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Communicative and Collective Formative Program Evaluation: A descriptive Case Study of Experiences of Teachers and Students in Saudi Arabia

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COMMUNICATIVE AND COLLECTIVE FORMATIVE PROGRAM EVALUATION: A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY OF EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN SAUDI ARABIA

BY

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DISSERTATION

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DEDICATION

In the Name of Allah, The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful and Gracious

All praises and thanks first be to Allah for empowering me with uncountable blessings and gifts to complete this work. I dedicate this dissertation to the prettiest person on the face of earth, my wife Wejdan Alaqsam for her unparalleled love, constant attention, continuing sacrifice, and immeasurable support. Along this tortuous journey, she has been the father I lost nine years ago, the mother I traveled away from to pursue my education, and the brothers and sisters I missed so much. Her absolute faith and sincere belief in me kept me going every time I wanted to give up.

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ABSTRACT

Saudi students who matriculate in programs of higher education in Saudi Arabia confront major language obstacles that hinder their academic output, due to the transition from high school, which employs Arabic-language instruction, to the English-medium of instruction in post-high school education. Preparatory Year Programs (PYPs) established to aid students' transition, from Arabic to English, have not produced satisfactory results (M. A. Alseweed & Daif-Allah, 2013). Those programs have rarely been submitted to any form of formative evaluation procedures (Barnawi, 2011).

This descriptive case study embarked on evaluating formatively the English Language Teaching (ELT) in a Saudi university through bridging the perspectives or evaluations of teachers and students in the program about the quality of teaching and learning practices implemented in the program. By drawing on a Communicative and

Collective Formative Evaluation (CCFE) approach, this study aimed to provide the students and teachers with an opportunity to evaluate the ELT program's implementation processes. This included the instructional materials/practices and the policies that affected the process of teaching and learning English. Data were obtained through observing classrooms, distributing surveys to the entire population of teachers and students, and conducting three sequential interviews with a selective group of the teachers and students where their views were circulated. The purpose of circulating data was to involve the teachers and students of the ELT program in a collective effort so that a reflective and well-informed understanding of how the program can improve is constructed through the participants' experiences. Briefly, this CCFE study found most of the participants dissatisfied with aspects in relation to teaching and learning of English in the program (e.g., the instructional materials and teaching practices).

This study suggests that the CCFE approach seems to be a promising means for providing students and teachers in Saudi ELT programs with a window into each other's needs, and an insight into aspects teachers and students need to reflect on and change in the interest of enhancing everyone's experience in the ELT program. It also suggests that decision makers must integrate the notion of formative evaluation as an integral element in the structure of ELTs. It is in the ongoing exchange of information and the intersection of perspectives from the communication and reflection of students and teachers that ELTs can fulfill their desired goals.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Arabic versus English in Saudi Arabia: How Much English do We Need?

Teaching English to students in Saudi Arabia has become paramount for several reasons. The significance of teaching English in Saudi Arabia stemmed from the global recognition of the English language as a means for international communication, as well as the recognition of English as the language of science and as a tool for upward social mobility (Brutt-Griffler, 2002). Researchers throughout the world appear to have accepted English as the medium of scientific publications in all disciplines. Therefore, unsurprisingly, educationists in Saudi Arabia also believe that the English language grants a Saudi student better access to educational attainment. With such strong beliefs, within Saudi Arabia proficiency in English is widely perceived as a must-have skill that students need to master to advance in their studies, their careers, and in life generally. Therefore, the present study is intended to evaluate formatively the quality of an English Language Teaching (ELT) program at the college level in Saudi Arabia to help Saudi students enhance their experience of learning English.

I am concerned about the fate of Arabic, given the increasing dominance of English, not only as the language of science, but also as a prestigious alternative to Arabic among people from various generations in Saudi Arabia at the present time (Elyas, 2008). Whether English spread as a result of a deliberate British and American linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) or due to a natural reaction from less-powerful countries that sought more economic and political growth (Brutt-Griffler, 2002), the spread of English in Saudi Arabia needs to be examined critically. The fact that contemporary Saudi education leaders visualize English as a highway to knowledge is dangerous. The blind acceptance of English as an indispensable element to the academic success of any nation may insidiously normalize the subjugation of native languages in countries in which English is not the official language (Kachru, Kachru, & Nelson, 2009).

Saudi Arabia is one of the expanding circle nations as described by Kachru (2009) in his three concentric circles of World English. The expanding circle encompasses countries where while English has not an administrative status; yet, English is perceived as an international lingua franca; therefore, it is studied as a foreign language at schools. In Saudi Arabia, however, one researcher revealed that English has already come to be regarded by Saudi students as more than merely a means to communicate (Elyas, 2008). Elyas (2008) found that English already "plays a major role in their lives, starting from work, daily life, and entertainment. . . . There are TV, satellite TV, radio, video games, and popular hip hop, which are taking Saudi youth by storm" (p. 39). Such a rapid assimilation of English among Saudi students can be perceived as an indicator that English is increasingly privileged over Arabic, which may affect students' cultural identity (Almahmood, 2011).

Therefore, education leaders in Saudi Arabia should be aware of unintended adverse consequences of promoting English-only instruction in Saudi higher education. An equal attention on the use of English and Arabic in higher education is important to avoid unconsciously degrading or subordinating Arabic in the minds of youth. I also urge Saudi education ministers to reinforce the importance of Arabic as the language in which our Islamic, national, and Arab identities are anchored, honored, and preserved.

Quality in Saudi Higher Education: Reality and Challenges

Education in Saudi Arabia, possibly in all nations, is perceived to be a ticket to success and prosperity. The value of education in Saudi Arabia is reflected in the enormous support that education has received from the government since the country was established. The Saudi administration's annual expenditure for the Ministry of Education (MOE) exceeds the budget of several other countries combined. In fact, recent indicators showed that the financial support allocated for improving education in Saudi Arabia has increased significantly in the past two decades. In 2017 alone, the Saudi government spent approximately (228) billion Saudi riyals on education, a quarter of the country's overall budget (Feteha, 2017).

Unsurprisingly, in light of the high commitment to enhancing educational outcomes, Saudi Arabia has witnessed a rapid growth in the number of universities in the country, from 6 universities in 1989 to 38 universities in 2019. The enrollment in Saudi universities increased from 636,000 in 2006 to 1.7 million students in 2017 (Al-Youbi, 2017). Academic programs in a variety of disciplines have also diversified to produce the workforce needed for the Saudi job market. More than 100 teachers' colleges and vocational programs have been established for both men and women (Al-Youbi, 2017). In addition, the private sector began to receive governmental support in a further effort to establish private universities and colleges, which should help to prepare the workforce needed to create an economically thriving society.

Nonetheless, amid the tremendous quantitative expansion that higher education has undergone, a qualitative change was missing. Several scholars have sought to identify the impediments to a high-quality higher education in Saudi Arabia. Bureaucracy, the absence of well-defined educational policy, and the absence of evaluation were identified as three key elements that impeded the improvement of the quality of higher education (Alhawsawi, 2004, 2014; Al-Hazmi, 2003; Al-Mengash, 2006; Al-Seghayer, 2014; Alyami, 2013; Barnawi, 2011; Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). Rugh (2002) contended that the bureaucratic structure of education in Saudi Arabia played a fundamental role in impeding developments. Alamri (2011) referred to bureaucracy as one of the main challenges that the education system in Saudi Arabia has faced. Alamri (2011) argued that "the system is centralized in the Ministry of Education, and there is no clear venue for changes that move a milestone toward development" (p. 90). Alkhazim (2003), Al-Mengash, (2006), and Al-Seghayer (2017) claimed that the educational policy of higher education was not based on a clear strategic plan, nor was there any plan for development or assessment of higher education.

Consistent with other mounting evidence on the negative impact of bureaucracy on the development of education in Saudi educational institutions, Abu-Rizaizah (2010) found that "in the Saudi culture, evaluation was usually conducted for purposes of accountability and was mostly linked to cases of corruption within educational institutions" (p. 23). Evaluation has been conceived as a negative procedure and formative/developmental evaluation appeared not to exist (Makkawi, 2008, as cited by Abu-Rizaizah, 2010). Although higher education has undergone a tremendous evolution in Saudi Arabia, it seems that the problem lies in its quality, not in its quantity.

Where is the Problem?

Saudi students who matriculate in programs of higher education confront major obstacles that hinder their academic output. Students' learning difficulties start appearing when they transition from high school, which employs Arabic-language instruction, to the English-medium of instruction in post-high school education (M. Alseweed, Daif-Allah, & Thabit, 2013; Khan, 2011). While teaching in public education is undertaken through the students' mother tongue, higher education programs require advanced English skills for most areas of specialization (Al-Hazmi, 2003). It is predictable then that students' progress and success in higher education programs are impeded by this shift from Arabic to English, especially in light of the poor English education that students receive in Saudi public schools (Khan, 2011). Coping with this hard transition from high school to college in pursuing their higher education goals becomes even harder for Saudi students, given the shift from Arabic-language instruction to English-language instruction.

Attempting to scaffold high school graduates' poor English proficiency, the Ministry of Education (MOE) established Preparatory Year Programs (PYPs), mandatory two-semester programs that are a prerequisite for all universities' prospective students to complete before entering their preferred area of specialization. PYPs aim at providing a sound foundation for a smooth transition from the Arabic-medium high school environment to a more academically based English-learning setting. All students must pass these PYPs before enrolling in their specialized course of study.

Unfortunately, Saudi researchers have indicated that PYPs have not been completely successful in achieving desired goals. Two main reasons have been cited to explain the failure of PYPs in Saudi universities. On the one hand, the bureaucratic structure of education was found to have hindered the effectiveness of PYPs. The more powerful a university was, the more resources and autonomy it managed to obtain to amend or alter restrictions of the bureaucratic educational policy (Alhawsawi, 2014). On the other hand, teaching materials and instructional practices employed in many of the Saudi PYPs were found to be ineffective in preparing students for the Saudi job market (e.g., Abu-Rizaizah, 2010; Al-bakestani, 1984; Alfallaj, 1998; Al-Ghamdi, 2006; Alobaid, 2016; Alshuaifan, 2009; Barnawi, 2011). In fact, the bureaucratic structure of education significantly contributed to this problem, as only a few faculty members possess the authority to make decisions pertaining to selecting new textbooks or enforcing new policy (Al-Seghayer, 20177; Barnawi, 2011). Because of the restrictions enforced within Saudi universities on how to teach and what to teach, there always has been a mismatch between the skills of the English language that were taught to students in PYPs and those required in the Saudi job market.

In addition to the two reasons cited above, PYPs were rarely submitted to any form of evaluation procedures (Abu-Ghararah, 1989; Al-Bakestani, 1984; Alfallaj, 1998; Alhawsawi, 2004; Al-Shabbi, 1985; Barnawi, 2011). Furthermore, much communication that could have been useful between students, teachers, and administrators did not occur, as the notion of formative evaluation seemed not to be an integral element in the structure of PYPs (Alobaid, 2016). English teachers, as a result, rarely engaged in a self-reflective process about the efficiency of their teaching materials or practices (Azhar & Ali, 2014; Fareh, 2010). Moreover, in light of the absence of effective evaluation procedures—just as the banking models of education that Freire (2019) has criticized, which view teaching and learning as a process where students are recipients of information, so students learn primarily by storing information provided by teachers—have remained unchallenged and persisted as the main teaching tradition in Saudi PYPs.

Saudi students continued to be victims of the traditional teacher-centered, banking instructional system. The banking model of education has sabotaged the students' independent learning growth and their ability to think outside the box because the norm of rote learning encourages only one-way conversation: teacher-to-student (Fareh, 2010). As instructors control the flow of information and represent the primary source of knowledge, students remained passive and were expected to learn by rote whatever was printed in books or dictated by teachers. Therefore, students ended up learning examination-passing skills rather than communicative skills and hence failed to demonstrate competency in relevant job markets (Khan, 2011).

The Purpose of the Study

In this study, I aim to promote a communicative process—an information sharing process across stakeholders, a dialogue between the teachers and students of an ELT program in Saudi Arabia. The purpose of creating this dialogue is to involve the teachers and students of the program in a communicative and formative evaluation process of the quality of how the program was implemented. This include instructional practices, teaching and learning materials of English, and policies that affect the teaching and learning process.

In what I have named the Communicative-Collective Formative Evaluation (CCFE) process, I strive to provide the teachers and students with an opportunity to share their experiences within the ELT program, as well as the strengths and weaknesses they perceive in that program, and also to evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of methods used to implement the program, based on their experiences. I intend to encourage the students and teachers to share their evaluations of the methods used to implement the program with each other to promote or enable innovations and improvements. The students, in particular, are provided a chance to provide constructive criticism pertaining to the effectiveness of teaching materials and teaching methods used by teachers in the program.

Student criticism of teachers' practices can prompt teachers to reexamine their taken-for-granted beliefs about the efficiency of teaching materials and instructional practices in relation to the students' experiences. Through enhancing communication between the teachers and students, new insights into how to improve the program and its delivery methods appear. Formative insights gained from the participation of students and teachers in this CCFE study are to be presented to decision-makers to consider. This CCFE study is empowering in the sense that the students and teachers of the program would cultivate a sense of responsibility for the program's effectiveness after they had engaged in a collective evaluation of their own learning processes (Patton, 2008).

Research Questions

Two subsidiary research questions were explored in this study under a single overarching research question:

- What are the program participants' (teachers' and students') evaluations of the effectiveness of the English Language Teaching program regarding: instructional practices, teaching and learning materials, and policies affecting teaching and learning of English?
    - What understanding about the teaching and learning of English and the English Language Teaching program occur during the Communicative-Collective Formative Evaluation process?

- How does the implementation of the Communicative-Collective Formative Evaluation process promote self-assessment of participants' own teaching and learning practices?

The Positionality and Role of the Researcher

My educational and professional experiences as an English learner and teacher formed my interest in and knowledge about evaluating instructional programs in general and certainly in Saudi Arabia. In my four-year English teaching experience, two years in college-level English teaching programs, and two years in high school education, I experienced some critical issues that could hinder the educational quality of the program, including restrictions of educational policy and scarcity of resources.

Hindrances and challenges that I encountered as a Saudi student also deepened my understanding of some context-specific learning difficulties that Saudi students often encounter. As a student, I was deprived of the opportunity of using English in classrooms because teachers' use of English was limited to translating new vocabulary for students. Arabic was the medium of communication and instruction. My English teachers in public education did not employ group discussions or collaborative learning. The use of educational aides and technology was limited or nonexistent. These experiences have profoundly influenced my English-language academic development. In fact, if it were not for my strong dedication and desire to thrive academically, I would not have overcome barriers to learning English as a foreign language in the Saudi education system. When I became a junior at the college level, teachers began to use English for instructional purposes. However, rote learning was still dominant. I was never encouraged or asked to participate in a group discussion or give a speech in English.

It is also important to mention that I know some of the teachers working in the program to be evaluated for I have worked for one year in that program. As I approach this study as a former teacher in the program under examination, I admit that my positionality, relationship with teachers, and personal views would inevitably influence the design, progress, and interpretation of my research findings (Greenbank, 2003). Denzin (1986) argued that “interpretive research begins and ends with the biography and self of the researcher” (p. 12). Indeed, I assumed that the students in the program were likely to express problems similar to mine. The contributions and commentaries of teachers might be restricted, for instance, by the program’s or department’s academic policy or the scarcity of resources, and hence teachers would not work free of bureaucratic burdens. My role as the researcher was to create a safe communication zone for the students and teachers collectively to evaluate the aspects of the program, to communicate with one another, and to discuss the problems that they had confronted.

Fulfilling my role ethically required me to incorporate a self-reflexive approach in the research. “A reflexive approach suggests that researchers should acknowledge and disclose their selves in the research, aiming to understand their own influence on and in the process rather than trying to eliminate their effect” (Holmes, 2014, p. 5). Ultimately, “there is no way [in which] we can escape the social world to study it” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 17). Therefore, my self-reflection and self-awareness of my positionality’s effect on the research should add to the truthfulness and rigor of findings. It is important for me to acknowledge this positionality and its potential effects on this research study and its findings.

The Significance of the Study

The current study could contribute to the research and theory of evaluation at a macro level and also practically could improve the overall quality of evaluation of ELT programs. At the macro-theoretical level, on the one hand, this study would test the feasibility of adopting a participant-oriented and formative approach to evaluation in a bureaucratic education system, that of Saudi Arabia. Although a few studies (Abu-Ghararah, 1989; Al-Bakestani, 1984; Alhawsawi, 2004; Al-Shabbi, 1985; Barnawi, 2011) applied a formative approach to evaluation in Saudi Arabia, none actually attempted to create a communication channel through which program participants could communicate and question their presuppositions and premises in relation to the effectiveness of teaching and learning English. Previous evaluation research in Saudi Arabia concentrated mostly on collecting the attitudinal stances of participants about the overall quality of the program and then outlining findings without having to engage the stakeholders in a self-reflective process to evoke a transformation in their attitudes.

Potential applications of this study could be quite practical. The purpose of this CCFE study was to involve the participants in a reflective and evaluative process of their experiences in the hope that this could lead to improving the quality of the teaching materials, instructional practices, and policies that affect the teaching and learning of English in Saudi higher education. This purpose could be cultivated when both teachers and students collaboratively work at an early stage of the program to pinpoint obstacles to progress and then together reinforce satisfactory aspects of the program. Weir and Roberts (1994) stated that “it is better to identify at an early stage students whose progress is slow rather than to wait to the end of the course, possibly failing them and sending them back to face disgrace in their own country" (p. 7). Patton (2008) argued that when program stakeholders are invited to invest in the program, a sense of ownership and a positive learning attitude would probably prevail.

The practical benefits of this research study also extended to teachers. The involvement of teachers in a self-evaluative process and dialogue with other stakeholders, the students in this study, was considered to be a form of teachers' professional development (Day, Whitaker, & Wren, 1987; Edge & Richards, 1993). Roberts (1993) found that as teachers engaged in a self-reflective process of classroom events, they were more likely to sharpen the practical skills required to pinpoint the most critical professional issues in their classrooms. Teachers then would be able to develop a more helpful professional dialogue with peers and students (Roberts, 1993).

I perceived this evaluation study to be a call for Saudi evaluation practitioners to advocate for the importance of engaging program participants routinely in formative evaluation processes.

Definitions of Key Terms

Before moving on to a detailed discussion of the literature on program evaluation, I should clarify some terminology that is crucial to the clarity of the current study. This study revolved around the collection of diverse reflections of the participants on three key elements of English language teaching program components in Saudi higher education: teaching materials, instructional practices, and the departmental academic educational policy.

"Teaching materials" in the current study, as Brown (1995) noted, referred to "any systematic description of the materials and exercises to be used in the classroom teaching" (p. 139). Thus, the program teaching material encompassed, but was not limited to, textbooks; flash cards; posters; computer-assisted materials, such as videos or podcast; computer labs; and/or worksheets. As for "instructional practices," I used the latter notion to indicate the activities, methods, and behaviors that the instructors used in instruction. For instance, were the program teachers "getting learners to use a language (i.e., to speak and understand it) versus getting learners to analyze a language (i.e., to learn its grammatical rules)" (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p. 3). Usually, foreign language instructional practices have vacillated between these general types (Celce-Murcia, 2001). In simpler terms, instructional practices in the current study implied the teaching methodologies that English instructors used inside classrooms to achieve the desired objectives of instruction. The Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) and the Communicative Teaching Method (CTM) are two popular examples of instructional practices used frequently by foreign language teachers in general (Celce-Murcia, 2001). Each of these practices is characterized by a set of features and is dedicated to enhancing certain linguistic skills. The "departmental academic educational policy" simply referred to the set of rules that outlined both the responsibilities and rights of teachers and students. There were located in the program manual published on the program's website.

Summary

This chapter began by outlining my positions in relation to the field of using the English language for teaching in Saudi Arabia. Although the teaching of English is valuable to Saudi students in many ways, the promotion of native languages in education remains a crucial element for students to maintain a positive attitude toward their home language, identity, heritage, and culture. I also discussed the problem that most high school graduates experience upon starting their higher education as they shift from receiving instruction in Arabic to receiving instruction in English. As evident in the literature, the problem increases and intensifies when the program managers do not attend to the students' learning needs or consult teachers and draw from their expertise.

Therefore, this study is intended to help the head of the program and the program coordinator create an interactive and collective panel for the students and teachers collaboratively to evaluate the program components at an early stage, trying to locate and remove obstacles to success and also to build on strengths. Such a study, I believe, would not only contribute to enhancing the students' English learning experiences, but also assist in improving the educational quality of the program in general.

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

As the primary goal of this study was to evaluate formatively an English language teaching (ELT) program in Saudi Arabia by exploring with the program students and teachers the effectiveness of the process of teaching and learning of English, it was essential to review the literature on program evaluation in general and provide a brief background about Saudi Arabia. So, this review was divided into two main sections. In the first section of this chapter, program evaluation was defined, demonstrating the most popular and trending approaches and models used in evaluating ELT programs. In the second section of this chapter, I provided an introductory informative account of Saudi Arabia and the structure of the Saudi higher education system, and I complete this section with a review of related ELT evaluation studies conducted in the Saudi context. Reviewing the ELT evaluation studies that were conducted in Saudi Arabia helped in situating the current study within the local literature of program evaluation. It also informs the structure of the present study. To begin with, the next section was dedicated to introducing the concept of program evaluation by highlighting its definitions, approaches and popular models.

Definitions of Program Evaluation

There are two types of evaluation: formal/professional and informal/unprofessional (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 2004). Informal evaluation is a type of act that all human beings practice in their daily routines for several reasons. It is the kind of assessment that most human beings conduct to measure the effectiveness and satisfaction of a lived experience or concrete artifacts made for a specific purpose. This type of informal evaluation has been around since the existence of humankind

(Patton, 2008; Worthen et al., 2004). The second type of evaluation, which was the focus of this review, refers to the professional form of evaluation. This type of evaluation must always adhere to a certain set of criteria in order to meet the standards of a fair, professional evaluative act, as agreed upon by evaluation theorists and practitioners (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014).

Yet, defining an evaluation was found to be a difficult task (Spaulding, 2014), which stems from the fact that programs are not homogeneous entities. ELT programs, like any other educational programs, are distinctive and complex entities. The nature, structure, and even goals of ELT programs are often impacted by the overarching education policy and goals of the hosting social structure (Kiely & Rea-Dickins, 2005; Scott, 2008). Norris (2016) demonstrated several examples of the factors that are capable of complicating the nature of modern educational programs. According to Norris (2016), these factors may include the “geopolitical and economic forces, governmental budgets and policies; institutional affordances and constraints; and the everyday actions of administrators, teachers, learners, and others” (p. 169). Put simply, the social milieu always affects how and for what purposes ELT programs are structured and, consequently, the type of evaluation deemed suitable to assess the success of these programs (Kiely & Rea-Dickins, 2005; Lynch, 1996; Scott, 2008). As a result, it appeared that there was no single definition of program evaluation because the goal of evaluation and the criteria used for the evaluation process tend to differ depending on the circumstances of the social structure. So, regardless of their similar appearances or commonalities, ELT programs always differ in many aspects in terms of desired goals, needs, participants, affordances, ideologies, etc. It was, thus, not unsurprising to find that numerous definitions of program evaluation were provided.

Stufflebeam et al., (1971) identified educational evaluation as “the process of delineating, obtaining and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives.” Lynch (1996), drawing upon the work of Bachman (1990) and Turner (1991), defined the concept of program evaluation as “the systematic attempt to gather information in order to make judgments or decisions” (p. 2). Mathison (2005) perceived program evaluation as “an applied inquiry process for collecting and synthesizing evidence that culminates in conclusion about the state of affairs, value, merit, worth, significance, or quality of a program, product, person, policy” (p. 140). Kiely and Rea-Dickins (2005) portrayed evaluation in language programs as “a form of enquiry, ranging from research to systematic approaches to decision-makings” (p. 6). Norris (2016) further states that “language program evaluation is a pragmatic mode of inquiry that illuminates the complex nature of language-related interventions of various kinds, the factors that foster or constrain them, and the consequences that ensue” (p. 169).

In this evaluation study, I adopted the definition from Spaulding (2014), where program evaluation is conceived as an adaptive, interactive, and systematic process applied to an educational program to help decision makers examine the value and effectiveness of the program, as well as the implementation processes, and provide a scheme for ongoing modifications, future refinement, and development. I favored Spaulding’s definition for a fundamental reason. Previous definitions emphasized mainly the judgmental nature of evaluation primarily for finding decision alternatives, usually by depending on outcomes measurement when assessing the effectiveness of program.

Unlike these definitions, Spaulding's definition provided a more comprehensive and inclusive view of the evaluation process and equated the formative and developmental orientations of program evaluation to the summative ones (See definition of these terms below). Spaulding's view of program evaluation actually mirrored the shift in program evaluation theory and trending practices witnessed in the second half of the twentieth century, a shift that overcame the sole reliance on outcomes measurement as the only valid approach to evaluation and moved towards a more formative and naturalistic approach when evaluating educational programs.

A Review of Evaluation Approaches and Models in ELT Education

In the field of ELT education, the foundation of professional/formal evaluation as an independent discipline is relatively recent; hence, the literature on program evaluation is scant (Lynch, 1996), which can be attributed to the fact that many evaluation clients—those who request the evaluation process—often refuse the publication of evaluation reports. However, two acts were believed to have sparked the explosion of interest in evaluating ELT programs (Alderson & Beretta, 1992). First, during the 1960s, the government of the United States (U.S.) dedicated huge financial expenditures for: constructing social institutions, developing welfare of the society, eliminating starvation, and reducing unemployment, which later came to be labeled as the 'Great Society' reform of President Johnson (Alderson & Beretta, 1992). Second, upon the launching of 'Sputnik Satellite' by the Soviet Union in 1957, the U.S. government invested a huge amount of money into developing foreign language programs, mathematics, and curricula of science programs, attempting to enhance the quality of education programs, and ultimately into evaluating the efficiency of education products. These two incidents have impacted the developmental trajectory of evaluation approaches in the field of education in general, and doubtlessly ELT programs, too.

It was imperative to mention that this review was dedicated to exploring the trending and most frequently used evaluation approaches in the field of ELT education. Approaches that are concerned with or tailored particularly to serve the needs of other educational evaluation in general—for instance, business and health education programs—were beyond the scope of this review. Yet, a large portion of the evaluation approaches this manuscript sought to cover was still applicable to different disciplines in education. Evaluation approaches discussed in this review were not presented in a chronological order. Although a chronological presentation of approaches to evaluation may often occur, I intended to occasionally group the interconnected approaches whenever I saw an interrelating relationship between the reviewed approaches. To state this differently, on some occasions the evolution of the field dictated the presentation of some approaches and the flow of information in this review. On other occasions, although some approaches may have emerged in divergent times of the past century, they still were presented together for comparison purposes or to point out their similarities regarding either their philosophical orientation, purpose, or focus. It was also noteworthy to mention that some approaches shared similar characteristics, making classification a somewhat difficult task.

Selecting the appropriate point from which to begin a review of published evaluation works was not an easy task, not even for gifted researchers. Yet, in the field of ELT education, the period from the 1960s to date has been revolutionary (Alderson & Beretta, 1992). It was also important to note that this review aimed not to be exhaustive of all published evaluation studies, but instead strived to cover the fundamental evaluation approaches that made (and still are making) a huge impact on the developmental trajectory of the field. In fact, as generally stated by many of the influential practitioners, not a single account of evaluation theory, practice, and approaches can do justice to unfolding the dynamism and diversity of this rapidly developing field. The following section outlined the most popular approaches and models in evaluating ELT programs.

Accountability, Summative and Formative Evaluation

Accountability, formative, and summative are three popular approaches of evaluation. In general, “accountability” refers to the answerability of staff to their duties and responsibilities (Weir & Roberts, 1994). Weir and Roberts (1994) argued that professional accountability should always be differentiated from contractual accountability. While the former is met where staff of a program submit to an inspection from an external evaluation entity, the latter is about the responsibility of staff in adhering to their program policy that defines fair conduct of all procedures (Weir & Roberts, 1994). Accountability-oriented evaluation gained its popularity in the 1970s and is usually motivated by a bureaucratic need to scrutinize the efficiency of programs that receive federal funding. Proponents of this approach (Alkin, 1969; Stufflebeam, 1966) emphasized that evaluations should be conducted by external agencies or agents to ensure the highest quality of the evaluation process and avoid what Stufflebeam (2001) called “pseudo evaluations.” Accountability evaluation rewards satisfying results and sanctions poor outcomes based on pre-established norm-referenced criteria. Therefore, it is very common for the proponents of this approach to use methods like standardized tests, cut-off scores, and payment by results (Stufflebeam, 2001).

Summative evaluation is conducted at the end of a program/project cycle to measure the goals for which the program/project was established. It usually is conducted by external evaluators for the benefit of resource providers or policy makers. This form of evaluation is quantitative in nature, as it frequently uses numeric measures (i.e., students' achievement scores & standardized tests) to judge the overall success of a program (Reiser & Dempsey, 2007). It also tends to focus only on the products of a program without paying any attention to how the program is being implemented (Long, 1984). In a summative evaluation, "only readily observed or measured phenomena [such as events, final result assessments and expenditures] may be applied as criteria of success, whereas less readily measured phenomena, such as staff morale and attitudes, staff reactions or instructional ethos, may be ignored" (Weir & Roberts, 1994, p. 6). So, summative evaluation is rarely implemented alone if developing a program is the ultimate goal of evaluation (Scriven, 1991).

In comparison to summative evaluation, formative evaluation is conducted while the program/project is still in progress, mainly to develop the quality of a program. Unlike summative and accountability evaluations, formative evaluation is often intrinsically motivated and usually implemented by insiders (i.e., staff) to locate strengths and weaknesses or to help clarify intrinsic concerns of the program components. Cronbach and Shapiro (1982) made a strong case for formative evaluation in that they argued that sorting out and addressing a problem in one of the program components at an early stage is more beneficial than examining the product of a program at the end of an educational cycle. Weir & Roberts (1994) also argued that systematic conduct of formative evaluation in ELT programs "can operate as a form of quality control, the monitoring of progress and provision of immediately useful information for decision making and change, at managerial and staff level" (p. 15). Barnawi (2011) contended that considering questions about program components that different participants may have can strengthen the sense of ownership within the participants, which would increase the quality of implementation of the program. In turn, changes that are likely to take place in formative evaluation can prepare the program for summative and accountability-oriented evaluations that are periodically requested by bureaucratic offices at the end of the year. The primary role of the formative evaluator is to watch out for the program, warn its participants about possible obstacles, and circulate constructive ideas (Morris & Fitz-Gibbon, 1978). Hence, the ultimate goal of a formative evaluation approach is to ensure that the way the program is implemented reaches its highest quality.

Evaluation as Outcomes Measurement

As mentioned before, ELT evaluation approaches, like mainstream evaluation, evolved in the Great Society era. In the post-World War II era, Tyler's (1950) prominent framework of programs as a set of behavioral objectives marked the starting point for early educational evaluations (Spaulding, 2014). Tyler (1950) believed that any program's objectives must be behaviorally described and operationalized in quantifiable terms if they were to be measured and improved. His well-known method, referred to in some works as the Scientific Management View of Programs, was originally established for industrial and engineering settings and then extended to various evaluation realms in social research disciplines (Kiely & Rea-Dickins, 2005). The scientific management approach foregrounded a new conceptual framework for evaluation in ELT education. Developers of ELT programs and curricula designers began to frame their programs' objectives in a behavioral manner, laying out the basis for a subsequent measuring process of learning outcomes. Based on the learning objectives stated in each program proposal, evaluators would devise a plan of what, how, and from whom data is collected, analyzed, and reported. This form of evaluation was extensively conducted by a number of internal program developers and teachers to investigate the degree to which the objectives of a program had been accomplished (Spaulding, 2014). One of the main applications of Tyler's' scientific management approach is its emphasis on measuring the added value of a program to the students' achievement via tests and other assessment tools (e.g. questionnaires) that are carefully designed to compare the intended goals with actual outcomes.

