highly effective in managing the challenges faced by new teachers. Certainly, *Rehab* felt this to be case, and expressed his views as follows:

...I will change the way that some of the courses have been taught, for example, courses like: counselling and guidance, Educational psychology and mental hygiene. All these courses shouldn't be taught theoretically I think it should be taught in more practical way (Rehab, University A).

Another suggestion in improving the teaching and learning process was that to make assessment activities more practical; not just transferring theoretical knowledge to the students.

For example, *Waleed* says ...

Even the assessment for this module could be more practical rather than just theoretical. For example, they could do a workshop on how the English teacher could design an exam. (Waleed, University A)

Some students indirectly suggest to improve teacher recruitment in the universities. One respondent complained about the quality of teaching the Test and Measurement module implying the university needs better-qualified teachers. *Waleed* (University A) makes the following observation:

Test and measurements has potential but the problem is with the lecturer who is not qualified to teach this module, and if we ask any question he just couldn't answer it. So the module is essential for every teacher but the lecturer was so useless. (Waleed, University A)

5.5.1.2 Modules to be removed

The interest in removing the psychology modules, as explained by participants and detailed above, is related to the perception that there are too many modules on this issue. Rather than suggesting a complete removal of these modules, participants advocated for a blending of multiple modules into a single module as a better scheme. This is evident from *Muna's* comment:

Modules that I think are not beneficial is Educational psychology and its branches, we had 3 modules in psychology and it was just a repetition because these 3 modules share the same information which I think was not needed for any teacher. So if they blend it in one module and save our time and effort (Muna, University A).

Another module, which some participants suggested to remove was 'Education in Saudi Arabia'. Although most participants did not offer an explanation for their decision on this module one participant did offer one, which was consistent with the theme of the importance of putting theoretical knowledge into practice and allocation of more time to practical activities during the Diploma. He explains his reason as follows:

Education in Saudi Arabia. I do not care when the establishment of each Saudi university established and if I need this type of information I could check wiki so, I do not think the content of these two modules is suitable for any English teacher. (Ahlam, University B)

It can be suggested however that in line with the theocratic and hierarchical society in Saudi Arabia that this module was included so that students understood the context of teaching in the country. From a practical perspective it does appear that the students do not see the value of the knowledge in terms of improving their overall teaching skills.

Additionally, Mental Hygiene, a module that was ranked one of the most helpful modules by one participant from the University A, was identified by three participants from the University B as one of the modules to remove. This disconnect may be related to a discrepancy in quality in the delivery of this module across both universities, as one of the three participants explained:

Mental hygiene because the lecturer only read from the book without caring if we understood or if we had any questions!! (Saeed, University B)

Therefore, the main issue of the suggestion to remove the Mental Hygiene module appears to be the participants' dissatisfaction for the way the module was taught rather than its contents. Therefore, it may be that if a more holistic approach to teaching was taken, the inclusion of a viable mental hygiene module would encourage the necessary reflective skills identified as valuable by Pollard (2008).

5.5.1.3 Modules to add

Within their discussion of the Diploma programme, participants sometimes offered suggestions of courses they would like to see added to the program, or topics they would appreciate being directly addressed in the Diploma.

One aspect that participants would like to have addressed in the Diploma is that of improving language proficiency

which was covered in detail in Section 5.3.1 along with the respondents' rationale for the inclusion of this module. Some participants suggested that some modules specifically designed for this goal would be beneficial. *Muna* from the University A express her view as follows:

Because I think we need to practice the language they aim to prepare us to teach in this Diploma soon or later, also to avoid embarrassment in the first English lesson in the classroom because we forget how to speak English (Muna, University A)

Specific ideas of such possible modules included: Improving spoken English, speaking and communication with students inside the classroom (e.g. giving instructions to students), developing lesson plans / evaluation materials in English. According to *Saleh* from the University B, English is “so important because as foreign language teacher this is your key to deliver the knowledge that you wish to pass to your students”.

Additionally, some participants suggested that it would be important to have a methods module that would provide insight into how to teach the language to different age groups.

I do think we need some extra modules on how to teach young learners, which approach fits with their age and how we can keep them learning with a bit of fun. (Hassan, University B)

I would add lots of modules that could help the English teacher in teaching different stages, like elementary or secondary. (Haifa, University B)

Although children develop at different rates, the Diploma programme, which aims to produce teachers who can teach English language to primary-aged and secondary-aged children, may not include techniques to teach nursery-aged children. This is mainly because a Diploma has a narrow scope and the objectives of the Diploma may not cover how to teach children who belong to special categories such as children with special education needs or children who are relatively at young ages. If the participants want to know about teaching special categories of

children, then it would be a good idea for them to do specialist courses rather than doing a general Diploma course.

Some other issues that participants indicated they still lacked confidence in, and which have been discussed above when talking about the participants' experiences in the practicum, included controlling or managing big groups of students and providing feedback to students when needed. There is also the aforementioned concern with not being appropriately prepared to present and pass the measurement test, which participants understand should be one of the goals in the Diploma.

5.5.2 Language Skill-Related Suggestions

Many of the participants' concerns were suggested to be at least partially addressed by teaching all or part of the Diploma for EFL teachers in English. As presented in the first theme section, the weakness in English proficiency preparation was one of the main complaints, and all participants considered that at least some of the modules should be taught in English. This was particularly important for two sets of modules: all methods modules, and the test and measurements. Delivering methods modules in English would overcome some of the problems that participants reported about having difficulty translating what was learned in class with the English teaching practice. Activities such as developing a curriculum, or a lesson plan, would be learned in the language in which they were to be applied. For the test and measurements module, the main concern is the mandatory test, which is in English. By teaching this module in English, participants consider they would be better prepared to succeed in this exam.

5.6 Structuring of Modules in the Diploma

Many participants indicated that while the method courses were some of the most helpful ones, they considered that they should be condensed in the first term, as some of the skills developed

in the second module were necessary for the practicum. This was particularly prevalent among University A participants.

In the second term when I was teaching at school I was struggling with how to teach reading because I do not have enough experience and knowledge, and after two weeks of giving the reading lesson at school we had a lecture at the university about how to teach reading!!! So, to make it easy and clear for us, we should have both English teaching methods 1&2 in the first term. (Nouf, University A)

My main concern with these best modules was with the schedule, I think it would be better to take both modules in the first term, as we are required to teach in a real classroom in the second term. (Muna, University A)

5.7 General Programme Suggestions

In addition to having suggestions specific to the modules and the curriculum, participants also offered comments and suggestions about the broader delivery of the Diploma, and elements that they considered could be improved. These include how students are distributed, supervision and guidance, and the quality of the education.

5.7.1 Distribution of Students by Major

As has been developed already above, EFL teachers in the Diploma often considered that their specific needs were not adequately met in the program. This included the issues of language of delivery, which was mostly in Arabic but participants considered should be in English, and the lack of appropriate peer interactions in exercises such as peer to peer observation and feedback. In order to overcome these issues, it would be necessary, as multiple participants suggested, separating students by major in the Diploma. This would allow for certain classes to be delivered in English, as well as guaranteeing that there could be productive peer interaction for English majors.

I think students should be distributed into classes according to their major and English prospective teachers should take the methods of teaching modules with a tutor from the English department. Even the lecturer who taught us specific teaching methods 2 felt sorry for other majors who were not math, especially English, as the teaching methods are quite different between Arabic and English. He literally said “sorry guys but I will teach you teaching methods 1 again,” the one that we took in the first term, “as I have no idea about other majors’ teaching methods.” (Hassan, University A)

5.7.2 Quality of Teaching

Hassan’s quote also helps illustrate another complaint from participants, which was their sense that either lecturers or university administrators did not care about them or their learning. The lack of response to complaints about all modules being taught in Arabic or by non-English major teachers was an example of this. However, in some of the specific modules quality was also a concern. Some participants indicated that some lecturers were not interested in engaging them and are content with having students to be only listeners. *Waleed’s* comments about the test and measurement class that he received, or *Saeed B’s* comment above about the mental hygiene lecturer who “only read from the book without caring if we understand or if we had any question” help illustrate this concern. With a similar sentiment, *Muna* (University A) expressed her thoughts about the evaluations that they had been asked to fill in: “We feel that even the lecturers do not check [the evaluations] or care about our views.”

5.7.3 Supervision and Guidance

Finally, and deserving its own space, participants also explained that they thought that the supervision and guidance provided in the Diploma could be better. This was in part as a result of having lecturers who were non-English majors, and were unable to respond to the specific needs of EFL teachers.

In the practicum I have not been observed or assessed by my university's supervisor. He did not attend any of my classes, he just relayed on my colleagues' evaluation form and the head teacher of the school's evaluation when he attends one of my classes. I think this is not fair because how could he rely on a trainee evaluation? Or on the head teacher who does not even understand English? This is why the teaching in our country is so weak, because some of our lecturers or teachers at school they do not care about the quality. But to be fair I do not blame the tutors of these modules who should have observed our teaching and provided us with an extensive feedback that we need to improve our teaching. Instead I blame the university in the first instance because it did not assign a lecturer from our department which is English. (Hassan, University B)

But the issue with supervision and guidance was also a broader problem. In particular, participants indicated that they would appreciate a more detailed feedback from their practicum, and in general, all applied experiences. Student wanted to be evaluated directly by their lecturers, not to be reliant on peers or on other teachers.

I think it's not professional to assess a prospective teacher according to his friends' or head-teacher's evaluation. Because these are his first steps and the university supervisor should attend at least one class a week and give him an accurate performance evaluation, this is how we could improve and see a huge difference at the end of this new experience. (Ahmad, University B)

The university supervisor never attended any of my classes, the English teacher from the other school attended once and she did not provide me with any feedback. (Amal, University A)

I was supervised by the school English teacher so she was stressed all the time on the curriculum activities and workbook and she did not motivate me to use outside curriculum activities even if I see it's better than the book used. (Muna, University A)

Additionally, participants also had concerns about the quality of the feedback that they received. Not just a grade, participants wanted thorough and detailed comments on what required improvement, and how to achieve it.

There was not any feedback. At the end of each term we just have to evaluate each module online in order to get our grades. I was not satisfied with two of my grades but there is no chance for us to ask the lecturer why you gave me this mark, and I wish to receive some type of feedback, written or even spoken, because I need to know my mistakes as we learn from our mistakes. (Amal, University A)

It was general feedback on the time management and the students' participation. I wish that the feedback was deeper and it reviewed my teaching methods, if they are correctly used or not. And even the lesson plan I was so confused on how to do it, there was not any session about it. (Rehab, University A)

I was not satisfied with the result that we have at the end of each term because we had only marks without any feedback, I do not know why this ambiguity, I need to know what I did wrong to deserve this mark. Moreover, I do believe that each student needs to recognize his good job whatever it was, essay or presentation, to keep it up and maintain it. (Saeed, University B)

There is nothing more than your mark. Maybe with exams it's fine but with mastering some skills we need this kind of assignments that we would get in back feedback to identify our mistakes and avoid them. (Ahlam, University B)

5.8 Summary

Having analysed the background of each research participant, a pen portrait was created and presented in this chapter. This helped understanding the backgrounds of the participants. A number of themes have emerged from the transcripts. However, the two most significant

themes were the importance of improving language skills and putting more emphasis on the application of the theoretical knowledge in real classrooms. The main reason for the improvement of English skills is to deliver English lessons effectively, but although the respondents felt that they required modules that focus improving English language through the Diploma course, their expectations were not met during the learning in Diploma. This mismatch between what has been expected and what was delivered was a result of traditional teaching and beliefs about English teacher preparation in Saudi Arabia. Similarly, the respondents found that the widespread use of Arabic in teaching English-related subjects in universities in Saudi Arabia reflected in English teaching in schools. The difficulty of applying the language teaching methods was heavily based on the teacher's ability to speak English fluently and the knowledge and belief about teaching English in Saudi classrooms.

5.9 Syllabus Analysis

As a complement to the qualitative thematic analysis of the participant responses, supplementary analysis was undertaken using document analysis. Specifically, the syllabus offered by the two universities (UA & UB) was considered and compared with the identified needs of the research participants. Document analysis was used as a preferred method for this element of the work because as Bryman (2012) argues, it is one of the qualitative research methods. The primary purpose of analysing the syllabi was to investigate whether the current syllabus of the EFL teacher preparation course meets the requirements of the future English teachers who would be in the forefront teaching English language in Saudi public and private schools. To achieve this purpose, both the syllabi were compared to find out to what extent they focus on improving English language skills and language proficiency.

5.9.1 Syllabus Analysis by Course Category

A further analysis of the syllabus has been carried out using the syllabi document contents in the Diploma course and these contents have been categorised under different disciplines (Table 5).

Table 5 Syllabus Analysis by Course Category

Categories	Syllabus Components	
	University A	University B
Curriculum-related courses	1. Curriculum principles and their organisation	1. Curriculum principles
Teaching-related courses	1. English teaching methods	1. General teaching methods
	2. Teaching aids	
	3. Methods of teaching English	
Testing and Evaluation courses	1. Language test	1. Measurement and Evaluation
	2. Tests and standards	
Education-related courses	1. Introduction to Education	1. Educational Psychology
	2. Fundamental of Islamic Education	2. Developmental psychology
	3. National Education	3. Fundamental of Islamic Education
	4. Education in Saudi Arabia	4. Mental hygiene
	5. Formative psychology,	5. Introduction to Educational
	6. Educational psychology	6. Education in Saudi Arabia

	7. Introduction to Psychology	7. Communication skills in Education
Technology-related courses	Nil	1. Fundamentals of Computer Science
		2. Teaching Technology Learning Sources
Management-related courses	1. Introduction in educational management	1. School Admissions
	2. Guidance	
	3. Managing school activity	
Practice-related courses	1. Practicum	1. Practicum
	2. Design school activity	2. Practical application in teaching
Language skills related courses	Nil	Nil

5.9.2 Curriculum-Related Courses

Table 5 show that both the universities have offered one curriculum-related course for the trainees. It is important that future teachers have an awareness on the curriculum principles and a highly detailed curricular may have a positive impact on EFL trainees (Ewens, Ainsworth and Bundy, 2004). However, the problem with the Diploma courses under evaluation is that they lack focus on English language, but rather they are general level of knowledge in curriculum principles.

5.9.3 Teaching-Related Courses

As shown in Table 5, the UB offers one teaching method course, whereas the UA delivers three teaching-related courses. What is interesting in this analysis is that the UB's course is a general teaching methods course. The general nature of teaching method course offered to EFL teachers was one factor that may have contributed to poor proficiency level of English among Saudi students (Javid and Umer, 2014). However, the courses offered by the UA are more English language teaching related. The module titles also suggest that it is the case. Despite this, the current research has found that these modules were taught to the student teachers by using the mother tongue, Arabic.

5.9.4 Testing and Evaluation

For students who are aiming to become future English language teachers in Saudi Arabia, acquiring knowledge on how to assess their students' understanding of what has been taught is definitely an important part of the teacher preparation course (Al-Seghayer, 2014). It is generally the case among the research participants. However, the way these testing and evaluation courses are structured is different in the two universities. On one hand, the UB offers a general 'measurement and evaluation' course, which does not distinguish students who are specialising for teaching English from the rest of the students whose majors are different subjects. The students are provided some general testing and evaluation knowledge in classes where students from different disciplines come together as one class. On the other hand, the UA provide two courses, placing more importance for assessment knowledge than the UB course. The UA courses seem to be tailor-made and hence, focusing on language testing skills. Again, the research participants have raised concerns about the medium instruction used to teach these modules.

5.9.5 Education-Related courses

Looking back at Table 5, it clearly shows that a large portion of the Diploma content was allocated for education-related subjects. Teaching English is educating students in English language and it requires an understanding of general educational principles, such as how people learn, the nature of learning, and what religion tells about education (Al-Seghayer 2014). Teachers should need to know how to establish quality human interaction in classroom conditions and for which appropriate pedagogical knowledge is essential (Alexander, 2007). Such knowledge will inform, for example, the student teachers the importance of not exercising corporate punishment in the classrooms (Barrow *et al.*, 2007).

The concentration of educational-related courses has been presented graphically (Figure 4). As illustrated in Figure 1, both the universities are offering the same number of education-related courses ($n = 7$). However, 50 per cent of the total course contents (7 out of 14 courses) in UB has been allocated to education, while 39 percent of the total contents of UA (7 out of 18) has focused on education-related subjects.

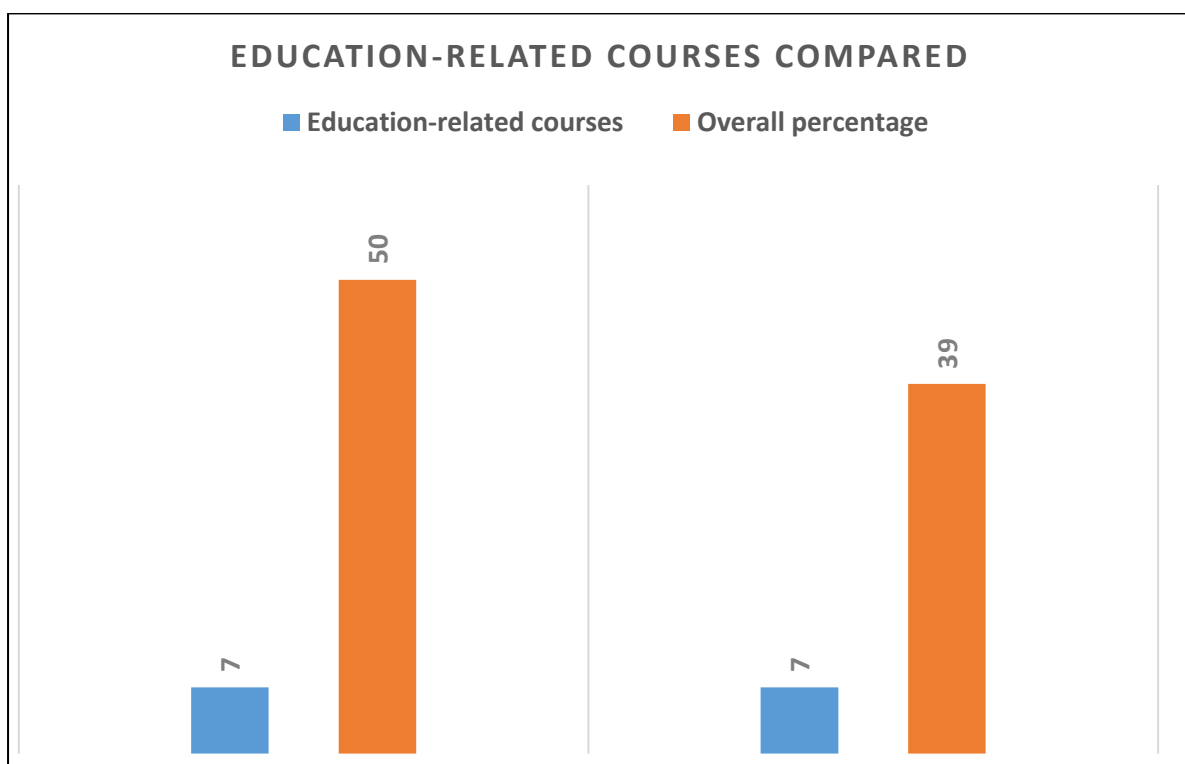


Figure 4: Education-related course contents compared

However, not all of these courses were perceived to be equally important by the research participants. In fact, some of the research participants strongly felt that following educational courses may be removed from the Diploma.

- a. Psychology modules
- b. Education in Saudi Arabia

Removing these contents could help add English skills modules; reading and writing, listening and speaking.

5.9.6 Technology-Related Courses

Table 5 show that the UB offers two technology-focused courses in the teacher preparation course. Indisputably, learning about educational technology is essential to become an effective English language teacher, as there are several technologies available for teachers to teach. The use of technology in teaching has been found as having positive impact on student's motivation to learn and their engagement in learning activities (Wright, 2015). In this day and age, many students have hand-held gadgets and access to the Internet where they can find sources to improve English language skills. Although this may be the case, it is only when teacher students know the benefits and are fully aware of the benefits of such technologies that they would use them in their teaching. While the UB has been offering technology-related course, it was surprising to learn that the UA does not have courses that teach the student teachers about the importance of educational technology. Therefore, this is an interesting area to investigate in a future research to understand why the UA has not given emphasis on this important aspect of teacher training.

5.9.7 Management-Related Courses

As shown in Table 5, both the universities have delivered educational management courses. While the UB has offered one module which falls under this category of syllabus contents, the UA includes three courses. These modules may be important for beginning teachers; however, they may be more relevant to supervisors, school managers or principals. Because these modules are not the focus of the current analysis, attention has been directed towards other sections.

5.9.8 Practice-Related Courses

The research participants have a high regard for the practice-related modules and they have been identified as a highly important part of the Diploma course. Table 5 also shows that both the universities have offered two courses that teach student teachers the necessary skills and provide the opportunities to apply knowledge and skills in teaching English in practical situations. Both the universities offer students a practicum module in which they are required to work with more experienced teachers in classroom environments. However, the UB has a module that teaches student teachers the skills necessary for them to be successful in their practicum.

On the other hand, the UA offers student a course that helps them to design school activities. The practicum module has been highly valuable for the research participants. For example, Farah (UB) acknowledged the benefits of teaching students in real classroom situations. She also argues that the duration of couple of months of practicum would not be sufficient for beginning teachers. This suggests the importance of giving students the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge into classroom situations. Hassan (from the UB) also recognized that the knowledge he had acquired from the teaching methods modules was very helpful in making lesson plans and teaching during the practicum. However, research participants expressed

concerns about not being able to use testing and evaluation knowledge effectively during the practicum period. Therefore, the overall analysis suggests that the research participants were unhappy about the applicability of the knowledge they learned during the practicum period.

5.9.9 English Skill-Related Courses

Table 5 suggests that neither the UB nor the UA have any courses that aim to improve English language skills or English proficiency courses. However, this study has found that the participants have expressed a need to advance their English language skills through the teaching Diploma course offered by both the universities. The English standard of teacher students in Saudi Arabia has also been a concern for many authors. For example, in their study, Javid and Umer (2014) expressed their concerns about the status of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Saudi schools. They put the blame on the admission policy that recruited candidates to be trained as English teachers. They also advocated increasing language-skill and proficiency-enhancement courses. Furthermore, they contended that there was a need to improve academic writing skills and to focus on modern language teaching skills specific to English language teaching. In addition to these concerns, the current study has found that the EFL Diploma has still this deficiency. Therefore, additional focus on language skill improvement is necessary and this may be achieved by introducing a language module and sequencing it as shown in Figure 5 below:



Figure 5: Sequencing the language content course in the Diploma (author's own model)

5.10 Summary

The qualitative analysis and the document analysis revealed that the modules in the EFL Diploma programme are spread across the two semesters in both the universities under evaluation. Both the UB and the UA provide one practicum module, but the most significant difference is the UB providing general teaching methods in the first semester and practical application in teaching in the second semesters, while the UA provides English teaching methods in both semester, which is good. While, overall the Diploma has been assessed by the participants as 'good', many concerns have been raised in the areas of the medium of instruction used to deliver learning and how the practical activities are conducted. Most significantly, participants have expressed discontentment about the Diploma because there is no course module in either of the universities that aims to improve their English language skills, more specifically listening, speaking, reading and writing. Thus, a sequence of including a language course has been suggested.

CHAPTER SIX: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

One of the most pressing concerns of the student-teacher participants in this study was the need to improve English proficiency, in particular the need to develop the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The respondents wished to see more focus on improving English skills throughout the teacher education course. Another area identified as needing more attention is putting theoretical knowledge into classroom practice, i.e. having the practicum opportunity to try out educational theory in teaching, which is directly related to the practicum module of the teacher education programme. These two broad areas will be discussed with respect to student-teacher attitudes and in relation to the research literature.

6.2 Importance of English Language Skill Development

6.2.1 English Language Requirements

As we have seen (subsection, 2.5 in Chapter 2), the requirements of the Diploma of Education are that candidates should have full operational command of English language. In many countries, to become an English teacher, a candidate would need a good pass (C grade and above) in English language of a general education programme such as the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) or equivalent examination.

From the literature review, it has been identified that Saudi students aspiring to become English teachers are required to pass in English language proficiency tests before they can apply for teaching courses (Khan, 2009). Although having a full operational command of English language is expected of the candidates who applied for teacher education programmes, some course participants require additional assistance in improving their language fluency and proficiency because English taught in SA as a foreign language gives students only limited exposure to English. For this reason, for those students who have difficulties in English

language, additional courses are also offered by Saudi universities. For example, King Abdulaziz University runs a separate department called English Language Institute (ELI) where students can study and improve their English language skills. This suggests that not all students enrolled in teacher education have the expected level of English language competence. Therefore, I think that some EFL student-teachers require additional language support for them to excel in their teacher training course as well as to be successful in their teaching career. Despite this, the course developers, administrators and lecturers seem to overlook the EFL student-teachers' needs to develop English language skills as part of the Diploma of Education programme. While giving additional language support for student-teachers might not be these officials' job, I believe that it would be beneficial for EFL student-teachers to be listened to them and provide lecturers who can teach in English. This view has also been confirmed by the present study as the majority of the participants felt that they needed to improve language proficiency through the course, which indicated that the would-be teachers thought that they were in need of developing their English language skills. Al-Ahdal *et al.* (2014) agree with this finding because their research found the need to develop Saudi students' oral competence. Therefore, I think that to prepare successful EFL teachers, it would require the concerned parties to understand the prospective candidates' needs of English language skills. Without taking this aspect into consideration, I argue that teacher preparation programmes may not produce what they are intended to achieve in Saudi Arabia.

6.2.2 Importance of Language Fluency and Proficiency

According to the findings of the present study (see subsections 5.3.3; 5.3.5; 5.4.3) the perception of the student-teachers is that the Diploma failed to meet their needs in terms of developing their language proficiency during the course of their initial teacher education. This clearly suggests that student-teachers have placed a high level of importance to English

proficiency to become a successful English teacher in Saudi Arabia. This was because almost all the research participants thought that English teachers should be able to speak fluently to deliver English lessons and those EFL student-teachers who needed to improve English language standard expected to receive additional support throughout the Diploma to improve and develop their language skills through different modules of the course. If not, they might face difficulty in teaching English in the future. The majority of the student-teachers in the present study thought that having knowledge of English language teaching was not sufficient to become a successful English teacher. The student-teachers may have increased English language knowledge, for example, the grammatical rules and linguistic information, but this knowledge would be different from the ability to use of language eloquently. They regarded language fluency and proficiency as equally important for them to deliver effective lessons to their students and a lack of focus on English language skill development has been a major issue of teacher preparation courses in Saudi Arabia as perceived by the participants of the present research.

Consistent with Al-Seghayer and Saud's (2014) findings, the present study has also found that English teachers should be able to teach all the key skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and to do so, their language ability should be developed throughout the course. However, as the existing literature has indicated, Saudi students have difficulties in spoken language. In an earlier study, Al-Ahdal *et al* (2014) confirmed that writing skills of college students in Saudi Arabia were better than their spoken language proficiency. In an education system where traditional teaching methods are common in classroom teaching, it would not be surprising to learn that the development of writing skills has been given preference over the speaking skills. However, good teachers are those who are able to communicate with their students effectively and put across their views, opinions and ideas to their students. Kyriakides *et al*. (2002) pointed out effective teachers should be able to provide 'enough' quality

instructions for students to learn, for which English teachers should have both language fluency and proficiency. Teachers' oral communication skills would be highly valuable in classroom teaching as they play a primary role in teacher explanations, expressing opinions, transmitting information, and giving instructions to students in a classroom environment (Akinola, 2014). Teachers who demonstrate fluent spoken language are more likely to be able to provide clarity in their explanation and classroom instructions. Chesebro (2003, p. 135) stated that "students who were taught by a clear teacher learned more than those who were taught by an unclear teacher".

Thus, English teachers should be good orators who can provide classroom instructions with fluency and clarity. While this is the case, some Saudi authors like Shehdeh, 2010 and Khan (2011) have found that one main drawback of teacher education in Saudi Arabia was poor English proficiency demonstrated by the students-teacher. Therefore, producing quality English teachers who can have a positive impact on student learning and achievement in English language can be attained by ensuring that future teachers are sufficiently competent in English language. However, while this is a necessary condition, it may not be sufficient for quality English teaching. Once the initial training is completed, these teachers need to continue their learning and professional development if they were to be successful in their career.

6.2.3 Focusing on the Improvement of Language Skills

As found in the present study, one of the primary concerns of the research participants was the Diploma lacked attention to improve English language skills of the course participants. According to the majority of the research participants, neither the bachelor's course nor the Diploma of Education gave them adequate language learning opportunities during their teacher education. This finding is consistent with some previous studies (for example, Boyd, 2016) as

they have raised this issue and its importance to Diploma students in Saudi Arabia. This finding calls for changes to the design of the Diploma programme and its implications may affect the way the modules of the course are allocated. Earlier, Al-Seghayer (2011) raised the concerns of English language teaching in Saudi Arabia, who identified English proficiency of teachers as a main problem of English teaching. Therefore, like the present study, earlier studies (for example, Boyd, 2016) have highlighted the importance of improving English skills among EFL student-teachers. What is not known earlier is whether the candidates of the Diploma of Education have experienced similar needs as those who undergo their first-degree education. Having conducted the present research, it is now clear that knowledge of language (subject knowledge) is highly valued by the research participants. Most of them even went so far as to suggest having a separate English course focusing on developing the four language skills. According to these participants, teaching them subject content would help them to develop their language skills, in particular oral language competence and most importantly, the acquired subject knowledge can help them teach English in the classroom.

Therefore, one way to improve English language skills is to introduce a module to teach advanced level English language such as 'Proficiency in English' or 'Advanced in English' conducted by Cambridge University. Perhaps the expected level of language competence might have been achieved without introducing a new module to focus on improving language fluency and proficiency had the tutors/lecturers' teaching approaches and methods been different. The comments provided by the student-teachers indicated that they were kept as passive learners, not giving them opportunities to use language during the Diploma course. This lack of student engagement in classroom learning reflects the traditional teaching, practised by Saudi teachers. For Szyliowicz (1973), rote learning was the primary focus of teaching even in Saudi universities and colleges and more recent studies (for example, Smith and Abouammoh, 2013) have also confirmed the domination of rote learning in higher education in Saudi Arabia. The

passiveness of teaching was evident from the responses given by the participants of the present study because they argued that there were no discussions, debates or dialogues within the classroom teaching during the Diploma programme. If such activities are not offered to learners, then it means that the learning activities given to the students must have been listening or reading-related activities.

Activities that involve students and their active participation such as classroom discussions and debates on different issues related to teaching are necessary for improving language fluency. For instance, an American study by Applebee *et al.* (2003) found that discussion-based instructional approaches were very effective in language development for both low-achieving and high-achieving students. However, the approach to teaching in Saudi higher education institutions seems to be teacher-fronted teaching, with students who have diverse learning needs. This may be due to the existing English language teaching system which does not teach students to be independent and autonomous English language users, but rather they are required to memorise language items. This means that the students are deprived of adequate opportunities to use language in real-life contexts, instead, they are required to produce artificial language in order to pass some assessments and examinations to be qualified for teaching English.

6.2.4 Barriers to Developing English Proficiency

The present study has found some ways that have negative impacts on the development of English proficiency during the course of Diploma education. Here, however, the effects of teaching in Arabic, inappropriate teaching materials, and lack of confidence will be discussed.

6.2.4.1 Teaching in Arabic

Almost all the participants in the present study have raised the issue of Arabic being used by lecturers as the medium of instruction during the Diploma programme. One of the reasons why

this is happening is because the Diploma modules are taught with students who are aiming to specialise in other subjects such as Mathematics and Science. This means that the general teaching methods and educational modules are being taught using Arabic as a medium of instruction. This is a new finding as the previous researchers have not discovered this fact. However, when using Arabic as a medium instruction in English language teacher education programmes, Al-Seghayer (2014) has found that curriculum contents had a negative impact on student-teacher quality. The main concern of these researchers was that the condensed nature of the curriculum and not giving sufficient time in teaching each curriculum subject in teacher preparation courses. If this is the case, then the target language has to be used to interact with student-teachers during English language teacher preparation course.

Similarly, Elyas and Al Grigri (2014) found that lecturers' overdependence on the old-fashioned teaching methods was responsible for the poor performance of English teachers in Saudi Arabia. Since Arabic is used to provide instruction in teacher education, this means that lecturers cannot hold English language activities that may engage student-teachers in ways that would help them use English in classroom learning. In their research, Applebee *et al.* (2003) found that discussion-based activities and problem-solving activities that were conducted in the target language improved students' language competence. Unfortunately, the present study has found that the instructors who taught in the Diploma used Arabic extensively as a medium of instruction in teaching the student-teachers. This means that the classroom activities should have been conducted in Arabic rather than English and if it were the case, then student-teachers might have missed opportunities to improve their language fluency and proficiency.

Another reason for relying heavily on Arabic in teaching is the difficulty of finding lecturers who are competent in teaching English. This was confirmed by some research participants as

reported in the preceding chapter, section 6.1.4. This is a new finding because although Elyas and Al Grigri (2014) have pointed out the inadequacy of teacher preparation, they have not concluded that it was the shortages of lecturers who are competent in teaching English that have contributed to poor performance of English teachers in Saudi Arabia. If human resource is the issue, then this will have greater implications for sourcing for teacher education institutions. It can also have an impact of micromanagement of teacher education programmes such as organisation of classes, timetabling and allocation of resources. For example, if lecturers are overburdened with clerical work, which is a common issue for teachers around the world, both in general practice, and in an EFL context according to Tiwari and Pant (2017), and Kehm (2015) then their academic work may be negatively affected as there is less time to devote to more effective lesson planning.

6.2.4.2 Inappropriate Teaching Materials

The learning materials play an important role in developing language proficiency and it is true in the case of Saudi EFL context. According to Mahib-ur-Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013), the suitability of English materials used in classroom teaching is a barrier to learning English. For positive learning outcomes in teacher education, some authors (for example, Mitchell and Alfuraih, 2017) call for effective use of textbooks. In his analysis, Aslam (2014) argues that the more recent teaching materials used by colleges and universities in Saudi Arabia have a focus on taking communicative language teaching approaches rather than traditional grammar translation or direct methods of teaching. However, Mahib-ur-Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) expressed concerns over the choice of teaching materials used by lecturers and tutors in Saudi higher education institutions.

In the present study, some research participants complained about the use of ‘chalk and talk’ method by tutors in classroom teaching. This means that there was a minimal use of educational materials as this particular method only requires a teacher to transfer knowledge rather than

using more modern educational technology such as watching movies or use of interactive whiteboards in classroom learning. It was found in the present study that student-teachers improved their language fluency and proficiency through watching English movies. Therefore, the use of inappropriate teaching materials may have contributed to the increased concerns of weak language proficiency.