Tyler's approach is objectives-based, as it makes program goals the starting point for any evaluation task. Thus, this approach was highly credited for its applicability to all objectives-based programs and its inclusiveness of several performance assessment tests in language programs. It proved advantageous because of its ability to provide funding agencies with the pertinent information needed to decide whether a program met its predicted overarching goals and objectives. In fact, Tyler's contribution to evaluation not only comprised the cornerstone of evaluation studies that followed but also stimulated the manifestation of many evaluation approaches emerged in subsequent generations, such as the performance evaluation approach in the 1990s and logic studies approach just to name few. It is fair to say that the Tylerian approach has been recognized as one of the oldest and most influential evaluation approaches (Alderson & Beretta, 1992; Kiely &

Rea-Dickins, 2005; Lynch, 1996; Norris, 2016; Stufflebeam, 2001; Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014; Weir & Roberts, 1994; Worthen et al., 2004).

However, this approach was criticized for its sole focus on scrutinizing a narrow set of prefixed goals. Therefore, the approach may fail to provide the types of data attendant for judging either the implementation processes or the improvement purposes (Tyler, Madaus, & Stufflebeam, 1989). In other words, this objective-based approach is summative in nature— Summative, as mentioned above, refers to the condition where findings of the evaluation are used at the end of a program to help make decisions about whether to continue or discontinue the program (Scriven, 1967). Another compelling reason that may threaten the potential of the Tylerian approach is that, since the focus of this approach is on the desired product, only the previously specified 'important' perceived goals of a program are evaluated. Consequently, it is very probable for evaluators using this approach to miss evaluating critical unforeseen goals that in the first place might not have had been specified and acknowledged as important from the perspective of those in charge. This is even true in contexts where the concept of scientific needs assessment is poorly or rarely carried out, such as in Saudi Arabia.

Experimentation Approach

The development of ELT evaluation paralleled the development of foreign language learning/teaching theories. The emergence of new language learning theories created a necessity for a systematic evaluative process in which the effectiveness of suggested learning theories are tested (Kiely & Rea-Dickins, 2005). One of the most prominent evaluation approaches devised to test the emerging theories within ELT education is the experimental evaluation approach, promoted by the work of Campbell and Stanley (1963) and Cronbach and Snow (1967). Evaluations in this approach take the form of controlled experimental trials –two ELT programs of the same capacity/resources are compared to each other to test the effectiveness of a newly emergent language learning/teaching methodology (Norris, 2009). Clearly, one program is considered as intervention (i.e. experiment) and the other is controlled to supply a comparison opportunity. The program exposed to a treatment (the contested theory) is called the experimental, and the other is widely identified as the control group. The role of the evaluator is to gather the evidence needed to judge if an intervention has helped the participants of one program achieve more objectives than the participants of the other program. Campbell and Stanley (1963) and Cronbach and Snow (1967) were considered pioneers in educational experimentation. Keating's (1963) study, along with the work of Scherer and Wertheimer (1964), and Smith's (1970), were three large-scale well-known evaluation studies that were the first to make use of the experimental approach.

Large-scale evaluation studies, as in the case of the three preceding ones, have proved to be ineffective for considerable reasons. First, no detailed description was ever collected about the implementation of the intervention nor did the majority of studies in this approach, at least in early studies, carefully control for the teacher variable or the Hawthorne threat (knowledge of being in an experiment) (Stufflebeam, 2001). As a result, the veracity of findings of these studies was severely criticized and challenged, and the causality could not be referenced to the intervention. Stufflebeam (2001), commenting on the reasons behind the failure of this approach, states that "educators, social workers, and other social service providers rarely can meet the required experimental conditions and assumptions" (p. 26). Second, by focusing only on designing a tightly controlled evaluation experiment to define either a theoretical relationship or answer a narrow question or issue, this approach fails to attend to the various issues known about educational programs in general and ELT programs in particular. It, thus, fails to shed light on and assess the diverse needs and problems of the program under study.

Despite the fact that this approach may not function as a comprehensive evaluation method, it yet has some marked advantages. A major advantage of the experimental evaluation approach is its high capability, if designed carefully, for producing unequivocal causal relationships between treatments and outcome variables about minor aspects of a program (Stufflebeam, 2001). Indeed, a primary attribute of the field of evaluation is the pragmatic orientation of evaluation approaches. So, the worth of this approach is not determined by the entire needs and conditions of the site under evaluation but by its ability to answer properly the sought inquiry. Moreover, some evaluation scholars (e.g., Campbell and sanely (1963)) view that evaluation should be conducted for the purposes of evaluating the overall merit of a teaching theory in a specific program, aiding to the theoretical knowledge of a discipline and enhancing the professional practices of teachers, as well as the decisions of policymakers (Kiely, 2009). In this view, experimentation evaluation can be advantageous in providing new insights on the effectiveness of teaching theories applied in a specific program. Information gained from experimental evaluations therefore can inform the decisions of policymakers to make available assisting workshops, enhance the practices of teachers, improve the afterward implementation process, and ultimately arrive at the desired outcomes of the program (Kiely, 2009).

A Transitional Period in Program Evaluation Approaches

The period of late 1960s to early 1970s experienced an expansion of the intellectual thoughts and philosophical orientations in social science, which impacted the advancement of language program evaluations, too (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; 1989). Along with outcomes measurement, unanticipated outcomes and the implementation process started to gain the interest of program evaluators. ELT evaluation approaches went beyond the positivist parameters of what counted as reality and how it should be investigated. The fluid socio-geopolitical circumstances of the 1960s (Great Society and War against Poverty movements) demanded the presence of methodological pluralism and new theoretical frameworks (Norris, 2016). As a result of this intellectual reform, formative and constructivist evaluative studies that looked at educational programs as evolving social constructs started to grow, and subsequently the process-oriented approaches appeared (Scriven, 1967; Stake, 1967).

Constructivism had a wide impact on ELT evaluation (Kiely & Rea-Dickins, 2005). In this post-positivist view, each stakeholder’s subjective experience counts and is valued in the evaluation process (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). This intellectual activity prompted a move beyond Tyler’s objectivist evaluation, and a move beyond the sole focus on summative approach, devoting an equal emphasis to the dynamic implementation processes with both summative and formative desires (Kiely & Rea-Dickins, 2005). Many evaluation approaches then saw the light. The followings are examples of these naturalistic-constructivist evaluation approaches.

A Goal-free Approach

In a response to the perceived shortcomings of the positivistic objective-based approach, Scriven (1972) proposed a naturalistic alternative, which he called a goal-free approach. Instead of a mere emphasis on the program objectives to guide the evaluation process, an evaluator would immerse him/herself in a program and purposefully avoid any direct contact with the officially announced objectives. This approach usually begins with a broad scope that lets all kinds of issues and matters that may take place in a program emerge. To achieve this, evaluators would adopt qualitative data collection methods to produce thick description about the program under investigation. From the gathered data, the evaluator can ultimately infer the goals of the program being evaluated and then compare them to what has been observed (Spaulding, 2014). This approach challenged the notion of a prescribed and quantitative objective-based evaluation by using a qualitative-based goal-free evaluation. An advantage to the goal-free approach is its allowance for the unexpected aspects of the evaluated program to surface. The evaluator must let the evaluation criteria emerge as he/she is observing the implementation mechanisms. A pitfall in this approach is that the type of information that funding agencies generally seek may end up not being collected.

Consumer-Oriented Approach

Scriven's (1967) classic consumer-oriented model is also another highly-credited example of post-positivistic evaluation approaches. Unlike summative-oriented approaches, Scriven (1967) advocated for an equal emphasis on both summative and formative evaluation that implements a wide range of assessment methods. This approach perceived language programs as a product and participants as primary consumers. The consumers and their needs are two key factors to this approach which the evaluator uses to judge the merit of the program. In the early intervals of the evaluation process, the evaluator identifies the primary beneficiaries and assesses their needs, and, then, collects formative-based information to ensure the program is functioning well. This initial step is ultimately used to make summative judgments about the overall value of a program (Stufflebeam, 2001). Scriven's consumer-oriented model is relatively objective in the sense that it makes use of the initial needs assessment procedures to formulate the evaluation criteria utilized to evaluate the program. Nonetheless, final conclusions and decisions on whether to use the product of a program (e.g., the implemented theory or textbook) are left for the beneficiaries of the program to render (Spaulding, 2014).

Management-Oriented Approaches

In this view of evaluation, it is believed that evaluation should be reoriented to focus more on informing decisions. Proponents of the management-oriented evaluation approach emphasized that the main goal they seek is to improve ELT programs, not to prove their success for external entities (Stufflebeam, 2001). The key identifying factor to the management-oriented approach is the answerability of evaluators to the needs of decision makers— those to whom the findings of an evaluation are presented. This approach primarily facilitates decision-making pertaining to program management and improvement, by providing useful evaluative information and suggesting alternatives to critical decisions. Accompanying every suggested decision alternative is an evaluator-made list of each alternative's advantages and disadvantages. Although this approach has an improvement dimension, it is widely referred to as a management-oriented approach, because it emphasizes the decision-making orientation, and the concerns and needs of decision makers are what guides the evaluation (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014; Worthen et al., 2004). The type of evaluative information needed to be collected in this approach tends to cover all program aspects.

The seminal works of Stufflebeam et al. (1971) and Alkin (1969) are two examples of pioneering yet still-trending evaluation approaches within the management-oriented approaches. In Stufflebeam's CIPP model, program aspects are delineated as Context, Input, Process, and Product. By collecting relevant information on each stage, the evaluator assists the relevant decisions for each stage. Alkin's UCLA model resembles to a great degree the model of Stufflebeam and provides information on all program aspects, too. His evaluation framework was named after the Center for the Study of Evaluation at UCLA (see Alkin, 1991, for more information on the ULCA model).

The discrepancy model by Provus (1971) has been classified as an objectives-based evaluation, but some evaluators may be entitled to use it for management purposes (Worthen et al., 2004). Just like a management-oriented model, Provus's model also endeavors to secure evaluative information on all aspects of the program under study. Yet, what distinguishes Provus's discrepancy model from a management-based model is that the emphasis of the latter is on decision making, while the objectives of a program are what stimulate and guide the evaluation in Provus' framework.

Participant-Oriented Approach

Labeling this approach as participant-oriented does not in any means imply its inability, for example, to accomplish what an accountability-based approach can do, but to emphasize the component of a program that this approach to evaluation strives to serve. "Participants" here refers to those who are affected by and benefit from the evaluation results (e.g. students or program staff). Unlike all previous approaches/models, what orients and sets off the focus of the evaluation in the participant-centered approach is the concerns, issues, and problems that program participants bring in early debates, discussions, and deliberations. From these evaluator-led ongoing communications with the program participants, the evaluator becomes able to highlight the most concerning aspects and issues that require in-depth investigation. Some audiences may ask for evaluative information on outcomes, whereas another group perhaps feels keener to shed light on spotted social inequities or on their inferior positions regarding decision making, for instance. Others may want to improve the process and implementation of a particular aspect of the program, for example, the teaching of the speaking or listening skill. Considering the diverse requirements, the role of the evaluator is to respond to all the demands of participants and let their needs lead the evaluation planning and implementation stages. The evaluator embraces the role of a learner about the program proceedings, and the participants' role becomes closer to that of informants. The evaluator seeks to obtain a thorough understanding of the participants' critical matters and needs by a continuous conduct of observations and communications as realities occur in their natural settings and without any interferences or manipulations.

This form of evaluation requires a high degree of flexibility in terms of data collection methods and evaluation designs. Therefore, this approach follows the pluralist paradigm that cancels the rigorous boundaries placed by the positivist logic on how an evaluation must be designed or what counts as evidence. The philosophical orientation of the participant-oriented approach values the diversity of human experiences and sees realities as social constructs. Therefore, although entitled to use both qualitative and quantitative designs/methods as dictated by the innovatively emerging needs of the program participants, evaluators usually favor the qualitative research methods. The use of naturalistic methods allows them to produce thick descriptive accounts of everyday realities popular at the human services enterprises. As the evaluation process takes off, evaluators focus on collecting evaluative data in a divergent manner, permitting all possible realities of everyday action to unfold and be examined. Then, the collection scope shifts to be more convergent and focused, as the screening procedure is coming to an end, being that evaluators had already collected enough data on the participant's' most persistent needs and concerns. The ultimate outcome of this approach is to obtain an in-depth understanding of the needs, process, and unique human experiences, as well as all (or as many as possible) issues of concern to the program participants, which will consequently aid subsequent decisions regarding the program rationale and intentions.

Popular models in the participant-oriented approach. The work of Guba and Lincoln, (1989), Patton (1997), and Stake (1967) have contributed to the evolution of the participant-oriented approach. Yet, the work of Stake (1967, 1972, 1975) was considered the cornerstone for this approach. Stake's conceptions of responsive and interactive evaluation provoked a new line of thought, in an era when the positivists' logic was still dominating the field of evaluation. Stake (1975) stressed that his responsive approach to evaluation should not be conceived as a new evaluation practice but as the natural behavior of an evaluator. He sees that the key role of the evaluator is to generate thick descriptions of the realities of the program participants as they occur in their natural settings, and then to render his final judgments. The final judgments have to carry evidence and reveal if there was a congruency between what was promised by the program developers and what is currently being delivered, and how the participants are experiencing that. Stake's responsive model gives equal importance to all program aspects, antecedents, transactions, and outcomes.

There are many evaluation models that were influenced by Stake's conceptual work of evaluation. Yet, their evaluation proposals were colored by the beliefs and interests of their developers. For example, the participatory model, developed by Cousins and Earl (1995), sees the potential of evaluation to roll out persistent problems in a program by establishing a partnership between the program key members and the evaluators. Cousins and Earl (1995) conceive the role of evaluators in the initial stages of the evaluation as trainers for the members of the evaluation. In advanced stages, once trainees have achieved the desired competence and are able to carry out the evaluation themselves, trained program members take over the lead of the evaluation and the evaluator(s) moves into a secondary supervising role, as coordinators for the evaluation process. As voiced by Cousins and Earl (1995), this model is "likely to be responsive to local needs, while maintaining sufficient technical rigor so as to satisfy probable critics, thereby enhancing use within the local context" (p. 9).

Another model within the participant-oriented approach to evaluation is transformative participatory evaluation. This type of evaluation adopts the view that evaluation should not only be practical for the technical problems that some participants may be experiencing, but also transformative for the conditions of some powerless stakeholders. This empowerment-based orientation to evaluation grew from the soil of community-based action research and community psychology (Worthen et al., 2004). Burrner and Guzman (1989) and McGee and Starnes (1988) suggested the application of this orientation to evaluation. Yet, it was Fetterman (1994) who brought empowerment evaluation to the central stage of educational evaluation. Goals of this evaluation model include: (1) training the program developers to reach a self-determination level, (2) facilitating the evaluation process, (3) advocating and reaching out to inform the public and affect subsequent decision making, (4) illuminating and liberating the participants of the program from the consequences of federally funded evaluations by training them to become self-determined (Fetterman, 1994).

The utilization-focused model of Patton (1994, 2008) is yet another evaluation model that embodies the growing emphasis on the participant-oriented approach in the field of evaluation. As mentioned above, evaluation has been accused of not being able to deliver effective and applicable evaluation findings, which incited a type of public resentment. Attempting to alleviate this disappointment, Patton (1997) proposed an evaluation model that "begins with the premise that evaluations should be judged by their utility and actual use; therefore, evaluators should facilitate the evaluation process and design any evaluation with careful consideration of how everything that is done, from beginning to end, will affect use" (p. 20). The evaluator initiates the evaluation process by identifying carefully and precisely the intended users whom the evaluation findings are going to serve. After analyzing the needs of program participants, the evaluator facilitates a democratic participation that involves all intended stakeholders, regarding what aspects to cover in the evaluation and how the findings will be presented and used. Patton believes that involving the participants in decision making regarding what aspects to evaluate and how evaluation should be conducted will likely increase the utility of the findings, since the participants have invested their efforts. Like many advocates of the participant-oriented approach, Patton places no boundaries on the methods used for evaluation. All designs and purposes of evaluation are acceptable in his model. This model shares a similarity with Cousins and Earl's (1995) participatory model in that evaluators are deemed obligated to train the program participants as a way to maximize the applicability of the evaluation findings.

In describing the objectives of these approaches, Stufflebeam (2001) stated:

> [T]hese approaches are directed to making a difference in society through program evaluation. These approaches seek to ensure that all segments of society have equal access to educational and social opportunities and services. They have an affirmative action bent toward giving preferential treatment through program evaluation to the disadvantaged. If—as many persons have stated—information is power, then these approaches employ program evaluation to empower the disenfranchised. (p. 63)

In addition, Parlett and Hamilton (1972) developed the illuminative model. The primary endeavor of this model is not necessarily to develop the situation of the participants of a program, change it, or aid decision making, although such consequences may ultimately occur. In fact, the goal is to gain a better understanding of the situation. This approach lends itself to detecting the undetected and revealing the unexpected regarding program activities and how they are experienced. So, the extensive use of naturalistic research methods or designs sounds reasonable in this model. For additional examples, see Gruba, Cárdenas-Claros, Suvorov, & Rick (2016), Kiely & Rea-Dickins (2005), and Lynch (1996). A limitation to this approach is that the turnover of the stakeholders, dropouts, or newcomers may affect the process of evaluation (Patton, 2008). Also, the evaluation agenda may experience renegotiations to include the perspectives of those who newly joined the program.

Expertise-Oriented Approach

This approach draws on professional expertise to render judgmental decisions about the quality of the program being evaluated and is one of the prominent evaluation approaches. The criteria used for evaluation are usually internalized by the evaluator, but these criteria must comply with the standards issued by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. More often, this approach is conducted by external evaluators recognized in the field for their acquaintance with the objects under evaluation. Yet, external evaluators' novelty to the evaluation (program/institution being evaluated) is a potential factor that may complicate the process of evaluation. Therefore, it is common to find that evaluative efforts are often comprised of teams of experts, to facilitate the collection of the requisite information. Even individual evaluators who receive invitations to evaluate educational sites usually ask to assemble a team of insiders. With the help of this team of insiders, individual evaluators can win the trust of stakeholders and build rapport quickly and be able to collect some evaluative information that perhaps would not be obtained had evaluators not requested the assistance of the insiders.

According to Worthen et al. (2004), four primary types exist in this approach to evaluation: (1) formal professional review systems, (2) informal professional review systems, (3) ad hoc panel reviews, and (4) individual ad hoc panel reviews. Worthen et al. (2004) proposed five identifying features to impose order and obtain some clarity on the latter four manifestations of expertise-oriented evaluation. These features pertain to whether each type has an existing structure, has published standards against which evaluands' quality will be evaluated, has periodic evaluations set at delineated intervals, uses opinions of multiple experts, and affects the status of the evaluand.

For special limitations, only accreditation—the oldest and most used type in this approach to evaluation— will be briefly examined. According to Worthen's typology, accreditation is deemed a formal professional review system in that it has an existing structure (usually a very popular accreditation agency), published evaluation standards, specified evaluation intervals, opinions of multiple experts, and often affects the status of the evaluand. Accreditation has a long history of development that I cannot fairly explain in this document. However, it is imperative to touch upon the hallmarks of accreditation. The process of accreditation includes collecting evaluative information about, but not exclusively through, the adequacy of facilitates, the qualification of staff, the implementation process, the structure of the evaluand, the vision and mission of the evaluand, students' outcomes and achievements, withdrawal rates, graduation rates, employment rates, and so forth. Interviews, observations, document analysis, surveys, and site visits are popular methods that accreditors frequently use. Once there is a congruency between what is being evaluated and the quality standards representing the accrediting agency, then the program/college being evaluated receives a certificate of accreditation, which usually results in a higher status for the program, depending on the reputation of the accrediting agency. It is noteworthy to mention that there is a difference between program accreditation and institutional accreditation. While the former covers only the program, the latter examines the entire institution's entities, colleges, and subsystems (Worthen et al., 2004).

Summary of first section.

I started the previous section by defining program evaluation and reviewing how program evaluation has become an invaluable independent discipline. I identified the two forces believed to have created the necessity for more professional evaluation procedures starting in the 1960s. I also demonstrated different approaches of evaluation and how their rapid development was influenced by the seminal works of Alkin, (1991); Campbell & Stanley, (1963); Cronbach, (1963); Fetterman, (1994); Guba, (1969); Lincoln & Guba, (1985); Patton, (1994); Scriven, (1967); Stake, (1967); Stufflebeam, (1966). This section also showed how evaluation theory was heavily affected by the positivist conventions of research at its early age, which is evidently manifested in the proliferation of many types of quantitatively-based evaluation approaches. It then presented a set of evaluation approaches that broke with positivist conventions to embrace a more naturalistic stance towards evaluation, especially after the writings of Lincoln & Guba, (1985); Long, (1984); Parlett et al., (1972); Scriven, (1967); Stake, (1967, 1972). These approaches value beliefs of social constructivists where human subjectivities and their differing experiences matter when conducting evaluations.

The Context of the Study

Because this research project aim to evaluate a university-level ELT program in Saudi Arabia, it is important to learn about Saudi Arabia and the structure of the higher education system in that country/kingdom. Learning about Saudi Arabia and the structure of its higher education system brings insights into the types of problems confronted in Saudi ELT programs, which in turn would help in understanding the motives and needs for the conduct of the present study in Saudi Arabia. This review of the Saudi context also provides a rationale for the selection of the evaluation approach I have selected for this study.

First, this section starts by briefly describing the structure of the country because the higher education policy in Saudi Arabia is heavily influenced by the country's governing system. Second, the structure of higher education in Saudi Arabia is demonstrated. Third, I present a review of evaluation studies that have been conducted on Saudi ELT programs. Finally, I concluded this section by highlighting the evaluation approach I find appropriate to the goal of the present study.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), with a land area of approximately 756,985 square miles, is considered the fifth largest state in the continent of Asia, about one-fifth the size of the United States (CNN library, 2017). After several conquests that began in 1902, King Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud established KSA in 1932 as an Arabic and Islamic state. KSA has since been an absolute Islamic monarchy, as Islamic teachings serve as the fundamental source of the law for the country. Since its foundation, KSA has been ruled by the Al-Saud royal family.

The governing system is centralized. All ministries and governmental institutions fall under the jurisdiction of the king, who also serves as the prime minister. The king carries out all judicial, executive, and legislative functions. The Council of Ministers– with the king as the prime minister— is responsible for making all decisions regarding all legislative and administrative matters of potential importance in developing the country's overall welfare, education, justice, defense, security, health, domestic and foreign policy, etc. In 1993, the Consultative Council was established to assist in drafting legislation;

however, drafted legislation by the members of the council must be approved by the monarch.

KSA encompasses the bulk of the Arabian Peninsula and borders Yemen to the south, Oman to the southeast, Jordan and Iraq to the north, Qatar, Kuwait, the Persian Gulf and the United Arab Emirates to the east, and the Red Sea to the west. KSA also is located in the middle of three continents, Asia, Europe, and Africa, and controls two important seaports on the coastlines of the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf, which put the country in a powerful position in international sea trade. Yet, regardless of its strategic geographical location that has made the country a well-known trade center, KSA is especially significant for two fundamental reasons.

First, KSA is globally conceived as the symbol of Islam, for it is the custodian of the two holiest mosques (Masjids) in Islam, in reference to Al-Masjid al-Haram (in Mecca) and Al-Masjid al-Nabawi (in Medina). Therefore, Muslims worldwide often refer to KSA as “the land of two holy mosques.” Second, KSA is famous for its economic resources that secured the country a respected rank in the global oil market. According to the CNN Library (2017), KSA’s reserve of oil and petroleum liquids comprises 22% of the worlds’ overall oil reserves. In fact, KSA’s oil industry is perceived to be one of the most dominant oil producers in the world, if not the largest (CNN Library, 2017).

Being perceived as the birthplace of Islam, as well as a leading country in the global oil market, were two factors that can be said to have influenced the social fabric of the Saudi society, which in turn had an impact on the evolution of education and the status of English. Millions of Muslim pilgrims travel annually to KSA to perform Hajj (or pilgrimage), which is the fifth pillar of Islam that requires Muslims to come to mecca once in a life-time to perform certain Islamic rites. Some pilgrims choose to reside and make Mecca their new home. Immigrants, therefore, make up 30% of the total Saudi population (*World population review*, 2019) . This huge number of immigrants is comprised of either those who migrated to KSA for religious reasons or for socioeconomic purposes (Elyas & Picard, 2010). As a result of the never-ending presence of multicultural Muslim pilgrims on the Saudi land, the Saudi social fabric has diversified, and English began to be needed as a lingua franca and started to be used for a communicative means (Alhawsawi, 2014). English, among other languages, was propagated because of the growing need of the Saudi government to establish business and industrial partnerships with the western world, specifically England and the united states of America.

The establishment of the oil industry in 1938 played a leading role in diversifying the social identity of the Saudi society and reshuffling the education structure. After the discovery of oil, the ruling family of KSA sensed a pressing need to seek the assistance of more experienced nations to assist in building the required infrastructure the country desperately needed to run the oil industry. There was a huge gap between the poor quality of the Saudi public education's graduates and the rising technical challenges of the local labor market during the oil boom years (Prokop, 2003) Therefore, the help of American and European oil operating companies was pursued. A period of approximately fifty years (1933-1980) was needed before the country was able to finally operate the oil industry without the help of European and American expertise (U.S. Library of Congress, 2017).

The heavy presence of English-speaking expatriates on the KSA soil over almost fifty years spurred many profound changes at several levels, namely education and culture. English began to gain more respected status not only as a lingua franca, but also as an opportunity for upward social mobility (Elyas & Picard, 2010). The Saudi government needed skillful national cadres to meet the newly encountered technological challenges in all domains, such as health, education, science, and construction. This mix of socioeconomic and sociocultural factors that the country witnessed in its early foundational stage created a pressing need to establish higher educational institutions.

The Structure and Goals of Higher Education in KSA

The Ministry of Education (MOE) is responsible for executing the regulations and policy of education in KSA once these are issued and legitimized by the King. All higher education institutions are structured to follow and adhere to the same education policy and regulations (MOE, 2017). These regulations map out and dictate the day-to-day dealings in a wide variety of issues that are frequently practiced in school settings (e.g., appointment of new staff, promotion, salary, approving textbooks/curriculum, student admission and graduation, research agenda, etc.) (Alkhazim, 2003). All universities are funded by the government. In addition to the previously mentioned overarching governing obligations, MOE carries out a variety of other tasks, such as: approving the foundation/modification of all educational programs in Saudi Arabia; appointing the universities' presidents, vice-presidents, and faculty; approving the cooperation agreements between Saudi universities and foreign/international institutions (Alkhazim, 2003).

In addition, MOE strives to build an educated society that can contribute to worldwide knowledge production (MOE, 2017). The main goals of the Ministry are to: provide decent learning opportunities for everyone in light of the country's education policy; enhance the quality of education's "outputs"; increase the efficiency of scientific research; and encourage innovation and creativity (MOE, 2017). The government allocates 10% of its annual budget to enhancing higher education (Alkhazim, 2003). The Ministry of Education in KSA established the Foreign Scholarship Program through which Saudi nationals are awarded scholarships to pursue their higher education in global universities. In less than four decades, the number of Saudi higher education institutions increased dramatically, reaching a total of 192 institutes throughout the country (Alhawsawi, 2014). These institutes provide male and female Saudi students a wide range of cost-free degrees in several disciplines, which include undergraduate and graduate studies alike. In fact, not only is higher education free, but also most college students receive monthly financial assistance to help secure required learning materials.

Teaching of English in higher education. The importance of English in Saudi higher education is driven by the notion of English as a key for employment and mobility. Elyas (2008) stated:

> With the economic growth, Saudi Arabia has gone through a huge process of modernization in all fields of life: from schools, hospitals, to way of life. This new trend of modernization required a transfer via western cultures and values where English is served as the medium of communication and carrier of the wave. (p. 39)

English nowadays symbolizes privilege and knowledge (Elyas, 2008), as well as serving as a social gatekeeper to upward mobility (Pennycook, 2014). Driven by this view that English is the "language of opportunity" and the "language of science", there is now more emphasis on English in the realm of higher education. The Saudi MOE directed all universities to dedicate the first academic year to establish Preparatory Year Programs (PYPs). The introduction of PYPs is dedicated to enhancing not only the English proficiency of Saudi high school graduates, but also scholars who seek to increase their English spoken fluency and comprehension ability (M. Alseweed et al., 2013). In addition, the role of English in enhancing the economic stability of the country has been recognized. With regard to the labor market in Saudi Arabia, a recent study by the British Council in 2016 indicated that 90% of employers in Saudi Arabia consider English as an important and vital language for their companies and institutions, and that 67% of them provide rewarding job offers to those who master English language skills. With this prevailing attitude, it is not surprising that English has become the medium of instruction in most Saudi higher education programs.

A Review of ELT Evaluation Studies in Saudi Arabia

It was not surprising to find that the literature on evaluation studies of ELT programs in Saudi Arabia was quite scant. Before the 1970s, there were no local English teacher education programs, and Saudi English teachers were sent overseas for preparation (Al-Seghayer, 2013). Preparation of English teachers took place by inviting gifted Saudi high school graduates to enroll in a one-year academic program, followed by a comprehensive exam. Only those who met a pre-set standard score were granted a hundred-week scholarship to western countries, such as the United Kingdom (Al-

Seghayer, 2013). It was not until the that Saudi English teachers were being prepared in local English postsecondary education programs (Al-Seghayer, 2013).

Saggaf (1981), one of the pioneering evaluators in Saudi Arabia, focused his attention on the Department of English at a university in the western region of the country. Saggaf (1981) sought to investigate whether the English program of the school took into consideration the needs and interests of the students and teachers. He also evaluated the effectiveness of the ELT program by collecting the students' and teachers' opinions about curriculum and learning activities, as well as teaching methods. Saggaf (1981) found that no needs assessment was conducted when the program was founded/initiated and, therefore, the curriculum was found to be unsuitable to the students' basic needs and interests. He also found that the program was not designed cooperatively or built through collective deliberations between different involved parties, such as language educators, social scientists, professional educators, and students. (Saggaf, 1981).

Altwaijri's study (1982) also signaled the importance of focusing attention on the diverse needs and necessities that students bring to any program. Altwaijri (1982) interviewed 499 Saudi graduate students about the quality of English programs in Saudi Arabia. The study aimed to collect the students' opinions about materials, teaching methods, attitudes toward English (as cited in Alfallaj, 1998). Most of the participants in this study claimed that the materials and methods of teaching were unsatisfactory for their needs. As a result, Alfallaj recommended that materials and teaching methods should undergo ongoing evaluation to meet the rapidly-changing needs of the students, especially in a developing nation such as Saudi Arabia.

In a similar vein, Al-Bakestani (1984) conducted an evaluative study to investigate the quality of teaching English at another postsecondary facility. This study was formative in nature and investigated a variety of potential factors that were of great aid in improving the program. The findings of Al-Bakestani were consistent with those of Altwaijri, (1982) and Saggaf, (1981). Al-Bakestani (1984) concluded that the prevalent teaching method in the program, which was the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), was a key element behind the students' lack of fluency in speaking. Moreover, the curriculum and teaching methodologies were in persistent need of further investigations and evaluations, as students were not satisfied with the curriculum. The study also revealed that the participating teachers lacked the opportunity and access to professional development resources.