6.2.4.3 Lack of confidence

EFL student-teachers' confidence in using English has been found to be a great barrier to improving English fluency and proficiency. This means that there is a need to work towards improving learner confidence when course modules are delivered to the prospective English teachers because a lack of confidence affects motivation and creates a negative attitude towards the use of English language (Weger, 2013).

According to many research participants, not much emphasis was given on confidence-building in terms of English language use during the Diploma. However, one of the key element of Keller's (1987) ARCS (attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction) model of motivation is confidence. One of the contributing factors to a decreased confidence in using English among student-teachers is the exam-oriented teaching (Al-Seghayer, 2015; Moskovsky, 2018) Another factor contributing to low confidence about EFL student-teachers' ability to use language is the lack of active learning in classroom teaching. Keller (2009) argues that students should have a certain level of control over their studies and know that their achievements in learning is directly related to their own work and effort. In Toussi *et al.*'s (2011) study, they argue that self-regulated learning should be incorporated within teacher education courses because it gives control to learners and helps them increase self-confidence.

If student-teachers demonstrate a lack of confidence, then there is an issue either that their certificate is not actually demonstrating the acquired skills or maybe the competence in English

that they have to pass that certificate is not sufficient to enable them to teach English. Teaching English language cannot be equated with the language proficiency. For example, there are many native English speakers, but not all can teach English in a classroom because they do not have the linguistic knowledge about the language. On the other hand, experience shows that many non-native speakers teach English really well because they have learned the English teaching methods. Therefore, the lack of confidence among EFL student-teachers suggests that there are other issues, apart from just English proficiency, such as inadequate knowledge of English teaching methods, that need to be addressed.

6.3 Teaching Practice/Practicum

Applying theory into practice has been mentioned repeatedly by the research participants, indicating the importance of putting theory into classroom practice. The opportunity to use both subject knowledge and pedagogical knowledge (Loughran, 1997) in actual teaching conditions was made possible for the research participants through teaching practice or the practicum module. This module is designed to allow EFL student-teachers to have first-hand experience in teaching and professional development prior to their entering into teaching profession. It gives field-based experience to student-teachers and it is a highly-valued module in initial teacher education programmes (Standal, Moen and Moe, 2013). Therefore, the issues expressed by the research participants will be discussed here in relation to the existing literature.

6.3.1 The Importance of Practicum

The current study has found that practice teaching was very useful module for the research participants. This outcome is consistent with the previous researchers' (for example, Stimpson *et al.*, 2000; Farrell, 2008; Standal *et al.*, 2013) findings. Practice teaching has become more important to teachers who do not have previous teaching experience or professional training in

teaching (Mahib-ur-Rahman and Alhaisoni, 2013). Therefore, as perceived by the research participants, teaching practice is very valuable to Saudi EFL teachers.

As teaching practice is perceived to be valuable for novice teachers, recent research has shown that changes in teacher education has put a lot of emphasis on school practice into teacher learning. Douglas (2014) argues that teacher education is greatly influenced by school practice with a view that it helps creating learning opportunities for prospective teachers in the classroom. Traditionally, the practicum module has been designed to provide the opportunity for EFL student-teachers to be attached to a school in order to complete one of their course components and try out knowledge they acquired from the university or teacher education institution. This traditional practice has been continuing in EFL teacher education programmes in Saudi Arabia. However, the existing literature (see Douglas, 2014; Canh, 2014; and Gebhard, 2009; Seghayer, 2014) suggests that there needs to be greater integration into school practice because of the divide between skills and experience required by schools and the course contents taught to student-teachers in their teacher education programmes.

The present study also found that the respondents felt that the duration of the practicum has to be longer than the current time frame. This gives an indication that the practicum module was very important for EFL student-teachers. While in many developed countries such as Australia, the UK and the US, teacher education programmes have been designed to provide a 'practice-based curriculum' (Lunenberg and Korthagen, 2009), there seem to be a little link between what has been taught in teacher preparation courses and what is applied in school practice in the Saudi context. This was evident from the interview analysis as some EFL student-teachers explained that they had to use grammar translation method and teacher-fronted teaching styles because the schools prefer such methods in teaching English. is the EFL student-teachers needed to obliged to school policies because the practicum module was just a course module that the students should undergo as part of their initial training. However, the research

participants felt that they required more time and greater coordination between their university and schools in order for them to make good use of the learning opportunities created by the practicum. The need to have a greater amount of time in schools for EFL student-teachers have also been recognised by researchers (for example, Douglas, 2014) in some Western countries. If there is no sufficient time, (how much time is sufficient is debatable) then how can EFL student-teachers be able to gain adequate practical classroom experience (Gebhard, 2009) for them to be equipped with the necessary skills to be effective teachers? A lack of classroom practice will not provide pre-service teachers' the opportunity they need to challenge and reflect on their own preconceptions about teaching and learning (Richards and Crookes, 1988; Gebhard, 2009). Therefore, it is important to establish a partnership between university and schools in order to make teacher education more practical and valuable for future teachers.

6.3.2 Perceived Benefits of Teaching Practice

The present study has found some benefits associated with teaching practice. For some participants, the practicum module provides deeper understanding of what classroom teaching involves. While teacher training institutions provide 'knowledge for practice' or theory, such knowledge does not help teacher effectiveness unless one can put it in classroom practice (Darling-Hammond and Branson, 2005). What practice teaching does, however, is to provide the opportunity for teachers to have 'knowledge of practice' (the knowledge, skills and experience for teachers to teach well), which they can construct collectively with peers, experienced teachers and the school community (Darling-Hammond and Branson). In addition, it enables pre-service teachers to teach in schools and in real classrooms (Anderson, 2005). Thus, classroom teaching can contribute to teachers' deeper understanding of teaching.

Another benefit of the practicum module, as perceived by the participants of the present study, is the increased opportunities for student-teachers to apply English teaching methods, to

prepare for lessons and to assess the effectiveness of these teaching methods. These findings are consistent with some previous studies. For instance, Rozelle and Wilson (2012) found that teaching practice has a positive impact on teachers' effectiveness because the practicum component of teacher education programmes enables pre-service teachers to improve their teaching.

Apart from this, according to some research participants of the present study, the practicum component enabled them to put English knowledge into practice and helped them improve language fluency and proficiency. However, some previous studies (for example, Gan, 2013) have found that non-native EFL student-teachers face many challenges during teaching practice. One of the reasons why they find teaching practice difficult is because of inadequate English language competence, an issue that has been already discussed in this chapter. The inadequacy of language skills has become a major factor that negatively affects teaching performance of pre-service teachers during teaching practicum (Gan, 2013).

Furthermore, some of the research participants in the present study have noted that they have seen improvements in their teaching during their practice teaching period. This is a great benefit to the pre-service teachers because when they enter into the real world of work, the experience they gained through teaching practice can be the foundation for them to have a successful teaching career. However, the empowering effects of practicum component has been linked to planning and preparation from the EFL student-teachers and their motivation towards learning to teach during teaching practice (Farrell, 2008).

Lastly, some participants in the present study have acknowledged that the teaching practice was a major influence of building their confidence in teaching, because it gave them the confirmation of their ability to apply the knowledge and skills learned throughout their

learning. According to Gebhard (2009), one of the purposes of teaching practice is to observing more experienced teachers and learn from them. If this is done effectively, it will have a positive impact on pre-service teacher practices in the future. However, in the context of Saudi English classrooms, the experienced teachers are often reported using the traditional methods of teaching English. While this is the common belief about English teaching in Saudi classrooms, some of the participants of the present study reported that they attempted to apply modern language teaching approaches such as CLT. If the novice teachers have tried and tested their acquired knowledge through teacher education programme, then this will improve their confidence in applying similar methodology in their own teaching.

6.3.3 Peer Teaching

Peer teaching or micro-teaching practice is often incorporated in teacher preparation courses, and indeed, Loughran, Berry and Tudball (2005) state that micro-teaching gives EFL student-teachers an opportunity to challenge intellectually through engaging teaching simple lesson and improving confidence necessary for them to take-risks in teaching. According to Ngara (2016), peer teaching is an element of practice teaching. It is also a common activity required by EFL teacher education in Saudi Arabia.

A number of benefits of peer teaching have been identified in the existing literature. For instance, in her study, Nguyen (2017) found that most of pre-service teachers felt that peer teaching and observation was valuable for them because it helped them to develop skills and experience in their teaching practice. Thus, peer teaching has found to be having a positive impact on pre-service teachers as they prepare themselves to become future practitioners. However, some of the participants in the present study thought that although peer teaching or micro-teaching was part of teacher education programme, it was not comparable to the benefits of teaching practice. This was because the practice lessons during the micro teaching were

evaluated by lecturers and peers while children were not involved in it. If students themselves conducted these sessions and evaluated their performance, the peer teaching activity would probably be more useful for EFL student-teachers. Another issue raised by the respondents is that the peer teaching lessons were not conducted in real classroom situations. Despite this, most of the respondents in the present research reported that these lessons were highly stressful because they were nervous and anxious about the outcome of the peer teaching sessions. Some previous studies (for example, Akcan, 2011) have argued that many per-service teachers have shown positive attitudes towards peer teaching as it provided them with the opportunity to put theory into practice. For this reason, Akcan (2011) found that peer teaching was one of the most valuable element of a teacher preparation course.

6.3.4 Professional Development

Like Pollard (2008), the EFL student-teachers viewed teaching practice as an important part of teachers' professional development for many reasons.

6.3.4.1 Reflection

Firstly, it provided EFL student-teachers with the opportunity to be reflective practitioners as they can reflect on their action (Schon, 1983) after each of the lessons. The present research has found that the practice teaching has demanded them to think about their own classroom behaviour. This finding is consistent with that of Sibahi's (2015) discovery. In his study, Sibahi (2015) found that EFL student-teachers were aware of reflective practice that it benefited for them in their professional development. I also think that reflecting on lessons may help teachers to realise the mistakes they made during the lessons and to think about how they can improve the future lessons.

However, Al-Ahdal and Al-Awaid (2014) have reported that reflective teaching is limited for EFL student-teachers because of inadequate knowledge of reflective practice, the lack of time

and demands of the course contents. If the future EFL English teachers were to use reflective practice, then I think this area has to be incorporated and emphasised in the pre-service courses. The reflective model of teacher education (Dewey, 1933) argues that reflective teaching can develop teachers' professional practice, improving classroom practice. I also agree with this argument. However, the problem is that teaching practice does not seem to be seen as part of teachers' professional development in Saudi Arabia, but rather as a necessary element to be completed by EFL student-teachers and assessed by teacher educators as part of their education programme. According to Altrjmi (2010), in-service teachers are provided with CPD in Saudi Arabia, although such programmes are discontinuous, fragmented and do not necessarily meet the needs of the serving teachers. For this reason, I think the EFL student-teachers should be able to apply reflective practice as a professional development activity.

6.3.4.2 Feedback

Secondly, like Ramaprasad (1983), the EFL student-teachers felt that feedback was an important process for teacher development as it can narrow the gap between known and unknown knowledge. The respondents raised concerns of their cooperating teachers giving some general feedback such as time management and resource management rather than how to improve language teaching using the modern language teaching techniques. As pointed out by Laurillard (2002), learning is unproductive without feedback while White (2017) asserts that feedback does help increasing understanding. I take this position and argue that both lecturers and cooperating teachers must give the EFL student-teachers quality feedback to improve their teaching. In the present study, many participants have pointed out the importance of feedback for them to develop their understanding, removing their misconceptions and enriching their knowledge of theory as suggested by Contijoch-Escontria *et al.*, (2012). The present research has found that EFL student-teachers wanted to have their lessons observed by both their university lecturers as well as the cooperating teachers. They also wanted to receive feedback

from more than one person in order to understand their strengths and weaknesses. One respondent argued that the university lecturer should visit him at least once a week to observe his teaching, evaluate his performance and provide him feedback. If this had happened, he thought it would have created a huge difference in his professional development. It seems, I think, that he is referring to the developmental model of lesson observation rather than the prescriptive model of practice teaching.

The former focuses on trying and experimenting new ways of teaching, while the latter is following a particular method in teaching. While the development model of feedback should be emphasised, it was reported by the research participants that the prescriptive model was adopted by the cooperating teachers. The cooperating teachers not only provided them with general feedback but also they often pointed out EFL student-teachers' weaknesses (Bailey, 2006). In this area it is interesting to note similarities between the outcomes of this work and the work (Ochieng'Ong'ondo and Borg, (2011) undertaken in Kenya. The value of this alignment is that Kenya is also working towards improvement in teaching practice and thus the lessons from Kenya, which is also a highly traditional country may have some relevance to the Saudi context. If these viewpoints from the participants are accurate reflections of practice, then I think that schools need to change their view of teaching practicum and help teachers to implement the development model of teacher education during the practice teaching.

6.3.4.3 Observation

In this study, the EFL student-teachers observed more experienced teachers as part of learning and it is another way that a pre-service teacher can develop their professionalism (Crandall, 2000). The EFL student-teacher can observe how experienced teacher manages content, behaviour, and classroom (Crandall, 2000). I think observing teachers is a good thing if the

teaching being observed is really good at teaching; if not, it may not help in-service teachers to learn and apply good teaching practices. In fact, the present research has found that some of the practices observed by the EFL student-teachers were not very impressive. This does not mean that those practices such as the use of grammar translation method were ineffective, but teachers' overreliance on a few methods was a concern for EFL student-teachers. For instance, one of the respondents reported that the experienced teacher she observed was using Arabic to teach English and applied the traditional grammar translation method to teach. This was mainly because of the large class size and insufficient timetabled time for English lessons.

Thus, under these limitations, the application of new English language methods learned by the EFL student-teachers becomes a challenge for novice teachers. One of the problems identified by one of the research participants in the present study is the disorganisation of the lesson observation. According to her, an English teacher from a nearby school and one from the school where she was attached observed her lessons (teachers observing a EFL student-teachers' lesson); however, these teachers were stressed because of their curriculum activities and as a result they followed the traditional teaching method and provided textbook tasks to students. They also discouraged her to use any tasks outside the normal curriculum activities planned for the term. Therefore, I argue that the cooperating teachers need to be given more time to spend with the teacher trainees in order to provide better guidance. Despite these issues, the school attachment has been perceived by the research participants as a good learning experience, which had developed them as professional teachers.

Apart from observing experienced teachers, peer observation has seen to be effective for teachers' professional development (Peel, 2005). This is because it offers an opportunity for practicing teachers to improve their teaching by receiving feedback from a colleague rather

than supervisors. According to Peel (2005), some school teachers use the peer observation technique for their professional development. However, this practice seems to be more appropriate for in-service teachers who are more professionally mature than those pre-service teachers who need professional support. Despite this, according to most of the research participants of the present study, micro teaching and observing their friends delivering lessons helped them improve their own teaching practice.

6.3.5 Issues with Practicum

Although the practicum component of teacher education in Saudi Arabia was perceived to be the most valuable for the pre-service teachers, several issues about teaching practice have been raised by the research participants. The main issue is the question of how to develop the pre-service teachers professionally (Richards, 1998).

6.3.5.1 Lack of Support for Student-Teachers

For a quality teaching practice, I argue that the cooperating teachers need to be able to give adequate support (guidance) for student-teachers. This is because the level of support, not only encourages student-teachers to start teaching, but motivates and develops their self-confidence in teaching (Ferrell, 2008). On the other hand, letting EFL student-teachers be on their own (minimal support) to follow school policies and to teach according to the timetable they are given can be de-motivating for them (Ferrell, 2008). This is because I think EFL student-teachers need to be involved in both curricular and extra-curricular activities as well as attending school meetings such as subject coordination meetings and staff meetings. I argue that increasing interaction within the school system can help improve EFL student-teachers' learning and professional development. Canh (2014) argues that maintaining quality of supervision is necessary for ensuring a quality practice teaching programme. However, the present study has found that the respondents did not receive sufficient support from their

supervisors or cooperating teachers. This finding is consistent with Ferrell's (2008) argument that in-service teachers get minimal support from their supervisors. If this is the case, then it is concerning because the beginning teachers need a considerable level of support from the experienced ones, not only to learn new skills, but also improve their confidence. Youngs and Bird (2010) also support this stance.

One of the participants in the present research stated that he was not observed or assessed by his university lecturer, but rather supplied the evaluation forms to the headteacher of the school where he was attached for practice teaching. This particular respondent questioned the head teacher's capability of assessing English teachers' performance when the head teacher did not understand English. According to Ochieng'Ong'ondo and Borg (2011), often supervision, during practice teaching, is uncoordinated and there is not much communication between the cooperating teacher from the school side and the lecturers from the university side. Moreover, Ferrell (2012) raised the issue that often it would be very difficult for schools or cooperating teachers to contact teacher educators for professional support and assistance. These views have reflected in practice teaching in Saudi Arabia.

6.3.5.2 Inadequate Application of New Knowledge

A recurring theme of the present research is that the EFL student-teachers have not been able to put theory into practice. This finding is consistent with Canh's (2014) argument that EFL student-teachers often fail to apply what they have learned in the university in their classroom practice during the practicum. 'Knowledge of teaching' is not linked to 'knowledge in teaching' (Seferoğlu, 2006). Although student-teachers know some modern methods to teach English, the authoritative and teacher dominant English teaching practice in Saudi Arabia (Alrabai, 2014) has limited the student-teachers to apply new theory into classroom practice.

If this is the case, then it may give the in-service teachers the impression that what they learned during the Diploma may not necessarily be useful in their classroom teaching.

On the other hand, they are encouraged to conform to the norms of the existing teaching culture within the school and respect the teaching styles and methods used by the experienced teachers. According to one respondent, the least she could do was to have pair and individual activities in her practice lessons. She was not able to use Communicative Language Teaching approach during her practice teaching period not because her cooperative teachers objected it, but because of the size of the class. Therefore, there is no appropriate teaching environment in which pre-service teachers can apply the new knowledge they acquired from the university. If this is the case, there is no point in learning the modern methods of English language teaching in the teacher education courses.

6.3.5.3 *Limitations of Educational Technology*

A vast majority of the EFL student-teachers agree that the use of advanced technology is important for their teaching; however, the present research shows that there is a lack of use of ICT and advanced educational technology in teaching during the teaching practice. This finding is consistent with the finding provided by Smith and Abouammoh (2013). Al-Seghayer and Saud (2014) also support this view as they stated that educational technology is ‘insufficiently employed’ in Saudi English language classrooms. I think there is a need for Saudi schools to change their approach to teaching as more and more schools in other parts of the world are going towards the use of electronic methods for classroom teaching such as using the Interactive Whiteboards (Saqlain *et al*, 2013). I think one of the reasons for teachers lack of willingness to use ICT in their classrooms is that teachers prefer control of the class rather than giving learner autonomy in language teaching (Ferrell, 2008). Fareh (2010) criticised the

English language teaching practices in Saudi Arabia stating that teachers use teacher-centred methods rather than learner-centred approaches.

On the other hand, many students use technology to learn the English language these days. For example, one respondent in the present study reported using videos and movies on his own to improve his English language proficiency and fluency. However, English language teachers in Saudi Arabia often tend to depend on the textbooks, students' workbooks and other supplementary materials rather than using online or authentic language materials. One of the reasons for teachers relying on prescribed materials is the fact that there are limited resources available for them to use in their classroom teaching. I think, if learning materials are limited to some prescribed amount, then it may affect students learning and education outcomes.

6.4 Pedagogical Issues

The holistic approach to teacher preparation has an emphasis on education pedagogy (Sleeter, 2004). Effective teacher perspective argues that teachers should know how to deliver quality instruction (Kyriakides, Campbell and Christofidou, 2002). This means that EFL student-teachers need to learn how to teach during teacher education period. Teacher training is primarily concerned about teaching in school environment (Anderson, 2005). However, previous studies have raised a number of issues in relation to pedagogical aspects of teacher education in Saudi Arabia. For instance, Shehdeh (2010) and Khan (2011) have observed that there was not enough method knowledge, while Al-Hazmi (2003) argued that EFL teachers were inadequately prepared in the past. Others (for example, Elyas and Picard, 2010; Alnassar and Dow, 2013) have pointed out some areas that are lacking in teacher education in Saudi Arabia. For Alnassar and Dow (2013), the focus on critical thinking in teacher education is insufficient and there is no emphasis on teaching how to learn or knowledge of metacognition.

In addition, Elyas and Picard (2010) have pointed out that deficiency in understanding modern language teaching methods. They also argued that the modern language teaching methods seemed to be incompatible with the teaching styles adopted by Saudi EFL teachers. Consistent with the existing literature, the present research has found that the EFL teacher education programme has failed to provide adequate teaching methods knowledge to teach English language in classroom conditions. According to one respondent in the present research, it is important to know the most appropriate strategy to deliver a specific language skill. However, the Diploma of Education did not prepare him to know and use skill-specific language teaching strategy.

6.4.1 Teaching Strategies

What is found in the present study is that the student-teachers need to know specific strategies to teach different language skills. A teaching strategy is a specific method used to deliver some information (Seghayer, 2014). In this case, it is teaching a specific language skill. For instance, what strategies would be most appropriate to teach reading and whether speaking lessons can be taught the same ways as a writing lesson? According to Zhan (2008), pedagogical content knowledge should provide pre-service teachers sufficient knowledge of teaching methods, approaches and techniques to deliver subject content in classroom environments. If the participants of the Diploma felt that they lacked teaching skills, it means that the future teachers would not be able to apply new methods of teaching English skills. The two English teaching methods course taught in the Diploma programme were viewed by some participants as inadequately delivered to them. One of the common complaint was the use of Arabic to teach English teaching methods. This may affect student-teachers' understanding of the concepts linked to teaching strategies and new ideas introduced to them through the Diploma programme.

The existing literature suggests that different strategies may be used to teach different language skills. For instance, giving students opportunities for repeated reading has been found to be very effective in improving reading fluency as well as develop better understanding in reading comprehension (Gorsuch and Taguchi, 2008). Similarly, meaning-focused speaking and communicative tasks are found to be effective ways of developing speaking skills among students (Newton, 2016). In reading lessons, the modern approach is to use a pre-reading-while-reading - post-reading approach rather than asking students to read a piece of text and giving them some comprehensive questions to answer as form of writing activities. Ellis (2008) also argues that giving communicative tasks in classroom teaching is important and if students are not reluctant to participate in such activities, it is teacher's responsibility to motivate his/her students.

However, such strategies have not been mentioned by the research participants in the present study. Perhaps, the EFL student-teachers have not been provided with such knowledge or the respondents might have forgotten to mention about the specific language teaching strategies that can adopt during their classroom practice. Although this information is not explicit, some respondents called for including modules to teach them how to teach young learners. This suggests that the English teaching methods taught to the EFL student-teachers in the Diploma of Education are general English teaching methods. It also indicates that there is a lack of attention to teach EFL student-teachers specific strategies that are suitable for different age groups in language learning. Despite this, many of the research participants have acknowledged that the Diploma has provided them with good amount of knowledge of English teaching methods. In a Turkish study by Akcan (2011) found that the English language teaching methods modules provided EFL student-teachers with opportunities to pass their practicum and acquired better understanding of how to solve classroom problems.

6.4.2 Overdependence on the Traditional Methods

Although some modern language teaching methods such as the CLT approach and presentation, production and practice (PPP) model are taught to EFL student-teachers, the respondents in the present study have described teaching in the university that follows some traditional methods of teaching. According to many respondents, they were kept passive while lecturers delivered lessons and there were no such classroom activities such as discussions or presentations. A similar approach was also used to teach English teaching methods modules. This finding is consistent with the previous research findings. For instance, Szyliowicz (1973) reported that the common method of learning in Saudi Arabia was 'rote learning'. Even more recent researchers like Smith and Abouammoh (2013) have also observed that the dominant pedagogical approach used by lecturers in Saudi higher education was rote learning and teacher-centred teaching.

Furthermore, other authors have also commented on the common teaching methods used by English teachers in Saudi Arabia. According to Al-Mohanna (2010), audio-lingual method is common, which is regarded as a traditional form of English language teaching. Teachers who use this method often use behaviourist principles of learning – repetition and memorisation. In an English lesson, teachers may drill pronunciation of words individually or they may give chorus drilling, all students saying the same thing at the same time. In this method, the focus is on rote learning. Students learn grammatical rules first and then they use these rules to translate sentences in the target language. These methods also encourage memorisation of language items rather than use them in communicative purposes. In an exam-oriented teaching environment, the use of communicative language teaching, which does not have prescribed testing methods for teachers, may be limited. In addition, Al-Ahdal *et al.*, (2014) observed that teachers focused on sentence-level when teaching writing skills. For these reasons, Al-Seghayer and Saud (2014) argue that modern language teaching methods are incompatible with

the existing teaching culture within English teaching in Saudi Arabia. Although there are several reasons for the lack of use of modern teaching methods, Nishino (2012) has provided two specific reasons. One is teachers' belief about the nature of language and language learning and the other is the lack of opportunities for teachers' professional development.

While some may promote CLT approach as superior to the traditional language teaching methods, it also has many problems. For instance, it may be ineffective if Arabic is used as medium of instruction, while the target language is English because the goal of CLT is to use the target language as the chosen medium of instruction (Adi, 2012). It cannot be used when student motivation level is low because this method requires using the target language in the classroom. According to Adi (2012), students should demonstrate intrinsic motivation towards learning English if CLT were to be effectively used by teachers. In Saudi classrooms where Arabic is commonly used by teachers to explain English lessons, the application of this method poses a great challenge for English teachers. Additionally, the exam-oriented teaching practised by Saudi schools becomes a problem if CLT were to be used in classroom teaching. Thus, teachers may think that focusing on transmitting knowledge (Orafi and Borg, 2009) can benefit students rather than giving them opportunity to be engaged in communicative activities in classroom teaching. The common belief to produce good results in examinations is to memorise grammar, practice reading comprehension and being able to produce descriptive writing rather than examining whether students are able to perform communicative acts in real-life situations. However, Shawer (2010) argues that there is no inherent problem for teachers in using the CLT approach. Indeed, Shawer (2013) puts forward the view that it is a reluctance borne out of lack of knowledge that is the primary obstacle to adopting this method of teaching, as noted in Section 3.7.5 of this work.

6.5 Perceived Usefulness of Course Modules

One of the two research questions requires identifying the aspects of the Diploma of Education that helped the student-teachers to teach English in the classroom and those that did not. The present research found the following to modules to be valuable and less useful for the research participants.

6.5.1 Useful Modules

One of the most useful courses of the Diploma was the modules that were related to teaching and learning. I think it is not surprising to discover that these modules have been regarded as highly valuable for teaching, because according to Alexander (2007), teachers should be equipped with the best possible means to interact with students in the classroom environments where many factors come into play. Therefore, like the research participants, I believe that the knowledge of education is very important for in-service teachers. These modules can also provide general and language specific learning theories and teaching methods. This view has been shared by Barrow *et al.* (2007) as they argue that student-teachers need tried and tested practices in order to become quality teachers, which may be achieved through learning contents from educational modules. Related to education is teaching methods modules and according to the perceptions of the EFL student-teachers they are very helpful for teaching. For instance, one research participant argued that the knowledge she received from the English teaching methods made her a very confident teacher. The module also prepared her for classroom teaching during the teaching practice. Although having knowledge of teaching methods is useful for a prospective teacher, I think what is more important is to have experience in using these teaching methods in their classroom teaching. This is because knowledge without application is just information that has a very limited use.

The syllabus analysis shows that the University A offers English teaching methods, while the University B provides general teaching methods. This difference is mainly due to the nature of student needs. For instance, when those graduates with the knowledge of general teaching methods are put into language classrooms, they may tend to use the traditional methods of teaching such as grammar translation. Therefore, I think that if these universities are preparing teachers to teach English, then they should be taught English teaching methods and those teachers who are not provided such methods may not be assigned to teach English. This is because I do not think that having knowledge of general teaching methods is good enough to qualify someone to teach English in a classroom. Javid and Umer (2014) argue that a lack of focus on language-specific teaching methods modules have contributed to poor performance in English teaching in Saudi Arabia. I agree with Javid and Umer (2014). These education-related modules also include language testing modules, instructional psychology and developmental psychology modules.

One issue raised by the EFL student-teachers in the present research is that although they should be taught using English as a medium of instruction in the university, often Arabic was used to deliver course contents. If this were to be continued and the course contents are delivered in this manner, then the importance of the educational modules may be reduced. Therefore, some research participants have suggested changing the way the course modules are taught. For instance, the assessment and evaluation modules can be made more practical rather than giving them a lot of theoretical knowledge in this area.

According to the perceptions shared by the EFL student-teachers, other useful modules are those courses that help them to improve English language skills and those that give them opportunities to put theory into classroom practice. Perhaps, fluency in speaking is a necessary

skill for classroom teacher, according to the admission requirements of the course, student-teachers are expected to fulfil certain language competencies before they are accepted on the course. Nevertheless, this does not mean that they are fluent and do not require improving their English language capabilities. However, it is clear from earlier discussions that the improvement of English language competence is a major concern. EFL student-teachers should not expect that this course should make them more fluent English speakers because they were not competent speakers.

Whilst the Diploma may have offered them several opportunities to develop their language skills, it was not designed to deliver lessons to improve their language skills. For example, peer-teaching and teaching practice sessions might have given them ample opportunities to use English language, which meant that they had practiced language skills that could not have been learnt somewhere else. However, as expressed by the EFL student-teachers, they could have been given opportunities to discuss issues in English during the lecture times. In his research, Shehdeh (2010) blames teacher training institutions for not offering the skills set required by English teachers and part of ineffective teaching English language is not preparing English teachers well (Khan, 2011). I also think there is some truth in these arguments as the EFL student-teachers also shared their unhappiness with regards to the quality of the Diploma.

One component of the Diploma that has been regarded by the research participants as highly valuable is teaching practice module, where students have the opportunity to use their language abilities and skills to teach and prove their qualification to become English language teachers. As shown in the previous discussions, I can argue that many student-teachers have issues regarding the way the practical module is implemented. Again, the usefulness of the practicum module is undermined partly because of the school culture, beliefs of English teaching practice, the class size and lack for support student-teachers during practice teaching. Therefore, I think

that there needs to be better coordination between the teacher education institutions and cooperating schools.

6.5.2 Less Valuable Modules

While some of the courses in the Diploma are very useful for the EFL student-teachers, there are some modules that do not seem to be helping pre-service teachers to teach English language in Saudi Arabia. One module that was perceived to be the least useful for the research participants was the English in Saudi Arabia. I think the reason behind this perception is that there is no correlation between the knowing the history of English speaking in Saudi Arabia and their teaching English in classrooms because this knowledge is provided as background knowledge. Although this course gives the background information and history of English language teaching, it has a little relevance to pre-service teachers teaching practice and future career. Perhaps, for this reason this module has been considered not helping the EFL student-teachers in teaching English language. However, knowing the past is important to understand ‘the enhanced status of English’ (Alshahrani, 2016, p.43) in Saudi Arabia, which may influence changing people’s attitude towards learning and teaching English language.

While education modules such as developmental psychology and instructional psychology are important, it has been suggested putting these modules into one course to avoid repetition in contents. I also think this is important because more time needs to be given to teach English teaching methods. This does not mean that psychology and educational courses are less important for them than other courses, but avoiding the repetition can probably help allocating more time for practice-based elements of the Diploma. However, according to Slavin (2012), the importance of psychological modules for teachers cannot be overemphasised. This is because they should be familiar with many theories, including children’ moral development, and their social, cognitive and moral development. Apart from this, educational psychology

will provide the EFL student-teachers with the knowledge they need to understand the nature of learning and different theories pertaining learning.

Therefore, while the respondents in the present study may perceive the psychological modules less valuable for them, from a curriculum developer perspective, theoretical knowledge of child psychology, instructional and developmental psychology will be essential for a teacher education programme. I agree with this view because it is vital for teachers to understand different stages of child development and the likely behaviour they may observe from children at different stages. This can help them to handle behavioural and learning issues.

Lastly, the Mental Hygiene (the official term) course is less important for some student-teachers, while others see it as very valuable. What this module offers to the EFL student-teachers is the knowledge and skills to maintain and promote good mental health. In this context, teaching mental hygiene is done probably to improve the EFL student-teachers' emotional intelligence because it is a necessary skill for effective teaching. I think this module is very important because teachers face many changes and they are required to be resilient. If they can improve emotional intelligence through this module, then I argue that it can be very useful for them in their career. According to Ghanizadeh and Moafian (2010), emotional intelligence leads to achieving success in EFL classrooms. Mental hygiene is also important to understand children as well as to have knowledge about their emotional well-being. Therefore, this is an important module for English language teachers. However, the present study finds that the main issue with this module is the quality of teaching because from the responses of the research participants, one can deduce that this module is a theory-intensive course, which does have little focus on practical work. If the content of this module were linked to teaching

practice and children's language development, then perhaps, the value of the mental hygiene module may increase.

6.6 Summary

The present study aimed to explore student-teachers' perceptions of the issues with regard to the research questions. One was to find out the aspects of Diploma that helped student-teachers in classroom teaching and the other is to know the student-teachers' perceptions on the extent to which the Diploma developed their English competence. The present study finds that improving English language skills is very important for student-teachers aiming to become future English teachers in Saudi Arabia. One of the ways in which they can enhance their language proficiency is through the modules of the Diploma course. However, a major barrier to the development of English competence is the use of Arabic as a medium of instruction in teaching in the university education. As reported by the research participants, often Arabic is used to deliver course modules in teacher education courses in Saudi Arabia. The overdependence on textbooks also has a negative effect on the development of language skills. The lack of English language competence affects the EFL student-teachers' confidence in using English language negatively. However, the teaching practice module provides them with opportunities to use English. This module is viewed as being the most valuable and preferred module by the research participants. There are several benefits of the teaching practice module, including having deeper understanding, increasing opportunities to apply theory into practice, giving opportunities of pre-service English teachers to practice language skills. The practicum also proves to help in building confidence in student-teacher ability to teach. Furthermore, it allows them to learn from experienced teachers. Another practice-based practice in teacher development is peer teaching, which is an important element to increase teaching skills. Feedback from lesson observations through both peer teaching and classroom teaching improves teachers' professionalism. Reflective teaching is an important teacher development

activity for student-teachers. However, many issues are associated with the practicum module. One key issue is the lack of support for student-teachers from the school attachment and university during the practice teaching. There is little opportunity for them to apply the new knowledge into classroom practice. On the topic of pedagogy, student-teachers need to have knowledge of modern English teaching methods. More importantly, they should be able to use the modern English teaching methods in classroom teaching. However, a lack of knowledge in skill-specific strategies has been recognised, while there is overdependence of traditional teaching methods in schools. Lastly, educational modules, language development modules, and English teaching methods courses are viewed as highly valuable for student-teachers. However, the modules that offer information about history of English teaching in Saudi Arabia are seen to be less useful for the EFL student-teachers.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Conclusion and Implications

7.1 Introduction

The aim of the present study was to investigate Saudi EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions regarding the Diploma of education programme. The study has focused on two areas of the Diploma; the first was to identify the aspects of the teacher education course that are perceived to be helpful and not helpful by the student-teachers for teaching English in Saudi classrooms and the second was to explore the perceptions of the research participants on whether the Diploma enabled the student-teachers to develop their English language proficiency. In relation to these two areas of research, the following research questions were answered in this study:

1. Which aspects of the Diploma of Education do the EFL student-teachers identify as helping them to teach English in the classroom? And which do they identify as having not helped them?
2. What are the EFL student-teachers' perceptions of the extent to which the Diploma of Education programme develops their English language proficiency?