Al-Shabbi's (1985) formative evaluation study yielded similar conclusions. Al-Shabbi (1985) found that the Grammar Translation Method was widely adopted. He also argued that the excessive use of such a teaching method affected negatively the speaking proficiency of students and positioned them into passive roles (Al-Shabbi, 1985). The evaluator advocated for implementing a communicative teaching approach instead of a mere focus on grammar correctness. The curriculum was left for further evaluations.

Abu-Ghararah (1989) was also interested in locating the causes that contributed to Saudi college students' English-speaking inability. Focusing on GTM as the only approach to teaching English promoted student passivity and discouraged students from engaging in interactive learning processes. The evaluator used surveys with open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews to elicit the data from 71 students and 6 teachers. Abu-Ghararah (1989) contended that the inappropriateness of the curriculum to the interests and goals of the students is another reason behind the recognized speaking deficiencies. The curriculum needed to lay greater emphasis on including communication-based activities, rather than too much reliance on English literature courses in which the students showed no interest or excitement (Abu-Ghararah, 1989). Abu-Ghararah also highlighted the importance of considering the students' input as to what the courses should include.

Nearly a decade later, Alfallaj (1998), using a qualitative approach to evaluation, and Abu-Rizaizah's (2010) mixed-method study yielded quite surprising findings in many aspects. In their evaluation studies of two different Saudi ELT programs, the researchers collected the data from a wide cluster of informants: students, teachers, teacher assistants, administrators, employed alumni, and representatives from potential employers. It is astonishing to discover that the conclusions of two studies were similar although there is a period of more than ten years between the two studies. In terms of the needs assessment, participants showed a disenchantment regarding the content and teaching methods of their ELT program (Abu-Rizaizah, 2010; Alfallaj, 1998). The pervasiveness of Grammar Translation Method and the dependence of the teachers on the mother language (Arabic) as the medium of instruction were believed to have greatly limited English speaking ability (Alfallaj, 1998). Neither the students nor the prospective employers were satisfied with the quality that students showed upon completing their course of study. From the students' perspective, there was ambiguousness regarding the goals the programs sought to achieve. The programs, in fact, had contradictory mission and vision statements. Interestingly, these findings are in line with the work of Alobaid (2016) in many aspects. Teaching practices were found to be ineffective and students' achievement did not meet expectations. Students' dissatisfaction with the curriculum and teaching practices, particularly GTM, was also a recurrent theme. In general, Alobaid (2016) found that the components of the two programs he evaluated did not match the standards of two accrediting agencies to which the programs had applied to acquire accreditation. The Saudi programs had two contradictory missions that did not meet students' goals, nor did they meet the standards of the two accreditation organizations. The programs were required to incorporate a periodical written evaluation as an indispensable part of the overall program structure.

Consistently, Alfallaj (1998) and Abu-Rizaizah (2010) recommended that the concept of evaluation must be perceived as an integral element to the success of any educational program and that all stakeholders need to actively participate in all stages, including the initial planning stages, of a program.

The dissatisfaction of students with the prevalent speaking-inhibiting teaching practices and exercises manifested in ELT programs that focused on teaching students English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses, in an attempt to link English learning to the students majors (Al-Ghamdi, 2006; Alhawsawi, 2004). According to Al-Ghamdi (2006), although the overall effectiveness of the course he investigated was acceptable, he criticized the program for its mere concentration on reading skills; writing and speaking activities needed improvements. Similarly, Al-Hawsawi (2004) examined the effectiveness of the Saudi Electricity Company Training Institute. The findings of Al-Hawsawi (2004) showed that students and alumni agreed that they were unclear about the goals the program was trying to achieve, as no needs assessment was conducted prior to the beginning of the program. The alumni also reported that they were unsatisfied with the quality of their learning and that their competence did not reach the degree of proficiency expected in the job market. Al-Hawsawi (2006) suggested that policy/decision makers needed to incorporate the views of the stakeholders into the practices of teaching and into the curriculum to improve the quality of the program and to better accommodate the needs of the students.

Interestingly, conclusions that Al-Hawsawi (2004) and Al-Ghamdi (2006) offered corroborated the findings of Barnawi in his formative evaluation of the efficiency of an English-for-Industrial-Purposes (EIP) program (2011). Barnawi (2011) studied the attitudes of students, alumni, and teachers about the effectiveness of the program components to see if they reflect the desired outcomes stated in the vision of the program. As Barnawi (2011) states:

> ESP teachers, students and alumni expressed a great deal of concern about the materials and textbooks used in the current ESP program, which suggests that most of these textbooks were irrelevant to the students' academic needs and produced for commercial purposes only" (pp. 302-303).

Barnawi (2011) reported that the vast majority of the participants held different understandings of the program from those stated by the curriculum guidelines. The students had no clear views on why the curriculum did not introduce them to the content related to their career subjects. Barnawi (2011) also indicated the need for securing professional development workshops for EIP instructors to reinforce their abilities in teaching EIP programs.

Along with the absence of needs analysis, unsuitable teaching materials and teaching practices, and inattention to the input of stakeholders, the bureaucratic structure of education and the educational policy are two significant factors that can affect the quality of English teaching in Saudi ELT programs. Alhawsawi (2014) examined the effects of education policy and teaching practices on Saudi students' English learning experiences. Although all Saudi universities adhere to a centralized education policy that is enforced by the MOE, the managers of the university of QU-HS, which is a pseudonym of the university in the study, were able to break with the MOE's binding bureaucratic rules because of the power and prominent status ascribed to the institution. As Alhawsawi (2014) stated:

> The background of the university and particularly its association with MHA [refers to Ministry of Health Affairs in Saudi Arabia]allows the university to negotiate MOE rules in relation to EFL teaching and learning. The university was able to extend the EFL programme and intensify the delivery of English teaching in terms of teaching hours. The EFL programme in QU-HS runs for three academic semesters with an average of seventeen hours per week: this equates to 68% more exposure to English teaching than other Saudi universities. While other universities are teaching a maximum of sixteen hours of EFL per week over two semesters, QU-HS teaches seventeen hours per week over three semesters. (p. 224)

Additionally, the university of QU-HS was also able to alter the recruitment standards to attract more competent English teachers, as the excellence of students in English speaking abilities is a must-achieve goal for the program. Recruiting more proficient English teachers required QU-HS to invest more financial resources compared to other Saudi universities (Alhawsawi, 2014). This demonstrates the power that the administrators of QU-HS possessed in order to modify the education policy. The fact that this program excelled in aspects where other Saudi universities confronted many challenges strongly suggests that bureaucracy and educational policy have been playing a great role in affecting the quality of English teaching in Saudi Arabia. In fact, many scholars (Abu-Rizaizah, 2010; Alamri, 2011; Al-Mengash, 2006; Fareh, 2010; Prokop, 2003) have acknowledged the role of bureaucracy and education policy in affecting the quality in Saudi higher education programs.

Statement of Problem

Despite the high expenditures allocated to improving the quality of ELT education in Saudi Arabia, Saudi ELT programs have been heavily criticized because of their failure to produce qualified graduates who meet the job market's expectations (Al-Hazmi, 2003; Alkhazim, 2003; Azhar & Ali, 2014; Khan, 2011). ELT education in the KSA has been lagging, compared to other nations with similar or even less financial resources (Abu-Rizaizah, 2010; Alkhazim, 2003; Al-Seghayer, 2013). As shown in my review, discrepancies between what was taught to students and what the Saudi job market was looking for were documented (Abu-Rizaizah, 2010; Al-Bakestani, 1984; Alfallaj, 1998; Barnawi, 2011). My review provided an interpretation of why such discrepancies had existed.

First and foremost, by tracing the history of ELT education in Saudi Arabia, I found that the concept of evaluation was newly introduced in the field of English education in Saudi Arabia. Intriguingly, no evaluation committees or professional academic associations responsible for quality assurance of higher education programs existed prior to 2004, although the Ministry of Education was established in the 1950s. This was a clear manifestation that evaluation was a recently born concept in Saudi Arabia in the early 2000's. Almost all of the evaluation studies examined in this review were single efforts fueled by the individual enthusiasm of Saudi graduate students and were conducted in fulfillment of the requirements for their academic degrees in foreign universities. Nonetheless, the fact that many Saudi ELT teachers have decided to professionally specialize in and practice evaluation can likewise be conceived as a promising sign that the field of evaluation lately has been gaining promoters in the Saudi context. In fact, responding to the mounting pressure from local media to solve persistent problems in the education system, there is an increasing emphasis now on developing more organized and systematic developmental evaluative organizations. MOE already took the first step and established the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) "with responsibility for determining standards and procedures for accreditation and quality assurance and accrediting postsecondary institutions and programs within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" (NCAAA, 2004).

Second, neglecting the needs and perspectives of the stakeholders, especially students and teachers, in evaluation tasks was seen as a key reason that has led to a mismatch between students and potential employers. After reviewing all the made-accessible literature on evaluation studies, I unfortunately found that students and instructors in Saudi Arabia have not contributed enough to the evaluation and development of ELT programs. On the whole, educational evaluation in Saudi Arabia is accountability-oriented. That is, evaluations often occurred as a form of external inspection that is usually conducted by external agents working for bureaucratic offices (Alobaid, 2016). The intent of these evaluations was to document whether external criteria or standards had been met. Neither students nor teachers were involved in these accountability-oriented evaluations, mainly because inspectors were generally not interested in difficulties and issues that students and teachers may be experiencing. As a result, educational curricula and teaching practices remained the two recurring program components that were mostly cited as drawbacks in Saudi ELT programs. The findings of my review supported this conclusion. Most of the studies conducted in the early eighties, late nineties, and after the second millennium have yielded consistent findings regarding the bad quality of the most important components of any ELT program - curriculum and teaching practices. When neither the potential employers nor the students or teachers are asked about their needs, a mismatch and a low-quality product become inevitable results.

In summary, the absence of the concept of ongoing evaluation in Saudi Arabia, and the non-participation of students and teachers in evaluation, are two factors that have led to adopting improper ELT learning materials and teaching techniques (Abu-Rizaizah, 2010; Alkhazim, 2003; Al-Seghayer, 2013; Barnawi, 2011). This, in turn, has negatively affected the quality of education services Saudi students receive in higher education programs. It is so vital that decisions regarding the establishment and modification of ELT programs involve all stakeholders. Correcting drawbacks prevalent in the Saudi ELT programs, and reaching the highest quality level possible, cannot be achieved without paying ample attention and listening to what students and teachers have to say. Being a professional evaluator, professional teacher, or a policy/decision-maker does not eliminate the right and importance of students and teachers to participate in evaluation and decision makings.

The Evaluand

The program evaluated in this study is a preparatory two-semester ELT program in a university located at the western region of Saudi Arabia. This program aims mainly to scaffold the students' English proficiencies that students developed at their earlier public education stages. In contrast to public schools where teaching and learning occurred in the students' mother tongue, the medium of instruction in this program is English. This program functions as a preparatory and transitioning stage, where students are required to strengthen their communicative and technical English skills necessary in order to meet the expectations in their specialized course of study. The program also strives to prepare students with the English skills needed in the Saudi job market.

The program has established several partnerships with globally recognized organizations, such as: the Global Body for Professional Accountants (ACCA); Cisco Systems: Networking Academy; the International Certificate in IT Skill from the University of Cambridge; Adobe Certified Associate; etc. The certifications that these globally-recognized organizations grant have the potential to secure the students decent jobs on a global scale. Students are awarded these certifications, along with their associated diplomas, only after they achieve a specific score on an English competence test because the examinations that students have to take to earn these certifications require advanced English skills.

Yet, no evaluations have been conducted on site since the establishment of the program in 2003. The program managers are enthusiastic to bring about new opportunities for students; hence, I adopted features from the formative and participant-oriented approach to evaluation. My formative and participant-oriented evaluation approach can enhance the communication between the managers, teachers and students, and help them achieve their goals.

In this study, I particularly focused on highlighting the students' and teachers' concerns in relation to the program components: namely, teaching methods, teaching materials, and the academic education policy. By introducing the concept of collective evaluation, I strived to create a space in which the students and teachers could evaluate and exchange opinions and attitudes about the effectiveness of the program implementation and how they could maximize their benefits from the program. I believe that a formative approach to evaluation was successful for this study because it helped in pinpointing challenges and issues at an early stage. Also, as suggested by Abu-Ghararah, (1989); Abu-Rizaizah, (2010); Alfallaj, (1998); Alobaid, (2016); Barnawi, (2011); Saggaf, (1981), engaging the students' and teachers' perspectives in the evaluation of the program's teaching materials, instructional practices, and educational policy at an early stage can help the decision makers correct any rising challenges that may obstruct students from maximizing their beneficence from the program. Adopting a participant-oriented formative approach also provided the needed feedback for teachers to "adjust their activities accordingly" (Mohr, 1995, p. 33), and therefore enhance the quality of their teaching. This form of collective evaluation will not only contribute to program efficacy in achieving its proposed goals, but also increase the teachers' and students' sense of ownership of their program (Scriven, 1991).

Research Questions

Two subsidiary research questions were explored in this study under a single overarching research question:

- What are the program participants' (teachers' and students') evaluations of the effectiveness of the English Language Teaching program regarding: instructional practices, teaching and learning materials, and policies affecting teaching and learning of English?
    - What understanding about the teaching and learning of English and the English Language Teaching program occur during the Communicative-Collective Formative Evaluation process?
    - How does the implementation of the Communicative-Collective Formative Evaluation process promote self-assessment of participants' own teaching and learning practices?

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

This study was intended to empower the students and teachers of an English-language teaching (ELT) college-level program in Saudi Arabia by granting them the opportunity to evaluate their experiences of learning and teaching English within the program. In particular, this formative evaluation process focused on exploring the students' and teachers' own evaluations of the effectiveness of three elements of the program: instructional practices, teaching and learning materials, and policies that affected teaching and learning English. These elements have been identified in prior research as having had a negative impact on the quality of English learning and teaching in several Saudi ELT programs (Abu-Rizaizah, 2010; Almalki, 2014; Alobaid, 2016a; Barnawi, 2011).

My goal in this evaluation was to help the teachers and students to assess the effectiveness of these elements through a student-teacher *communicative collective formative evaluation* (CCFE) process regarding the ELT program at a Saudi university. The CCFE process had the potential to improve the quality of teaching and learning English in the program because it acknowledged the value of communication and collaboration between the teachers and students in the process of learning and teaching English. The goal was to motivate teachers and students through the CCFE process to reflect on and self-assess specific program elements and to exchange constructive feedback regarding the effectiveness of instructional practices and strategies, instructional materials, and the content and goals of the program. Such a process might bring about changes in teacher and student practices through the emergence of new realizations about their teaching and learning practices, thereby enhancing the experiences of the participants in the program. Two subsidiary research questions were explored in this study in addition to the primary research question:

- What is the program participants' (teachers' and students') evaluation of the effectiveness of the English Language Teaching program regarding: instructional practices, teaching and learning materials, and policies affecting teaching and learning of English?
    - What understandings about the teaching and learning of English and the English-language teaching program emerge during the communicative collective formative evaluation process?
    - How does the implementation of the communicative collective formative evaluation process promote self-assessment of participants' own teaching and learning practices?

The CCFE Theoretical Framework

Factors that govern the planning and implementation of an evaluation study differ dramatically in different contexts because "each context . . . holds clues to the approach that will be most appropriate for conducting an evaluation study that makes a difference in that context" (Worthen et al., 2004, p. 114). As evident in the literature review in chapter 2 of the quality of ELT programs in Saudi Arabia, the need for formative evaluation has persisted to improve the quality of Saudi ELT programs (Barnawi, 2011). I decided to draw on formative evaluation to guide this evaluation study.

Program participants' communication and collaboration are also fundamental parts of any evaluation task and can aid the effectiveness of a formative evaluation (Patton, 2008). Teachers and students do not see the program in the same way because people's conditions vary, and life experiences play a decisive role in how people conceive of, experience, or evaluate a program. I believe that there is no better way to be informed of the different views about a program than having everyone communicate openly and collaborate in a formative evaluation study. Many evaluation theorists have acknowledged the potential of communication to enhance program evaluation. As Sanders and Sullins (2006) noted, "one must always consider three aspects of good program evaluation—communication, communication, and communication" (p. xi). Patton (2008) affirmed that when participants communicate, this can enhance the usefulness of findings. Rodríguez-Campos and Rincones-Gómez (2013) also confirmed that "when people are involved in a collaborative process and develop a nuanced appreciation for aspects beyond their tasks, they are more willing to assume responsibility for the entire effort" (p. 3). Hence, a formative evaluation approach that supports the communication and collaboration of program participants can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the program; this reflective understanding can be used to optimize the effects and outcomes of a formative evaluation approach. Without the participants' diverse views—which can only be obtained through communication and collaboration—a formative evaluation study may draw incomplete, unusable, or misguided implications regarding the program under evaluation and therefore fail its intended formative goals. Therefore, this study included a communicative collaborative formative approach (CCFE) to generate data to evaluate the quality of the teaching and learning of English in the program under study.

Hybridity of the CCFE Approach

While the word *formative* implies a developmental approach to an evaluation process, aspects to focus on and steps to follow in an evaluation study can differ widely. "Evaluation is not a mechanical process; it is a human endeavor" (Sanders & Sullins, 2006, p. xi). With human endeavors come many complexities and variations. The CCFE theoretical framework resulted from my adaptation of several perspectives by drawing on two approaches: *formative evaluation* (FE) (Sanders & Sullins, 2006), and *responsive evaluation* (RE) (Stake, 2004). These approaches helped to produce a comprehensive communicative formative evaluation process for both teachers and students.

By drawing on the formative approach, the CCFE approach was not intended to render summative judgments about the merit or worth of the program to lead to any specific recommendation to stabilize, replicate, generalize, continue, or discontinue the program. Nor was this approach intended to generate statistical generalizations or to develop any theory. The goal of embracing a formative orientation was to gain an understanding that would recursively inform the dynamics of the case under study—the quality of learning and teaching of English in this particular Saudi program of higher education—by attending to and valuing the participants' distinct experiences, concerns, and goals (Sanders & Sullins, 2006). This study was formative in the sense that context-specific data based on the experiences of the teachers and students were produced, with the aim of informing ongoing innovation and development (Sanders & Sullins, 2006).

The CCFE approach also drew on several perspectives on evaluation from the conceptual work of Stake (2004): first and foremost, its responsiveness and attention to the needs of the group of stakeholders involved in the evaluation. In line with Stake's responsive evaluation approach, I view evaluation in the CCFE approach as participatory and responsive: (a) advocating for continuous communication by program stakeholders for providing useful information as to the program's issue under study; and (b) being responsive to the needs of the stakeholders.

In addition, the CCFE approach was also aimed at depicting a full picture of a program's contested issues and advocating for the collection of subjective and divergent data from multiple stakeholders. The CCFE approach does not seek a single and authoritative judgment from the evaluator. Instead, it lends itself to interpreting the findings in light of the stakeholders' different views. CCFE is also a naturalistic evaluation in that the evaluator collects information about the program's issues without manipulating the program implementation process. Thus, it is unsurprising to learn that the CCFE approach primarily relies on qualitative methods (e.g., observations, interviews, revision of documents) to capture the full picture of the program's issues being studied in its natural setting.

The role of evaluator in the CCFE approach was captured in Stake's (1975) words. Stake stated that the evaluator

> finds out what is of value to his audience. He gathers expressions of worth from various individuals whose points of view differ. Of course, he checks the quality of his records. He gets program personnel to react to the accuracy of his portrayals. He gets authority figures to react to the importance of various findings. He gets audience members to react to the relevance of his findings. He does much of this informally, iterating and keeping a record of action and reaction. He chooses media accessible to his audiences to increase the likelihood and fidelity

> of communication. He might prepare a final written report; he might not—depending on what he and his clients have agreed on. (p. 11)

Perspectives mentioned above that I adapted from the conceptual work of Stake (2004) and Sanders and Sullins (2006) comprised my CCFE theoretical framework. It is in the exchange of information and the intersection of perspectives from the communication and reflection of participants that a hybrid and all-encompassing perspective of this formative program evaluation emerges.

The Scope of the CCFE Approach

The CCFE approach underwent two main phases: (a) an exploratory phase; and (b) a communicative and in-depth analysis phase. In the exploratory phase, the emphasis of the CCFE approach was on the context of the case under investigation to provide a holistic understanding of the case and its context: the quality of learning and teaching English in this particular Saudi program of higher education. In examining the context of the case, multiple views on the program activities, textbooks, resources, and goals were collected from the program students and teachers, the key respondents in this case study.

In the communicative and in-depth analysis phase, my CCFE approach was aimed at describing and documenting in greater detail what would happen with the students and teachers when engaged in evaluating formatively the program's process of teaching and learning English. Students and teachers had an opportunity to discuss in greater details their evaluations of the effectiveness of the process of teaching and learning in the English-language program. In this process, I planned to have teachers and students reflect on their views of the program's effectiveness and also exchange feedback on how the program could be improved. Special attention was dedicated to the needs expressed by the students and teachers as these unfolded during the communication process. Insights, attitudes, and understandings that the students and teachers developed in their communication were iteratively analyzed to ensure credibility. I used the data I collected at different stages (e.g., surveys and interviews) to corroborate the findings of the present study.

My role, as explained in the words of Stake (2004), was to coordinate and mediate the communication and collaboration between the teachers and students, taking into consideration context-specific challenges that pertained to the unique circumstances of the program. Then, my task as the researcher was to report the findings of the discussion between the teachers and students. The report took the form of a set of formative recommendations based on the discussion of the teachers and students.

Research Design

This study took the form of a single, descriptive, and qualitative case study of teacher and student perspectives on or evaluation of the process and the quality of learning and teaching English in a particular Saudi program of higher education. This case study was labeled as single because it was intended to examine a single "representative or typical" case of many that might have been found in the same field. What was learned from evaluating this single case formatively—the process of learning and teaching English at a specific Saudi institution of higher education—can be informative for other institutions and ELT programs in relatively similar conditions and circumstances. As also categorized in the work of Yin (2009), this single case can also be portrayed as a descriptive case study because this CCFE approach sought to provide detailed descriptions of the teachers' and students' formative evaluation of the case, or perspectives on or evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning of English in the program.

Two fundamental reasons justify the adoption of a qualitative case study design for this communicative collaborative formative evaluation (CCFE) study. First, the CCFE approach relied on the experiences of the teachers and students in evaluating the case formatively and supported communication between the teachers and students. When the teachers and students communicated, they posed several why-and-how questions regarding the process of teaching and learning because each participant's experience was distinct. The perspectives that the teachers and students shared about the case resulted in creating diverse causal relationships and various perceptions of the case. This diversity in the ideas and perceptions of the students and teachers required the kind of research design that can describe such variations and elucidate complexities. Second, there was a necessity to generate a thick description of: (a) how the communication and collaboration between the teachers and students would contribute to understanding the case being studied; and (b) the extent to which the CCFE approach was efficient in provoking new formative attitudinal and behavioral changes.

For the latter reasons, a qualitative case study design was appropriate. "Case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (Yin, 2009, p. 1). A qualitative case study design accommodated the richness of data produced from involving the students and teachers of the program in a communicative-formative evaluation process. Also, employing a qualitative case study helped to "catch the complexity" (Scriven, 1991, p. xi) of the teachers' and students' experiences. Gass, Mackey, and Ross-Feldman (2005) illustrated that evaluation studies, such as this study, may often be labeled as case studies. This is because program evaluation is often focused on unearthing the particularity and complexity of a case—in this study, the process of learning and teaching English in a specific Saudi higher education setting.

In this case study, perspectives on the quality of learning and teaching English in this particular Saudi program of higher education was what the teachers and students of the program needed to assess through a communicative-formative process. The teachers' and students' different attitudes, evaluations, and perspectives about the process of teaching and learning comprised the units of analysis. Put differently, to evaluate formatively the quality of teaching and learning English in this particular program, it was essential to collect relevant information about the process from "qualified cases" (Yin, 2009). In this case study, the students' and teachers' perspectives or evaluations as "qualified cases" provided relevant information about the case under investigation.

The teachers and students invested tremendous amounts of time and effort to reach success in their language studies, and they were the first to be affected by the success or failure of the educational process. Their experiences thus were full of precious information critical for providing helpful and beneficial data on how to improve the process of teaching and learning English in the program. Consequently, the role of the teachers' and students' experiences in understanding and enhancing the case studied must be scrutinized because their input and experiences encompassed the units of analysis of the case. By analyzing the input of teachers and students—which encompasses this case study unit of analysis—well-informed formative conclusions and recommendation were drawn.

Now that I have discussed my rationale for adopting a case study approach for the present study, the rest of this chapter is devoted to explaining other elements of this study's research design: participants and sampling procedures, data collection methods and procedures, and strategies for data analysis. The next section is divided into two subsections. The first subsection introduces in a holistic manner the sampling technique implemented in this study and then explains why such a sampling technique was appropriate for this study. The second subsection details the procedures used for recruiting the teachers and students in this study.

A Glimpse about the Program/Participants

The study participants included male students and teachers enrolled in an ELT program at a university located in the western region of Saudi Arabia, the second most populous region in Saudi Arabia. This urban region has been ranked as one of the most innovative regions in Saudi Arabia for it is the commercial center of the country. The first academic year in Saudi higher education structure is called the preparatory year, which is a two-semester ELT program that students are required to complete before entering the desired specialization in college. During the preparatory year (ELT program), students study intensive English language courses (level 1 & level 2). Each level lasts for a semester. All Students are placed in level 1 first. Thus, all students are required to pass all English courses (speaking and listening, reading and writing, and grammar) during the preparatory year in order to enter into the desired specialization in the department they select. This ELT program aims at upgrading the English competency of the high school graduates joining college. The ELT program equips students with knowledge and skills to undertake the more specialized course of study in their second and third years. This arrangement becomes all the more significant when it is noted that all instruction takes place in English. Thus, ELT students' ability to read, write, and speak English is of crucial importance. Each level of The ELT program lasts for 14 weeks with a maximum of 20 hours of intensive English teaching peer week.

It also is worthy to mention that this college gives all Saudi undergraduates a free tuition education. However, students of this particular college do not receive the monthly stipends that all other-college students receive in this university—monthly stipends are allowances for students provided by the Saudi government as incentives to encourage and support students in higher education programs.

Students' background. From the group of students in the ELT program, 8 students voluntarily decided to participate in the two student focus groups, 4 students in each group. The participant students' names were Nawaf, Riyad, Turki, Ahmad, Feras, Fares, Nader, and Tariq. These names are given pseudonymous that the students have selected themselves in order to preserve confidentiality and anonymity. The students were enrolled in the two different levels of the ELT program. Nawaf and Riyad were in level two. The rest of students were still in level one of the ELT program, the first year of their three-year course of studies. It also is worth mentioning that Nawaf's, Riyad's, Turki's, Ahmad's, and Feras's level of English proficiency allowed them to carry out simple conversation in English. Fares, Tariq, and Nader seemed to have more difficulties using English for communication. In a way, some of these proficiency patterns seemed generally linked to their level placement.

All the interviewed students are graduates of Saudi public high schools located in the western region of Saudi Arabia. Students' ages range between 18 and 25. All the students are citizens of Saudi Arabia, born and raised in middle-class, Arabic-only speaking families. So, the first language of all the students is Arabic. None of the students studied English privately, or used English at home, or lived any time period in an English-speaking country. They all started studying English as a subject on grade six; yet, English in elementary, middle, and high schools was taught to the participant students via an Arabic medium of instruction. In other words, English language courses that students took in Saudi public school were predominantly explained in Arabic. So English was not spoken in the courses. English courses also were predominantly taught by following a grammar-based, teacher-centered instruction.

Teachers' background. There are 18 English teachers in the evaluated program but only 12 decided to participate in the study. Since I used three different instruments to collect the data in this study, the number of participant teachers in each stage of this study varied. Out of the 18 English teachers, six teachers participated the observation stage, 12 teachers in the survey stage, and five teachers in the interview stage, this last group participated also in the observation stage. It also is important to mention that data generated by the observation and survey served mainly the purpose of establishing a communication between the teachers and student around mostly concerned issues in the program. This teacher-student communication dialogue, which contributed to the major findings of the current study, was mediated by the researcher and undertaken via separate sequential interviews conducted with the students and teachers.

Five teachers voluntarily participated in the teacher interviews—Mohsen, Omar, Faisal, Ali, and Mansour. These names are given pseudonyms that teachers have selected by themselves. Although pseudonyms are used, some of the interviewed teachers can be easily identified by their fellow colleagues. Therefore, to protect the anonymity of the interviewed teachers in this study, I cannot provide specific biographies or information on the background and qualification of each interviewed teacher. I, instead, used the demographic information of all teachers to give a general background about the interviewed teachers.

In terms of origins and qualifications, interviewed teachers' ages ranged from 30 to 55. The interviewed teachers come from different nations, such as, the United Kingdom, South Africa, India, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. Two of the five interviewed teachers were native speakers of English. The interviewed teachers' years of experience varied widely—from 6 to 25 years of experience. The five interviewed teachers had been working in the program for more than 10 years.

In addition, interviewed teachers received their ELT training in different parts of the world. Two of the five teachers interviewed in this study held a master's degree in applied linguistics and one teacher received a master's degree in TESOL from western universities. The other two teachers completed a doctorate in English literature and applied linguistics from south Asian universities. Said differently, while three of the teachers interviewed received their training in western universities, the other two teachers earned their degrees in south Asian universities.

In terms of duties and responsibilities, the teachers of the program are responsible for the selection of the course textbooks and any other instructional materials they use. In consultation with the program department head and program coordinator, which usually takes place in departmental meetings, each teacher can select textbooks for each course assigned to him by the department head—as explained above, these courses are grammar, listening and speaking, and writing and reading. These courses are administrated to students in level one and level two.

Teaching load for a full-time teaching instructor in a regular semester may vary from semester to semester depending upon the requirements of the department and the number of teaching staff available. Primarily, the teaching load for the interviewed teachers varies from (15 – 20) semester credit hours during a regular (fall/spring) semester depending on the ranking of the instructor. When necessary, the program head may reduce the course load of a faculty member who is assigned a special duty by the program head, college, or the university.

In terms of the qualifications of the 12 teachers who completed the survey, six of the English program teachers reported that they earned their doctorates from south Asian and African universities in the following specializations: educational psychology, English literature, and applied linguistics. The other six teachers were awarded master's degrees from western universities in disciplines such as: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), and applied linguistics.

Sampling and Recruitment of Participants

Sampling. This study used a purposeful sampling technique to recruit the teachers and students of the program being studied. I selected the teachers and students because of their expertise. Their input added to existing understandings about the effectiveness of the process of teaching and learning—about the effectiveness of instructional practices, teaching/learning materials, and departmental policies. In fact, the teachers and students represented the primary sources of data, without which it was impossible to address the research questions. Not only was the purposeful selection of the teachers and students imperative for satisfying the informational needs for the case under examination, but also such a sampling technique “lends more strength in case study research because data sources, participants, or cases are selected by how much can be learned from them” (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2012, p. 253). Patton (1987) described this sampling technique as “rich-information” through which researchers can generate an in-depth understanding of the aspects of central importance to the case under study (p. 58). It was on this basis that the teachers and students were purposefully selected as the main participants in this study. Given that Saudi educational institutions are segregated by gender, the participants in this study were all male.

Recruitment. The number and recruitment process of teachers for this study varied according to each method’s goal; three data-collection methods were employed in this study. For instance, the number of students recruited in the survey surpassed the number of those recruited in the interviews because the goal of administering surveys was to generate a broad understanding of the case from a broader student representation.