As far as the research participants' perceptions are concerned, there is inadequate support for the EFL teachers to develop their English language proficiency through this course. These questions have been answered with the help of primary data, which were collected by employing a qualitative approach to gathering information. The qualitative data through semi-structured interviews were collected from two universities in Saudi Arabia, involving fifteen student-teachers. In this study, seven male and eight female EFL student-teachers contributed to the research from each these universities. The data have been analysed using a thematic approach and findings have already been presented in the Chapter 5 above. These findings have also been discussed in relation to the existing literature in the preceding chapter.

Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to discuss the overall conclusions of the study with the relevant evidence for each conclusion and discuss the implications of the research findings for English teacher education institutions, course designers and participating schools in the practicum experience.

The current study contributes to knowledge in terms of teacher education specifically Diploma of education programme in several ways. Firstly, there is very limited empirical evidence, if any, that relates to EFL student-teachers in SA on their perception of the quality of teacher education programmes (Al-Hazmi, 2003) This is, to my knowledge, the first study conducted in Saudi Arabia that aims to explore EFL student- teacher perceptions regarding the Diploma of education programme. Their perceptions can be gathered by an empirical research, through interviewing them to find out how they view the entire Diploma programme. This study aimed to endeavour this difficult task and provide student-teachers voice, which may be beneficial for developers of Diploma programme.

At the level of theoretical contribution, I have formulated a model that contributes to the area of teacher education in SA participants have expressed discontentment about the Diploma because there is no course module in either of the universities that aims to improve their English language skills, more specifically listening, speaking, reading and writing. Thus, a sequence which includes a language course has been suggested. (See subsection 5.10.10.)

The current study made a substantial contribution in the area of pedagogy. The study shed light on some of the challenges that EFL students-teachers experienced in Diploma programme modules and in teaching practice. For example, the study found that there is a greater necessity to develop proficiency in English language skills. This is because the participants felt that they lacked English language skills and confidence in using the language. Concerns about developing and maintaining English language proficiency was not only present, but pressing,

to all participants. It was an important lens through which they evaluated their experience in the Diploma. Therefore, the study emphasises that to prepare successful EFL teachers, would require the concerned parties to understand the prospective candidates' needs of English language skills. Without taking this aspect into consideration, the study argues that teacher preparation programmes may not produce what they intended to achieve in Saudi Arabia.

7.2 Conclusions

The following conclusions may be drawn from the present study based on the data analysis and the findings discovered in this research.

7.2.1 Improving English language proficiency is Necessary

This study concludes that the most helpful course of the Diploma in were the modules that facilitated the EFL student-teachers to develop their English language proficiency. Over 73 per cent of the respondents (11 out of 15 student-teachers) put language development courses as their first priority when ranking the course modules. This implies that there are many EFL student-teachers who are not confident about the level of their English proficiency. As mentioned in the introduction and elsewhere in this report, some previous scholars (for example, Al-Seghayer and Saud, 2014) have raised concerns about the English standard of those people who were selected for English teaching courses in the KSA. It is the contention of some authors (for example, Al-Shumaimeri, 2003; Fareh, 2010) that school leavers from Saudi schools do not have the capability to engage in simple conversational in English.

7.2.2 There is a need to increase the knowledge of teaching four English language skills

However, there is no single module in the Diploma that teaches the four English language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). The respondents may have felt the need to improve their language competency during assessments and practical teaching sessions. In fact, some student-teachers mentioned that they need to improve their communicative competence as they become English teachers. This means the EFL student-teachers expected to improve their productive skills (speaking or writing) using the opportunity of the Diploma. The fact that they have not achieved this goal indicates that there was a mismatch between what the students had expected from the Diploma and what they had received from it. Therefore, as suggested by the respondents, English teacher education in Saudi context needs to have an additional module to improve their language proficiency.

7.2.3 The use of Arabic in teaching is a significant obstacle for improving English proficiency

Even if such an arrangement is made, one obstacle that needs overcoming in English teaching and learning is the use of Arabic in English lessons. In this study, this issue has been raised by the EFL student-teachers several times. As identified in the introductory chapter, English teaching in Saudi Arabia begins around Grade 4 (Mahib-ur-Rahman and Alhaisoni, 2013) as English is a foreign language, whereas in other countries where English is considered a second language, English teaching begins from the very first year of schooling. The late introduction of English language in Saudi Arabia means that Arabic is needed to help students to understand the meanings of words and phrases. Therefore, there is a culture of accepting the use of Arabic in English lessons in primary and secondary schools. The use of grammar translation method

and audio-lingual method, which are considered to be traditional methods of English teaching, is also not uncommon in teaching English language in Saudi higher education.

7.2.4 It is difficult to apply new theory into classroom practice

While the modern language teaching approaches are promoted within the language teaching faculties, often these approaches become very ineffective. The English language teaching methods module also aims to teach the EFL student-teachers many modern English teaching methods, techniques and approaches. However, in actual classroom teaching, it is difficult to apply the new knowledge acquired by student-teachers. One reason why such approaches fail in real-life situations in Saudi Arabia is because of CLT demands complex language production and focuses on the automatic use of language within the classroom. For example, the communicative language teaching approach requires teachers to offer real-life situations to achieve some communicative purposes. The lack of student ability to be engaged in such communicative tasks means teachers rely on more traditional methods that do not demand complex language production activities. Another reason is the condensed nature of the Diploma course means compromising the depth of each module.

Many previous scholars (for example, Khan, 2011; Al-Seghayer and Saud, 2014) claim that Saudi EFL teachers are not professionally and linguistically competent and they also assert that these EFL teachers do not acquire deeper understanding of the English teaching methods in order to teach language elements efficiently. Furthermore, the fact that some modules in the Diploma are taught with students who are specialising to teach other subjects such as science and mathematics in Saudi Arabia, Arabic is often used by lecturers to teach student who are enrolled in the Diploma of Education course.

7.2.5 Education modules are highly valuable for pre-service teachers

Education-related modules are the second most useful courses for the pre-service teachers in the context of the Diploma. Two thirds of the respondents (10 out of 15 student-teachers) put educational courses as their second priority in the ranking table. These modules include educational and developmental psychology, national education and education in Saudi Arabia. However, most of the respondents thought that education in Saudi Arabia was not very useful for them to teach English in classrooms; therefore, it was perceived to be the least helpful module in the entire Diploma. Similarly, mental hygiene was also regarded as not as important as ‘communication skills in education’ or ‘formative psychology’ courses. These ‘not so important’ modules are viewed by the respondents as modules that should be replaced by new modules that can improve English language proficiency among the EFL student-teachers. If improving English competency can make English teacher more confident, motivated and successful teachers, then by all means this change in the Diploma may be worth exploring.

7.2.6 Applying educational theory into classroom practice is the most important aspect

Practice teaching or ‘practicum’ is highly valued by the EFL student-teachers. This module provides them with the opportunity to put theory into classroom practice and it is one of the most salient theme identified in the present study. According to the findings of this research, the term ‘practice’ was one of the most frequently occurring words. Additionally, some research participants thought practice experience allowed them to apply theory to have a deeper understanding of educational theory and approaches they learned in the Diploma. Probably for this reason, those modules that provided skills and knowledge to teach were perceived to be highly valuable for the EFL student-teachers. In this context, 13 out of 15 participants thought that English teaching methods were the most important modules. In support of the teaching

methods, one respondent stated that English Teaching Methods 1&2 offered them support for preparing workable lesson plans to deliver English lessons in classroom teaching.

7.2.7 Practice teaching is a part of teacher professional development

Some student-teachers in this research saw self-improvement, in terms of motivation and confidence in teaching, during teaching practice. The increase in confidence, in the capability of teaching, was built on the knowledge and skills acquired through English teaching methods. According to some previous researchers (for example, Al-Nasser, 2015; Elyas and Al Grigri, 2014), the teacher education programmes should have greater emphasis on teaching methods in order to provide the EFL teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach effectively in classrooms. However, the level of emphasis on English teaching methods is not sufficient as pointed out by some research participants. As a proof, one EFL student-teacher has raised the concern about the generic nature of the methods taught to them. They felt that if they were to be professional English teachers, then they should be taught English teaching methods specific to teaching language skills, not only common teaching methods.

7.3 Implications for Practice

One of the aims of this research was to contribute some empirical evidence to a general debate about the inadequate nature of EFL teacher training in the KSA. This aim has been achieved by collecting information from some EFL student-teachers who have undergone the Diploma of Education programme.

The first practical contribution of this research is that it has provided additional research evidence on the needs to improve EFL teachers' English language proficiency from student-teachers' perspectives. It has indicated the importance of a need analysis of the EFL teachers and focusing on the improvement of English language competency among the prospective English teachers. The level of language assistance needed by the EFL student-teachers may be

identified by conducting a needs analysis. A needs assessment requires universities to link the requirement of schools, consider the students current level of language competency and determine what methods should be used to train future EFL teachers. Additionally, they also have to conduct cost/benefits analysis of the programme. Having undertaken, the needs analysis, universities then be able to clarify the level of language improvement needed by the prospective EFL teachers. As the current research has found that the student-teachers wanted to improve their spoken language, particular attention can be given to assess the ability of the prospective EFL teachers in their spoken language. Spoken language is particularly important because teachers need to interact with students, talk to them and give oral instructions. For these reasons, spoken language competency needs to be given priority over other language skills.

A second implication which derives from the findings of this research is on the need to bring about the necessary changes to the present course outline, according to the requirements of the EFL student-teachers to facilitate English teaching in Saudi classrooms. This means replacing those modules that are perceived be less useful than the other modules for the learners. For example, 'Education in Saudi Arabia' and 'Mental Hygiene' are regarded by the research participants as the least valuable modules; instead of these modules, they suggest to include modules that focus on improving language competency. Such a change can actually be brought to the Diploma of Education by the university course administrators/managers because it is they who develop the course, not the student-teachers. One of the benefits of increasing language improvement courses is that it can address the issue of poor English proficiency among the EFL student-teachers. However, this may require additional resources to be allocated for the Diploma course and more administrative support to run the course. Another area that requires thinking about is the use of Arabic to deliver lessons to the EFL student-teachers, which, according to the respondents, was a barrier to improving English proficiency.

This may require providing the lecturers with professional development opportunities such as training and development courses that help them improve their English language competency.

A third implication arises from the findings of this research is that there is a need to provide deeper understanding of English teaching methods. Previous studies (for example, Abu-Melhim, 2009; Akcan, 2011) have raised the importance of having greater theoretical knowledge on teaching methodology that is specific to teaching English. Some scholars (for example, (Alnassar and Dow, 2013; Al-Seghayer and Saud, 2014) have also argued that pedagogical content knowledge possessed by English teachers in Saudi Arabia is insufficient. One way to do this, as suggested by the respondents, is to separate the EFL Diploma students from the other students who are specialising in other subjects such as science and mathematics. One benefit of this approach is it can give more time for lecturers/instructors to teach English language teaching methods rather than delivering some generic methods to teach in classroom. However, this may require the universities to provide more resources, including increasing lecturers, allocating more rooms to teach and other physical and financial resources. Despite this, the need to improve the quality of English teaching can be improved when EFL teachers are provided with more courses-specific methods.

Lastly, a fourth implication stems from the research findings is that the EFL student-teachers require more effective teaching practice. Some previous scholars (for example, Khan, 2011; Mahib-ur-Rahman and Alhaisoni, 2013) have pointed out the importance of teaching practice for teachers' professional development. The current study has found that the most positive experience of the entire Diploma was teaching practice, providing the course participants with experience and new skills in delivering classroom teaching. While peer-teaching has some benefits, it cannot be replaced with teaching practice, but the course participants have raised some concerns about the way the practicum module was conducted. Firstly, there seems to be a weak co-ordination between schools and the universities; consequently, the EFL student-

teachers tend to feel they are left alone during the practicum period. There needs to be close communication between co-operating schools and the university in order to make teaching practice a positive experience for student-teachers. For this, universities should take the initiative and work towards establishing better relationships with schools. Another issue is the co-operating teachers' lack of support for the trainee teachers, especially when it comes to allowing them to try out new teaching methods. A high level of control over the trainee teachers means that they are somewhat forced to comply with the traditional teaching methods rather than the co-operating teachers encouraging the trainees to apply the new educational theory into classroom practice. Therefore, universities should consider taking a new and more effective approach to practicum in the future.

7.4 Limitations and Future research

This research has come across some limitations, as is the case in other academic work. One important limitation is that its inability to generalise the findings across other fields of education and organisational cultures. As pointed out in the methodology chapter, this research took a qualitative approach to collect qualitative data through semi-structured interviews and documents analysis. This mono method means restricting the amount of data and losing the opportunity to triangulate the data. The term 'triangulation' refers to the use of more than one method of data collection or including data from different sources. The purpose of triangulation, according to Patton (2002), is to develop a comprehensive understanding of a research topic. A researcher who is interested in undertaking a study on the effectiveness of EFL teacher education programmes in Saudi Arabia may use a multiple methods approach and collect data from various sources; for example, survey data, interview data and organisational documents. Such a study, then, will require triangulate the different source of data, increasing validity of information and thereby improving the trustworthiness of its findings. This does not mean the present study is not to be trusted, but rather the fact that it has collected information

from the EFL student-teachers means the information has come from the correct source; thus, it is trustworthy.

Another limitation of the present study is the difficulty of generalising its findings to other cultures. As stated in the methodology, the research was set out in the Saudi context, a culture that is very different from that of western societies (Hofstede, 2005), indicating the problems and issues related to only one culture. However, the issues raised in the present study, such as the use of traditional methods in teaching, have some relevance to many other countries including Hong Kong and India. Therefore, one way to increase generalisability to other cultures is to conduct a comparative study into understanding the aspects that help EFL teachers to teach English in classrooms. Future researchers can take this point into consideration in designing their research. Perhaps, they can compare two different cultures (for example, Saudi Arabia and the USA) and generalise their findings to both western countries and non-western countries or they may compare two cultures with similar characteristics such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar and generalised their similarities across the Arabian countries.

7.5 Overall Conclusion

Whilst the research questions have been answered in a satisfactory manner, there is still a big question that this research could not answer, which is to decide whether the EFL student-teachers' expectations of what the course could do was realistic. The current study has shown that student-teachers expected to take a course that could develop their English language proficiency; however, they could be fundamentally mistaken in what they thought the Diploma could possibly do. It may be unreasonable to expect to teach them English language skills to develop their language competence in a course that aims to teach them how to teach English in schools. On the other hand, it may be reasonable to argue that it would not be possible to teach English if they do not have a reasonable level of language proficiency. Therefore, the research

participants' claim that they did not receive sufficient language development opportunities from the Diploma seems to be not guided by good sense. If they think they need to improve their English proficiency, perhaps they should have more informal opportunities to develop spoken English and improve confidence and competence. Whilst suggesting this, there is a gender difference issue in Saudi Arabia as males get more opportunities to go out and use their English than females. As I see the language proficiency issue, the teacher training courses are for those who already have appropriate level of English competence; therefore, the course should concentrate on modules that teach the students how to teach English effectively in actual classrooms rather than teaching them language skills to improve their language proficiency. As far as this argument is concerned, there are many modules in the Diploma programme focusing on how to teach.

Finally, this project has been a very valuable learning experience and at the same time, it was a great challenge. The opportunity to complete this work has provided me with knowledge and skills in number of ways. It has enriched my understanding of a research process – from setting out the aim and objectives to arrive at conclusions. Additionally, this project has improved my analytical skills by handling complex qualitative data and my ability to collect, analyse, visualize and present information in detail has enriched because of this project. It taught me how to use software and to employ technological techniques to handle large amount of qualitative data. Another important skill that has flourished due to this work is critical thinking, which is an important skill for professional development because it gives the ability to make decisions-based evidence and weighing this evidence intelligently before an informed decision is made. Furthermore, this huge project has enabled me to improve my reflective skills. Looking back my past skills and experiences has helped me to develop the effectiveness of the skills I have possessed earlier. On the whole, the skills I have learned from this work will be very valuable in my future work and professional development.

References

- Abahussain, M. (2016). *Implementing communicative language teaching method in Saudi Arabia: Challenges faced by formative year Teachers in state schools*. Stirling: University of Stirling.
- Abu-Melhim, A. R. (2009). Attitudes of Jordanian college students towards learning English as a foreign language. *College Student Journal*, 43(2), 682 - 673.
- AbuSeileek, A. F. (2006). The use of word processor for teaching writing to EFL learners in King Saud University. *Journal of King Saud University*, 8, 18-42.
- Adi, S. (2012). Communicative language teaching: Is it appropriate for Indonesian context? *Foreign Language Annuals*, 7(3), 110-121.
- Ahmed, M. (1979). *Teacher training*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Akcan, S. (2011). Analysis of teacher candidates' learning experiences in an "English Teaching Methods" course. *Education and Science*, 36(162), 247-260.
- Akinola, O. (2014). The influence of practical teaching of oral communication. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature*, 2(9), 44-48.
- Al-Abdulkader, A. (1978). *A survey of the contribution of higher education to the development of human resources in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*. Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Kansas.
- Al-Ahdal, A., Alfallaj, F., Al-Awaied, S., and Al-Hattami, A. (2014). A comparative study of proficiency in speaking and writing among EFL learners in Saudi Arabia. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 4(2), 141-149.
- Al-Ahdal, A.A.M.H., Alfallaj, F.S., Al-Awaied, S.A., and Al-Hattami, A.A. (2014). A comparative study of proficiency in speaking and writing among EFL learners in Saudi Arabia. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 4(2), 141 - 149.
- Al-Ahdal, A.A.M.H., and Al-Awaied, S.A.A. (2014). Reflective teaching and language teacher education programmes: A milestone in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 5(4), 759-768.
- Al-Asmari, A. R. (2013). Saudi university undergraduates' language learning attitudes: A preparatory year perspective. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 3(11), 2288-2306.
- Albaqami, S. (2015). Implementing quality assurance in Saudi Arabia: a comparison between the MESO and the MICRO levels at PSU. *Higher Education Studies*, 5(3), 66-81.
- Al-Bedaiwi, S. (2010). *What is the role of the teacher in promoting learner autonomy in EFL Secondary (high) school classrooms in The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)?* Master of Education, University of Glasgow.
- Al-Bedaiwi, S. (2010). *What is the role of the teacher in promoting learner autonomy in EFL Secondary (high) school classrooms in The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)?* Glasgow: University of Glasgow.

- Albedaiwi, S. (2011). *EFL materials in public school classrooms in Saudi Arabia*. Glasgow: Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow.
- Al-Braik, M. (2007). Performance of KFU English major students. *Scientific Journal of King Faisal University*, 8(2), 647–677.
- Alexander, R. (2007). *Education for all: The quality imperative and the problem of pedagogy*. New Delhi: DfID.
- Al-Ghamdi, A., and Al-Saddat, I. (2002). *The development of the educational system in Saudi Arabia*. Riyadh: Tarbiat Al Ghad.
- Al-Hazmi, S. (2003). EFL teacher preparation programs in Saudi Arabia: Trends and challenges. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37, 341 -344.
- Al-Hazmi, S., and Schofield, P. (2007). Enforced revision with checklist and peer feedback in EFL writing: The example of Saudi University students. *Scientific Journal of King Faisal University. Humanities and Management Sciences*, 8(2), 237-267.
- Alkubaidi, M. A. (2014). The relationship between Saudi English major university students writing performance and their learning style and strategy use. *English Language Teaching*, 7(4), 83-92.
- Al-Mohanna, A. (2010). English teaching in Saudi Arabian context: How communicatively oriented is it? *Journal of King Saudi University (Language and Translation)*, 22, 69-88.
- Alnassar, S.A., and Dow, K.L. (2013). Delivering high-quality teaching and learning for university students in Saudi Arabia. In L.Smith, & A. Abouammoh, *Higher Education in Saudi Arabia: Achievements, Challenges and Opportunities* (pp. 49 - 60). New York: Springer.
- Al-Nasser, A. (2015). Problems of English language acquisition in Saudi Arabia: An exploratory-cum-remedial study. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 5(8), 1612-1619.
- Alrabai, F. (2014). Motivational practices in English as a foreign language classes in Saudi Arabia: Teachers beliefs and learners perceptions. *Arab World English Journal*, 5(1), 224-246.
- Alrashidi, O. and Phan, H. (2015). Education context and English teaching and learning in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *An Overview. English Language Teaching*, 8(5), 33 - 44.
- Al-Saraj, T. M. (2014). Foreign language anxiety in female Arabs learning English: Case studies. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 8(3), 257-278.
- Al-Seghayer, K. (2011). *English teaching in Saudi Arabia: Status, issues, and challenges*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Hala Printed Co.
- Al-Seghayer, K. (2014). The actuality, inefficiency, and needs of EFL teacher-preparation programmes in Saudi Arabia. In *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature (IJALEL)* (pp. 143 - 151). Australia: Australian International Academic Centre.

- Al-Seghayer, K., and Saud, M.I. (2014). The four most common constraints affecting English teaching in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 4(5), 17 - 26.
- Alshahrani, M. (2016). A brief historical perspective of English in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics*, 26, 43-47.
- Al-Shumaimeri, Y. A. (2003). *A study of classroom exposure to oral pedagogic tasks in relation to the motivation and performance of Saudi secondary learners of English in a context of potential curriculum reform*. Leeds: Unpublished Ph.D.Thesis, University of Leeds.
- Alsubaie, M. (2014). *An exploration of reading comprehension challenges in Saudi Arabian university EFL students*. Exeter: The University of Exeter: Unpublished Thesis of Doctor of Philosophy in Education.
- Altrjmi, F. M. (2010). *The evaluation of training programmes for Arabic language teachers in the secondary stage in Almadinah Almunawarah in the light of their professional needs*. (Unpublished master's thesis), Madinah: Taibah University.
- Alzaydi, D. (2010). *Activity theory as a lense to explore participant perspectives of the administrative and academic activity systems in a university-school partnership in initial teacher education in Saudi Arabia*. Exeter: Open Research Exeter, University of Exeter.
- Anderson, P. (2005). The meaning of pedagogy. In C. T. Introduction, *J. L. Kincheloe* (pp. 53 - 70). New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Applebee, A.N., Langer, J.A., Nystrand, M., and Gamoran, A. (2003). Discussion-based approaches to developing understanding: Classroom instruction and student performance in middle and high school English. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(3), 685-730.
- Aslam, Z. (2014). A study of factors responsible for low motivation level for learning English as second language level in Saudi female students. *Journal of English Language and Literature*, 1(1), 08-12.
- Bailey, K. (2006). *Language teacher supervision: A case-based approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barahona, M. (2016). *English Language Teacher Education in Chile: A cultural historical activity theory perspective*. New York: Routledge.
- Barrow, K., Boyle, H., Ginsburg, M., Leu, E., Pier, D., Price-Rom, A., and Rocha, V. (2007). *Professional development and implementing active-learning, student-centered pedagogies, Cross national synthesis on education quality report no. 3*. Washington, DC: USAid.
- Başyurt-Tüzel, A.E., and Akcan, S. (2009). Raising the language awareness of preservice English teachers in an EFL context. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 32(3), 273-289.
- Bazeley, P., & Jackson, K. (Eds.). (2013). *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo*. Sage Publications Limited.

- Beltman, S., Mansfield, C., and Price, A. (2011). Thriving not just surviving: A review of research on teacher resilience. *Educational Research Review*, 6(3), 185-207.
- Benade, L. (2017). *Being a teacher in the 21st century: A critical New Zealand research study*. New Zealand: Springer.
- Besley, T. (2015). Social Education and Mental Hygiene. *Beyond the Philosophy of the Subject: An Educational Philosophy and Theory Post-Structuralist Reader*, 1, 172.
- Beverley, A., and Worsley, A. (2007). *Learning and teaching in social work practice*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Blackwell, R. and McLean, M. (1996). Peer observation of teaching and staff development. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 50(2), 156-171.
- Booth, W.C., Colomb, G.G., and Williams, J.M. (2008). *The craft of research* (3rd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Boyd, M. (2016). Relations between teacher questioning and student talk in one elementary ELL classroom. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 47(3), 370-404.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), , 3(2), 77-101.
- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social research methods* . Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods* (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cabaroglu, N., and Roberts, J. (2000). Development in student teachers' pre-existing beliefs during a 1-year PGCE programme. *System*, 28, 387-402.
- Canh, L. (2014). Great expectations: The TESOL practicum as a professional learning experience. *TESOL Journal*, 5(2), 199-224.
- Carrasquillo, A. (1994). *Teaching English as a second language: A resource guide*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.
- Chesebro, J. (2003). Effects of teacher clarity and nonverbal immediacy on student learning, receiver apprehension, and affect. *Communication Education*, 52(2), 135-147.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., and Morison, K . (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th ed.). London: Routledge.
- Commins, D. D. (2008). *The Wahhabi mission and Saudi Arabia*. London: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd.
- Contijoch-Escontria, M.d.C., Burns, A., and Candlin, C.N. (2012). Feedback in the mediation of learning in online language teacher education . In L. England, *Online Language Teacher Education: TESOL Perspectives* (pp. 22 - 36). New York: Routledge.
- Crandall, J. (2000). Language teacher education. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 20, 34-55.
- Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approach* (2nd ed.). USA: SAAGE Publication.

- Creswell, J. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Crookes, G. (2003). *A practicum in TESOL: Professional development through teaching practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Dajani, B.A.S., and Omari, F.M.A. (2013). A comparison between the Arabic and the English language. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 82(3), 701-706.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). Research on teaching and teacher education and its influences on policy and practice. *Educational Researcher*, 45(2), 83-91.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). Teacher education and the American future. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61, 35-47.
- Darling-Hammond, L., and Bransford, J. (2005). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Day, C., and Gu, Q. (2007). Variations in the conditions for teachers' professional learning and development: Sustaining commitment and effectiveness over a career. *Oxford Review of Education*, 33(4), 423-443.
- Daymon, C., and Holloway, I. (2010). *Qualitative research methods in public relations and marketing communications*. London: Routledge.
- Demirjian, H. (2015). *Teacher shortage in the Arab World: Policy implications*. Doha, Qatar: Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies.
- Denzin, N. K. and Giardina, M. D. (2007). *Ethical futures of qualitative research: Decolonizing the politics of knowledge*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds) . (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Department for Education. (2017). *Get into teaching*. Retrieved February 26, 2017, from <https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/eligibility-for-teacher-training>
- Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think*. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative qualitative, and mixed methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Douglas, A. (2014). *Student teachers in school practice: An analysis of learning opportunities*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

- El-Deghaidy, H., and Mansour, N. (2015). Science teachers' perceptions of STEM education: Possibilities and challenges. *International Journal of Learning and Teaching*, 1(1), 51-54.
- Ellis, R. (2008). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Elyas, T. (2008). The attitude and the impact of the American English as a global language within the Saudi education system. *Novitas-Royal, Research on Youth and Language*, 2(1), 28-38.
- Elyas, T. (2014). English in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *World Englishes*, 33(1), 128–142.
- Elyas, T., and Al Grigri, W.H. (2014). Obstacles to teaching English in Saudi Arabia public schools: Teachers' and supervisors' perceptions. *International Journal of English Language Teaching*, 2(3), 74-89.
- Elyas, T., and Picard, M. (2010). Saudi Arabian educational history: impacts of English language teaching. *Education Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues*, 3(2), 136-145.
- Erlandson, P. (2005). The Body Disciplined: rewriting teaching and competence and the doctrine of reflection. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 39(4), 661-670.
- Estaji, M., and Rahimi, A. (2014). Examining the ESP teachers' perception of resilience. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 98, 453 – 457 .
- Evans, A., Hawksley, F., Holland, M.R., and Caillau, I. (2008). *Improving subject knowledge and subject pedagogic knowledge in employment- based secondary initial teacher training in England*. Brussels: Annual Conference of the Association of Teacher Education in Europe.
- Ewens, T., Ainsworth, R., and Bundy, R. (2004). *Beyond the curriculum: Empowering student teachers to learn, think and act creatively within the many curricula that impact on their experience*. London: Escalate: Education Subject Centre.
- Fageeh, A. (2011). EFL learners' use of blogging for developing writing skills and enhancing attitudes towards English learning: An exploratory study. *Journal of Language and Literature*, 2(1), 31-48.
- Fareh, S. (2010). Challenges of teaching English in the Arab world: Why can't EFL programs deliver as expected? *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2(2), 3600-3604.
- Farrell, T. (2012). Novice-service language teacher development: Bridging the gap between preservice and in-service education and development. *TESOL QUARTERLY*, 46(3), 435-449.
- Farrell, T. S. (2007). Failing the practicum: Narrowing the gap between expectations and reality with reflective practice. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41, 193–201.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2008). “Here’s the book, go and teach the class”: EFL practicum support. *RELC Journal*, 39, 226–241.
- Farrell, T., and Ives, J. (2015). Exploring teacher beliefs and classroom practices through reflective practice: A case study. *Language Teaching Research*, 19(5), 594-610.

- Faruk, S. (2013). English language teaching in Saudi Arabia: A world system perspective. *Scientific Bulletin of the Politehnica University of Timișoara Transactions on Modern Languages*, 12(2-2), 73-80.
- Fry, H., Ketteridge, S., and Stephanie, M. (2015). *A handbook for teaching and learning in higher education: Enhancing academic practice* (4th ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Gadzella, B. M. (1977). *A comparison of students' perception of an ideal professor. Paper presented at Southwestern Psychological Association Convention*. Austin, Texas: Southwestern Psychological Association.
- Gan, Z. (2013). Learning to teach English language in the practicum: What challenges do non-native ESL student. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(3), 92-108.
- Gebhard, J. G. (2009). The practicum. In A. Burns, & J. C. Richards, *The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education* (pp. 250–258). Cambridge, England : Cambridge University Press.
- Ghanizadeh, A., and Moafian, F. (2010). The role of EFL teachers' emotional intelligence in their success. *ELT Journal*, 64(4), 424-435.
- Ghanizadeh, A., and Moafian, F. (2011). The relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' sense of self-efficacy and their pedagogical success in Language Institutes. *Asian EFL Journal*, 13(2), 249-272.
- Gorsuch, G., and Taguchi, E. (2008). Repeated reading for developing reading fluency and reading comprehension: The case of EFL learners in Vietnam. *System*, 36, 253–278.
- Greany, T., and Brown, C . (2015). *Partnerships between teaching schools and universities: research report*. London: UCL: Institute of Education.
- Guba, E. G., and Lincoln, Y. S. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. Newbury Park, California: Sage.
- Guba, E. G., and Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 105 - 117). London: Sage.
- Guest, G., MacQueen, K.M., and Namey, E.E. (2012). *Applied thematic analysis*. London Publication: Sage.
- Hamdan, A. (2013). Pre-service teachers' preferred methods of assessment: A perspective from Saudi Arabia . *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(4), 66-90.
- Harvey, O. (1986). Beliefs systems and attitudes toward the death penalty and other punishments. *Journal of Personality*, 54, 659-675.
- Hiebert, J., Morris, A.K., Berk, D., and Jansen, A. (2007). Preparing teachers to learn from teaching. *Journal of Special Education*, 36, 186-205.
- Hobson, A.J., Malderez, A., Tracey, L., Giannakaki, M.S., Pell, R.G., Kerr, K., Chambers, G.N., Tomlinson, P.D. and Roper, T. . (2006). *Becoming a teacher: Student teachers' experiences of initial teacher training in England*. Nottingham: The University of Nottingham.

- Hofstede, G. (2005). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Iphofen, R. (2009). *Ethical decision making in research*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Javid, C.Z. and Umer, M. (2014). Saudi EFL learners' writing problems: A move towards solution. Taif, KSA: Taif University .
- Johnson, K. E. (2009). *Second language teacher education: A sociocultural perspective*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Joram, E., and Gabriele, A. (1998). Preservice teacher's prior beliefs: transforming obstacles into opportunities. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 14(2), 175–191.
- Kagan, D. M. (1992). Implication of research on teacher belief. *Educational Psychologist*, 27(10), 65–90.
- Keller, J. M. (2009). *Motivational design for learning and performance: The ARCS model approach*. Tallahassee, Florida: Springer Science & Business Media.
- Keller, J. M. (1987). Development and use of the ARCS model of instructional design. *Journal of Instructional Development*, 10(3), 2-10.
- Khan, I. (2011). Professional development of English teachers: The Saudi Arabian context. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 3(2), 1583-1591.
- Khan, S. (2009). Imperialism of international tests: An EIL perspective. In F. Sharifian, *English as an International Language: Perspectives and Pedagogical Issues* (pp. 190 - 208). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Kiely, R., and Askham, J. (2012). Furnished imagination: The impact of preservice teacher training on early career work in TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 46(3), 496-518.
- King Abdulaziz University . (2010, June 6). *Institute of educational graduate studies*. Retrieved from www.iges.kau.edu.sa: <https://iges.kau.edu.sa/Pages-cond.aspx>
- King Abdulaziz University . (2017). *Overview of Educational Diploma Programme*. Retrieved October 3, 2017, from http://iges.kau.edu.sa/Default.aspx?Site_ID=324&Lng=EN
- King Abdulaziz University. (2009, February 2). *Institute of education graduate studies*. Retrieved from [www.iges.kau.edu.sa: https://iges.kau.edu.sa/content.aspx?Site_ID=324&Lng=EN&cid=2292](https://iges.kau.edu.sa/content.aspx?Site_ID=324&Lng=EN&cid=2292)
- KING ABDULAZIZ UNIVERSITY. (2017). *ELI history*. Retrieved August 26, 2017, from <http://eli.kau.edu.sa/Pages-vision-eli-er.aspx>
- Krashen, S. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Harlow: Longman.
- Kyriakides, L., Campbell, R. J., and Christofidou, E. (2002). Generating criteria for measuring teacher effectiveness through a self-evaluation approach: A complementary way of measuring teacher effectiveness. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 13(3), 291-325.
- Laurillard, D. (2002). Rethinking teaching for the knowledge society. *EDUCAUSE review*, 37(1), 50-58.