Recruitment of teachers. For the observations, teachers who agreed to host me in their classes were contacted, and I then observed their classes. (Information about what I observed is discussed in the data-collection methods section). The total number of teachers I recruited for observations was six—and I observed all six (although, as explained below, data was used in the analysis only from five), which provided a representative sample of the English language courses offered in the ELT program (reading and writing, grammar, and listening and speaking). In particular, I recruited the following teachers: a level-one writing and reading instructor, a level-one listening and speaking instructor, and a level-one grammar instructor, as well as a level-two writing and reading instructor, a level-two listening and speaking instructor (two instructors from level two). Observing these teachers helped me to gain comparable insights into the process of teaching and learning and how materials were being used across different courses and levels.

Table 1 below offers a summary of participants recruited by each method. For observations, six teachers were recruited from the two Different Levels (DLs) in the program (1&2). Teachers observed were also teaching Different Courses (DCs), which helped in gaining a more representation of teachers' experiences inside classrooms. Surveys were sent to all 18 teachers (100% of the teacher population in the program). Recruiting 100% of the teacher population from the different courses and different levels was important for delivering a more holistic view of the experiences of the teachers in the process of teaching and learning English in this particular program—its pros and cons. Recruiting all teachers in the survey stage also aimed at providing a deeper understanding of the case by gathering representative and accurate evidence from the entire teacher population. For the interviews, because recruiting can sometimes be challenging, I managed to recruit only five teachers out of the six teachers who allowed me to observe their classrooms. However, teachers whom I recruited were teaching in the two different levels in the program. Recruiting teachers from different course levels was intended to generate an insight into the variety of demands on teachers at different levels in the ETL program.

Table 1
Summary of Recruited Participants

	Criteria & Numbers of Participants from Each Method					
Participants	Observation	Criteria	Survey	Criteria	Interview	Criteria
Students	__	DCs DLs	280 (100% of population)	__	8 students (4 in each group)	2DLs
Teachers	6	3DCs 2DLs	18 (100% of population)	__	5	3DCs 2DLs

Note: DL refers to the two levels in the program, DC refers to different courses.

Recruitment of students. Students were also recruited for surveys and focus groups, see table 1 above for a summary of students recruited in each stage of the study. 100% of the program students participated in the survey. The purpose of recruiting all the program students was to gather divergent information on the effectiveness of the process of teaching and learning of English from multiple points of view to add greater insight.

The student recruitment for the focus groups took place through the survey. At the end of it, in a separate sheet of the survey (which was conducted to keep students' identities on the surveys confidential), students were requested to volunteer for follow-up focus-group meetings. Eight students volunteered for the focus-group meetings, although I initially hoped to recruit 14 students. Fortunately, the eight students who volunteered for focus groups were enrolled in the two different levels of the program and provided a rich and vivid picture of students' experiences in the English-language teaching program. This number of students was an ideal number for two focus groups for several reasons. First, researchers have revealed that larger numbers may intimidate the students from sharing their insights and observations (Mason, 2010). Therefore, four students in each group were easier to manage and interview. Second, controlling the flow of information was easier when the focus-group size was manageable; third, this manageable number of students helped the group dive into an in-depth discussion of their experiences within the program. Finally, having a controllable number of participants in each focus group maximized each student's participation.

Sampling students from different levels to participate in two focus groups was intended to provide a diverse and thoughtful view of the process of teaching and learning. Students provided additional clarifying information on data collected previously at the survey stage and exchanged their views with the teachers. Also, a student-group discussion was effective in driving the conversation into new directions, eliciting a wider range of concerns and issues (Weir & Roberts, 1994). Indeed, such a procedure helped students brainstorm together and collaboratively identify otherwise unarticulated hardships that they had experienced throughout their studies in the program.

Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Two fundamental factors necessitated the implementation of several data-collection methods in this study. The first factor is linked to the CCFE approach, which required the implementation of more than a single data-collection method to broaden the understanding of the case being studied. The CCFE approach entails two evaluative phases: (a) an exploratory phase, and (b) a communicative in-depth analysis. In the exploratory phase, I needed to develop a holistic understanding of the program's functioning from a wide array of participants' views. This understanding would then serve as a platform for a fertile discussion during the second phase, in which the participants embarked on a communicative evaluative process of the ELT program.

Second, case study research conventions promote the use of multiple sources of evidence to strengthen the reliability and credibility of findings—a concept known as triangulation (Lapan et al., 2012). As Yin (2009) stated, "a major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence" (p. 115). For these reasons, I triangulated my sources of data and methods so that my case study design would yield more accurate and solid findings.

In complying with the two factors mentioned above, there were two main data-collection phases in this study (exploratory and in-depth), and I utilized different methods for data collection during each phase. In the first phase, I used observations and surveys for exploratory purposes. (More detailed information regarding methods is presented in subsequent subsections.) In the second phase, I conducted individual interviews with each of the five participant teachers, as well as two focus groups with students.

Figure 1 (see below) displays the sequence and timeline for implementing the methods used in this study. Data collection began at the outset of Fall 2018 in an ELT program in Saudi Arabia. The involvement of participants in this study lasted for a single academic semester.

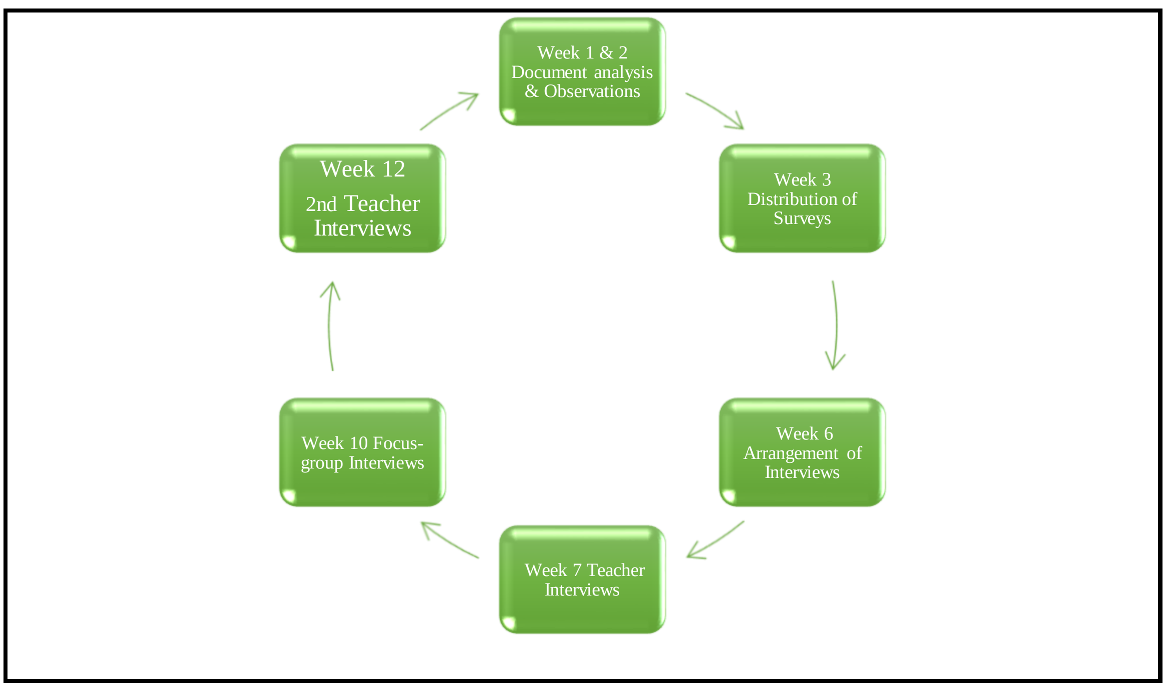

Figure 1. Timeline of data collection.

Exploratory document review. I reviewed the program vision, mission, and catalog manual of the ELT program. Reviewing the vision and mission of the ELT program helped in understanding the objectives that this program endeavored to achieve. Providing developmental suggestions for the process of teaching and learning would have been difficult had I not discerned the objectives of the program. Being mindful of the objectives of the program was helpful in focusing my observations. Only observational data that pertained to the objectives of the program could reveal whether there was a conflict between what was planned in the program's vision and mission statements and what was taking place in the process of learning and teaching. Data collection methods are summarized in Table 2 (see below). Note: In-depth interviews followed the same sequence demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2
Summary of Data Collection Methods and their Desired Goals and Benefits

Method	Data Sources Used in Each Method	Main Goals	Benefits
Exploratory review of program documents	1. Vision 2. Mission	1. Identify the objectives and policies of the ELT program	Help in generating more questions in the interview & guide formative suggestions
Exploratory observations	One observation in each class of the 6 participant teachers, 3 teachers from each level	1. How the classes operate 2. Interactions 3. Use of materials 4. Instructional practices 5. Time management 6. Verbal & nonverbal actions	Gain awareness of the context of the case and direct my attention to unseen issues.
Exploratory surveys 1. Teacher surveys 2. Student surveys	1. 12 teachers (67%) 2. 208 students (74%)	Acquire a general and comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the program implementation process from a larger group of participants	Give an insight into the overall feelings of the participants towards the efficacy of the case.
In-depth interviews 1. 1st Teacher interviews	A total of 5 teachers	1. Conduct an in-depth analysis of issues raised by survey-collected data. 2. Collect developmental suggestions for students.	Deliver an in-depth understanding of the teachers' views, evaluations, and satisfaction with the case components.
2. Two student focus-group interviews	8 students from the two different levels divided into two focus-group interviews	1. Clarify and/or elaborate on survey data. 2. Give constructive feedback and criticism of teaching practices and use of materials 3. Collect developmental suggestions.	Enhance students' ownership and motivate students to positively invest in the program & offer them an opportunity to challenge the views of teachers.
3. 2nd Teacher interviews	Same 5 teachers who participated in 1st teacher interview	1. Stimulate teachers' self-reflexive and self-assessment practices 2. Inform teachers of students' needs, concerns, and goals.	Develop a transforming understanding of the quality of instructional practices and use of materials.

Exploratory observations. I conducted six nonparticipant observations for six different teachers in six different classes. My observations covered: (a) speaking and listening, (b) writing and reading, and (c) grammar courses at the two levels: level one and level two. I labeled my observations as nonparticipant although I believe that my presence in the classrooms was a type of participation in the sense that it altered the phenomena under observation. I used *nonparticipant* to signify my intention simply to observe the happenings of the process of teaching and learning without interacting overtly with the teachers or students. My observations were factual, descriptive, and detailed. No interpretive adjectives were used in documenting observations. (See observation protocol in Appendix A.)

One value of employing observational data in this study was to generate a detailed description of the case's physical and social environment. Understanding the physical and social environment (e.g., how groups were organized, the layout of classrooms while classes were in session, and patterns of communication) of the case can provide a holistic perspective on what occurs in the process of teaching and learning English and how it occurs. The physical and social characteristics of a class carried priceless information about the process of learning and teaching. Also, firsthand experience with how teaching and learning happens in the ELT program prepared me to be open to emerging issues and follow an inductive approach. It also decreased my reliance on my prior conceptualizations of the process of teaching and learning in the program, which should provide an opportunity to increase the credibility of my research, test my assumptions, and reduce my bias (Patton, 2015).

There was additional value in conducting observations in this case study. For example, "seeing the unseen" was a significant strength in observations (Patton, 2015). When teaching becomes a daily routine, teachers are more likely to develop a few unconscious instructional practices—habits. Some of these habits may not reflect teachers' conscious beliefs. When interviewing teachers, I used observational data to help teachers reflect on their habits, especially those that might have escaped their conscious awareness. Consequently, observations provided critical information about potential matters that needed further investigation or improvement. Observations also helped me delve into matters that teachers or students might not choose to bring up on their own (Patton, 2015). I prepared some interview questions to address such matters, which created an opportunity for everyone involved in the study to participate and comment on phenomena that I found interesting inside classrooms.

I remained open to allow new issues to emerge, but my observations were also focused. The focus of my observations was on collecting information relevant to the process of learning and teaching. Aspects covered in the six observations revolved around: (a) patterns of interaction, (b) frequency of interaction, (c) direction of interaction, (d) language use, (e) teachers' use of the textbook, (f) teachers' instructional practices, (g) students' responses to teachers, (h) classroom management and time management, and (i) verbal and nonverbal actions. These aspects provided potential units of analysis and were selected due to their immediate relation to the process of teaching and learning of English in this particular Saudi ELT program. By observing these aspects throughout the various classes that I observed, I collected valuable information that guided my further investigations.

In fact, observations were extremely valuable in that they corroborated the findings of the survey and interviews in relation to the students' concerns about lack of interactive and communicative-based class activities in the program. Since most of data in this study were mostly collected by self-reporting instruments (e.g., surveys and interviews), it was crucial to conduct observations in order to enhance the credibility of claims/findings pointed out in this study. So, data that were generated by observations were used primarily for triangulation purposes as well as driving the mediated dialogue between the teachers and students of the program into new dimensions. I used observation data (collected on the patterns of interaction, frequency of interaction, and language use) mainly to mediate the communication between the teachers and students, which makes the essence of this evaluation approach. Therefore, this study focused more on presenting the findings that surfaced from the teacher-student communication, which in essence was based on observation data.

Exploratory surveys. Observations provided firsthand data about the physical context of the case and how social interaction occurred between the students and the teachers. Surveys were helpful in gathering information about the effectiveness of the process of learning and teaching English from a representative sample of the ELT program teachers and students. The surveys elicited the teachers' and students' attitudes and evaluations and gauged the extent of their satisfaction with three specific components: instructional practices and activities used in the program, teaching and learning materials, and the academic policies of the program. An advantage to using the surveys was the ability to disclose any extant discrepancies or inconsistencies between the beliefs of students and teachers regarding the effectiveness of teaching English in the ELT program. The surveys took place before the interviews, as shown in Figure 1 (see above). Survey-collected information generated the questions for the follow-up interview.

The design of the surveys. I developed two questionnaires for this study. The teachers' survey was different from the students' survey. Despite a similarity in the content and overall design of the items, the student survey was translated into Arabic, and the scientific terminology was simplified to suit the level of students and to maximize their comprehension.

Both surveys included four sections. Section one on each survey was devoted to collecting contextual and background information about the participants. Sections two and three implemented a closed-ended Likert-scale format to gather evaluative and formative information about the teaching and learning materials, as well as information about the instructional practices and activities in the ELT program. Likert-type scales provide a range of response categories to a series of statements (e.g., *agree strongly*, *agree*, *no opinion*, *disagree*, or *disagree strongly*) from which each respondent can choose which one indicates his feelings, attitudes, or opinions about a particular issue (Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011). Section four, which used an open-ended format, provided an opportunity for the respondents to elaborate on their input in sections two and three and urged them to give additional explanations on related components about the case. Information acquired through section four was intended to offer compare-and-contrast insights between the answers of the participants.

In designing the surveys, I drew from two Likert-scale surveys initially developed by Abu-Rizaizah (2010) and Barnawi (2011), particularly to formulate the close-ended questions in sections two and three. Hyman, Lamb, and Bulmer (2006) stated that "one advantage of using pre-existing questions is that they [already] will have been extensively tested" (p. 1). Therefore, I adopted survey questions from the literature of Abu-Rizaizah

(2010) and Barnawi (2011), who also drew on perspectives of a formative evaluation approach in their ELT program evaluation studies. Doing this should increase the construct validity of my surveys. Nonetheless, I modified the scale of the surveys to a 4-point, Likert-type scale to avoid midpoint or neutral selections (e.g., *agree strongly*, *agree*, *disagree*, or *disagree strongly*). As revealed in the work of Garland (1991) and Worcester and Burns (1975), odd-numbered Likert-scale categories are likely to invite respondents to take a neutral stance towards a statement by selecting an option that allows them to say, in effect, “I have no opinion.” Allowing respondents to take a position of indecision or neutrality contradicted the goal of my study to empower the students and teachers by: (a) engaging them in active evaluative roles, and (b) increasing their agency by encouraging them to evaluate their learning and teaching processes and express their opinions.

The teacher survey. Section one of the teacher survey included a variety of questions (e.g., opened-ended questions, multiple-choice questions, and fill-in-the-blank questions) to collect information about the number of years of their teaching experience, areas of specialization, qualifications, and recently completed professional-development workshops in English teaching (See teacher survey in Appendix C). This information was useful in developing an understanding of the background of the teachers in the program.

In addition to section one, there were 13 close-ended items in section two and 7 close-ended items in section three; all items used a four-point, Likert-type scale organized as: *disagree strongly*, *disagree*, *agree*, and *agree strongly*. I used these items to gather attitudinal data from the teachers on the effectiveness of teaching materials, instructional practices, and policies. In the last section of the teachers’ survey, six open-ended questions were employed, which allowed more space for the teachers to provide: (a) additional clarifications of what they had mentioned in previous sections; and (b) additional comments about other topics of interest to them.

The student survey. Section one in the student survey began with a few background questions about age, level in the program, major, previous experience in English learning, and purpose of education. Sections two and three, which encompassed 11 and 10 close-ended items respectively, were intended to provide a more detailed description of and reflections on the program components from many students. All items in sections two and three used a four-point, Likert-type scale (*disagree strongly*, *disagree*, *agree*, and *agree strongly*), requesting a student to indicate the category that described his attitude about each item. The student survey ended with six open-ended questions in which students were asked to share their goals for attending the program, overall evaluations of the teaching and learning process, formative suggestions for improvement, and other issues of interest to them (See student survey in Appendix D).

In-depth interviews. In line with the CCFE approach, the in-depth interviews aimed at activating collaboration and communication so that teachers and students would discuss emergent issues about the case. However, assembling students and teachers of the ELT program and getting them to participate in a face-to-face dialogue was difficult for two critical reasons. First, a teacher-student interview would breach the ethics of confidentiality and anonymity. Second, the CCFE approach advocated for an open discussion between the teachers and students regarding challenges that they had encountered in the process of learning and teaching English in the ELT program. I encouraged students to express openly and honestly their opinions about their teachers' instructional practices and use of English materials. My goal was to provide constructive criticism. Without these explicit critiques of teachers' practices, there would be no real change in teachers' behaviors, and teachers might not reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching methods. Also, I could not gather the students and teachers in a face-to-face interview to allow the participants to speak freely, especially when they might like to state opinions that might prove embarrassing, awkward, or inappropriate.

Instead, I established a dialogue between students and teachers by conducting three sequential interviews. The first round of individual interviews was with five teachers, followed by two student focus groups with a total of eight students, four in each group. Finally, I conducted a second round of individual interviews with the teachers who had already been interviewed. Here is how the efficacy of the CCFE approach in establishing communication and collaboration was fulfilled. Throughout the interviews, I facilitated indirectly, not face-to-face, communication and collaboration between students and teachers so that they would share their views on the case and discuss in depth the issues highlighted in the exploratory phase: issues that had arisen from observations and surveys. The interviewing process established the mediated dialogue between the teachers and students and a deeper collective understanding of the challenges that affect teaching and learning English.

The interviewing process was beneficial in many ways. The discussion between the teachers and students in the in-depth interview phase motivated the teachers to develop self-assessment of their teaching practices. Weir and Roberts (1994) argued that self-assessment practices are a form of professional development. Also, formative suggestions that the teachers and students made during the interviewing process would be reported in the implications section for decision makers to consider. More details of the three sequential interviews are provided in the next three paragraphs.

First teacher interviews. I began the interviews, conducted in English, by individually interviewing five teachers. There was a key reason for favoring individual interviews with teachers. Most of the teachers in the ELT program were expatriates who held a working visa. Therefore, asking teachers to evaluate decisions that were made by their superiors in the program in a focus group might have proved inconvenient or might have caused some of the teachers to feel uncomfortable. Therefore, individual interviews (one-on-one interview sessions) were preferable because such interviews could facilitate more relaxed conversation and helped me collect more candid information from the teachers about decisions made by their superiors and about teaching English. Given the packed and hectic schedules of teachers, coordinating one-on-one interviews with teachers was easier than setting up a focus group.

Two goals drove the first set of interviews with teachers: (a) to conduct an in-depth analysis of issues raised by survey data and request clarifications regarding what had been observed in classrooms; and (b) to collect feedback for the students. Aspects that were covered during the first round of teacher interviews included student–teacher interaction, student–student interaction, teachers' evaluation of textbooks and policies, teachers' instructional practices, the participation of students, activities in the classrooms, and time management. I later shared teachers' input on these aspects with the students. (See interview protocol in Appendix B.)

After I completed the first set of interviews with teachers, I made an initial examination of the teachers' interviews and prepared a list of quotations (unidentified by teacher) from them. I organized these anonymous quotes around recurring themes and topics before sharing them with students in the following step. Instead of narrating the views of the teachers to students, I used verbatim quotations from the teachers' interviews to share their views on each emergent topic with students. it is important to stress that I did not attach any names to teacher quotations to preserve anonymity. Using direct quotations to represent unidentified teachers' views on each specific issue (e.g., the effectiveness of textbooks) helped me to preserve both the authenticity and the anonymity of the teachers' perspectives. The use of these quotations also enabled students to interpret the talk of the teachers without any additional intervention from me. I followed the same procedure when sharing students' perspectives with the teachers.

Student focus groups. Student focus groups were conducted using the students' first language, Arabic, to facilitate a smoother communication and to ease students' process of sharing their mostly contest concerns. Besides, students felt more comfortable using their first language. There were two main purposes for conducting interviews with students. First, they provided an opportunity for the students to engage collaboratively in an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of the process of teaching and learning English. They elaborated on information gained by the previous exploratory methods (i.e., observations and surveys) on the effectiveness of textbooks, instructional practices and activities used in the ELT program, policies, and additional topics of interest to them. Second, student collective evaluations about teaching practices offered information that I used to stimulate and provoke teachers' self-reflexive and self-assessment practices. Students also were able to respond to views and concerns that the teachers had revealed in the first round of teacher interviews. When I cite student comments in this study, I have translated them from the original Arabic into English.

Second teacher interviews. The aim of the second teacher interviews, which also were conducted in English, was to give teachers an opportunity to hear the students' opinions, reflections, and evaluations on the instructional practices and use of materials in the ELT program. The student comments shared with teachers were already translated into English. Such a procedure was intended to provide the teachers with a better sense of students' experiences in the ELT program regarding their goals, interests, needs, and concerns so that teachers would engage in a self-assessment of the appropriateness of instructional practices and learning materials in relation to students' experiences.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

Data collected in this study were analyzed continually because data gathered by each method informed subsequent stages of the study. Yin (2009) stated that case study researchers "must be able to interpret the information as it is being collected to know immediately, for instance, [whether] several sources of information contradict one another and lead to the need for additional evidence" (pp. 71–72). Therefore, as my research advanced, I followed rigorous and continuous procedures to avoid becoming overwhelmed or losing track of leads on emerging issues to scrutinize. I wanted to amplify all of the evidence required to enhance an understanding of the effectiveness of teaching and learning English in the ELT program. In the following subsections, I explain my analytic approach to a rigorous analysis throughout the course of data collection. Then, I present a detailed discussion of the procedures undertaken to analyze data obtained via each method.

My overarching analytic approach. To conduct a rigorous analysis, I applied what Yin (2003) called the theoretical preposition strategy as a general analytic approach. This strategy helped me to locate the most relevant and important pieces of evidence amidst the piles of data collected. The theoretical preposition strategy, as stated by Yin (2003), “helps to focus attention on certain data and to ignore other data” (p. 130). The theoretical preposition approach relied upon the assumption that identifying key data depends on the relevance of data to the case study. The theoretical preposition strategy assisted me in locating the parts of data important to deepen existing understandings about the process of learning and teaching English in the program.

Having identified the potential data relevant to the case study questions, I then drew on Stake’s (1995) three analysis steps in case study research to guide the thematic analysis. These steps were categorical aggregation, patterns, and naturalistic generalizations. In categorical aggregation, I coded data thematically and then classified these codes into several categories. I looked for patterns among already aggregated categories and examined the correspondence between established categories. The goal of this procedure was to identify similarities and differences between the categories. At the last stage, synthetic generalizations and descriptions about the case under study were reported.

I used Nvivo computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software. All narrative texts obtained in this study were entered into the software. I did this to ease the process of storing data, accessing memos associated with data, making visual concept maps, locating specific codes, and counting the incidence of certain codes or particular combinations of codes (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995).

Analysis of observational data. Data acquired by observations were tabulated and arranged in field notes. These field notes were then transcribed and inserted into Nviov in preparation for thematic coding and categorical aggregation. Digitizing all observational data facilitated the thematic analysis. In the thematic observation analysis, I examined recurring themes and the occurrence of codes or combinations of codes pertaining to aspects of the case being studied, such as patterns of interaction, teachers' use of materials, instructional practices, and participation of students. A list of these aspects is provided in Appendix A. As needed, thematic coding processes were used iteratively to build even larger categories (Yin, 2009). After the thematic analysis of observational data had been completed, I used emergent themes to guide further investigations.

Analysis of teacher and student surveys. Analyzing the teacher and student surveys followed the same process because the two surveys shared the same type of questions: a combination of open-ended questions and close-ended questions. I analyzed responses to open-ended questions by establishing thematic codes and arranging them into several categories to identify patterns and make inferences. Textual data needed to be transcribed and imported into Nvivo to ease the process of thematic analysis. Data collected from survey items that were structured in a close-ended format were analyzed using basic descriptive statistics (percentages) to identify areas of consensus or differences in the perceptions of the participants. Calculated percentages (frequencies) were examined to identify where the perceptions of the teachers and students converged and diverged. Also, calculated percentages showed any consistencies in responses and, if any, on what aspects of the process of teaching and learning.

Analysis of interview data. There were three sequential interviews: teachers, students, and then teachers a second time. Analyzing each interview began with a transcription process. Student interviews needed to be translated first because they were conducted in Arabic. After the translation and transcription processes had been completed, interviews were imported to Nvivo. The rest of my analytic process followed Yin's (2003) and Stake's (1995) analysis strategies adopted for analyzing the observations and text-based survey data. Yin's (2003) theoretical preposition analysis strategy helped me locate the key data, depending on their relevance and importance to the research questions. Stakes' (1995) suggested analysis steps guided the coding and categorizing processes. Recurring and interesting words in the interviews were coded. Coded data then were grouped into broader categories to establish a more comprehensive understanding of the data. A compare-and-contrast analysis followed the categorization stage to prepare for the next stage, in which I described the connections between the aggregated themes and generalized the results (Stake, 1995). Tracking conversations or lines of interaction between students and teachers on specific topics served as ways to present findings or narratives about participants' communications. I also applied a cyclical and iterative analytic approach to increase the familiarity with the data and strengthen the validity of my final conclusions (Creswell, 2007).

Analysis of documents. Inferences that I made by reviewing the case-related documents were not treated as definitive. The main purposes of reviewing documents were to obtain clues on further issues to examine and to help me relate to the experiences and stories of the teachers and students. I did not conduct any sophisticated discourse analysis, neither of the vision and mission nor of the adopted textbooks in the ELT program. Instead, I read these documents carefully to learn more about the program. Therefore, document analysis took the form of a simple thematic scanning process. As for the textbooks, I scanned the textbooks used in the ELT program to gain a better sense of their goals, themes, and topics. This helped to guide the conversation with the participants about the effectiveness of teaching materials. Analyzing the vision and mission also underwent the same thematic analytic scanning process so that I would learn about the policy of the ELT program and the objectives of the ELT program.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics is emphasized in social scientific research. To ensure that this research addresses the ethical issues involved in the present study, many ethical procedures were considered during the design and execution of the present study. At the outset of this research project, my research proposal and research instruments were submitted to an institutional review board (see Appendix E). Efforts were made in this study to adhere to the National Composition's regulations on the ethical conduct of research, as reported in the Belmont Report (1979). These regulations are linked to three main principles: beneficence, respect, and justice of research. Accordingly, all participants in this study were treated with respect and dignity. The participants in the study were always reminded that their participation was voluntarily and that they were under no obligation to finish the study. The participants were also informed that they were entitled to withdraw at any stage of the study. Informed consent forms were provided to the participants in an accessible and easy-to-understand language.

Concerted efforts were made to maximize the benefits to the participants. The confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity of respondents were maintained. I established pseudonyms and codes to conceal the actual names of the participating teachers and students. The codes that corresponded to the real names of the participants were saved in my password-protected personal computer, while only the corresponding pseudonyms appeared on the manuscript of my dissertation, as this study pledged that no sort of discomfort or inconvenience would be caused to the participants. Also, because this study sought to expose the opinions of one group of participants to the other, precautionary steps were taken to conceal the identities of participants when participants circulated data. I used only blind quotations to share the main ideas of the teachers with the students and vice versa. I also met the participating students off campus to avoid any possible breach of their privacy.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a concept that qualitative researchers use to refer to the validity, rigor, and ethics of qualitative inquiry. Guba and Lincoln (1989) proposed several principles that should direct qualitative researchers in the process of increasing the trustworthiness of their research. These principles are credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Credibility is linked with whether the researcher has followed proper techniques and used appropriate measures to answer questions of interest. Credibility parallels internal validity in quantitative research (Lapan et al., 2012). There are several strategies that a qualitative researcher can adopt to achieve credibility, such as prolonged involvement on the site, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checks. Dependability refers to the idea that research procedures should be conducted in a systematic manner to enable replications of the study in other contexts. Shenton (2004) stated that

> to address the dependability issue more directly, the processes within the study should be reported in detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same results. Thus, the research design may be viewed as a 'prototype model. (p. 71)

Transferability can be achieved by providing detailed descriptions of participants in qualitative studies to assist readers' decisions [about] whether the findings are generalizable to their circumstances (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Confirmability speaks to the idea of whether the findings of the study are a result of sources of data or arise from biases due to poorly implemented research procedures (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

To increase the trustworthiness of this research, all aforementioned principles were taken into consideration in designing the present study. First, this study triangulated not only its data collection methods, but also data sources to ensure that all issues of interest were examined from several standpoints. Second, collected data were crosschecked with the data gathered from other methods, which contributed to the confirmability of findings. Moreover, in the analysis stage, the participants were invited to review their input to ensure that selected quotations captured what they had tried to say. Third, my prolonged presence while conducting observations and interviews provided a reflective understanding of the program under study that also increased the credibility of the findings. This prolonged presence also helped me ease the tension and build rapport with the participants, which increased the possibility of extracting more trustworthy data. Fourth, along with this prolonged research process, member checks were unitized to ensure that my preconceptions were not distorting my analytical lenses at any stage connected with the course of this research. I met frequently with my academic mentor for debriefing sessions.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS

The goal of this case study was to explore with a sample of teachers and students from an English-language teaching (ELT) program in a Saudi university their evaluations of the effectiveness of the teaching and learning materials, instructional practices, and policy affecting teaching and learning of English in their ELT program. This study was driven by my strong belief that exploring teachers' and students' experiences within the program could allow the program stakeholders to improve the effectiveness of instructional practices, the teaching and learning materials used, and the policies that affect the ELT program. The key findings of this study were obtained from distributing surveys to the entire population of teachers and students in the ELT program and conducting two in-depth follow-up interviews with each of five teachers after having observed six classrooms in the program, as well as conducting two student focus groups with a total of eight students, four students in each focus group.

In analyzing the findings of this study, I relied heavily on data obtained from interviews. I could not have captured such insight into teachers' and students' experiences without using a partially structured qualitative interview questionnaire. Data gathered by the surveys, doubtlessly, were equally beneficial to me, as such data paved my way into a vivid discussion about the most contested issues that the teachers and students had experienced. Where necessary, survey data were woven in with data from interviews to solidify and augment the discussion. The primary and subsidiary research questions developed for this study were:

- What are the program participants' (teachers' and students') evaluations of the effectiveness of teaching and learning materials, instructional materials, and policies that affect the implementation of the English Language Teaching (ELT) Program?

- What understandings of the process of teaching and learning occur during communicative and collaborative formative evaluation (CCFE)?
- How does the implementation of the communicative collective formative evaluation (CCFE) process promote self-assessment of participants' own teaching and learning practices?