- Lave, J., and Wenger, E. (1990). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge. UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Le Cornu, R., and Ewing, R. (2008). Reconceptualising professional experiences in pre-service teacher education...reconstructing the past to embrace the future. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(7), 1799-1812.
- Le, P.T.A., and Vásquez, C. (2011). Feedback in teacher education: mentor discourse and intern perceptions. *Teacher Development: An International Journal of Teachers' Professional Development*, 15(4), 453-470.
- Le, T. (2007). Supervisors' feedback to student teachers: Inside out. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 4(2), 195–216.
- Lems, K., Miller, L.D., and Soro, T.M. (2017). *Building literacy with English language learners: Insights from linguistics* (2nd ed.). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Lercanlioglu, L. (2015). Pre-service EFL teachers beliefs about foreign language learning and how they relate to gender. *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology*, 3(1), 145-162.
- Liu, D. (2009). Training non-native TESOL students: Challenges for TESOL teacher education in the west. In G. Braine, *Non-native Educators in English Language Teaching* (pp. 197- 210). New York: Routeledge.
- Lockwood, F. (1998). *The design and production of self-instructional materials*. London: Kogan Page.
- Loughran, J. (1997). An introduction to purpose, passion and pedagogy. In J. Loughran, & T. Russell, *Teaching about Teaching: Purpose, Passion and Pedagogy in Teacher Education* (pp. 3 - 10). London: The Falmer Press.
- Loughran, J., Berry, A., and Tudball, E. (2005). Developing a culture of critique in teacher education classes. In G.F.Hoban, *The Missing Links in Teacher Education Design: Developing a Multi-linked* (pp. 193-208). The Netherlands: Springer.
- Louws, M.L., van Veen, K., Meirink, J.A., and van Driel, J.H. (2017). Teachers' professional learning goals in relation to teaching experience. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(4), 487-504.
- Lunenberg, M., and Korthagen, F. (2009). Experience, theory, and practical wisdom in teaching and teacher education. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 15(2), 225-240.
- Mahib-ur-Rahman, M., and Alhaisoni, E. (2013). Teaching English in Saudi Arabia: Prospects and challenges. *Academic Research International*, 4(1), 112-118.
- Mattheoudakis, M. (2007). Tracking changes in pre-service EFL teacher beliefs in Greece: A longitudinal study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23, 1272–1288.
- Maykut, P.S. and Morehouse, R. (2002). *Beginning qualitative research: A philosophic and practical guide*. London: Falmer Press.

- Mehlmauer-Larcher, B. (2012). The EPOSTL (European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages): A tool to promote reflection and learning in pre-service teacher education. In J. Huttner, B. Mehlmauer-Larcher, S. Reichl, & B. Schiftner, *Theory and Practice in EFL Teacher Education: Bridging the Gap* (pp. 164-185). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Ministry of Economy and Planning. (2010). *Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Millenium Development Goals Report 2010*. Riyadh: UNDP.
- Ministry of Education. (2017). *Establishment of the Ministry of Education*. Retrieved October 3, 2017, from <https://www.moe.gov.sa/en/TheMinistry/Education/Pages/EstablishmentoftheMinistryofEducation.aspx>
- Mitchell, B., and Alfuraih, A. (2017). English language teaching in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Past, present and beyond. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(2), 317-325.
- Murphy, P. K., Delli, L. A. M., and Edwards, M. N. (2004). The good teacher and good teaching: comparing beliefs of second-grade students, preservice teachers, and inservice teachers. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 72(2), 69–92.
- Newton, J. (2016). Teaching language skills. In G. Hall, *The Routledge Handbook of English Language Teaching* (pp. 428-440). New York: Routledge.
- Ng, W., Nicholas, H., and Williams, A. (2010). School experience influences on pre-service teachers' evolving beliefs about effective teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26, 278–289.
- Ngara, R. (2016). Peer teaching: Practices and challenges in teacher development programmes in open and distance learning. *International Advanced Journal Of Teaching And Learning*, 2(4), 55-67.
- Nguyen, H. (2017). *Models of mentoring in language teacher education*. Sydney: Springer.
- Nguyen, H.T.M., and Hudson, P. (2012). Peer group monitoring: Pre-service EFL teachers' collaborations for enhancing practices . In A. Honigsfeld, & M. Dove, *Coteaching and Other Collaborative Practices in the EFL/ESL Classroom* (pp. 231-240). Charlotte, North Carolina: Information Age Publishing.
- Nishino, T. (2012). Modeling teacher beliefs and practices in context: A multimethods approach. *The Modern Language Journal*, 96, 380–399.
- Nunan, D. (1991). *Language teaching methodology: A textbook for teachers*. Edinburgh: Harlow, England: Longman.
- Ochieng'Ong'ondo, C., and Borg, S. (2011). “We teach plastic lesson to please them”: The influence of supervision on the practice of English language student teachers in Kenya. *Language Teaching Research*, 15, 509–528.
- OECD. (2017). *PISA 2015 results (volume III): students' well-being*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

- Orafi, S. M., and Borg, S. (2009). Intentions and realities in implementing communicative curriculum reform. *System: An International Journal of Educational Technology and Applied*, 37, 243-253.
- Pajares, M. F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research*, 62(3), 307-332.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (3rd ed.). London: Thousand Oaks.
- Peacock, M. (2001). Pre-service ESL teachers' beliefs about second language learning: a longitudinal study. *System*, 29, 177-195.
- Peel, D. (2005). Peer observation as a transformatory tool? *Teaching in Higher Education*, 10(4), 489-504.
- Pollard, A. (2008). *Reflective teaching: Evidence-informed professional practice* (3rd ed.). London: Continuum International Publishing.
- Punch, K. (2009). *Introduction to research methods in education*. London: Sage .
- Radnor, H. (2002). *Researching your professional practice: Doing interpretative research*. Buckingham : Open University.
- Ramaprasad, A. (1983). On the definition of feedback. *Behavioral Science*, 28, 4-13.
- Randall, M., and Thornton, B. (2001). *Advising and supporting teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. (2001). *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. (1998). *Beyond training*. New York, NY : Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., and Crookes, G. (1988). The practicum in TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 21, 9–27.
- Roberts, J. (2016). *Language teacher education*. London: Routledge.
- Rozelle, J., and Wilson, S. (2012). Opening the black box of field experiences: How cooperating teachers' beliefs and practices shape student teachers' beliefs and practices. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 28(8), 1196-1205.
- Ryan, G.W. and Bernard, H.R. (2003). Techniques to identify themes. *Field Methods*, 15(1), 85-109.
- Sallis, E. (2002). *Total quality management in education* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Saqlain, N., Al-Qarni, F., and Ghadi, N. (2013). Are English Language Teachers in Saudi Arabia Ready to Integrate Technology? *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 103, 146-153.
- Schon, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner*. New York: Basic Books.

- Seferoğlu, G. (2006). Teacher candidates' reflections on some components of a pre-service English teacher education programme in Turkey. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 32(4), 369 - 378.
- Shaw, S. M. (1994). Gender, leisure, and constraint: Towards a framework for the analysis of women's leisure. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 26(1), 8 - 22.
- Shawer, S. (2013). Preparing adult educators: The need to develop communicative language teaching skills in college level instructors. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 45(4), 431–464.
- Shawer, S. F. (2010). Communicative-based curriculum innovations between theory and practice: Implications for EFL curriculum development and student cognitive and affective change. *The Curriculum Journal*, 21(3), 333-359.
- Shehdeh, F. (2010). Challenges of teaching English in the Arab world: Why can't EFL programs deliver as expected? *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2, 3600-3604.
- Sheridan, L. (2011). *Exploring pre-service teachers' perceptions of teacher qualities in secondary education: A mixed-method study*. Canberra, Australia: Unpublished theses of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Canberra.
- Sibahi, R. (2015). Exploring reflective practice among college EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. *Arab World English Journal*, 6(2), 337 – 351.
- Silverman, D. (2001). *Interpreting qualitative data: Methods for analysing talk, text and interaction* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook* (4th ed.). London: Sage Publication.
- Slavin, R. (2012). *Educational psychology: Theory and practice* (10th ed.). London: Allyn & Bacon.
- Sleeter, C. (2004). Critical multicultural curriculum and the standards movement. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 3(2), 122-138.
- Smith, L., and Abouammoh, A. (2013). Higher education in Saudi Arabia: Reforms, challenges and priorities. In L. Smith, & A. Abouammoh, *Higher Education in Saudi Arabia: Achievements, Challenges and Opportunities* (pp. 1 - 12). New York: Springer.
- Standal, O.F., Moen, K.M., and Moe, V.F. (2013). Theory and practice in the context of practicum: The perspectives of Norwegian physical education student teachers. *European Physical Education Review*, 20(2), 165-178.
- Stemler, S.E., and Tsai, J. (2003). Best practices in interrater reliability: Three common approaches. In J. Osborne (Ed.), *Best Practices in Quantitative Methods* (pp. 29 - 49). London: SAGE Publication.
- Stimpson, P., Lopez-Real, F., Bunton, D., Chan, D.W-K., Sivan, A., and Williams, M. (2000). *Better supervision better teaching: A handbook for teaching practice supervisors*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

- Szyliowicz, J. (1973). *Education and modernisation in the middle east*. London: Cornell University Press.
- Tamran, R. (2016). *Teaching English as a second language in Saudi Arabia*. Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: The Faculty of Effat University.
- Tomlinson, B. (2011). *Materials development in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Toussi, M.T.M., Boori, A.A., and Ghanizadeh, A. (2011). The role of EFL teachers' self-regulation in effective teaching. *World Journal of Education*, 1(2), 39-48.
- University of East London. (2017). *MA English language teaching (Distance Learning)*. Retrieved March 7, 2017, from <https://www.uel.ac.uk/Postgraduate/Courses/MA-English-Language-Teaching-Via-Dist-Learning>
- Ushioda, E. (2009). Motivation and good language learners. In C. Griffiths, *Lessons from good language learners*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wallace, M. (1991). *Training foreign language teachers: A reflective approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weger, H. (2013). Examining English language learning motivation of adult international learners studying abroad in the US. *RELC Journal*, 44(1), 87-101.
- Wellington, J. (2000). *Educational research: Contemporary issues and practical approaches*. London: Continnum.
- Wellington, J. (2015). *Educational research: Contemporary issues and practical approaches*. London: Bloomsbury Academic .
- Wendt, M. (2003). Context, culture and construction: Research implications of theory formation in foreign language methodology. In M. Byram, & P. Grundy, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching and Learning* (pp. 92 - 112). Sydney: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- White, E. (2017). Teacher self-assessment of feedback practices in an EFL academic writing class - a reflective case study. In E. Cano, & G. Ion, *Innovative Practices for Higher Education Assessment and Measurement* (pp. 162 - 187). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
- Wright, W. (2015). *Foundations for teaching English language learners: Research, theory, policy, and practice* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Yesim, C.A., Sungur, S., and Uzuntiryaki, E. (2009). Teacher self-regulation: examining a multidimensional construct. *Educational Psychology*, 29(3), 345-356.
- Youngs, P., and Bird, T. (2010). Using embedded assessment to promote pedagogical reasoning among secondary teaching candidates. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26, 185-198.
- Yüce, K., Şahin, E.Y., Koçer, O., and Kana, F. (2013). Motivations for choosing teaching as a career: a perspective of pre-service teachers from a Turkish context. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 14(3), 295-306.

Zacharias, N. (2012). *Qualitative research methods for second language education: A coursebook*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Zhan, S. (2008). Changes to a Chinese pre-service language teacher education program : analysis, results and implications. *Asia-Pacific journal of teacher education*, 36(1), 53-70.

Appendix I: A Sample Interview

1\ *The Syllabus:*

R: Q1: Tell me about the Diploma program, which courses in the Diploma of Education did you find helpful in preparing you for classroom teaching and which not? And why?

I can't say that this Diploma has prepared me to teach English (**Lack of applicability**) but instead it's prepared me to teach in general but it has nothing to do with English. It did not focus on my major

It's generally about how I could deal with students inside classroom and all the issue any teacher could face in the classroom but it did not focus on how to teach English or what are the different types of methods English teacher could use. (**Inadequate English teaching methods**).

I think the most helpful modules in this Diploma are: English language methods 1 and 2. (**English teaching module**). But I need to say something about these two modules, I think we should take methods 1 & 2 in first term where we spend the whole term at the university attending lectures to prepare us for teaching practice in second term.

R: *Why?*

I would say so, because methods 1 was teaching in general and methods 2 is more specific about how to teach grammar, reading, listening and writing. (**English proficiency**). For instant, in the second term when I was teaching at school I struggled to find out how to teach reading (because I do not have enough knowledge & experience) (**Lack of applicability**) and after 2 weeks of giving the reading lesson at school, we had a lecture at the university about how to teach reading!! So, to make it easy and clear for us we should have both English teaching methods 1&2 in the first term.

R: Could you mention any other modules that you think were useful??

Yes, I just would like to add one module which is curriculum principles.

R: Why? What do you think special with this module?

It was so beneficial because this module helps me to select the appropriate methods and strategies to achieve the desired outcomes. And how teacher could organize the students sitting to be fully engaged with each material used.

R: what are the modules that you have not benefited of them?

The only module that I could say it useless is Education in Saudi Arabia. (**Less valuable modules**).

R: Why?

Because it has nothing to do with teaching it was all about the establishments of each university in Saudi Arabia and I do not care. (**Less valuable modules**).

A: Do you think there was a connection between the bachelor degree and Diploma?

The Bachelor was mixed of subjects and knowledge like literature, grammar, language developments. So there is no connection between them. But I should say, the bad thing that all the modules in this Diploma were taught in Arabic, (**English proficiency**) even (English language teaching methods) and we complain so many times about this issue that we were hoping if they could teach us in English at least the (English teaching methods 1&2), but they said we have a different majors mixed with our group so we cannot separate the English ones for just two modules.

B: Rank these courses according to their usefulness to you as an English teacher. Start with the most important, please. (Educational courses – literature courses – language improvement – knowledge courses)

I think as a teacher I would start with educational courses, then, language improvement, knowledgeable courses and finally literature courses. (**Useful modules**). Because we had lots of literature modules in the bachelor degree.

Q2: If you would have a chance to re-design this Diploma of education, which syllabus (modules) would you like focus on more and which would you remove from the teacher education program?

as I said before If I get the chance to re design the Diploma I will add 2 more courses about teaching methods. And I will remove 2 courses: education in Saudi Arabia and national education.

R: Would you change anything in the practicum?

No it was the most useful part in the whole Diploma, I really loved it because I practice the language at school all the time in and outside the classroom, I get the chance to put all the new knowledge of methods into practice. (**Applicability**).

But all students plus me were complaining about the one day in the week that we should go to university and attend lectures and submit some course work. It was really tough to be student and a teacher at the same week.

2\ *language proficiency:*

Q1: How confident do you feel to use Communicative language teaching (CLT) approach in classroom in the practicum?

the first 4 weeks was difficult because I need to avoid using Arabic (**English proficiency**) inside the classroom and at the same time I need to use the words that they could easily understand as they were young learners.

Sometimes in these 3 weeks I end up using the tradition methods of teaching and I did ignore (**Applicability**) what I wrote in the lesson plan.

R: why?

Because I have a 45min not the whole day to give a lesson if they did not understand and I cannot use Arabic I do need to go back to the basic methods of teaching like grammar translation methods. (**Lack of applicability of English teaching methods**).

But in week 6 they were amazing and I think they quite enjoyed my classes. This is why I do believe that the TB (teaching practice) should be longer than 12 weeks (**Useful module**)

A: How would you evaluate your English proficiency?

I would say 7 out of 10

R: where do you think this 7 came from the bachelor or your personal endeavour?

I think there was not a good speaking practice during our bachelor. (**English proficiency**).

B: Do you think it's important for TEFL teacher to master the language? Why?

I think it's very important because she is the role-model that all students will follow. (**English proficiency**) I can't say the methods could cover or hid up any weakness that teacher could have.

C: What are the reasons that obstructed you from developing your linguistic competence throughout the bachelor & Diploma?

In the bachelor, even though that all the lecturers were using English language in their teaching but we have not got the chance to practice the language. (**English proficiency**). We were just listener. I wish if our lecturers have used different approach and strategies to engage us. (**Useful module**).

In the Diploma,

Q2: Based on your needs, rank the following courses in linguistics in regard to their value in teaching. Start with the most important, please.

(Phonetics & phonology - Morphology – Semantics – Sociolinguistics).

1/ semantics 2/ morphology 3/ phonetics 4/ sociolinguistics.

3/ Teaching practice:

Q1: Can you tell me about your positive/negative experience that you've had in the teaching practice?

I was trying to be creative with the teaching methods, (**Applicability**), I would say thanks to google because he taught me what this Diploma fail to deliver. I was keen to explore the

methods that's fit with young learners and unfortunately we have not had any lecture on how to teach young once. As a result, before each class I was eager to check the young learners teaching methods website, (**English teaching methods**) just to make sure that I'm using a new and full of fun methods and approach as I got young learners in my practicum. (**Useful module**) So, I learnt from this website how do these younger think and learn then I did my best to apply all the approaches that I think it would help them to love and acquire this strange language they never heard before.

A: Have you been encouraged by your supervisor to use different teaching approaches for different situations?

I've been observed two times by the English language school teacher, and It was general feedback on the time management and the student's participation (**Lack of good feedback**), I wished if the feedback were deeper and review my teaching methods if it's correctly used or not. And even the lesson plan I was so confused how to do I wished if there was any kind of workshop to practice it before practicum.

B: Have you been trained how to use or adapt, foreign-language- teaching materials?

No, only curriculum

Q2: Have you been introduced to the skill of reflection and self-evaluation as a teacher in this training programs? In another way: Have you been encouraged to write reflection on the experiences and values that you had in the training

No, I have no idea about reflective report. (**Useful module**).

Q3: What about observing other experienced teachers at school you're your colleagues, have you had some??

Yes, we have been attending each other and it was so useful. (**Useful module**).

R: Why?

In term of avoiding each other mistakes and know the good way to deal with students. (**Good feedback**).

A: Have you been taught or trained how to give a peer feedback to your colleagues?

No, it was oral feedback there was not any form (**feedback**).

B: How useful did you find peer observation? Why?

Yes, it was very helpful (**useful module**) but I wish if it's written just to give me more chance to go through it again and work on my weaknesses

4/ Assessment:

Q1: How were you assessed throughout this Diploma of education program?

IT was mixed there was mid and final exams, PowerPoints and coursework.

Q2: Are you aware of the criteria that you will be assessed on throughout this Diploma, and was every clear about each modules requirements from the beginning of the Diploma?

Yes, we are aware of each model requirements from the first lecturer.

Q3: Was there any type of feedback on your assignments and course work or just your mark?

Never, only marks without any comments.

5/ evaluation:

Q4: How would you evaluate the Diploma in term of meeting your needs and preparing you to classroom teaching? Why? On scale 0{worst} to 10{Best}.

As a teacher in general I would say 7 because it helped me to understand the aim of teaching in general.

BUT as an English language teacher I would say 4 (**Usefulness of Diploma**)

R: Way?

Because we just had 2 courses of teaching methods and even though both of them were about teaching methods but method 2 is the best (**Useful module**) but it should be taught in the first term not while we are teaching at schools. Even methods 2 was the best but I do think the course was too rich. Another annoying issue was with the curriculum of this course (teaching methods 2) Were the lecturer that was teaching us this course was asking us to avoid some

incorrect parts of the book, like; this method do not fit with Arab learners so avoid it.

(Inadequate English teaching method). we were confused about this reference as we need

to focus on what our lecturer recommends and ignore.

Appendix II: Sample of Data Analysis Stages

Stage 1 (Data preparation) – sample extracts from the transcripts	Stage 2		Stage 3
	Codes	Developing themes	Emerged themes
<p>...in the second term when I was teaching at school I struggled to find out how to teach reading (because I do not have enough knowledge & experience)</p> <p>...in the second term when I was teaching at school I struggled to find out how to teach reading (because I do not have enough knowledge & experience)</p> <p>...the bad thing that all the modules in this Diploma were taught in Arabic, even (English language teaching methods)</p> <p>...as a teacher I would start with educational courses, then, language improvement, knowledgeable courses and finally literature courses.</p> <p>....the first 4 weeks were difficult because I need to avoid using Arabic inside the classroom and at the same time I need to use the words that they could easily understand as they were young learners.</p>	<p>English proficiency</p>	<p>Using key-words Repetition of same ideas</p>	<p>The need to improve English proficiency</p>
<p>I can't say that this Diploma has prepared me to teach English but instead it's prepared me to teach in general but it has nothing to do with English.</p> <p>...It's generally about how I could deal with students inside classroom and all the issue any teacher could face in the</p>	<p>Syllabus)</p>	<p>Using key-words Repetition of same ideas</p>	<p>Lack of language teaching methods</p>

<p>classroom but it did not focus on how to teach English or what are the different types of methods English teacher could use.</p> <p>...I think the most helpful modules in this Diploma are: English language methods 1 and 2</p> <p>...I just would like to add one module which is curriculum principles.</p>			
<p>Sometimes in these 3 weeks I end up using the tradition methods of teaching and I did ignore what I wrote in the lesson plan.</p> <p>Because I have a 45min not the whole day to give a lesson if they did not understand and I cannot use Arabic I do need to go back to the basic methods of teaching like grammar translation methods.</p> <p>...even though that all the lecturers were using English language in their teaching but we have not got the chance to practice the language. We were just listener</p> <p>... I've been observed two times by the English language school teacher, and It was general feedback on the time management and the students participation</p>	<p>Teaching Practice</p>	<p>Using key-words Repetition of same ideas</p>	<p>Applicability (putting theory into practice)</p>

Appendix III: Ethical Research Approval Form



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: Saudi EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions regarding the design of the Diploma of Education programme

Researcher(s) name: Noura Alamri

Supervisor(s): Vivienne Baumfield
Karen Walshe

This project has been approved for the period

From: 05/04/2016
To: 22/09/2016

Ethics Committee approval reference:

D/15/16/41

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Durrant', with a small star-like mark at the end.

Signature: (Dr Philip Durrant, Chair, Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee) **Date:** 05/04/2016

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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

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

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

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

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

Applicant details	
Name	Noura Alamri
Department	Doctor of Education, EdD
UoE email address	Nmna202@exeter.ac.uk

Duration for which permission is required		
You should request approval for the entire period of your research activity. The start date should be at least one month from the date that you submit this form. Students should use the anticipated date of completion of their course as the end date of their work. Please note that <u>retrospective ethical approval will never be given.</u>		
Start date: 01/04/2016	End date: 22/09/2016	Date submitted: 01 /03/2016

Students only	
All students must discuss their research intentions with their supervisor/tutor prior to submitting an application for ethical approval. The discussion may be face to face or via email.	
Prior to submitting your application in its final form to the SSIS Ethics Committee it should be approved by your first and second supervisor / dissertation supervisor/tutor. You should submit evidence of their approval with your application, e.g. a copy of their email approval.	
Student number	610053459
Programme of study	EdD TESOL
Name of Supervisor(s)/tutors or Dissertation Tutor	Professor Vivienne Baumfield Dr. Karen Walshe

Appendix IV – NVivo Code Definition

Table 6 Main Coding Area Definitions

Main Areas	Codes	Definition
Syllabus	Modules	The group of independent units of study or training that are combined to achieve the overall degree
	Connections	Links identified between Diploma and bachelor's degree
	Instructions	The mode of teaching – in this case Arabic
	Literature	Theoretical studies and historical works in the field of pedagogy to provide a foundation for the degree.
	Teaching	Teaching practices in the degree (level of theory vs practice) and the teaching styles adopted in the course.
	Suggestions	Ideas and plans of the students for how the course can be improved.
Language proficiency	CLT	Communicative language teaching involving high levels of interaction
	Proficiency	The level of knowledge and application of that knowledge in English
	Benefits	The advantages of the modules and their value for future teaching practice
	Barriers	Impediments identified in the courses and individual modules.
Teaching Practice	Experience	Events or occurrences which have an impact on understanding and views of a particular area.
	Approaches	A way of dealing with a situation (i.e. teaching instruction in this case).
	Self-evaluation	The ability to assess one's own performance and experiences or knowledge
	Observations	The ability to notice things (both from active and passive experience)
Assessment	Methods	The procedures followed for evaluating performance – usually systematic
	Criteria	The standards against which something is judged or evaluated.
Overall course evaluation	Evaluation	Making judgements
	Reasons	The justification or explanation of a situation or a belief.

Appendix V: Participant Consent Form



INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH

Title of Research Project

**Saudi EFL Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions Regarding the Design of the
Diploma of Education Programme**

Details of Project

My name is Noura Alamri, EdD candidate at University of Exeter in the UK. I am doing this research as part of my EdD's degree in TESOL. I would like to thank you for taking part in this research that aims to explore EFL student-teachers' perceptions of their experiences of Diploma program. Also, to find out if the content of this program in meeting prospective teachers' needs. This new Knowledge will hopefully facilitate the development of EFL teacher training programs in S.A. All the information you provide will be confidential and used for this research project and future research papers. It is anticipated that the interviews will take roughly about 30-50 minutes. All personal information will be kept anonymous.

Contact Details

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

Name: Noura Alamri.

Postal address: Graduate School of Education □ St Luke's Campus □ Heavitree
Road □ Exeter □ Devon □ EX1 2LU □ United Kingdom □

Telephone: 00 44 (0) [REDACTED]

Email: nmna202@exeter.ac.uk

If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact:

Prof. Vivienne Baumfield

or

Dr. Karen Walshe

Email: V.Baumfield@exeter.ac.uk

K.S.J.Walshe@exeter.ac.uk

Confidentiality

Interview tapes and transcripts will be held in confidence. They will not be used other than for the purposes described above and third parties will not be allowed access to them. However, if you request to review, comment on or even edit the information that you provided in the interviews you can request that. After it is transcribed and written up, if you wish your comments to be withdrawn from the study, you may say so. (Please give your email below so that I am able to contact you at a later date). Recordings interviews and transcripts will be kept on external hard disks under password protection. Transcriptions will use pseudonyms for individual respondents and other identifying data will be anonymized where possible. Your data will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

**INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT
FORM FOR RESEARCH**

Data Protection Notice

The data generated from the semi-structured interviews will be stored on the researcher's password protected files stored on University U- Drive accessible by password of the researcher only. Once the research has been written up the material will be destroyed. It will be retained for no longer than two years. The data will be written up into a thesis to fulfil the requirements of the researcher's EdD program. You will be informed of the storage and use of the information they provide in the interviews. Your personal data will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties. The results of the research will be published in anonymised form.

Anonymity

Interview data will be held and used on an anonymous basis, with no mention of your name, but we will refer to the group of which you are a member. all information will be treated as confidential and I will make every effort to preserve your anonymity.

If you would like to take part, please read and sign below.

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 participating in this project in an anonymised form;
- all information I give will be treated as confidential;
- the researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

.....
(Signature of participant)

.....
(Date)

.....
(Printed name of participant)

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

Appendix VI: Pen Portraits of Respondents

This section provides an overview of each participant, with a purpose of giving some contextual understanding and his or her background of the individuals who were interviewed to collect information for the research. This is important because a person's background may influence his or her value and belief system (Al-Seghayer and Saud, 2014). Having anonymised the participants, what is followed is a short pen pictures of each participant under each university they were studying at the time of this study. As stated, the interviewees are all Saudi citizens.

VI.I University A

Amal

Amal, a female 28-year old student, was studying at this university after taking a 2-year gap. She has 2-year previous teaching experience. She was unhappy about the lack of focus on English language throughout the course and she was disappointed about the use of Arabic as a mode of instruction. She was not particularly happy about the way her lesson observations and feedback sessions and she could not use all the teaching methods during the practicum.

Hani

Hani, a male 27-year-old student, had one-year gap before he joined the Diploma. He has 2-year work experience in a private school. He held the view that there should be more focus on teaching English skills and using English in delivering the course modules. He also thought that the Diploma would be more useful for them if the students have more time to teach in the real classrooms rather than doing peer teaching in the university itself. On the whole, she evaluated the course as below average.

Mohamed

Mohamed, a male 27-year-old, had one-year experience of teaching and took one and half year gap before starting the Diploma course. He thought that the contents in the Diploma was good, but he was dissatisfied with the extensive use of Arabic in teaching in the university. He was also unhappy about the fact that there was no module to improve student teachers' language skills. He stressed the importance of improving his spoken English and the application of teaching methods in the practical teaching.

Muna

Muna, a female 25-year-old, did not have any previous teaching experience nor did she take a gap year. In her view, the Diploma did not provide the learners with sufficient knowledge about how to teach English. She also complained about the use of Arabic in teaching the modules, but she was happy about the way in which feedback was given for her teaching during the practicum. In addition, she found the assessment of the course useful, but felt that there is a pressing need for them to improve English proficiency level in order to improve English language teaching in the classrooms.

Nouf

Nouf, a male 26-year-old, did not take a gap year and she did not have any work experience in teaching. In his view, the Diploma provided him with some general methods to teach, but there was no significant attention to teaching English language. He felt that the programme taught him several classroom management skills rather than improving his English language skills. The practicum module was satisfactory as it gave her opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge. Furthermore, he benefited greatly from the evaluation aspects of the course. Thus, he evaluated the course 8 out of 10 based on the effectiveness on teaching methods.

Rehab

Rehab, a female 26-year-old, joined the Diploma with no gap year and no previous work experience in teaching. He was unhappy about the use of Arabic in teaching the modules in the Diploma. She also thought that the course would prepare them to become better English language teachers if there were some module teaching English language skills. According to her experience, the communicative approach was not effective with Saudi students as class size was relatively big and the experienced teachers preferred traditional teaching methods. Thus, she thought more practice was necessary.

Waleed

Waleed is a male student who was 26-year-old at the time the study. He did not have previous work experience and did not take a gap year. He echoed similar views about focusing on how to teach English. However, he thought he had a good command in English language skills; hence, unlike other students, he was happy with his language proficiency. Despite this, he evaluated the course as an average one because there was a lack of focus on improving English language skills and lack of practical focus.

VI.II University B

Ahlam

Ahlam is a female 26-year-old, did not have previous teaching experience and took one-year gap before joining the Diploma programme. She thought that the Diploma was good for general teaching, but it lacked focus on English language teaching. She also complained about the extensive use of the Arabic in teaching at the university and felt that the students should be taught in English. In addition, she argued that she should improve her spoken English although she was confident in her language proficiency. She was concerned about the use of Arabic to teach English in language classrooms in Saudi Arabia and the dependence on the traditional methods. Thus, she thought the Diploma course was an average programme.

Ahmed

Ahmed, a male 26-year-old student, had one-year teaching experience and took one-year gap prior to attending the Diploma programme. He was disappointed about the knowledge he received on teaching methods during the course as his previous teaching role had provided him with more skills and knowledge regarding teaching methods. He also echoed similar concerns as other students about the use of Arabic in teaching them at the university and he strongly felt that improving spoken language was necessary as English language teachers. There was a sense of urgency to improve practical aspect of the course.

Farah

Farah, a female 26-year old, had one-year work experience in teaching and took a yearlong gap before starting the Diploma. She thought that both teaching methods courses and practicum modules were valuable and that focusing on the improvement of English skills should be the most important aspect of the module. She also expressed the view that the use of Arabic to teach them at the university was a weakness of the programme. She thought the course was below average because it did not meet her needs to improve English language nor did it have sufficient focus on applying the theory into practice.

Haifa

Haifa, a female 27-year old, did not have previous teaching experience and took two-year gap before studying. In her view, teaching methods courses were very useful for her teaching and she also thought that she needed to improve her English language skills, in particular spoken skills. She observed many English teachers using Arabic in English lessons during her practicum, which was something she was concerned about and suggested that the traditional

teaching methods should be changed to improve English language skills among students. As there was not sufficient focus on improving English language skills in the Diploma course and application of the knowledge, she graded it as very poor learning programme.

Hassan

Hassan, a male 27-year old, had two-year teaching experience, but took two-year gap before starting the Diploma course. He found teaching method courses particularly helpful, but felt insufficient to teach more young pupils. Like many other students, he also complained about the use of Arabic in teaching at university. In his view, the use of communicative language teaching methods depended on the students' attitude and circumstances, implying that new language methods have not embedded in English language teaching culture. He evaluated the course as below average because the Diploma was not English-specific course.

Saeed

Saeed, a male 26-year old, took one-year gap prior to starting the Diploma course and he had one-year teaching experience. He held the view that both English teaching methods and practicum modules were very useful for him. However, he thought that they should have been taught language specialists and practitioners rather than lecturers from other teaching backgrounds. He echoed the view expressed by others, which they needed to improve spoken English skills, as they become English teachers. He was not happy about the attention to use old teaching methods given by the lecturers. Thus, he thought the Diploma was an average course in terms of meeting his needs.

Saleh

Saleh, a male 28-year old, had one-year previous work experience in teaching and he took a yearlong break before starting the Diploma. He thought that both English language skills improvement and teaching methods were not adequate for him, because there was a lack of practical application of the knowledge. He observed that one could pass in all the Diploma modules even without saying a word orally. Like other students, he was concerned about not using English to deliver course contents.

Sara

Sara, a female 28-year old, took 3-year gap before starting the Diploma and she had no experience in teaching. She thought English language teaching methods were very useful and put English language improvement as the priority in the Diploma course. She said non-native speakers taught her and thus, her language proficiency was fair. She also thought she did not

improve her language skills because of attending the Diploma but as a result of the language courses outside the Diploma. She was not happy with how her progress was evaluated, the contents of the course were assessed and the way feedback was provided. Thus, she evaluated the Diploma as below average.

VI.III Summary

Thus, the above pen pictures suggest that there are many issues related to the Diploma course, including the strong influence of traditional teaching methods, lack of practical use of knowledge in the real classroom situation and the use of Arabic in the university courses, which have negatively affected the students learning.

Appendix V: Participants' University Approval.

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
Ministry of Higher Education
[Redacted]
Vice presidency for Graduate Studies & Academic Research
Deanship of Graduate Studies

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم العالي
[Redacted]
عمادة الدراسات العليا

الى من يهمه الامر

بناءً على موافقة سعادة وكيل الجامعة للدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي
المشرف بخطاب الملحق الثقافي بسفارة المملكة العربية السعودية في لندن
بشأن المبتعثة / نورة بنت متعب نايف العمري . مقترح اطروحة الدكتوراه
بعنوان :

مدى فاعلية الدبلوم التربوي في اعداد معلم اللغة الانجليزية
عليه تفيد عمادة الدراسات العليا انه لا مانع من قيام المبتعثة بدراسة
ميدانية في مكة [Redacted] من تاريخ
٢٥/٣/٢٠١٦م حتى تاريخ ١٥/٦/٢٠١٦م.

وقد أعطيت هذه الإفادة للباحثة بناءً على طلبه دون أدنى مسئولية على الجامعة.
وتقبلوا خالص تحياتي وتقديري!!!

مدير وحدة الرسائل العلمية والاستبانات
[Signature]
أ / عمر بن مبارك البلادي

Encl: المرفق
Date: التاريخ
Ref: رقم

ص.ب: ٨٠٢١٧ جدة ٢١٥٨٩ ت: ٦٩٥١٢٦٦ / ٦٤٠٠٠٠٠ - ٦١٣٨٧ فاكس: ٠٢ ٦٩٥٢٨٩٦
P.O.Box: 80217 Jeddah 21589 Tel.: 6951266 / 6400000 - 61387 Fax.: 02 6952896
Website: graduatesstudies.kau.edu.sa