Analysis Procedures

As this study collected two kinds of data by using both surveys and interviews, the analytical procedures included two different approaches. The survey prompts were first assigned numerical values (e.g., 1 = strongly disagree), and then all the participants' input from each survey item was coded into an Excel sheet. Coded data were imported into JASP, an open-source analytical software that offers basic statistical operations. With the assistance of JASP, basic frequencies of the participants' input on each item of the survey were calculated, which resulted in a set of descriptive data that provided a general view on the participants' evaluations of some aspects of the program. This analytical process was completed prior to conducting interviews and helped me to form questions for the follow-up interviews.

Analyzing the interview data was more complicated and comprised four stages. First, locating an affordable and user-friendly software to analyze my qualitative data was not easy. Eventually, I decided to use NVivo, after exploring various explanatory tutorials on how NVivo could assist qualitative researchers in organizing, coding, and sorting out data, as well as in generating themes. Using NVivo, I managed to import all interviews into the software. I then created an initial code book, which consisted of three anchor codes. Each anchor code represented a question in my research. I followed this procedure to help in relating and linking the data to my research questions, as it is the essence of coding and analysis to be able to: (1) reduce a huge amount of data to a manageable size and (2) identify the significant segments of data that can help better understand the experiences of the participants and answer the research questions (Stake, 2003).

Underneath each anchor code, I created a few predetermined codes. I called these the parent codes. For example, in the first research question, I intended to examine the participants' experiences with the teaching materials, so I expected a segment of the data to be coded on books. Therefore, I created a parent code called *books* underneath the first research question's anchor code, named (Q1). I called it a parent code because underneath this parent code (*books*), I added another list of codes, which I called child codes. I repeated the same procedure with the other primary anchor codes for question two and three. The time had come for the next stage, which was about getting to know the data closely.

In this stage, I started carefully listening to my interviews. I read interview transcripts repeatedly. While reading the interviews, I would annotate some segments of the data and mark them for subsequent coding. After I had thoroughly familiarized myself with the interviews, I began the actual coding process. While coding the interviews, I made a concerted effort to use as many NVivo codes as possible. In fact, I wanted to honor my participants by selecting their own words as labels for coded data. Where possible, I labeled the data with NVivo codes. I also stayed open for emerging issues and never relied solely on predetermined labels while coding the data. I used this strategy to box my background and bias and minimize their influence on my coding process.

After I finished coding all interviews, I reexamined the references underneath every established code to see what I already had and to see whether I had missed anyone or captured everyone’s input on this matter. Also, every time I came across a new code, I would go back and search previously coded interviews to compare and contrast the other participants’ sayings on the newly popped-up code.

After I finished my first cycle of coding, which resulted in generating almost 50 codes, I started the second cycle of the coding process. In this cycle, I sorted out my initial codes by endeavoring to reorganize and define the relationships between them. Going over my initial codes helped me to make meaning of the established codes and generate themes based on the underlying meaning and the commonality and frequency of each established code.

Six broad themes emerged from this analysis:

1. The overwhelming majority of the teachers and students who were interviewed stated that the instructional materials used in the ELT program were obsolete and needed to be updated or replaced.
    a. Marginalizing content.
    b. Inconsistency between coursebooks’ content and students’ needs.
    c. Incoherence between college and public schools’ curricula.
2. Lack of time, organization, money, and commitment were identified as major barriers to program progress with respect to changing or improving instructional materials and teaching and learning practices.
3. The overwhelming majority of students interviewed complained of lack of feedback and the prevalence of teacher-centered activities.
4. A common view held by teachers was that the ELT program policy, administration, and environment of the workplace were respectful, helpful, and supportive.

5. In discussing the effectiveness of teaching and learning practices within the program, all teachers indicated a set of challenges and deficiencies realized as major obstacles to improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning practices.
    a. Lack of professional development.
    b. Unqualified staff.
    c. Absence of placement test and needs analysis made effective teaching and learning hard for teachers.
    d. Level and qualifications of students admitted complicate the situation.
6. All interviewed students expressed the need for establishing a two-kind set of self-assessment strategies, whereas most teachers highly valued more of the teacher-student dialogue and demanded access to more teacher professional development seminars very beneficial to self-monitoring the teaching process.

The six broad themes introduced briefly above were thoroughly analyzed in three separate sections below. Each section was devoted to presenting the main themes that are associated with each of the three questions developed in this study. In each section, there is a detailed presentation of the key findings that corroborate and explain each main theme and its dimensions, with a range of lived experiences of the study participants. I invite readers to gain a better understanding of the research participants by allowing the participants speak for themselves. The use of illustrative quotations extracted from interview transcripts is emphasized throughout this chapter for the readers to better understand and capture the richness of multiple participant perspectives on each theme. Each of the six themes will be discussed in tandem with the research question under which the theme originally emerged, although the majority of themes appeared recursively throughout the interviews, as I learned that issues of educational programs appear to be highly interrelated and too complex to examine in isolation.

What are the Participants' Evaluations of the Effectiveness of Instructional Materials and Teaching and Learning Materials, as well as Policies that Affect the Implementation of the English Language Teaching (ELT) Program?

In this section, I will present the themes that cover all aspects of the first research question. I will discuss each theme's main point and its interrelated dimensions. The following discussion will involve three of the five main themes that emerged in this study.

Obsolete and Inappropriate Instructional Materials

One of the overriding findings of this study was that the overwhelming majority of students and teachers interviewed complained about the ineffectiveness of the Interchange Series, which is used as the coursebook in the ELT program. This finding is highly important: 92% of students and teachers interviewed held this view. It is also interesting in terms of its coding density, as issues about the coursebook and its impact on the effectiveness of the process of teaching and learning comprised the largest set of coding references. In fact, 73% of students who completed the survey agreed that the content of the implemented textbook was not interesting. From the students' perspective, the content of the coursebook was boring, old, repetitive, unmotivating, and too basic. Riyad, a level-two student, had a comment on this issue: "Frankly, the coursebook does not help in respect to our specializations, nor does the information presented in the coursebook interest or excite me. It's old and boring. *Imagine* [speaking in an exclamatory tone] that I have been studying the same themes since elementary school!"

To students, the coursebook's topics resembled to a great extent what they had studied in public schools' English coursebooks. Students also spoke unfavorably of the content of the coursebook. Feras, from level one in the program, shared Riyad's sentiments about the inappropriateness of the coursebook' topics:

> You do not have to possess a professional knowledge to know that our coursebook in the program is too basic. Imagine that the coursebook still presents words like *book* and *pen* as new words to college students, words even illiterate people would know. Do you know how it feels when you are forced to learn or read a book you are not interested in, and you deeply know you are never going to benefit from?

Based on the accounts of the students, there appeared to be a lack of consistency between the curriculum of English coursebooks in Saudi public schools and those in the ELT program.

Students were not alone in their feelings towards the inappropriate transition from high school English to university English. In fact, I found that the majority of teachers had similar opinions on inappropriateness of English coursebooks in the Saudi education system. The following extract from Faisal's interview demonstrates a compelling example of this finding: "There is a big mismatch between the curriculum of the school and the curriculum of the university. While designing the curriculum, there should be a coherence between this level and that level." This study also indicated that teachers shared the same belief that students articulated about the coursebook in terms of its outdated themes. A common view held by teachers was a sense that using the Interchange coursebook "is not really the best idea. . . . Overall, the materials and content of course are obsolete. It's really out of date" (Omar). As Ali put it, "The book is almost 20 years old!" Only one teacher of all the participants, while acknowledging that the coursebook is old, stated that there are other aspects that teachers should also be asking about:

> Everybody complains [that] it's old and all that. I do agree, yet I think [that] the coursebook is not bad either. You could use any coursebook. It could use old video cassettes, but when it comes to the actual content and the things [that] you need to teach, does it meet your objective or not? Does it meet the students' needs and objectives or not? Does it meet the needs of the department of the programs? Can the teachers teach with it? This is what we should be asking. (Mohsen)

I also found that two of the five teachers interviewed in this study raised a critical issue about the coursebook's content different from those issues raised by their counterparts. Imam and Jameel were concerned not only about the obsoleteness of the coursebook or inconsistency with previous levels in public schools, but also about the fact that the coursebook may contain sensitive religious and cultural topics. They expressed their concern about the impact of the coursebook's themes on the students' cultural identity, their Islamic and Arab culture. They said that the content of the coursebook marginalizes and largely overlooks Islamic and Arab cultures. As, Mansour commented,

> When we are teaching the books written by somebody else, then in the way we are trying to alienate all the students from our own culture, and really, I was scared of that because we should try to bring a balance between foreign culture and our local culture. So, the book should consist of a local culture, maybe 50%, and 50% global culture. Because when I went through the books, I found that OK,

> the Chinese culture, Japanese culture, British cultures, American cultures are taken into account in the book, but the things actually which were missing [were that there was] . . . no mention of Arab culture, no mention of Islamic culture.

Mansour appeared to be apprehensive, thinking that students might ultimately develop a sense of cultural inferiority if not explicitly taught about their cultures in their English coursebooks. Ali said specifically of the coursebook: “Sometimes we have cultural, [religiously] offensive materials. That takes us half an hour to bring back these students to the teaching process. Why don’t we have our own curriculum?” Altogether, these results provide important insights into the perceptions of teachers and students on the obsoleteness and ineffectiveness of the instructional materials utilized in the ELT program.

If the Textbook was Old, Why had the Textbook not been Changed?

Having realized that the overwhelming majority of teachers and students interviewed agreed upon the obsoleteness and ineffectiveness of the textbook utilized in the ELT program and that it should no longer be used, the question I felt imperative to ask was: “Why didn’t you change the book since its unproductiveness had long been acknowledged?” This study revealed that teachers identified lack of time, organization, money, and commitment as major barriers in the way of changing the textbook used. Compelling evidence supported this finding. As Ali said, “Honestly, nobody’s there to take responsibility for this, number one. Number two, lack of organization for so many years. We unfortunately seem to be neglecting the importance of discussing the necessity of changing the book.” This represents Imam’s view on why efforts are not coordinated in advance to make changes.

Another teacher participant supported Ali's view and outlined similar reasons for why the textbook has not been changed: "Three things . . . delayed change: . . . money, lack of time, and lack of planning. . . . [Administrators] need to plan a little bit better, they need to be a lot more [exposed to], and liaise [more] with different parts of the university" (Omar). To compensate for such lacks, Omar urged the administration to take advantage of university resources available in other facilities by establishing a partnership with colleges richer in resources.

Even when an opportunity for change was present, teachers did not seize it. Department meetings regarding curriculum issues are held at the beginning of every semester. For 11 years, the *Interchange Series* remained the main coursebook taught in the ELT program, except for an interval of one semester in 2014 in which a newly appointed departmental chairman substituted *Interchange* with *Unlimited English*. However, when this new department chairman left after one semester,

> there was a meeting about the new coursebook [*Unlimited English*]. So, all the teachers . . . gave their observation about [*Unlimited English*]. There were lots of complaints from the student side. So, we discussed . . . it, and we recommended to reuse *Interchange*. But, I think, what I personally feel, that was our mistake because there was not so much focus on [an] updated version because all the teachers, they were focused on replacing the old book. (Mansour).

In investigating why teachers voted for returning to using *Interchange* despite knowing that it was not the best decision to make, one teacher participant said that teachers

> had difficulty teaching *Unlimited English* to the students . . . . And when they get the opportunity to change, . . . when [the outgoing chairman] left the department,

> they directly changed it. They changed to things that felt comfortable to them, the things that they already had the materials for; they didn't need to work again the materials. (Faisal)

Faisal's view of why the *Interchange* textbook was restored is consistent with Omar's view. Omar stated that retaining the Interchange textbook "was more like convenience, more like 'the students can do it, things are going to run, and that's it." Omar added:

> This is what the students can do. These are the books that the teachers can use. These are the books that the teachers are comfortable with and they're happy with. This is what's going to work, and get things going, and we did it. And that was it.

These findings show that retaining *Interchange* as the main coursebook appeared to be a matter of convenience for teachers, as they had been teaching *Interchange* for a long time.

This study also indicated that while the majority of teachers voted to return to using *Interchange* and believed that there was a lack of time and organization from the administrators' side, a minority (two teachers) argued that the whole department was to be blamed for a lack of commitment to continuous improvement. In this vein, Mohsen said:

> Where we're at right now is a situation [in which] teachers can say that they have an input in selecting the books. There's nothing wrong with that. But where I disagree with that or where there might be some issues with this claim is when they are given the book and they are asked to analyze it, scrutinize it, give feedback, but there's nothing that they have written to suggest that they did

> scrutinize it, they did criticize it, they did give feedback. Everything I've done, I've written, and I've emailed, and I've documented to initiate change never receives any sort of feedback. I've always wanted teachers eagerly working to improve our curriculum. Fingers cannot be pointed at a few people.

Mohsen seemed annoyed with teachers' modest contributions to finding a better textbook, especially when he found out that 91% of teachers who completed the teacher surveys confessed that they are always consulted prior to selecting new textbooks. Another teacher participant spoke poignantly about why all teachers voted for restoring *Interchange* by arguing that all faculty members should accept accountability for lack of insight in this regard:

> I think it's the whole department. I don't think [that] it's one person [who] needs to be blamed. I think that [it's the] whole department [that is] given the function of changing the curriculum. . . . They are to be blamed, really, because it's a lack of foresight. (Omar)

In a nutshell, Omar and Mohsen argued that administrators (e.g., the program head and course coordinator) alone cannot be held accountable for not providing suitable teaching materials just because they are the ones who make the final decision on textbooks. In fact, they argued that all faculty members are to be blamed because every teacher has been given the opportunity to select/suggest a textbook in departmental meetings.

Lack of Student-Centered Instructional Practices and Lack of Feedback

The overwhelming majority of students interviewed demanded more active and interactive learning roles. Of the eight students who participated in the two focus groups, seven stated that teachers rarely create class activities in which students can interact with each other using the English language to communicate. Students claimed that teacher-centered instructional practices dominated most of their class time. Following are two quotations that depict the students' evaluation of the process of teaching:

> To be honest, most of the teachers spend the entire class time lecturing us. We are seated all the time, and they explain [things] to us while sitting at their desks. There is not any sort of interaction between teachers and us. We never get off our chairs. And we do not have any activity or game in which we can speak English in the classroom. (Riyad)

Another student said,

> Our biggest problem is that teachers never care to get us engaged in interactive class activities. They stay behind the teacher desk the entire class time. They spend most of the class time working on their computer. I feel like tasks given to us are only to keep us busy and pass time because they do not care [whether] we have finished the task . . . and never give [us] feedback. (Nawaf)

In addition to discovering students' concern about the dominance of teacher-centered instructional practices, I also learned that students hope to receive more feedback from teachers. In this regard, Ahmad said:

> I am really dissatisfied with the writing teacher. At the beginning of the semester, I used to work hard and do every assignment I [was] told to do. After I discovered that many teachers rarely give feedback, I stopped doing homework. Why would I do [homework assignments] when there is no feedback to learn from? [Ahmad stated this most emphatically.]

In the same vein, Feras commented: “It has already been five weeks in this semester, [and] my teacher has assigned five essays to write, but [he] never asked us to turn them in. There is no way I can benefit without feedback.” Commenting on Feras’s experience, Nader poignantly said, “We were never instructed to write essays, just regular fill-in-the-blank drills on the coursebook, yet my teacher gives collective feedback using the projector.” These results indicated that teachers need to address students’ concern about the lack of feedback.

Nonetheless, compared with their experiences in public schools, all students whom I interviewed still liked the ELT program for the fact that English was the medium of classroom communication, which is a feature that they lacked during their years of English learning in Saudi public schools. The study found students relatively happy with the quality of education they were receiving in college because the quality of teaching in the ELT program surpasses its counterpart in public schools. This view was well described in Turki’s words:

> Now that eight weeks have passed since the beginning of my first term in college, I assure you that the benefit that we have gained in this short time is equal to twice the benefit of what we have learned in the past six years of learning in previous stages [of schooling].

In fact, all students expressed the belief that their problems of low English proficiency arose because of the poor quality of education that they had received in English classes in Saudi public schools. Some of the ways students stated the difficulty they had in public schools were as follows:

> Our problem with English is rooted in public schools. English teachers in public schools were supposed to give us active learning roles to enable us to speak the English language. But, unfortunately, the medium of communication was Arabic, and teachers were lecturing all the time. I felt like there is [a] need to learn English, [but to the teachers], it [was] not important. (Fahad)

Another student noted,

> I never recall a time in which public-schools English teachers oriented us about the importance of the English language. I felt that I needed only to focus on scientific subjects, mathematics and chemistry, for example. English felt like a [less important] subject. I felt like English teachers' policy was "come to class, and do your homework; [it] does not matter if it is a verbatim copy of others' work, and you will surely pass." (Tariq)

To sum up, the majority of students (90%) expressed a strong demand for more interactive and student-centered instructional practices, as well as more feedback from teachers when expressing their evaluations of the process of teaching and learning in the ELT program. These criticisms could also be an indicator of a lack of teachers' lesson preparation. Nevertheless, all students liked the program for being better in teaching them English than the quality of English-language education that they had received in public schools.

In terms of the teachers' evaluations of the process of teaching and learning, the findings of this study revealed that teachers were mostly concerned about issues related to the program's overall duration and the amount of instruction time, the academic level of students, and the qualification of faculty members and administrators. On the one hand, three of the five teachers interviewed mentioned that 20 hours of weekly English learning were not sufficient for students to master the English language. One of these teachers described the lack of time this way:

> I think [that the] time is never enough for anyone, even probably for me to learn a language. . . . There should be general courses like X111 and X112. Then there should be a continuation of English language like ESP in the specialized courses. Not only one year, but there should be at least two years. I taught ESP courses, and all of them were there, and they were learning very seriously because now they understand the importance of English. (Mansour)

Another teacher reinforced the argument made by Mansour by saying, “Yes. That’s what should happen. Actually the time that students are taking to learn English is not enough. You can’t be a fluent native speaker after two semesters” (Omar). Mansour and Omar also supported Ali’s idea of increasing the instruction time from four to five hours of daily teaching; Imam stated, “Teaching should be 5 hours every day, 25 hours a week. That is the most important concern of mine. . . . And another thing, that there should be teaching 15 weeks, not 14.”

On the other hand, two teachers expressed a dissenting opinion regarding the amount of time, arguing that 20 hours of weekly English instruction is what most foreign-language-teaching programs follow around the globe. Faisal contended that students are already enrolled in an additional two-hour English for a specific purpose (ESP) course in their specialized departments and so there is no need “to increase the load of the students.” The dichotomy of teachers’ views about the amount and adequacy of time in the program becomes more interesting when compared with the findings gathered from the survey data. In fact, the survey data revealed that 62% of students (130 out of 208 students total) asserted that four hours of weekly English teaching is adequate to reach the targeted proficiency in the program, whereas 58% of teachers (7 out of 12 teachers total) asserted that the amount of time in the program is inadequate. Put differently, it is thought-provoking to realize that while more than half of the students believed that the program time is enough, more than half of the teachers believed otherwise.

The academic level of students appeared to be another major concern to four of the teachers who participated in the interviews. Mansour described the level of students upon their admission to the program as follows:

> Every university has fixed a certain standard for a certain course. For example, we have X111 in the university, and we expect a certain level of proficiency from the students. But when students join the college . . . , they don't understand. . . . They don't know A–Z. So, this is the big challenge. So, how to cope with the standard of the university is a big problem.

Other teachers corroborated the view of Mansour even more explicitly. Following are examples of the way some teachers expressed their concern about students' low levels of English proficiency:

> The difficult part is trying to solve the problem of the system. When the students somehow skip the system by any way and pass to a level they don't deserve, this is the most difficult challenge that you will face. . . . I'm teaching level two right now. Why do I have students who don't even speak English in a level-two English class? They shouldn't have passed level one. (Faisal)

Another teacher observed,

> The criticism we've been having [for] many years is "Why do the students not speak English?" I always say, "What teachers do you have to teach these students, and what qualifications do they have?" That's the first thing. . . . The second thing is, "What students are you taking in?" You know what I mean? You're taking the students that you have been given. You're not taking students that you can choose from. (Omar)

The previous teacher excerpts provided an illustration of the difficulty that teachers encounter in the process of teaching due to the students' low level of English proficiency and teacher competence, which occurs because of the nonexistence of admission standards that students must fulfill to join the program. Only one of the five teachers interviewed addressed the issue of the students' low proficiency of English in a different way by saying:

> I hate the fact that students are looked at as if they were all one particular type, without even knowing their potential because no assessment or needs analysis measures are in place. And this is what I dislike from what I sense either from the admin [administrators]. or the teachers. They feel as if all our students are the same. . . . When you get to the students and get to feel what they are suffering from, their hard times, things they're complaining of, when the students feel that, and they can feel it by the way, they can see who looks after them and who doesn't, who cares and who doesn't, when they get to see that, they respect you. And when they respect you, they're willing to do everything they won't do for other teachers. (Mohsen)

Mohsen believed that it was very imperative for teachers to walk the extra mile to get to know the potential of their students because students, he believed, have different reasons for joining the program, yet they all do want to be fluent in the English language. “You’d say that it’s their parents or that they have a choice or not. On the surface it looks the same, but when you push the students, you will find that students actually want to learn this language” (Mohsen).

In addition to highlighting the program duration or time and the student academic performance as major teacher concerns about the process of the teaching, three teachers cited the necessity of talking about the impact of the qualifications of some administrators and faculty members on the process of teaching. Omar spoke critically of a very fundamental issue that he argued could possibly lead to disastrous results for students in the ELT program.

> Saudi Arabia has a problem with employing people with experience. That’s what their problem is. So, [in] Saudi Arabia, they get someone in the position who is qualified on paper, but in terms of practical fortification, they don’t have this. So by the time that person has learned what to do, it’s time for him to move on. . . . You can’t just let anyone go in a classroom and then just stand on top of a camel or stand on top of an elephant and start to do circus tricks because it’s just going to be a disaster for the students. And this is what’s been happening. . . . We should have a TESOL that [would] teach the practical knowledge. All teachers should have this. (Omar)

To Omar, it is fundamental that whoever runs an English language teaching program must have credentials or experience in foreign language education. Omar argued that many problems in the process of teaching and learning are likely to arise when inexperienced administrators are in office. When discussing concerns about the process of teaching, Faisal also touched upon the issue of qualifications by saying that the program faces a problem that is administrative in nature. As Faisal explained,

> We still rely on underqualified people who come here just for the money. So they may have a contract, they don't feel secure, so they just work . . . so [that] their contract would be renewed. They're willing to satisfy and secure their contract by doing other administrative tasks that have nothing to do with the main criteria of their teaching contract.

Mohsen also touched on the qualification of teachers and administrators when he discussed the difficulty the program struggles against whenever teachers agitate for change. Mohsen commented:

> When we have ideas thrown at the head of department or at the individuals who want to create change, what happens is [that] when teachers are in these situations, they don't think through all the assumptions and all the possibilities so that they can plan. So when they start to implement, you know problems will occur. It's not an issue so much of decision-making, I think; it's to do with [the] qualification and cooperation of teachers.

Mohsen explained how he considered the qualification of teachers an obstacle to the application of the nonexistent placement test, which may negatively impact teacher performance inside classrooms. Mohsen explained, "When you have so many students joining, you do need to know, especially someone like me, I do need the placement test to know more about who is coming to my class so that I can motivate them."

The findings of this study indicated that most of teachers' concerns involved three issues: the program's duration or time, students' English competence, and the qualification of administrators and teachers. The majority of teachers spoke about the need to increase the program duration or time for success in remedying the students' low level of English proficiency. Also, three of the teachers expressed a concern about appointing inexperienced faculty and administrators in critical positions and believed that doing so did not serve the common good of the program.

"The Department and College Policy is Helpful"

Regarding participants' experiences with the impact of the ELT program policy on the process of teaching and learning, including selecting and implementing coursebooks, all teachers were very pleased with the individual autonomy to which they were entitled in expressing their professional knowledge and practicing their teaching obligations according to their beliefs. In fact, 91% of teachers revealed in the survey that they had the autonomy to select textbooks for their English courses. One teacher stated, "This is a university; this is an academy. And you find that we have committees, people [here] do lots of things. . . . This is a typical university. You'll find this going on in universities anywhere in the world" (Mohsen). Another teacher commented:

> In the beginning of the semester every year or at the end of the semester, we talk about our curriculum, our books, *Alhamdulilah* [praise be to god]. . . . So when we say, "Yes, this is the book we're going to teach," . . . we give out emphasis on the book, and we prepare ourselves to teach the curriculum. So that's not a problem. That's good. The department and college policy is helpful. (Mansour)

The findings of the study revealed that all teachers interviewed were delighted with the support and respect they received from the administration, as Faisal noted: "When it comes to [members of the] administration, they are very helpful in my experience, very helpful if they can do something. If it's in their hands, they will give it to you." I also found that cooperation and respect were two values that teachers embraced. All teachers appreciated the environment of the workplace. Following are some of the ways other teachers expressed their admiration for the mutual respect prevalent in the program:

> In terms of the interaction between the teachers and administration and the respect that's given to each other to make sure that everyone works together, I think that this is one of the best places that you could ever work in. That has been going for a . . . long time, and I know that there are worse places out there, to the extent that most people who leave Saudi Arabia, and *Al-Amal* [pseudonym] College in particular, and our department, they always want to come back. So there's some sort of magnetic force coming from the relationship between the teachers and administration. So this is really good. (Omar)

Another teacher said:

> When it comes to teacher and teacher, to be honest, . . . whenever I asked someone for help, they would provide it, whether it's a sort of activity, whether it's a way of teaching, whether it's a way of handling a certain situation in a class. (Ali)

These results suggest that all teachers appreciated the aid of policy and the support and respect they received from administrators and fellow teachers in carrying out their obligations in a constructive and supportive working environment.

What Understandings about the Process of Teaching and Learning Occur During Communicative and Collaborative Formative Evaluation (CCFE)?

This section addresses the study findings associated with the second question of this study. I endeavored in this study to reveal to the students and teachers each other's evaluations of the process of teaching and learning, hoping thereby to help the students and teachers share and reflect on their experiences within the process of teaching and learning. The actual process that I followed when conducting interviews involved relaying messages indirectly from teachers to students and vice versa, in what I call a communicative and collaborative formative evaluation (CCFE) process. These messages concerned the most contested issues that teachers and students have long desired to share.

I present the main findings that emerged during this CCFE process in two subsections (see below). I dedicate the first subsection to presenting the teachers' concerns about the students and the process of teaching in general, as well as to presenting understandings that emerged from the students' responses. The second subsection describes how teachers responded to the students' input and provides insight into understandings reached during this CCFE process.

Understandings Reached from Student Discussions of Teachers' Input

When exploring with the teachers their experiences of the process of teaching and learning, teachers concentrated heavily on aspects relevant to students' academic performance and attitude about learning. The CCFE process helped me construct an understanding of the three critical issues upon which all teachers seemed to agree. These critical issues dealt with the students' level of motivation, level of English proficiency, and commitment to learning.

"What is learning to you?" The majority of teachers appeared to be seeking answers from students about why they exhibited low levels of motivation and commitment to learning. Faisal, for example, took advantage of the CCFE process to share with the students his growing bewilderment concerning their concept of learning: "What is learning to you? Is it a teacher? Is it a book? Is it a combination of both? . . . Why do you bother coming here? If you deeply know that you don't want to be here?" Faisal wondered about the low levels of student motivation and commitment that he observed. Another way teachers felt about students' low levels of motivation and commitment was expressed by Mansour:

> The students . . . don't nurture any ambition for their life. If you ask any, "What are you going to be in your future?", they don't know. . . . My message for the students is [that] they have to be committed to the goal. They must do self-study at home because this skill, this habit, makes a person great. If they want to improve their proficiency, they have to keep up this activity. They go back home, and I think [that for] almost all of them, they don't open the book.

Ali also was unhappy with the amount of effort that students had made. "Students do not want to work. It happens everywhere. But . . . a little more here." He added, "So my advice . . . is to get motivated and do the work. Watch what the teacher is doing with you. Learn it in a nice way. It is not going to be easy, but it is doable." The accounts of teachers about students' attitudes towards learning suggested that teachers sensed that irresponsibility was prevalent among students.

"A big part of it is true." An interesting phenomenon occurred during the CCFE process when the teachers' observations of students' irresponsibility were communicated to students. Unexpectedly, all students interviewed agreed with the teachers about' students' low level of motivation and commitment to learning. In fact, students stated a number of factors that not only endorsed their teachers' observation but also explained some of the reasons behind the low levels of student motivation and commitment to work. Among the reasons were those uttered by Riyad, who commented on the teachers' message by saying,

> To be honest, a big part of it is true. I guess [that] this is because the importance of the English language was never communicated to us in public schools. Public school teachers treated English as a secondary subject. This explains why most of the students desire to get only a passing grade with [the] least effort possible. In my class, most of the students seem always in a hurry to finish the class and leave. Only a few work hard and desire to learn.

Fahad cited another reason for why students appeared to exhibit low levels of motivation and commitment to learning. Fahad said, "Some parents practice some sort of coercion on their kids to go to college. In lots of [cases], those students resist their families' pressure by giving up their learning duties." Nader, adding to the students' reasons, marked the absence of student month-to-month financial rewards in this program as a probable contributing factor to the low level of motivation that students had exhibited. In Nader's words, "Some students entered this college thinking [that] they'd get the monthly stipend that all other college students get at this university. When they discovered that no student monthly stipends are given in this program, their sense of self-worth decreased."

The CCFE process also documented that two of the students interviewed, while recognizing contributing factors cited above about the problem of low student motivation, also perceived teacher-centered instructional practices as a major factor that might have diminished student motivation. As one student said:

> In terms of motivation, I'd like to say that some teachers' way of teaching may unknowingly have negatively impacted their students' motivation. When you have a teacher who operates from behind his desk, never prepares any sort of interactive activity or cares to generate enthusiasm in the class, it is normal for students to be demotivated. Even good students would feel less motivated to participate. By way of contrast, when teachers move around students, come prepared with a set of enthusiastic and interactive activities, and encourage students to participate, you feel that [the entire] class is learning and alive! (Nawaf)

Fahad supported Nawaf's point: "I agree with Nawaf. I lose my interest in learning when I have teachers with such . . . practices."

The results presented in this subsection signified that the overwhelming majority of students concurred with their teachers' observation of the low levels of motivation and the lack of commitment to learning that students exhibited. Students actually cited, as mentioned in student quotations provided above, the impact of family, miscommunication about the importance of the English language in public schools, and the lack of financial incentives as three probable factors that decreased student motivation. A minority of students also believed that the prevalence of teacher-centered instructional practices in the ELT program might also have played a significant role in decreasing students' level of motivation and enthusiasm for learning.

Understandings Reached from Teacher Discussions of Students' Input

Students indicated in discussing their experiences in the process of teaching and learning that most of their contested issues centered on two key themes: the type of instructional practices prevalent in the ELT program and the amount of feedback that they received in the program. Students' accounts of the dominance of teacher-centered instructional practices and the lack of feedback and lesson preparation have already been discussed above under the first question in section 1 of this chapter, so this subsection only sheds light on understandings that emerged from the teacher discussions of their students' input.

"There's no time for that." When the students' complaints about the lack of feedback were brought to the teachers' attention, three of the five teachers interviewed mentioned the time factor. Those teachers found it difficult to satisfy students' desire for individual feedback for many reasons, most importantly due to a lack of time. As one teacher said, "The feedback for the students, they are really telling the truth. To some extent, some of the teachers might not be doing this because of a time problem" (Ali). Ali added,

> If I teach writing . . . , I will have enough time to give feedback, but [usually] I'm teaching reading and writing together in a 50-minute class. So, I give them reading in the classroom. I do not have time to give feedback to [all of] them. . . . But I give them feedback every time. . . . I give a general feedback. (Ali)

Another teacher also alluded to the notion that time is the biggest enemy of feedback and that teachers sometimes are obligated to give only general feedback because of the lack of time. Omar explained,

> I like to put their mistakes on the board so that I don't have to go and see each student and address their mistakes. There's no time for that. And, this is how we've been taught. In centers of TESOL, they teach you to expose students, so that the other students can benefit from this. . . . Maybe a student makes a mistake, and that student is a little bit more [of] an introvert. He's not that good with [other] students. And sometimes you sense this as a teacher, and you would deal with that, with them in a one-to-one [meeting].

Mohsen strongly disagreed with other teachers and argued that there was plenty of time for providing feedback when teachers prepare and plan well for their classrooms. As Mohsen said,

> The issue of time comes in when you don't plan your lessons. You see, when you say time is not enough, [not enough] for what exactly? Because some of the correction can be done by the students. They can be self-corrected. You can have different strategies for students' work. If they need me to check their work, I always have time out of the classrooms, on the phone, blackboard, email.

"I was expecting that." The CCFE process revealed an additional remarkable understanding regarding the students' concern about lack of feedback from teachers. Although the majority of the teachers interviewed highlighted the time factor as their potential barrier to providing individual feedback, Faisal took a different stance by arguing that students should be in charge of their learning and therefore need to formulate a self-correction strategy. The following is an excerpt from Faisal's interview transcript in which he commented on the lack of feedback.

> I was expecting that. Actually, I was talking with my students about the feedback and Washback and the difference between them a few classes ago before the exam because I was building my own teaching circuitry as a facilitator of learning. What I do is [that] after I give my students an exercise, I give them the answers. OK, and I tell them, "If you find that you made a mistake, ask me, 'Why [did I make] this mistake? What could I do? What's the correct answer?' But if everything was done well, this means that you're ready." And this [approach] is what I've been using lately: "You already meet the objective that is required."

Teachers revealed two dissenting views in their response to the students' concern about lack of feedback. While three teachers believed that a lack of time was a potential barrier to students' receiving the amount of individual feedback that they wanted, one teacher strongly refuted this view by arguing instead that it was a lack of teacher preparation that causes a lack of sufficient time for providing feedback to students. Another teacher asserted that it was the students' responsibility to self-correct their mistakes and therefore rely less on teacher feedback.

"Just tell me this; say something." The CCFE process elicited divergent teacher responses regarding students' dissatisfaction with the lack of teacher-devised interactive class activities, the students' second contested issue. Two of the five teachers interviewed in this study confessed that their instructional practices can be described as directive rather than interactive. Nevertheless, they all cited different reasons to justify their need to be directive in their teaching in this program. Faisal, for example, expressed his frustration with how his students' unwillingness to participate in classroom discussions forced him to use more teacher-centered teaching practices. Faisal commented,

> I wish [that] every student would say this [referring to students' complaint about lack of speaking opportunities]. Just 30 minutes ago, I gave students a discussion exercise. I looked at them, and they were quiet for five minutes. Everyone started doing it on his own. I told them [that they were] supposed to talk. No one talked, [so] I just skipped the exercise. . . . When it comes to real work with [those] students, you need to be more teacher-centered. . . . [because of students' reluctance to participate], I still have some aspect of the old teaching methods where it's mostly teacher-centered.

Faisal explicitly justified the directedness of his teaching practices by claiming that students do not help teachers devise student-centered learning activities. Ali also argued that students do not cooperate when it comes to speaking in front of peers. He justified teacher-centered teaching by saying,

> Most of the time, teachers speak, but in some of the classes, many of the classes, teachers ask them. Like me. We ask them, "You just tell me this. Say something; say one sentence; two sentences, three sentences; speak something." I ask them, "Come here, and speak before the class—two or three sentences." They refuse to participate.

Ali referred to the idea that devising an interactive learning activity is challenging due to the presence of a large number of students in each classroom. "I want to note that in English language classes, there should be how many students? There should be 14 to 20. [However,] we have 38 students in each class" (Ali).

“Why didn’t you organize it last year?” Three of the five teachers who participated in the CCFE process expressed opinions that differed from those noted above, as stated by Ali and Faisal, on the dominance of teacher-centered teaching practices. While Ali’s and Faisal’s responses concentrated on students’ reluctance to participate, the other three teachers disclosed critical details that called into question the responsibility of teachers and administrators. For instance, Omar asserted that it was some teachers’ attitude towards professional development workshops that contributed to the dominance of old-school teaching practices. He explained:

> This is one of the things with teachers, especially the ones from Asia. . . . This is one of the negative things about people with [a] Ph.D., unfortunately. . . . They feel [that] they’ve got everything already. So they are well-covered. They don’t need new knowledge, and that’s enough for them. So when you try to introduce something that’s new to them, they have a rebuttal for that, that it’s not necessary for them.

Omar was profoundly disappointed with the lack of professional development opportunities in the program and emphasized that the program administrators should “ensure that teachers have professional development all the way through. . . . Even if [only] once a year, but that shouldn’t be left in abeyance.” Mansour, like Omar, attributed the predominance of teacher-centered teaching practices to a possible teacher lack of required professional knowledge of the difference between effective learning versus effective teaching. As Mansour explained,

> There’s a very big difference between how to make teaching effective and how to make learning effective. Some teachers . . . might think that . . . they speak a lot in

> the classroom, so they are effective. They never think about how to make learning effective, how to motivate the learners, how to engage them, how to motivate them for self-learning. . . . Students should be the listened to in the classroom, and teachers should speak less and keep both apart to learn as we speak.

Mohsen was also displeased with the fact that students complain about the lack of interactive and active learning opportunities: "I cannot accept the fact that my students are sitting in these chairs and just receiving the information and . . . they're just passively learning the teacher's knowledge or whatever." Mohsen noted that the absence of a placement test made planning and implementing a student-centered learning class relatively difficult because classes have students with mixed abilities. This is a recurrent problem that Mohsen reported frequently to the administration. Mohsen said,

> One of the things I hated about this semester was [that] last semester, we agreed [that] we were going to have [a] placement test. . . . We shared it, and we approved it, we sent it to the university, [and] everything was done. . . . This year, for some reason we had more students, which is a good thing. But because we had more students, they said, "Let's not do the placement [exam] because it's difficult for the teachers." Well, why didn't they organize it last year? When I was putting pressure on them to organize it? . . . This is an issue [that] I've been trying to push as a department.

As noted above, two divergent teacher views emerged from teachers regarding students' concern about the lack of interactive class activities that occurred due to the dominance of teacher-centered instructional practices. The first group of teachers openly recognized the necessity to employ teacher-centered practices. Those teachers explained that the students' reluctance to participate in class discussions as well as the large number of students in each class were two key challenges that demanded the use of teacher-centered teaching practices. Different from the previous view was the view held by the second group of teachers, whose understanding tied the dominance of teacher-centered instructional practices to the responsibility of teachers and administrators, not the students' reluctance to participate in class discussions as well as the large number of students in each class. In the second group's view, teachers' lack of access to professional development resources and the failure to use a placement test in the program for students were regarded as major contributing factors to the dominance of teacher-centered English instruction.

What Self-Assessment Practices Do the Participants Develop as a Result of Communicative and Collaborative Formative Evaluation (CCFE)?

The main goal of conducting a dialogue between teachers and students was to help them, particularly teachers, reflect on their own experiences in the program because, as the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegård said, "Life can only be understood backwards" (as cited in Rounds, 2006). In the field of foreign-language education, it is natural for seasoned teachers to get attached to certain teaching practices. These long-held teaching practices make it possible for these practices to transform into enduring and deep-seated beliefs, especially if these practices proved effective for teachers in their own personal experience of learning a foreign language. This study sought to provide the teachers and students with an opportunity for them to reexamine their own long-held beliefs about teaching and learning. The teacher–student information exchange has already been presented above. This section demonstrates how the participants reacted to the CCFE process and outlines a few self-assessment practices that teachers and students suggested in the CCFE process. This section will start with a brief discussion of the students' suggestions about how their experiences in the program could be enhanced. A discussion of the teachers' final remarks about the CCFE process is also presented.

"The biggest problem I am facing is the fear and anxiety of speaking English in front of others. This problem [has been] aroused due to accumulations of my previous experiences in public schools" (Tariq). As evident in this quotation, this study found some students who were aware of and self-reflexive about their struggles with participating in classroom discussions. That students were aware of their own needs was a significant finding reached in the CCFE process. I found that this student awareness actually helped the students to identify the kind of assessment practices that were needed. In particular, two kinds of assessment practices were suggested by the students interviewed in this study. The majority of students demonstrated that the first kind is a responsibility of all teachers. Students hope that teachers can take into consideration the difficulty that students have experienced in their prior education. Students therefore wish that their teachers could be more understanding and tolerant of students' slow learning process.

> Public school teachers never have devised for us classroom discussions—neither in Arabic nor in English. Everyone is now feeling shy to participate because of this because it is hard for us to speak. I am not ashamed to say it. Most of us cannot speak. So, all I am asking is [that] I need our teachers to understand what we have been through. I do need them to tolerate us when we're struggling [while] trying to make simple sentences. (Fares)

I believe that the students' awareness of their deficiencies in English-language proficiency, as well as their desire to learn, are two factors that could provide the key to success if teachers prudently managed to use these two factors to help students develop a favorable mindset towards self-assessment. Students urged their teachers to help them locate online materials for self-learning that they could utilize in their spare time. One student said:

> I wish our teachers would help us with how to use our time out of school. I feel like sometimes I want to learn new stuff, like doing new grammar rules or writing simple sentences, but the problem is [that] I do not know how I can find these resources online. It would be helpful if teachers [could] guide us to where we [could] use some self-learning online websites . . . to assess and improve ourselves. (Tariq)

The second kind of student-suggested assessment practices identified in the CCFE process is a responsibility of students. All students interviewed acknowledged the fact that teachers cannot help unless students willingly cooperate and dedicate their best efforts to their learning process. Therefore, in their discussion in the focus group of the resources they could use to improve their English proficiency, the students highlighted a few learning strategies that had proved effective for some of them. Provided next are some of the practices that the students suggested in the focus groups for others to follow:

> Students need to put more effort but most importantly to establish their personal goals in advance. . . . We are the ones supposed to learn, not the teachers. Teachers have got only 50 minutes to [run a class] and cannot teach you everything. If you dedicate two hours of your daily routine to doing all your

> entertainment—hobbies, books, movies, or sports—in English, surely you'd improve your English! What is more important is commitment to goals. If you have no commitment to your goals or do not have goals at all, nothing will be achieved. (Ahmad)

Another student remarked,

> Teachers here are way better than [teachers in] public schools, and I [could not] agree more with them. Students still have a lot to do. . .. They need to work harder. Yes. Students can complain about why some teachers do not create adequate interaction opportunities, yet it is all on the students. You have to use the resources available to you on a daily basis. Regardless of what teachers should or should not do, put a plan [in place] to improve yourself, using your own resources. Surround yourself with English. Your readings, games, and everything you love doing should be set up to English. It is the only way to learn English. (Turki)

Whereas all students were enthusiastic about their participation in the CCFE process, teachers demonstrated a varying degree of excitement about their participation in the CCFE process. Teachers therefore exhibited varying receptivity to developing self-assessment practices. I sensed from some of the teachers' responses a tendency to defend themselves against the issues that the students had raised. Some teachers perceived some of the issues that students raised as a lack of student ability rather than an indicator of opportunity for improving teaching practices. I also felt that some teachers, regardless of all the explicit efforts I made to approach them informally, still conceived of me as some form of authority and therefore tended to justify their positions to me instead of taking advantage of the CCFE process to look for potential improvements. Nevertheless, all teachers had a deep appreciation for the CCFE process and provided valuable input that could be applied to the common good of the program, particularly to students.

Ali said that it was fundamentally important to maintain a routine of student–teacher dialogue under the supervision of the administration so that teachers succeed in fulfilling prospective students' needs. In this regard, Ali said:

> This was a very good dialogue. We talked about the feedback of the students, and this is a marvelous thing. . . . We must get feedback every time from these students. If they inform us, we will improve, and we will be up to their expectations, so this is a good thing. We can have a general meeting every time, and we can ask to feel free and give . . . feedback.

Another teacher said that participating in the CCFE process had been one of the best experiences he had ever had at the program. Omar commented,

> By the way, I'm happy for this because it would help me to develop my teaching. For all the years that I've been here, this is what I've always been looking for. What you're doing is what I've always been looking for, [yet] I've never found it. So, the fact that you've given me what I've really wanted as a teacher, I think that this is one of the best times I've ever had at *Al-Amal* [pseudonym] College. Because I needed to have some reflection, and I, sometimes, I mean, you want other teachers to see your teaching, but you know that they're going to come with some sort of baggage. But you didn't come into my classroom with baggage, and that's why I was happy that you came.

Omar seemed very grateful to the CCFE process, as the information exchange between the teachers and students provided him with holistic and meaningful feedback about his teaching effectiveness. Mohsen also expressed a profound gratitude for the teacher–student dialogue. Learning about other teachers' private universes (how teachers involved in the CCFE process responded to the students' feedback) provided Mohsen with a cross-cultural understanding that would help him appreciate how every teacher tends to live in his private universe and therefore has a tendency to do things differently. As illustrated in Mohsen's words, this reflective experience brought him an understanding that he could use to improve the program:

> Talking with you and learning from this experience is a very valuable way for me to learn because what it means is like, when you talk about this private universe, you have given me another way of seeing things. . . . It has given me something to think about. I can go check this out. Maybe this is a reason why people have done this or that, and I can maybe say, "Oh, wait a minute! Hey, guys: Have you guys seen these?" And try and see if we can double up something in the college to improve.

Aside from how teachers felt about their participation in the CCFE process, a minority of the teachers interviewed suggested that providing professional development resources in the form of teacher-coordinated seminars was essential to alleviate students' concerns. Faisal revealed that he benefited greatly from attending seminars about the teaching of writing in English presented last year by his colleagues. He also maintained that these seminars could be a very effective form of assessment.

> You know last term, we used to do seminars. Many of the topics that the students raised have already been discussed in these seminars by the teachers themselves in papers they've done by themselves. Dr. X was actually talking about writing. I think it was context writing. . . . So I relied on him to fix my issues in terms of teaching reading and writing. I know that there are other methods to [use], but I think it's time to try to apply these again. I mean we need demos. . . . I actually talked with Dr. X, asking him to start demos again. (Faisal)

Omar, a proponent of professional development workshops for teachers, demanded an increase in teachers' exposure to professional development opportunities. Omar also believed that it is dangerous for students when teachers live inside their private universe, thinking that their knowledge has already reached its full potential. When teachers live inside their own private universe, they rarely aspire to master cutting-edge approaches that they could use to assess and improve their teaching practices.

> From certain cultures, to be seen as having . . .weakness in the classroom is . . . an incapability. But it's not incapability. You just have to develop a little bit more for the interest of the students. So you are in the private universe, and you never come out of it because everybody always says that you're good, or you always think that you're good. And you never come out of that private universe. And this is a danger for the students. . . . If you just leave the teachers as they are, to do what they want by themselves, they will never come out of where they are. They're not going to move on, because they've always believed "What I'm doing is right, and I'm a good teacher."

Omar, whose opinion is consistent with Faisal's encouragement for "demos," encouraged the administration to drive momentum among teachers so that they could exchange their views periodically on how emerging teaching challenges in the program should be confronted to better address students' needs.

This study encouraged program participants to challenge their long-held practices towards teaching and learning. This section in particular was devoted to examining whether the program participants would develop greater self-awareness of the importance of embracing ongoing self-assessment of their teaching practices. Both students and teachers had a deep appreciation for participating in the CCFE process and exhibited a great deal of awareness of the necessity of embracing self-assessment. On the one hand, students identified two kinds of assessment practices that they desperately need to reach their targeted English proficiency. Students think that there are two kinds of self-assessment practices that need to be nurtured in this program. The first kind of assessment practices falls on the shoulders of teachers, while the second kind is an acknowledgment of the potential of students to use self-teaching resources and to make a strong commitment to self-established personal goals. On the other hand, the majority of teachers acknowledged the potential of retaining a student-teacher dialogue in the program. Such dialogue, teachers believed, could bring about an evolving understanding of the students' changing needs and could provide teachers with resourceful and thoughtful methods to self-assess their teaching practices. Highlighted in the discussion by teachers was also the teachers' acknowledgment of the need for teacher professional-development seminars, either those held in the program or those coordinated by larger institutional programs, as a valuable resource to self-assessment practices.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this case study was to examine through the collaborative perspectives of teachers and students a college-level English-language teaching (ELT) program in a Saudi university. The research was undertaken with a group of teachers and students who explored their experiences of teaching and learning the English language in that setting. English proficiency is fundamental for college students' success. In fact, students' success in Saudi colleges, in which the medium of instruction shifts from Arabic to English, heavily relies on students' English proficiency attained after the preparatory two-semester ELT college program. For these reasons, students' experiences and perspectives are crucial in evaluating the effectiveness of the English teaching practices and materials implemented in the preparatory ELT program.

The students and teachers in the program are its major participants. Through exploring the experiences of the students and teachers in the ELT program, this study sought to obtain multiple well-informed perspectives about the effectiveness of current teaching practices, teaching materials, and the program policy that governs its implementation. Driven by a formative evaluation theory, this study built an emerging understanding from multiple perspectives about the views of teachers and students on the ELT practices and used them to engage the teachers and students in a reflective process about their experiences to promote a formative assessment of their English-language teaching and learning practices. An additional hope was that participating teachers would draw from newly developed insights to enhance the ELT program practices for current and future students to better achieve program goals.

Analysis and Synthesis of the Findings

This study drew on a formative evaluation theory to obtain deep understandings about the teachers' and students' experiences of the teaching and learning process in the hope that such understandings could ultimately produce new insights about how to spur teacher-initiated improvements. This evaluation study used naturalistic data-collection methods to collect qualitative data by conducting two in-depth interviews with each of the five teachers after six classes had been observed, as well as by collecting the experiences of eight students through the use of two focus-group discussions.

The questions used to facilitate the semi-structured teacher interviews and student focus groups were based on data collected through the surveys returned by 12 teachers and 208 students. I first analyzed the survey data to develop a general view of the participants on two major aspects of the process of teaching and learning English: coursework and teaching practices. The effectiveness of these two aspects is often what is examined first in any ELT program evaluation study. The qualitative data were first coded in relation to each of the three research questions. This yielded three main categories. Several subcategories elaborated on the identified themes to address the research questions:

- What are the participants' evaluations of the effectiveness of teaching and learning materials, instructional materials, and policy that affect the implementation of the English-language teaching (ELT) program?
    - What understandings on the process of teaching and learning occur during communicative and collaborative formative evaluation (CCFE)?

- What self-assessment practices do the participants develop as a result of communicative and collaborative formative evaluation (CCFE)?

As a secondary level of the analysis, I searched for patterns within each category and between the various categories to compare and contrast and to produce more credible interpretations of the data gained in this study. In a third level of analysis, emerging categories were compared and contrasted with issues that had been raised in the existing body of literature on ELT program evaluation in Saudi higher education. That analysis was undertaken to identify both consistent themes and inconsistencies.

The previous chapter presented the findings of each question by organizing them into several main themes. The purpose of this chapter is to provide interpretations of and insights into the findings of this study. The goal is to produce a more fully integrated picture of how the students and teachers have experienced the effectiveness of the program's instructional materials, the process of teaching and learning English, and program policy. The synthesis that emerged in this chapter resulted from analyzing and interpreting the findings presented thematically in the findings chapter.

To present a more synthetic discussion of the overriding findings in this study, this chapter used three analytic categories that emerged from reexamining the findings delineated in the previous chapter. The first two analytic categories of this chapter present my interpretations of the findings of this study, highlighting where possible intersections with related literature—revealing consistencies and inconsistencies. The third analytic category generated suggestions, implications, and insights into potential needed improvements in the program, as seen by the participants themselves. This chapter concludes with my final thoughts on the process of implementing the CCFE approach in this study. This lays a foundation for my personal evaluation of the effectiveness and feasibility of implementing the CCFE approach in a Saudi higher education program or elsewhere.

Analytic Category 1: Recognizing the Gap in the Program

This study sought to determine how the participants evaluated the program based on their own experience. In particular, this study addressed participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of current teaching materials, the process of teaching and learning, and the policy that affects the implementation of these two aspects. A key finding that this study documented was that almost all participating teachers and students were displeased for numerous reasons with the textbook implemented in the ELT program. Paramount among the reasons cited were that the book was outdated and its content was neither interesting nor challenging. Furthermore, it was unsuitable for the academic level of many students, at least from their perspective. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, this dissatisfaction was reflected quite often in many of the participants' views about the effectiveness of teaching materials.

The fact that the students and teachers expressed a sense of dissatisfaction with the book in use was to some extent something that I expected to encounter, being a former teacher in the program in question. In fact, finding out about how outdated and unsuitable the teaching materials were was consistent with results found in many evaluation studies conducted in ELT Saudi higher-education programs (e.g., Abughararah, 1989; Alhawsawi, 2004; Alshabbi, 1985; Altwaijri, 1982; Barnawi, 2011; & Saggaf, 1981). The results of these studies indicated that the dissatisfaction with textbooks implemented in Saudi ELT programs was often the result of a combination of many interrelated factors: (1) the bureaucratic design and structure of higher-education policy in Saudi ELT programs, (2) contradictions in programs' vision and mission, and (3) the absence of needs analysis. These factors were argued to be responsible for adverse decisions on textbook selection in many Saudi ELT higher-education programs. This resulted ultimately in a recurring problem of dissatisfaction with textbooks in use. In the current study, nonetheless, only one of these factors—the absence of needs analysis—was found to have contributed to the spread of dissatisfaction with the textbook in use.

In terms of the influence of the bureaucratic structure on the Saudi higher education ELT programs, Shah, Hussain, and Nassef (2013) found that the constraints imposed by the Saudi Ministry of Education (MOE) on what to teach or even how to teach within the structure of Saudi higher-education ELT programs have negatively impacted the process of textbook selection, provoking widespread discontentment. In the current study, on the contrary, all the participating teachers, surprisingly, were content with the degree of autonomy granted for them to practice their professional obligations in the program, including the selection of teaching materials. All the participating teachers have acknowledged that the program policy did not constrain or limit their autonomy. In fact, the participating teachers endorsed the supporting role that the program policy and administration played in making a wonderful and encouraging working environment and agreed that the respective program's vision is aligned with its mission.

These findings seemed inconsistent with the factors previously found to have been responsible for causing dissatisfaction with the textbook used in Saudi ELT programs, as revealed by the ELT program evaluation studies in Saudi universities reviewed for this study. Interestingly, however, despite the finding that the participating teachers of this study did not face undue bureaucratic pressure while carrying out their professional duties, including the selection of teaching materials, the teachers of this program had still retained the Interchange Series for more than a decade as the main textbook to teach. They believed that it was the right textbook year after year for their new students. The widespread dissatisfaction with the implemented textbook (Interchange Series) held by the students in this program can be explained through examining slightly different factors from those discussed previously in the literature review.

It appeared that the widespread dissatisfaction with textbooks among the participants in the program studied could be attributed to three interrelated factors: (1) the dominant teachers' view of their students' English proficiency and the absence of needs analyses and placement tests, (2) teacher discrimination, and (3) the lack of organization and cooperation resources. Of these factors, the absence of needs analysis and placement tests in the program was consistent with the literature on evaluation studies of Saudi ELT programs, while teacher discrimination and the dominant teacher view of their students' level of English proficiency are contributing factors that seemed to have played a role in spreading textbook dissatisfaction in this particular program.

Dominant Teacher View and Absence of Needs Analysis

The dominant teachers' view of students' level of English proficiency, I argue, was one of the key factors that led to student discontentment with the textbook used in the ELT program. In the findings chapter, I gathered compelling evidence that reflected the teachers' general view of students' level of English proficiency upon admission to the program. A clear representative example of the teachers' prevailing view is demonstrated in Mansour's words: "When students join the college, . . . they don't understand. . . . They don't know A–Z." With such a negative teacher view of students' English proficiency, it was foreseeable that teachers would mainly decide that relying on a beginner-lever English textbook would suit their view of students' limited English proficiency.

However, the teachers' view of students' level of English proficiency might have been only partially accurate, for it was not based on any rigorous measures. First, teachers' view of students' low level of English proficiency was not representative of all students because some students did find the content of the textbook insufficiently challenging, given their current level of English competency. Feras, for example, said, "The college is doing well in math and technology classes. But, at the English language level, the content of the book in level one is not adding anything new to my knowledge. I deserve to be in level four." Second, some teachers admitted that the students' level of English has been improving every year, as is evident in the following example:

> The students of last semester were better than the one before it. We see them improving. . . . And their knowledge about English when they come here is totally different. I believe like two years from now, we need to change the objectives from beginner to medium to advanced English because the students are changing. (Faisal)

Therefore, it was not ideal to impose one textbook on all students, insisting upon the assumption that the level of English proficiency of every academic-year student would be low. Teachers' decision to retain the *Interchang*e textbook arguably remained heavily influenced by their preconceived view that students' mediocre level of English proficiency does not permit teachers to change the textbook in use. The teachers' conception of students' level of English has impacted the textbook-selection decisions for years in the program, and as a result, generated widespread student dissatisfaction with that textbook. In fact, the participating teachers have explicitly articulated that retaining the textbook all these years was a matter of convenience for them based mainly on what they think students were capable of doing. A supporting piece of evidence of this interpretation was found in Omar's words:

> I think having the third edition is a change. It's ... very convenient because we have knowledge of the book itself, and the book is prepared in such a way that you don't have to go outside too much to adventure. So, I think teachers have become complacent with this, that they don't provide anything external. . . . What's been happening now, and I'm being truthful in saying this, is that the *Interchange* book is that we have gone to the standards of the students. This is what the students can do. These are the books that the teachers can use. These are the books that the teachers are comfortable with and they're happy with. This is what's going to work and get things going, and we did it. And that was it.

Another teacher said, "We like this the *Interchange* textbook because of one thing: that it is available; in the first week it is available." The textbook arguably was retained to serve the interests of teachers rather than to suit the students' level of English proficiency. This interpretation gained more validity when I discovered that the conduct of placement tests and needs analysis were not emphasized in the program, as evident in the quotation provided below.

> When I'm with the classroom the first day, I find that none of my students are placed correctly in my class because no placement tests were conducted at the beginning of the semester. I have mixed-ability students, and sometimes it's hard for [all of] the students to be on the same level. Some of them might be able to read well. Some of them might not be able to read well. Some of them can speak really well, but then they can't read well. . . . This is an issue [that] I've been trying to push as a Department. Do the placement. Do a regular simple analysis of students' needs. (Mohsen)

The second factor that compounded the problem of textbook dissatisfaction was the absence of scientific measures for assessing students' proficiency in English, without which it was difficult for teachers to accurately determine each student's level of proficiency and accordingly plan the teaching process on a scientific basis. Richards (2001) argued that needs analysis plays a fundamental role in the success of any educational program. Indeed, without a meaningful understanding of learners' needs and English proficiency levels, it is difficult for foreign-language teachers to select or devise the appropriate teaching materials to meet the expectations and needs of learners. In the current study, in light of the absence of continuous needs analysis and placement tests, which are fundamental for sorting out students' levels and identifying necessary and effective teaching materials, it can be inferred that the program teachers' decisions to continuously retain the Interchange was solely based on their preconceived view of students' proficiency level in English being low.

It could also be inferred that the absence of needs analysis and placement tests was arguably the second contributing factor to the widespread textbook discontent that students felt. The program teachers did not seem to utilize any sort of scientific measures to sort out the students' levels of proficiency or to identify their learning needs when voting to retain the *Interchange* all these years. As an inevitable result, the overwhelming majority of students who participated in the current study were displeased with the textbook in many ways, as documented in the previous chapter. It is interesting to note that this interpretation was in line with many of the ELT program evaluations reviewed in chapter 1, which showed the absence of needs analysis and placement tests to have often aroused a dissatisfaction with textbooks implemented.

I was surprised to find that some teachers demonstrated a sense of dissatisfaction with the textbook that they have chosen year after year to retain for more than a decade. The next subsection presents an interpretive insight into this matter and compares this finding with the literature on ELT evaluation in Saudi higher-education programs.

Teacher Discrimination and Lack of Definite Criteria

In addition to the absence of scientific measures and the dominant negative teacher view of students' level of English proficiency, other factors spread dissatisfaction. These factors were discrimination against some teachers and a lack of definite criteria in the program. Both factors spread dissatisfaction with the Interchange textbook. For example, most of the participating teachers were displeased with the content of the textbook due to its being outdated and some thought it is culturally offensive and marginalizing to Muslims and Arabs. They showed a long-held interest in changing or at least updating the Interchange series implemented in the ELT program. Nonetheless, I found that the participating teachers never spoke out about their concerns about the textbook in the department meetings. Not until this study was conducted did the teachers overcome their hesitancy to share their concerns about the textbook. Upon close cross-analysis of the established categories, it appeared that some teachers refrained from sharing their concerns about the textbook, believing that only a few teachers were privileged to be listened to and were entitled to make critical decisions or occupy leading positions in the program. The administration perhaps unintentionally discriminated against some teachers' views to the extent that some teachers refrained from sharing their long-held concerns about the need to change the Interchange textbook:

> I feel that whatever I say is not going to be accepted because I mentioned some crucial things, and I saw them just being wiped over. And I saw other people who were saying a lot of other things that had no relevance, and they were listened to. . . . They don't see me as a contributor, for whatever reason. I don't believe that I'm a contributor now. Especially with the new head of the department because he's made his decision about whom he needs to take things from, and I don't know what's that based on, but there's some confirmation biases that I can see. I think I've got enough experience, and I think I'm giving the students as much as I possibly can give them, and the good thing that I like about what I'm doing now is that the students are giving me a positive response. (Omar)

Omar explained how he is now experienced enough to focus on only dedicating his best to students after he felt that the administration no longer valued his contributions as much as those of his colleagues.

Feelings of being discriminated against that Omar expressed appeared in Ali's interview too. Ali spoke of the lack of definitive criteria on how teachers are rewarded for their efforts in the program or appointed for leading positions, which generated some resentment held by teachers. Ali said:

> I have a PhD. I did it in …, but I'm not on the curriculum committee. Sometimes it happens [referring to discrimination]. Then I feel like a person who is just a bachelor is on the committee, and he's guiding, directing. This, this happens, but I do, I personally, me, I don't mind this. But people mind, and they talk. . . . We can fairly say that they don't have certain definite criteria for who is included or excluded from these committees.

Some teachers felt discriminated against, and clearly, many believed that no definite criteria existed as to how the program curriculum committee members are appointed or rewarded. These factors discouraged some teachers and prevented some of them from sharing their concerns about the textbook. I argue below that the existence of perhaps unintentional discrimination between teachers and the paucity of definite criteria in the program contributed to the widespread dissatisfaction with the textbook. Its continuous selection and use might have prevented teachers from articulating their long-held concerns about the textbook in the program's annual meetings. However, it is important to note that the perceived discrimination experienced by the teachers may to a great extent be unintentional, given the fact that all the participating teachers valued efforts made by the administration to make the program's working environment one of the best that teachers could ever experience. This is reflected in the teachers' quotations presented in the findings chapter.

The Lack of Organization and Commitment to Improvement in the Program

Another factor that deepened the problem of textbook dissatisfaction was the lack of organization in the program. This study has revealed that the majority of the participating teachers acknowledged that there was a lack of foresight in terms of advanced planning for textbook change. One teacher commented on why the textbook has not been changed or updated by saying, “Honestly, nobody’s there to take responsibility for this, number one. Number two, lack of organization across so many years. We unfortunately seem to be neglecting the importance of discussing the necessity of changing the book every year” (Ali). Teachers apparently did not place a high priority on discussing the updating of teaching materials, especially given their belief in the students’ low level of English proficiency. Another teacher said in this vein:

> In the last meeting, we talked about the books, but it wasn’t a heavily discussed topic. But teachers said, “Okay, we will use the *Interchange* for now, and next year we will think about this issue.” And he [the head of the department] said, “Why you don’t change to the updated one?” Some of the teachers there said, “Because the new one is not available yet. It’s hard to get it.” (Faisal)

Postponing discussions about a widely disliked textbook was a surprising finding, especially given that most of the teachers who participated in this study had long-held concerns about that textbook. The teachers delayed discussing the need to update the textbook they selected more than ten years ago because it was hard to obtain the new version of the textbook. This indicated a lack of organization and a lack of commitment to improvement. It was difficult to understand why the teachers delayed discussing such a fundamental topic, although they have shown a great deal of dissatisfaction towards the textbook. Perhaps it was the discrimination that some teachers experienced in the program that inhibited the teachers from sharing their critical observations on the textbook.

Analytic Category 2: Analyzing Understandings Revealed in CCFE Process

This study also was designed to engage the participating teachers and students in an indirect Communicative Collective Formative Evaluation (CCFE) process of teacher-student dialogue in which they could evaluate and reflect on their experiences regarding the process of teaching and learning. The goal of initiating the CCFE process was to provide a reflection opportunity for the participants in which to exchange formative suggestions and address concerns. Key understandings emerged from having the participants share with each other their most troubling concerns through relying on their experiential knowledge from within the program.

The study found that the students were mainly concerned about the predominance of teacher-centered class activities that decreased student opportunities to practice English inside classrooms. The students also requested more feedback from their teachers. On the other hand, the teachers cited the students' low levels of English proficiency, lack of time, and teacher professional resources, as well as insufficiently qualified staff, as potential barriers to addressing student concerns. In the following sections, I intend to present an interpretive insight into these findings, comparing them when possible with my interpretations of the literature on ELT evaluation studies in Saudi universities.

Teacher-Centered Instruction

The fact that the participating students in this study were dissatisfied with the predominance of teacher-centered instruction in the program was a finding consistent with the results revealed by Abughararah (1989), Abu-Rizaizah (2010), Al Obaid (2016), Alhawsawi (2004), Alshabbi (1985) Altwaijri (1982), Barnawi (2011), and Saggaf (1981). These studies found that the grammar translation method (GTM), in which the instruction of grammar is at the center of teaching English, dominated the Saudi ELT college-level programs that they studied. Unfortunately, the GTM was also the predominant teaching method in this program. Out of the six teachers whom I observed in this study, four tended to focus on only providing explanations of newly introduced grammar rules. Those teachers switched between Arabic and English when explaining grammatical rules to students. They concentrated heavily on reading and writing skills, with almost no attention paid to speaking or listening. Student-student interaction and group discussions rarely occurred inside classrooms. While observing teachers, I also noticed that these four teachers defaulted to the lecturing mode throughout most of the class time. Students' participation was controlled and occurred only when the teachers sought an answer to a key question that was imperative to keep the flow of their grammar-based explanations. Students, as a result, remained passively attentive to their teachers' explanations of grammar, and therefore, their chance of using English as a communicative means was severely diminished.

The teachers actually cited the low level of students' English proficiency, large class sizes, and lack of time, as potential factors to justify why they needed to depend heavily on lecturing most of the class time rather than facilitating student-led learning.

Taking the teachers' explanations into account, teachers actually argued about the influence that the English proficiency level of students and the amount of class time had on the effectiveness of their teaching process. Nonetheless, I believe that the teachers still could have used available resources and utilized students' funds of knowledge to make learning more meaningful, interactive, and student-centered. Within the same program, I observed two teachers who managed to maximize their students' time of using English inside classrooms by designing student-led activities and using group discussions. Those teachers, needless to say, had the same students and operated within the same program's timeframes and circumstances, yet their concerted efforts to make their English classrooms more engaging, interactive, meaningful, and encouraging for students to participate were deeply appreciated by the focus-group students, who praised those teachers by name. Even in the case of large class sizes—the average number of students was 25, those teachers did not turn to a lecturing mode. They still overcame the large-class challenge effectively by leveraging the power of group work. One teacher explained how he confronted the challenge keeping every student engaged in a large class by saying:

> What I usually do . . . to address this issue, I get the good students to work with the low students in groups and help me as teacher assistants. Right, so that the low students can benefit from them. But at the same time, it is a little more push to good students, too, so that they feel a little bit more encouraged. (Omar)

It is my belief that there is always some sort of strategy that teachers could have used to face challenges confronted in English-language classrooms.

A probable contributor to the dominance of the teacher-centered English instruction in the program was the lack of teacher participation in professional development resources that stress the importance of implementing a student-initiated learning process. In fact, this interpretation aligned with the standpoint of three (Omar, Mansour, and Mohsen) of the five teachers who participated in the interviews. Those three teachers stated that the high academic? qualifications of some teachers and their attitudes towards professional development workshops might have been deterrents to their aspiring to continually acquire cutting-edge Communicative Teaching Methods (CTM) for teaching a foreign language. In the following excerpt, Mohsen, for instance, expressed very powerful support for the view that the teachers' high qualifications and attitudes towards continuous professional development might fundamentally have exacerbated the problem of teacher-centered instruction.

> I think that what you have is [that] a lot of teachers who are highly qualified . . . teach students who are really like sidelined. You have a situation where something needs to change. And for that to happen, the teachers need to be humble and say to themselves, "Wait a minute. What do I need to learn . . . to teach that person?" Because a lot of the time, what is happening is [that] the teachers feel, "I already know this. I already know this stuff. I don't need to know it. It's the student's fault, it's the student's fault." . . . The teachers have conflicts, which are linked to how they feel. Because of their academic/teaching qualifications, they feel they do not need to climb down and come to the level of the student and say, "Hey. Wait a minute. How can I really help the students, so that the student actually learns?" (Mohsen)

This situation can be interpreted as teachers inhabited a private universe, teachers who then centered students' learning of English around the teacher's own knowledge, thinking that they somehow were the source of knowledge. In fact, the teaching of the English language in Saudi Arabia was shown to be influenced by the Islamic teacher-centered teaching approach that largely characterizes knowledge transmission in Saudi Arabia (al-Seghayer, 2017). Therefore, challenging the authority and knowledge of teachers is unadvisable in the realm of education in Saudi Arabia. Having said that, it was unsurprising to find out that a teacher-centered model instruction dominated the teachers' instructional practices in the program, that while traditional, participant students deemed as ineffective in supporting the development of their language skills in English.

As this program was immersed in a culture that characterizes teachers as the source of knowledge, it is my belief that teachers would find it easier to blame students for having to rely on a teacher-centered instruction rather than admitting the need to continue the search for professional development sessions on the importance of student-led learning. Perhaps if the goal is to support the language development of the students some renovations in instruction would be pertinent to take place. However, this renovation cannot be imposed given the cultural history of instructional practices in Saudi Arabia. Thus, not surprisingly some of teachers might have considered the students' feedback that they received in the CCFE process as a way of calling out their teaching preparation. In fact Omar, one of the interviewed teachers , had a powerful comment on how some of the program teacher might have felt when they were being criticized.

> From certain cultures, to be seen as having . . . weakness in the classroom is a weakness from your side, or as incompetence. But it's not incompetence. You just

> have to develop a little bit more for the interest of the students. So you are in the private universe, and you never come out of it because everybody always says that you're good, or you always think that you're good. And you never come out of that private universe. And this is a danger for the students. (Omar)

To save face, I suspect, it was easier for teachers to cite the students' level of English proficiency and lack of time as preventive factors to adopting a student-centered learning process, rather than considering that it could be their unconscious perception of themselves as the source of knowledge that really prevented them from trying a new teaching method that prioritized students' interests. The dilemma presented here deals with a historical culture of instruction that within the context of teaching a second language that is needed, demanded and still not a language accessible within the regular cultural context of the students, then these demand for new instructional methodologies and a culture of instruction that maximize students' exposure to and use of the target language.

Inexperienced Administration

A possible explanation as to why teachers occasionally aspired to continue learning about their students' desires for communicative-based English instruction was that the program was often managed by faculty members inexperienced in terms of foreign language education. Most of the department heads were appointed from other faculties because the department did not have adequately qualified Saudi faculty members who met the required standards to occupy the position of a department head. Without the professional knowledge of the process of teaching and learning of foreign languages, it was highly possible for administrators to make misinformed decisions regarding how teaching and learning should occur, the best curriculum needed for students, and resources required for teachers or students. One of the participating teachers explained that it was one of his major concerns about the program that the majority of the previously appointed department heads lacked the actual practical knowledge and skills required to run the ELT program.

> Saudi Arabia has a problem with employing people with experience. That's what their problem is. To run an English-language department without an English-language background, it means you have to learn a lot. You have to learn a lot [about] how to deal with the skills of individual people: interpersonal skills, the skills of understanding what it takes for students to learn, how we can teach the [English] language, how the teacher's supposed to pass on the knowledge, and how to run a department. It's just so many different things. . . . When someone becomes the head of the department, he has to learn what to do as the head of the department. So there is just so much to learn, and by the time he learns everything he needs to learn about being the head of the department, he's already moved on to another department. (Omar)

In the current study, as evident in Omar's words quoted above, administrators failed to provide support to teachers that seemed adequate to them. Perhaps because the previously appointed department heads lacked the actual expertise needed to run the ELT program, they failed to encourage teachers to update their knowledge on the importance of embracing a student-centered learning practice.

The teachers might have looked so highly qualified to the administrators that asking the teachers to join professional development workshops seemed like an unjustifiable request. Al-Hazmi (2003) stated that within the English teaching profession within Saudi Arabia, high qualifications were viewed as a way for teachers to produce unchallengeable authority in their workplace. Perhaps the teachers never felt that they needed to sign up for workshops on the importance of student-led learning because their superiors never encouraged them to do so, especially when the latter lacked the professional knowledge in the field of foreign-language education that was needed to challenge the teachers' authority.

Analytic Category 3: Bridging the Gap in the Program

The purpose of this section is to discuss suggestions and insights into where improvements, as seen by the participants themselves, needed to occur in the program. Most of these suggestions originated from the indirect dialogue between teachers and students in the CCFE process. These suggestions covered concerns cited about the main aspects that this study sought to evaluate by depending on the experiential knowledge of teachers and students in the program. The first subsection reviews thoughtful suggestions related to the problem of dissatisfaction with the textbook, whereas the second subsection explores ideas about the serious difficulties confronted by the participants in the process of teaching and learning.

Teaching Materials

The absence of needs analysis was a persistent factor that fundamentally affected the effectiveness of the teaching materials, not only in this specific ELT program but also in most higher education programs in Saudi Arabia, as evident in the literature reviewed for this study. To terminate the effect of this quality-destroying factor, it is vital that decisions related to the selection and development of teaching materials in ELT programs need to be planned and implemented in accordance with empirical evidence for best practices. As found in this study, when the students' needs were neither analyzed nor considered, the students showed a great deal of dissatisfaction towards the textbook and predominant instructional practices.

According to student comments in this study, the textbook in the program resembled what students studied in public schools' ELT textbooks. Therefore, the students lost their motivation for learning when they found that their needs for interesting knowledge were not met by the textbook provided in the program. Richards (2001) argues that it is fundamental for the success of the students in foreign language learning that decisions regarding what to teach or how to teach in the program are always informed and guided by the students' actual needs through carefully conducted placement tests that accurately assess their level of proficiency and their developmental needs. In addition, all teachers admitted that it is essential to contextualize the content of teaching materials around the real needs of students so that the content matches students' real-life experiences. The following quotation reflected the opinion of teachers in this regard:

> If you're going to teach a book, then this is my observation: You should conduct a survey [of] the students. For example, there had been students [who had] been studying this book [referring to alumni who studied the *interchange* textbook] for years. So, what is their observation? Is this book fit for them? Are they able to understand [it]? [Does] this book conform to their standards? They should conduct a survey, taking observations from the students, and from the teachers, as well. So, if we combine [these observations], then we can better decide about the

book, whether this book should be introduced in the classroom or this should be changed. (Mansour)

Every textbook proves to be an excellent teaching resource when its selection is based on the results of a needs-analysis procedure and is contextualized around the students' lives. It is essential that students can make connections between what they study in these materials and their real-life experiences. Students could easily lack the motivation to learn when teachers solely focus on getting the lesson across without consciously attempting to connect learning to students' real-life situations (Relojo, 2017).

Loss of motivation was found in the current study. Some students lost their motivation to learn when the textbook's topics were repetitive and irrelevant to their lives. The following quotation is a reminder of how students felt due to their perception of the textbook's contents as outdated: "It's really hard to follow and pay attention to teachers because the topics we talk about in the textbook rarely presented something I do not know. It is always a repetition of what I already studied in middle school" (Riyadh). It is crucial to the success of the program that the program teachers periodically conduct a needs-analysis procedure to ensure that the selected teaching materials indeed reflect and suit the students' needs.

Teachers also cited the lack of resources (such as money and access to professional development workshops) as a potential barrier in the program. One teacher suggested that there should be more coordination between the program officials and other faculties that share similar agendas. This teacher said:

> [This] program should really be a liaison with other faculties in terms of their books because if they get a contract, they can just make sure that that contract is

utilized in . . . the books, the audio materials, training. . . . They get a lot of that. Why can't [we]? Why couldn't [we] benefit from all of that too? (Omar)

Indeed, If this program lacks sufficient money to purchase new textbooks or get the resources that the teachers need, photocopying the third edition of the *Interchange* textbook, which was completely outdated, was nevertheless not the best decision. The program administration could take the initiative and establish a partnership with the more resourceful and financially rich faculties. Teachers could be appointed to take responsibility for developing teaching materials. In fact, three of the participating teachers suggested that the program administration should give teachers the opportunity to devise their own ELT materials.

Those teachers have already expressed that the textbook used in the program contained some material that was culturally insensitive to Arabs and even religiously offensive to Muslims. Teachers were alarmed that students would be alienated from their own culture when it is the one culture they do not study about in their ELT textbook. The English language is noticeably taking over so many world languages, and much of the English-language material overlooks cultural views embodied in other world languages (Brutt-Griffler, 2002). There has been a growing awareness among language scholars of the importance of making diligent and explicit efforts to enable students to acknowledge and value their own culture. What is problematic in Saudi universities is that decision makers often select English teaching textbooks based on the reputation of the publisher rather than on a needs-analysis procedure (Barnawi, 2011).

These textbooks, as a result, often fail to address the students' needs and fail to consider the importance of empowering and valuing students' own cultural identity

(Barnawi, 2011). As was the case in this study, the one-size-fits-all English textbook that was selected from the marketplace did not match the needs of the program's students. Its selection was not based on an ongoing needs-analysis procedure. Nor did the textbook fairly represent the students' cultural milieu, as evident in the teachers' remarks. Through teaching materials, teachers need to heighten students' awareness of the importance of preserving their cultural identity when using English for international communication means.

In fact, the increasing number of non-native English speakers has led to the emergence of many varieties of World Englishes, all with distinct syntactic, phonetic, phonological, and even cultural features (Coskun & Daloglu, 2010). So, whose English are students should assimilate to? Due to the presence of many varieties of World Englishes, some EFL scholars started to perceive English as a pluralistic language rather than a monolithic one. For example, Erling (2005), in light of the witnessed increase of people learning English as a foreign language around the world, argues that English teaching materials in EFL contexts should move away from representing only the inner-circle varieties of English. Matsuda (2003) also suggests that EFL textbooks should expose learners of English to various cultures and varieties of World Englishes believing that such exposure increases students' awareness of the cross-cultural competence and the role English plays in many geographical regions.

Moreover, there is a growing awareness in EFL pedagogy of the importance for EFL learners to be exposed to various cultures and varieties of English, and not only the western varieties (either American or British varieties) (Coskun, 2010). McKay (2003) contends that "it is the users' cultural content and their sense of the appropriate use of

English that should inform language pedagogy" (p. 13).This growing awareness in EFL pedagogy requires EFL textbooks to embed a fairly diversified content representing many cultures and varieties of World Englishes, in the case of this study, a culturally diversified content representing the culture of Islamic/Arab nations located in the expanding circle as well as some cultural aspects from outer circle nations such as India and some African nations (Kachru, 1985). Mackay (2003) emphasizes that such culturally diversified EFL textbooks can provide basis for students to understand fully how English is used for a variety of international purposes across wide range of contexts, alerting students of the importance to be respectful and mindful of their heritage and other nations' culture and traditions as well.

To embed aspects of Islamic and Arabic culture as well some from outer circle nations in the textbook, I advocate that the program teachers be appointed to develop the materials needed for the program. Assigning teachers to this task could be advantageous in many ways. First, some of the program' teachers ideally are truly qualified experts and capable of devising the type of materials necessary to meet the actual needs of students. These teachers are professionally qualified and experienced with the type of materials suitable for both the special needs of the students and the job market that they will face as graduates. These teachers also can present the administration with an efficient financial solution to potentially alleviate some of the financial challenges that the program is facing. Second, while international English teaching materials publishers do not have a precise profile of the students' actual needs and motivations for learning English, the program teachers can always give the students surveys throughout the course, compile a corpus of information, and review this information periodically in line with the materials that they are using to ensure that the materials remain effective in light of the students' changing needs.

Whether devised by teachers themselves or selected from the international market of English textbooks, students' heritage must not be underrepresented or missing from the depiction of the other cultures presented in the selected textbook. Whoever devises the textbook for the program must be familiar with what the program's students need first when they come to the college. Whoever develops the textbook needs to know why the students want to study the English language. This person has to understand the students' point of view and their cognitive abilities before devising or selecting the most appropriate textbook. Most importantly, students need to be reminded of the importance of valuing and maintaining their cultural identity even as they master proficiency in the English language, which is embedded in a different cultural tradition.

Amount of English Needed for Students

The preceding discussion on the importance of conducting a student needs analysis incorporate the issue of the amount of English that Saudi students need to learn to secure a decent job in the Saudi job market. The eminent status of English as the primary foreign language within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is unquestionable, especially amid the rapid changes that the country is now witnessing. However, the amount of English that a student needs to learn to secure a job in Saudi Arabia remains critically overlooked. It is true that Saudi employers have a preference for English-speaking employees in the Saudi private sector. Yet, Arabic still remains the main language used for communication. In fact, English is only used for communication between Saudi employees and new expatriates who do not yet speak Arabic or plan not to learn the official language of the country. It is then bewildering to witness this accelerating shift to replace Arabic as the medium of instruction in Saudi higher education with an English-only as the medium of instruction. Upon closer investigation of the Saudi research community, it appeared that many preeminent Saudi scholars, who specialized in English, are eager to improve the quality of English education within the country (e.g., Abu-Rizaizah, 2010; Al-bakestani, 1984; Alfallaj, 1998; Al-Ghamdi, 2006; Alobaid, 2016; Alshuaifan, 2009; Barnawi, 2011), but it was difficult to find as many who were equally eager to raising the awareness of the true amount of English needed to be taught in Saudi educational institutions. Saudi scholars appeared to overlook the cost that upcoming generations would need to pay for the rapidly increasing tendency to emphasize an English-only teaching policy.

From experience, Saudi students can efficiently meet the expectations of the Saudi job market with a relatively low proficiency in English. No compelling evidence that supports a need to enforce English-only instruction throughout Saudi higher education programs can be cited. For instance, Saudi teachers who were interviewed in a study conducted by Asiri (2016) to understand their beliefs and views towards teaching English in Saudi Arabia expressed their belief that the majority of their students confirmed that a minimum proficiency of English was adequate to secure a decent job in their Arabic-speaking society. Those teachers further stated that the majority of their students appreciated being able to speak English for personal purposes but perceived the English language as a course to pass rather than a must-have communication tool in the Saudi job market (Asiri, 2016).

Some Saudi students' path to success in college may contain impediments when enforcing an only-English medium of instruction in all higher education programs in light of the absence of the serious need for communicating through English in the Saudi job market. It would be wise if decision makers in Saudi universities took this issue into consideration. Students could still learn English, but their path of learning the English language should be based on an informed and well-conducted needs analysis of the true amount of English that students need to learn to meet the actual requirements of the Saudi job market. In the current study, for example, one of the participating teachers found that his students had a varying need to learn English; he conducted his own research to find out more about the students' needs. Therefore, he stated that the type and amount of English that students need to study in the program should always be based on carefully conducted measures and that some courses could be taught in Arabic. This teacher said:

> We need to know why students [entered] college. Some students just want to . . . pass the exam and go to the next section. Other students want to get that diploma, [while] other students have no clue what they are doing. For me, having the placement test [means that] I can say to the student, "Look at your English. Tell me about yourself. What do you want to do?" . . . Lots of students are actually intelligent. Just because they don't speak English doesn't mean [that] they're not intelligent. They know what they want. For example, networking requires a lot of English. You open that big book; it is full of English. Okay; it's hands-on, but [in] something like sales or something like insurance, they can get by, 'cause you don't really need English; you can study it in Arabic. (Mohsen)

Students may loosen their connection to their cultural identity when English is emphasized throughout all of their educational stages without a serious and well-documented justification. When English is widely promoted as the way to a better income, a higher social class, an education marker, or a key to success and civilization, it is more likely that Saudi students would unconsciously degrade their perception of their own native language and try to assimilate to the more prestigious language. Research about the impact of languages on cultural identities is well known (Saville-Troike, 1978), and the role that languages play in shaping and reflecting our identity is undeniable (Saville-Troike, 1978). Savaile-toike (1978) stated that:

> A major hazard in teaching a second culture is that students may reject parts of their native culture without knowing or accepting comparable parts of the second, or that they will find themselves repeatedly facing cultural interference as the rules or values of one conflict with the other in a single situation or domain. When this happens, either one culture 'wins', or students must deal with emotional and cognitive stress (p.11)

So, I suggest that decision makers in the program and in the Saudi Ministry of Education (MOE) in general need to reinforce students' affiliation with and pride in their own Arab and Islamic culture by not needlessly overemphasizing the culture of inner circle varieties of the English language in the realm of education. There should be a fair representation of students' native culture as well as many varieties of World Englishes, as also pointed out above in the findings chapter, by one of the teachers. The program administrators and teachers can conduct a needs analysis procedure to collect information on topics that students are interested in learning about and to gain an accurate measurement of students' level of English upon joining the ELT program (Richards, 2006). Based on the results of the needs analyses, the program administrators could assign the task of preparing the program teaching materials that fairly represent student native culture and other varieties of English to either a globally recognized publisher or the qualified faculty members of the program, using topics that student would have had already suggested (Richards, 2006). Whoever assigned to the task of preparing the teaching materials can then develop the teaching materials into different difficulty levels to suit the level of students joining the ELT program.

How to Improve the Effectiveness of Teaching and Learning

As mentioned above, one of the main concerns that students expressed about their experiences in the program was that teachers did not prepare interactive-based class activities. Instead, teachers extensively utilized the GTM to explain new grammar and language structures, and this approach decreased students' motivation to participate. A possible explanation of the dominance of the traditional GTM approach that has permeated the program might be the kind of teacher training that teachers had received. Perhaps the concept of "banking education" as Freire (2019) has called out as limiting, such approach might have shaped how the teachers perceived students. Within Saudi education institutions, teachers receive this kind of education, and students mainly are perceived as the recipients of the knowledge to be transmitted (Al-Seghayer, 2017). In an empirical study conducted by Barnawi (2011), 69% of the 48 teachers believed that they were the primary source of knowledge and that students were empty vessels to be filled.

It is important for teachers to refresh their knowledge of learning theories so that learner-centeredness becomes an integral part of their teaching process. Rather than overusing the role of a learning director, teachers should facilitate the students' learning process by providing them the opportunity to use critical-thinking and problem-solving strategies in group work (Ellis, 2003). To achieve this end, one of the teachers suggested that the administration should require teachers to engage in ongoing training and professional-development workshops. This teacher said: "Teachers should always be encouraged to have . . . up-to-date knowledge of how to get a communicative approach to teaching English. . . . [Administrators] should ensure that teachers have professional development all the way through. Even if once a year, but that shouldn't be left in abeyance" (Omar).

Professional development in education can refer to a wide range of activities, and critical reflection definitely is a form of it. Richards (2006) argued for the vital role that critical reflection can play in enhancing teachers' professional expertise, and therefore their performance inside classrooms. Richards (2006) insisted that teachers need training in how to become reflective practitioners. Undoubtedly, the teachers should work collaboratively to improve their teaching effectiveness and be more efficient in meeting students' various needs. It is recommended that teachers coordinate a routine of class observation of each other, through which they could help each other get valuable information on how they are performing inside classrooms (Richards, 2006). In a similar vein, one of the participating teachers in this study advised his colleagues to

> try to get a lot of feedback from students and fellow teachers, too, [to] try to understand and help each other a bit more, and what students like, what students dislike. . . . And also, when you're teaching, always believe that there's somebody who is looking at you, watching you. Then, you always feel that you've been

> watched. You're not alone. . . . Try to develop yourself as a teacher, practically. Get out of the private universe. (Omar)

Peer observation can serve as a tool to raise awareness that teachers can use not only to distinguish between what worked and what did not, but also to identify the underlying beliefs and principles that construct a teacher's conception of teaching (Serra, 2018). One of my main goals in this study was to push teachers critically to revisit their own beliefs about teaching and learning so that they become more aware of their professional development and how they could support their students. Experience, although important, is not enough for professional development. When experience is coupled with critical reflection, teachers can achieve great professional growth (Serra, 2018).

Journaling, the validity of which is being widely recognized in adult education, can also be advantageous. Journaling can foster a critical reflective teaching process and also aid the students' linguistic development (Hiemstra, 2001). Teachers can utilize journaling to aid their students' personal growth and critical reflection of the newly acquired information. Journalizing, then, can become a valuable informative technique that the teachers can use to stay informed about the dilemmas, difficulties, and contradictions that students experience in the learning process. Therefore, this learning method becomes a precious instrument for teachers to gain insights into what needs to change to maximize the benefits to students in the learning process (Hiemstra, 2001).

Journaling can be a very efficient way for teachers to enhance communication with students, making learning more meaningful and student-centered. The majority of the students in this study experienced a sense of detachment because they were not able to connect to the topics of the textbook and because of the predominance of teacher-centered class activities. As one teacher said: “Most of the curriculum . . . hasn’t been well thought out. What we are doing is following the coursework. Very old coursework” (Mohsen). Teaching foreign languages should focus “more on language in context than on teaching grammar and language structures” (Lorenzo, 2005, p. 1). When learning is contextualized around the students’ lives, students can easily draw connections between the lesson and their own real-life experiences. Students also are more likely to develop a better understanding of the lesson and become more able to acquire and retain the targeted knowledge for a longer period of time. I therefore suggest that journaling be implemented so that students can communicate their authentic concerns on an ongoing basis. Journaling could function as a systematic ongoing evaluation technique through which teachers could gain insights into the students’ lives and adapt materials and teaching styles to better suit the students’ emerging needs (Hiemstra, 2001).

Formative evaluation is also another form of professional development (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). Program decision makers need systematically to implement formative evaluation in the program, for it could improve the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. The ELT program needs to operate within a systematic evaluation system that has clear criteria for collecting information from program stakeholders (Fresko, 2002). Teachers and students should actively participate, for they comprise the backbone of the program. The evaluation could take place at the outset of the program so that strengths and weakness are addressed or coordinated to occur at the end of the program cycle to make changes and solve problems for upcoming cycles. Germaine and Rea-Dickins (2001) suggested group discussions, peer evaluation, and self-evaluation for formative evaluation involving both teachers and students. Involving students in these forms of evaluation can yield positive results. Student hands-on evaluation has received increased attention as students become more actively involved in their learning process.

Evaluation researchers have demonstrated that active engagement by students in evaluation tasks of their own learning process may motivate them to monitor their performance, detect weaknesses, and work towards overcoming them (Ozogul & Sullivan, 2009). Teachers also can use these forms of evaluation to learn about the experiences and attitudes of learners towards the process of teaching and learning so that they can make necessary changes and raise the students' motivation. This motivation issue was expressed by the teachers in this study.

Another aspect of a great deal of potential for boosting the effectiveness of the ELT program that program officials should explore is the role of orientation and family in fostering the motivation of students. In this vein, one teacher said:

> On the first day of classes, we always give one formal orientation, but it is not enough. For these guys, every day must be an orientation for five minutes, informal. So, every day, somehow, we should try to talk about the benefits of being proficient in English and the needs of the language. One more thing actually: The parents should sit with their sons and talk about education, not just about the job or salary. They should nurture great ambitions. I think [that] we need to open the floor for family conferences and encourage the parents to become more involved in school because they can actually contribute to our efforts in the program. (Mansour)

Mansour underscored in the preceding quotation the importance of empowering and nurturing great ambitions in the minds of students, to their success in college in particular, and in life in general. He suggested that teachers should establish a habit of giving motivational and spirit-lifting short speeches whenever the opportunity arises. Orientation is one valuable way for students to get acquainted with and motivated about their college career. Orientation also lets teachers to get to know how to better help students grow professionally and personally.

One way program officials could orient and motivate students would be to invite a group of college alumni to share how they benefited from the ELT program. The college alumni could give informative sessions on the correlation between the courses offered in the ELT program, their specialized courses, and their future careers. Program officials could conduct at least a one-week orientation in which students get a chance to know more about the future of their chosen careers and interact with representatives from each potential employer in a job-fair style. Families also need to play their part in nurturing the motivation of students by actively engaging in school. Family engagement in students' college education was found to be vital to the success of college students (Tierney, Corwin, & Colyar, 2005). It is recommended that program officials encourage the participation of students' families in college conferences and other events to empower and motivate students and spark a sense of belonging.

Relevance of the CCFE Approach

Previous evaluation research in Saudi Arabia concentrated mostly on collecting the attitudinal stances of participants about the overall quality of higher education programs and outlining findings. This prior research did not engage the stakeholders in a self-reflective process that could promote transformations in their attitudes. Unlike these previous formative evaluation studies conducted in Saudi higher education programs, this study drew on initiating an indirect collaboration and communication (or dialogue) between a group of teachers and students in a specific Saudi English language teaching program to make transformation possible. It did so by gathering authentic data through a collective and reflective dialogue on the teaching and learning experiences and perspectives of the participants in the program. Therefore, it was crucial to reflect on the implementation of the CCFE approach and theorize on the feasibility, effectiveness, and implications of the process for future implementations.

In the rest of this section, I provide a reflective discussion of how the students in this study interacted in the CCFE process and how they reacted to teachers' input. I also offer insight into how teachers experienced the CCFE process, demonstrating the teachers' attitudes towards points raised by the students in the CCFE process. Highlighting students' and teachers' experiences or reactions in the CCFE process lays a foundation for arguments on the effectiveness and feasibility of the CCFE approach for future implementation in Saudi higher education programs or other contexts. I conclude this section by presenting the implications of the CCFE approach, presenting some suggestions for the challenges that I confronted during the implementation of this CCFE approach in this study.

Reactions of Students and Teachers during the CCFE Process

Students showed great enthusiasm for evaluating the program. As I was distributing surveys, students showed remarkable trust in me and shared their concerns, not only about program-related issues but also about their personal attitudes towards teachers. Students had many questions on a wide variety of issues. Some of these issues concerned the effectiveness of the English-language teaching program in the college, for example, the teacher-centeredness of teaching practices, the inappropriateness of teaching materials, and the lack of feedback, as evident in the results section in chapter 4. Other students seemed unaware of what to do in college in general and had questions on what was expected from them and how they should select their specialization.

Students' willingness to share these concerns with me during our first meeting (both for completing surveys and participating focus groups) was an indicator of their need and willingness to participate in a communicative and formative evaluation process about their experiences in the program. In spite of the fact that the students knew that I used to work in the program and that I would be working closely with their teachers in this study, the students did not try to conceal or hide their fears or struggles. In fact, originally I did not expect that my visit would ignite such a high degree of excitement among the students in the program. The students were very willing and outgoing in sharing their personal concerns.

The enthusiasm and the openness that characterized students' interactions with me as soon as they began participating in the CCFE process also manifested in the way that they responded to teachers' input at the interview stage. Remarkably, not only did students positively respond to and appreciate teachers' feedback, but also most students agreed with most of the points that the teachers raised. Even when teachers' feedback was a bit harsh on students—indicating how unmotivated and incompetent some students were—students concentrated mostly on discussing how the students needed to work harder and improve more than countering the teachers' narrative or looking for justifications of their own low student performance. As evident in the students' talk in chapter 4 in this manuscript, most of the students agreed that student academic progress and excellence cannot be reached without a high degree of independence, determination, and commitment to personal goals. Hence, the way students reacted to teachers' feedback clearly demonstrated promising signs for the CCFE approach as a process that may activate communication through sharing multiple perspectives that provoke reflections and perhaps a change in the participants' attitudes and practices in the program.

Regarding the teachers, promising signs of admiration and appreciation for the CCFE approach were also evident. Teachers interviewed in this study warmly welcomed my presence in the program and acknowledged the potential of this formative evaluation study to enhance the experiences of the entire population of teachers and students in this program. All teachers with whom I worked in the CCFE process were appreciative, cooperative, and responsive. The following quotation is an example of how one teacher expressed his gratitude to the efforts of the CCFE process:

> I would like to thank you because you have taken these ventures, and you are going to take quantitative and qualitative research, and this is the modern research approach. You are collecting the data on the basis of surveys, interviews, and . . . observation. . . . I appreciate you for this venture and for trying to help us improve our educational outcomes. (Mansour)

While some teachers verbalized their appreciation, others showed their appreciation through assisting me in conducting the CCFE process. Some teachers voluntarily provided me with valuable documents on which the program decision makers had outlined the orientation of the ELT program and the goals set for students. Other teachers excelled in facilitating the conduct of this research by assisting the process of coordinating classroom visits for observation purposes and the distribution and collection of student surveys. Teachers' efforts actually guided my research steps and helped me focus the scope of the study on aspects that mattered most to them. Teachers' positive interaction and reaction in the CCFE process also manifested in the way they interacted with me during the interviews. All teachers freely shared their personal feelings about their experiences in the program (e.g., discrimination against some teachers) and remarks on the function of the program (e.g., lack of clear rewarding criteria).

There were promising signs on the CCFE approach but also challenges that I faced while implementing the CCFE approach in this study. The majority of teachers appreciated the efforts of the CCFE process in enhancing everyone's experiences, but a few became defensive when they realized that students had criticized their teaching practices. I noticed that the teachers who became defensive used instructional practices influenced by the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). As mentioned above, those teachers depended on lecturing and rarely employed an activity inside the classroom in which students could practice English.

In classes using the GTM approach, most students remained silent most of the time as teachers worked on introducing and explaining new lessons focused on grammatical rules and translation of new words. When teachers implementing such an approach were exposed to sincere student input in the CCFE process, these teachers blamed students for not being fluent enough in English to promote more communicative ways of teaching and learning. To me, this seemed a form of blame-the-victim circular reasoning. This fact provides insight on the need for altered understandings of how language learning and development take place through a process of using the language itself.

The latter group of teachers became defensive because they still perceived me as some sort of authority (being a Saudi evaluator with a potential to occupy leading positions in the program in the future) more than a mediator of a formative teacher-student dialogue. Perhaps they felt apprehensive for thinking that being identified by students for employing ineffective teaching practices might have left the evaluator with a bad impression of their teaching performance. It is possible too that the fear of being perceived as incompetent in the mind of the evaluator, especially when the evaluator was a colleague, might have pushed those teachers to become defensive and not fully take advantage of the CCFE to reflect on and self-assess their own teaching practices.

Evaluation of the CCFE Approach

By reflecting on how teachers and students acted in the CCFE process, I learned valuable lessons about its effectiveness and feasibility. I learned that the use of the CCFE approach was instrumental in providing students and teachers with a window into each other's needs and struggles, as well as an insight into what aspects teachers and students needed to reflect on and change to enhance everyone's experience. Through this window, students started feeling the need to change; their sense of responsibility was alerted by having been exposed to teachers' feedback. The CCFE approach acknowledged the potential of initiating dialogue between the students and teachers; it yielded encouraging and promising signs for students. When students collaborated with their teachers and engaged in the CCFE process to evaluate the program formatively, a sense of ownership among students was cultivated, and a positive learning attitude prevailed. This was evident in the high degree of excitement that students exhibited while participating in the study but also in the awareness and courage that students showed in acknowledging teachers' criticisms.

The CCFE approach succeeded in providing students with a communicative safe space in which they embarked on identifying and discussing at an early stage of the program obstacles to progress and then together suggested and reinforced satisfactory aspects of the program. This safe and honest sharing space provided through the use of the CCFE process boosted the students' sense of belonging and incited them to embrace a self-assessment mindset. Students' acknowledgement and positive reaction to their teachers' feedback, even harsh feedback, indicated the effectiveness and efficiency of this approach to: (1) make possible a transformation in the students' attitudes; and (2) increase students' responsibility and awareness of the purpose of the program in general.

For teachers, not only did the CCFE approach provide them with a window into students' perspectives on the effectiveness of the program, but it also enabled teachers to be knowledgeable of their students' needs, struggles, and learning process. Sharing perspectives between teachers and students helped teachers point out the strengths and weakness of the tools that they were already using in their classrooms. Some teachers became aware of students' demands for a more active role inside classrooms because their students expressed a strong need to be engaged in more hands-on class activities. Students wanted to have a more meaningful and student-led learning experience. One teacher admitted that he was expecting students to demand a more communicative-based teaching approach and that he had been working gradually to apply a teaching approach that primarily depended on student initiative.

Other teachers confirmed the effectiveness of the pedagogical choices that they had implemented in their classrooms as they heard their students were satisfied with their teaching practices. The process helped the teachers who were already implementing a communicative-based teaching approach affirm some of the productive practices that they are implementing via student feedback. Those teachers were able to confirm the effectiveness of the strategies that they were using to give student feedback. They were also able to justify to their students why they preferred and implemented certain feedback strategies and also promised to give more individual feedback to students after they heard their students' desire for a one-on-one feedback style. The CCFE process was instrumental in helping teachers not only to see the needs of students, but also to encourage the teachers to think of ways to target those needs.

I noticed that the CCFE process got teachers to engage in a self-assessment process as their pedagogical choices and opinions about students came under the scrutiny of fellow teachers and students. Teachers started to challenge each other's opinions, for example, about the amount of feedback that every student needs and how it should be given. Those teachers reported that as they engaged in a reflective process about classroom events and as their pedagogical choices were challenged, they became more likely able to sharpen the practical skills required to pinpoint the most critical professional issues in their classrooms. I also noticed that the CCFE process sparked those teachers' eagerness to learn more about their students' views of their teaching practices. Those teachers actually directed me to explore the views of their students on some additional matters that were not included on the list of concerns that students had expressed. I was delighted to experience the enthusiasm of those teachers who wanted to take advantage of the CCFE process to improve in all possible ways.

Based on the accounts of those teachers, it can be argued that the CCFE approach was an effective means for stimulating most teachers to self-assess their teaching philosophy. The involvement of teachers in such a self-evaluative process and a dialogue with the students in this study aided teachers' professional development. Teachers gained insight into what teaching practices or aspects of the program needed to change to better meet students' needs. Many evaluation researchers (e.g., Day, Whitaker, & Wren, 1987; Edge & Richards, 1993) considered the process of sharing perspectives of teachers and students as a form of teacher professional development. One teacher in the present study said in this regard,

> taking part in this process and being able to hear from others about what they think should be happening in this program . . . transformed me, gave me something new to think about and a desire to improve, and also is pushing me to want to know more [about] how other teachers and students see me as a teacher. So this dialogue is something [that] I need to do more often. So thank you for reminding us of the power of reflection. (Faisal)

Faisal was thankful for the CCFE process, for he felt that new insights into his approach to teaching English as a foreign language unfolded as a result of participating in that process. He appreciated learning about students' needs for more feedback, as well as their desire for a more student-centered teaching approach and more updated teaching materials.

While this process seems promising, the processes described here were limited by the pool of participants in the CCFE process. Three of the teachers were already implementing foreign teaching approaches that supported communication in the target language. Thus, for most of these teachers, the CCFE process confirmed the effectiveness of their current pedagogical choices. They were already comfortable with their current teaching strategies. Perhaps because of their confidence in their pedagogical choices, those teachers were willing to take part in the CCFE process, while other teachers might have decided not to take part in this study to avoid confrontations with students and teachers.

Future research might attempt to include the CCFE approach at a more general level to draw a more diverse sample of teachers and to pose further research questions. For example, *what would happen with those teachers who receive confrontational feedback from their students? Would it be enough to receive such feedback to support transformations in these foreign-language teachers' teaching practices?* Much is to be explored in future iterations of the CCFE approach.

However, one glimpse into this issue was provided by one of the teacher participants who was confronted on the teacher's teaching practices by the students, as mentioned in the reactions section. Students wanted this teacher to use more productive approaches to teaching English as a foreign language. In the case of this teacher, I learned that one meeting with this teacher in the CCFE process did not help him to recognize the misunderstanding or deficit perspective he internalized about his students.

This teacher persisted in defending his approaches to teaching English as a foreign language instead of attempting to see alternatives to his deficit perspective of students' inability to be instructed through a communicative-based, student-led teaching approach. Nonetheless, in spite of the fact that this teacher was not able to transform his preconceptions about his students' inability, the CCFE approach was still efficient in offering a critical understanding of his viewpoint. Being proficient in the subject area was not necessarily sufficient for the teachers to teach effectively or for the students to learn successfully.

As evident in this study, despite the fact that all teachers were highly qualified professionals, students were still disappointed with the lack of feedback and the dominance of the teacher-centered teaching practices that most teachers implemented in the program. The CCFE approach hence pointed out that teachers should enhance their appreciation for a student-centered pedagogy. Teachers could learn more about how students prefer to learn and how they could learn better. Teachers need to tune and refine their ongoing understanding of students' needs. Such fundamental understandings can be obtained through sustaining what the CCFE approach proposes: that the implementation of an ongoing formative-based dialogue between the program stakeholders points out strengths and weakness at an early stage of the program for better achievements.

Implications of the CCFE Approach

Before conducting this study, I had no doubts about the importance of evaluation to the success of educational programs in meeting desired goals. However, now that I have conducted this study, I have no doubts that there is no way for educational programs to succeed in achieving desired goals without making ongoing evaluation an integral part of the structure of any educational program. The credentials of the teachers serving in the program under evaluation are not in question. However, the current research found the students' disappointed with pervasive the teacher-centered pedagogy and the use of ineffective course materials, which some teachers found culturally sensitive to Arabic and Muslim values.

The teachers acknowledged and understood the importance of needs analysis and placement tests. They knew that these were needed to sort out students' needs and English proficiency levels so that well-informed decisions on suitable teaching materials or effective teaching approaches could be made. However, neither needs analyses nor placement tests were actually used in the program, a major gap between theoretical understanding and actual pedagogical practice. The failure to performing these critical assessments prior to the implementation of the program and the absence of evaluation prevented teachers from recognizing the ineffectiveness of the teaching materials or teaching approaches that they have been implementing in the program for years. As a result, many of the program teachers continued to use tools and pedagogical approaches that do not serve the primary goal of the program: to increase students' English proficiency level so that students could engage in all-English specialized courses.

Program decision makers may need to implement an ongoing long-term evaluation plan based on clearly articulated criteria. Subjecting the program to a long-term evaluation plan could assist in addressing new challenges as they unfold, providing a long-term solution for current problems (Chen & Chen, 2005). An ongoing CCFE process between teachers, students, and decision makers could be valuable to the program, for it would have the potential to pinpoint the strengths and weakness of the process of teaching and learning, providing ongoing formative suggestions for stakeholders. This evaluation process could take place at the middle of the semester so that teachers always could be informed of students' needs adjust teaching materials and approaches to teaching foreign languages according to students' current needs.

Subjecting the ELT program to a long-term formative evaluation process could also benefit decision makers and lay a sound foundation for them to build on. Information gained from this long-term ongoing formative could help decision makers address vital issues to either encourage or discourage teachers from working. For instance, this study revealed that some of the teachers had concealed their observations on the inappropriateness of the teaching materials, for they felt that their opinions were not valued or welcome. Such findings could help decision makers find directions for assessment, remediation, or restructuring so that all teachers might develop a better sense of worth and belonging and know that teachers' contributions always are encouraged, acknowledged, and appreciated. The application of a CCFE process not only would benefit teachers and students but would also guide decision makers' efforts in proactively making a constructive atmosphere for learning and teaching.

I also recommend that this long-term formative and communicative evaluation should not solely be initiated by decision makers. I strongly encourage teachers to engage in a formative dialogue with students to create a healthier learning atmosphere. In this atmosphere, everyone should feel secure to take risks, express opinions, and communicate and collaborate. Such an atmosphere is vital for improving everyone's experience and the overall quality of the program. This formative and collaborative form of dialogue should be built on mutual trust and should be manifest in the practices of teachers inside classrooms.

Nurturing trusting relationships and dialogues between teachers and students is critical in developing student learning (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Teachers need to take the initiative in establishing and maintaining a climate of trust and respect that would allow students to share on a regularly basis their concerns. In doing so, teachers would more likely be able to address students' needs. This could help resolve many of the challenges that Saudi students face in higher education in Saudi institutions.

Challenges that I confronted in implementing this communicative-based formative evaluation study should be taken into considerations in future iterations of the CCFE approach. As evident in the current study, a few teachers became defensive as they realized that their teaching practices were identified by students to be unproductive in teaching English as a foreign a language. To avoid such possible tensions and maximize the potential of the CCFE approach, I encourage decision makers in this program to consider hiring an external consultant with a long-term contract to conduct formative evaluation of the process of the program on a regular basis.

An external evaluator could help in two ways. First, using an external evaluator could help ease tension that some teachers develop when collaborating with colleagues or students in assessing the effectiveness of their teaching performance. The assistance of an external evaluator could help teachers not to worry about any impression they might leave about their teaching performance. With the assistance of an external evaluator, teachers are more likely to concentrate on the task of reflecting on their performance for development purposes (Kiely & Rea-Dickins, 2005). Second, as prior research on evaluation has pointed out, the use of an external evaluator with a long-term strategic plan in the program could assist in solving new challenges as they unfold in the program, consequently providing a long-term solution for current problems (Chen & Chen, 2005). In addition to the two reasons mentioned above, an external evaluator could also enhance teachers' ability to think outside the box (Kiely & Rea-Dickins, 2005). Teachers might be so immersed in the program that many important points could go unnoticed. An external evaluator could help teachers attend to things that had gone unnoticed. The assistance of an external evaluator, therefore, could increase the feasibility of implementing the CCFE approach in Saudi educational institutions, in which it is rare for teachers' practices to come under scrutiny, especially in higher education.

Student-Centered Pedagogy

There are implications for the CCFE approach to support a student-centered pedagogy for several compelling reasons. First and foremost, the theoretical foundation of this CCFE study advocates for a collective assessment of the program, seeking no single authoritative judgment from the researcher/evaluator of the program but yielding the findings through the participants' views. In this participant-oriented approach to formative evaluation, the essential feature is responsiveness to key issues and concerns experienced in the ETL program. The CCFE approach, hence, is responsive to the demands and needs of the students in the program. Recommendations and implications of the study, therefore, accommodated the participants' views (Patton, 2008). Following the participant-oriented theoretical foundation that I drew from on in this evaluation study, I find relevant to highlight the student-centered pedagogy that the students demanded. Promoting teaching approaches that value student critical-thinking and self-learning strategies through the process of communicating in the target language is not based upon my sole judgement of the program but is a strong demand that all the students and teachers of the program required and agreed on. As evident in the findings chapter, participant students showed a desperate need for acquiring more practical skills in the new language; aspect that they considered more likely to take place through hands-on student-led English learning activities and experiences, so that they get the chance to use the language in meaningful ways for them rather than simply memorizing grammatical rules and vocabulary. In fact, the students' major concern in this program is lack of English use/practice opportunities inside classrooms, due to pervasiveness of teacher-centered grammar-based teaching practices. So, a student-centered pedagogy in the ELAT program is a student request that capitalizes on their interest and need for learning to use the English language meaningful ways to express their ideas in the different language domains (writing, reading, speaking, and listening) and uses (e.g., interactional, persuasive, expository) and not only learning know about the grammar rules or how the teacher uses the language. Students want to be able to use the English for their own learning and practical purposes.

Second, as a Saudi EFL learner/teacher myself, I believe that a student-centered pedagogy that values student collaborative work and uses communicative approaches to EFL teaching is fundamental for the students at this particular program. As mentioned above, the ability to read, write, and speak English fluently is of great importance to students to complete their all-English specialized courses at the college. So, it is essential for the success of the students at this program to maximize the opportunities to practice English inside classrooms since these opportunities are more limited outside of school. The students need and want to develop not only knowledge on English syntax, but also on knowledge of communicative English to communicate properly with other English speakers, as well as using and understanding the academic English register and skills necessary to undertake their desired specializations instructed in English only. Unlike ESL context, the students in the ELT program have limited exposure to English outside the classroom. English in this EFL context that provides with students with access to the English language primarily via the course, the teacher, textbooks, and peers; therefore, EFL students lack the real-life learning environments that ESL contexts usually have (Richards, 2006). For optimal learning, the program teachers need to devote more efforts in preparing lessons that compensate for the limited opportunities that EFL students have outside of the classroom. Teachers of the ELT program may need to draw from a more communicative-based and student-centered teaching approach and strategies to promote a student learning process that is more authentic and nurturing of the expected skills for these students (Alhuqban, 2014; Alrabai, 2016; Fareh, 2010). Indeed, Richards (2006) stated that "more authentic communication is likely to occur in the classroom if students go beyond practice of language forms for their own sake and use their linguistic and communicative resources in order to obtain information" (p. 18).

Moreover, since the 1970s, the focus in foreign language teaching both in EFL and ESL contexts has shifted from a mere focus on delivering the grammatical knowledge or vocabulary that learners need to know to produce grammatically correct sentences (grammatical competence) into delivering the knowledge learners need to learn to be able to use language properly for communication purposes (communicative competence) (Richards, 2006). Teacher-centered language teaching that mainly relies on a grammar-based syllabus/textbook seems limiting for the purposes of the students in the ELT program. Many empirical studies conducted in the realm of Saudi EFL institutions confirm that the impact of grammar-based and teacher-centered language teaching practices contribute to the low achievement of Saudi EFL learners (Alharbi, 2015). In fact, authors such as Ahmad (2014), Alkubaidi (2014), Alrabai (2016), Alrashidi and Phan, (2015), Fareh (2010), and Rajab, (2013) revealed that teacher-centered teaching practices are pervasive in Saudi EFL educational institutions and tend to prevent students from developing satisfactory language competence.

In conclusion, there are three main reasons why this study promotes a rethinking of the teacher-centered teaching practices and advocates instead for a more student-centered, communicative-based teaching approach. The first reason pertains to the participant students' critics of the effectiveness of teacher-centered practices that most teachers seem to adopt as their main teaching approach. The participant students demanded more of communicative teaching approaches where they can have a better opportunity to practice English and reach the targeted proficiency level they need to carry out their subsequent specialized courses. Second, students learning English in EFL contexts, such as Saudi Arabia, need more exposure to English inside classrooms, because access to English in the Saudi society is limited. Third, research on EFL in Saudi Arabia has presented empirical findings on the negative impact of teacher-centered, grammar-based teaching to the achievement of EFL students in Saudi Arabia .

Additionally, EFL research on learning supports that "learners learn a language through the process of communicating in it, and that communication that is meaningful to the learner provides a better opportunity for learning than through a grammar-based approach" (Richards, 2006, p. 12). Therefore, in this study I am pointing out a need that stems from the perspective of the students in the ELT program, a pedagogy that supports communicative approaches in English language teaching and learning in order to support student-centered goals. This shift will ask all administrators, teachers, and students to engage in a shift, a new culture of teaching that focuses on that need. This culture can be nurtured through a learning community of teachers on foreign-language teaching communicative practices. Teachers in the evaluated program may want to draw from more on these types of methods for teaching and accordingly adapt their syllabi. Teachers could conceptualize the CCFE process as an ongoing formative evaluation process in which they can collaborate, train, and help each other implement a teaching methodology that best meets students' needs in this ELT program. CCFE exists not to judge teachers, but to notice what students are experiencing and learning, and in turn adapt their teaching practices to those target needs. This whole process could be deemed a community of teachers learning together from and with the students. Teachers should also select textbooks that support a communicative approach for teaching, and placement tests that may be used to facilitate implementation of this approach. It is my belief that the program administrators could also play a key role of supporting the development of an approach to English teaching that addresses the needs of the students by encouraging teachers and facilitating their access to professional development activities and resources that fit these goals.

Limitations of the Study

My study has limitations that need to be addressed. One limitation lies in the research paradigm adopted: the interpretivist paradigm. Patton (2008) argued that actions of researchers and the ways in which they approach and analyze findings from their studies are constrained by the philosophical underpinnings of the paradigm that they have adopted. As it is believed in this paradigm that knowledge is collectively built through close contact between multiple subjectivities in a given context, opponents of the interpretivist paradigm may doubt the integrity or validity of findings of this research. Nevertheless, it was important to be reminded that validity and integrity—trustworthiness—of qualitative research is measured through different techniques, as proposed by Flyvbjerg (2006), Guba and Lincoln (1989), Patton (2008), Shenton (2004), Stake (2003), and Yin (2003).

The use of a purposeful sampling technique in recruiting participants for the study and the selection of the research site could be argued to constitute another limitation. However, all potential participants had an equal chance to volunteer in the study. I made no selections regarding volunteers, as the number of participants who volunteered for this study barely met the desired number. The generalizability of findings to programs of typical circumstances is not perceived as a limitation in qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The goal of this qualitative case study was to particularize and improve program quality rather than to generalize findings. Nonetheless, Flyvbjerg (2006), Stake (2003), and Yin (2003) argued that with a careful selection of a purposeful sample and with thickness and richness of obtained data, findings from case study research are likely to be applicable in similar conditions.

It also is worth mentioning the fact that communication that took place between the teachers and students in this study was mediated by the researcher. In accordance with the instructions I received from the office of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in the University of New Mexico, I needed to avoid direct confrontations between the teachers and students of the program. Such confrontations would have violated the rights of the participants to confidentially and privacy. Also, students might have felt unsecured and discomforted if they had been asked to express their concerns in a face to face conversation with their teachers, given the nature of power dynamics in a teacher-student relation. Nevertheless, this same limitation prompts a question about what would a more authentic communication promote in a CCFE approach? How much communication is needed between stakeholders? How could a process like this be institutionalized?

A final limitation (already noted above) was that this study might have benefited from including the perspectives of female students in examining the effectiveness of the program aspects and alumni in examining how the program prepared them for their jobs. Unfortunately, this was beyond the scope of the present study. Due to accessibility challenges, my time constraints as a doctoral student, and lack of resources, I decided to limit the scope of this study to active and accessible male students in the program.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Observation Protocol

The focus of observations regards the quality of teaching and learning services and strategies provided during class to students in ELT program. Such focus includes the following aspects:

1. Teaching Practices
    a. Use of materials
    b. Teaching approaches
    c. Classroom and time management
2. Learning Practices
    a. Use of materials
    b. Learning approaches
    c. classroom and time management
3. Interaction Practices
    a. patterns of interaction
        i. verbal and nonverbal actions.
    b. frequency of interaction
    c. direction of interaction

By observing these aspects, I aim to gain understanding on the implementation process of the ELT program. This understanding will lead the communicative-formative evaluation of the ELT implementation process. In this process, teachers and students can exchange their views on how to improve this process by examining the effectiveness of materials, available resources, teaching methods, policies, and so forth. The table displayed below demonstrates how I plan to record my nonparticipant observations.

Course level: Course name: Number of students: Date:

Field Notes	
Observations	Comments

Appendix B

Interview questions varied according to the experiences each participant. Yet, provided below are few examples of questions everyone had the chance to talk about.

1. Please tell me about your experiences in the ELT program. (prompts will be given to spark the conversation i.e. years of teaching experience in the program, responsibilities beside teaching, pursued goals, expectations)
2. Based on your experiences, what would you say are the strengths and weaknesses of the ELT program?
3. How about your dislikes and likes about the ELT program?
   - Would you change any components of the program if you had the chance to do so? Why or why not?
4. How would you evaluate the effectiveness of your teaching practices in relation to the students' needs in the ELT program?
   - whether pretty helpful or not, why or how?
5. How about the materials and policies?
   - Are they aiding or constraining, and in what way?
   - Some follow up questions may ensue.
6. What challenges do you experience in the process of teaching and learning?
7. How about support from administration or colleagues? How would you describe the program in terms of communication and collaboration among you (in reference to all teachers), and between teachers, students, and administration?
8. 99% of teachers and 81% of students think that it is necessary to include subject content in English language course? How do you comment on that? Do books already meet this?
   - 66% of teachers say they adapt the content of textbooks to make them more relevant to students' majors. How often do you do that? And How?

9. 91% of Teachers are consulted prior to the implementation of new textbooks. Why books are still disliked?
10. Majority of students believe that you teachers should be in charge of selecting the textbooks? How do comment on that?
11. 64% of students do not know what the goals of the program are? What do you think?
12. 91% of teachers say books promote group discussion. What is your concept of group discussion? I observed classrooms and there were no real discussions to me. There were only conversations and students were merely reading rather than discussing?
13. What about the use of Arabic? Almost all teacher I observed allowed students to communicate in Arabic all time. What do you think?
14. Some teachers think that there is a discrepancy between the books and the goals of the
15. program? agree? Disagree? Why?
16. What is your message to students?
17. In what way do the books help improve communication skills?
18. There is a discrepancy students said time is enough teacher no, what do u think?

Messages to Students

1. Why do you bother coming to this college if you think you can be making good money elsewhere?
2. Teachers say that you do not spend enough effort at home and you heavily rely on them as if it is their job to do everything for you. What do you think?
3. Teachers also say they feel that you are unmotivated to study, come late, unprepared, and inactive to work.
4. Are you not committed to your goals? Then why you are not studying at home?

5. How are planning to compete with international students if you do not worry about your study?
6. Why do you insist on using Arabic inside classrooms?

<u>Messages to Teachers</u>

1. Lack of Feedback
2. Dominance of teacher centered activities
3. Speaking opportunities
4. Level of excitement for good students
5. Teaching Research skills
6. What advice would you give other teachers?

Appendix C

The Teacher Survey

Teacher Informed Consent for Survey Participation

I, Ahmed Khawaji, as the doctoral student under the supervision of professor Carlos LópezLeiva from the University of New Mexico, am conducting a research study with purpose to learn about the experiences of teachers and students in the English Language Teaching Program. Ultimately, the goal of this study is to gain insights into the experiences of the teachers and students in the program. Such new insights will be shared with the program decision makers so that they can meet the needs of the program stakeholders. You are being asked to participate in this study because your experiences in and opinions about the program are important to understand the quality of teaching and learning of English in the ELT program.

You are being asked to participate in two interviews. Each interview should take approximately 60-90 minutes to complete. The interview includes questions such as "How would you rate the effectiveness of your teaching practices?". Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate. You can refuse to answer any of the questions at any time. No names or identifying information will be associated with your responses. There are no known risks in this study, but some individuals may experience discomfort or loss of privacy when answering questions. Data will be de-identified and pseudonyms will be utilized. Although your collected data is going to be de-identified, parts of the interview will be disclosed with the students with the goal to get constructive feedback from the students on your input. You will have a chance to review the parts of the interview that can be shared with others. Data will be stored in my encrypted password-secured computer. No one except me and my advisor professor Carlos LópezLeiva will have access to the data. After completing the study, collected data will be transferred from my personal computer and stored in a hard disk drive that I will keep in a cabinet in my supervisor's office in UNM. All electronic data previously saved in my password-protected personal computer for analysis purposes will be deleted permanently after I close the research in the summer of 2019

The findings from this project will provide information on how to improve the experiences of the students and teachers and hopefully the process of teaching and learning in the ELT program. If published, results will be presented in summary form only. Quotes with pseudonyms will be used.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to call Ahmed Khawaji at [+966-55-187-6429]. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, or about what you should do in case of any harm to you, or if you want to obtain information or offer input you may call the UNM Office of the IRB (OIRB) at (505) 277-2644 or irb.unm.edu.

By signing below and providing your contact information, you will be agreeing to participate in the above described research study

Signature of Adult Participant Date

Section 1: Background Information

1. How many years have you been teaching in the English program?

Years	1-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20
Teaching experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. What are your educational qualifications?

Degree	**Areas of Specialization**					**Other (please specify)**
	TESOL	Linguistics	Applied linguistics	Literature	Curriculum & Instruction	
Ph.D.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
M.A./Med	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
BA	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Diploma	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. How many classes do you teach daily? ______________ and per semester? ____________

4. What is the average number of students in each class? _____________

5. Have you attended any training courses/professional development workshops on ELT teaching and learning over the last five years?

YES NO

If yes, please provide a short description of the training course(s) you attended along with date(s).

Section 2: Relevance of Textbooks in the ELT Program

6. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the statements below by either placing a cross (X) on or circling the appropriate choice.

Section 2: Relevance of Textbooks in the ELT Program	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
1. It is necessary to include the learning of subject content in English language courses.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Teachers have input to select textbooks for their English courses.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Teachers have freedom to introduce different teaching materials to meet their students' needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Teachers are consulted prior to the implementation of new textbooks.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Teachers evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching materials they use.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. The content of the textbooks used in English courses relates to students' major.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. The content of the English textbooks is interesting and motivating.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. The activities or exercises in the textbooks promote discussion among students.	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. The textbooks content and activities promote relevant interpersonal communication skills for students' professional field.	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. The textbooks help improve students' reading skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. The textbooks help improve students' writing skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. The textbooks help improve students' listening skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. The content of textbooks introduces the students' research skills needed at higher levels.	☐	☐	☐	☐

➢ What main concern(s), if any, do you have about the current textbooks and materials in use in the program?

____

____

____

____

Section 3: Instructional Practices and Activities to Teach English

7. Please indicate to what extent you agree with each of the statements below by either placing a cross (X) on or circling the appropriate choice.

Section 3: Instructional Practices and Activities to Teach English	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly**
1. I allow the use of Arabic among students in my classroom.				
2. I adapt the pace of my class based on my students' understanding.				
3. I use multi-modal approaches when I teach English.				
4. I follow the order of the textbook content and activities to teach my English classes				
5. I require students to present in class at least once per semester.				
6. When I ask students questions, I wait enough time until students are ready to participate.				
7. I adapt the content of the textbook to students' majors.				
8. I encourage students to engage in group discussions.				
9. I translate into Arabic when teaching new English vocabulary.				
10. I evenly distribute the time and activities in my class so that students develop reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in English.				

- What instructional strategies or methods are you using in your classes? Give your rationale for using such strategies or methods.

Section 4: Open Ended Questions

8. **What are the goals of the English program at this college?**

9. **Do you think that the time allocated for students in the ELT program is enough to help them reach their targeted proficiency in English? Why?**

10. **How useful are the current teaching materials and instructional practices in meeting the overall program goals? Please explain.**

11. **What do you think the focus of this program should be? Teaching English for General Purposes (EGP) OR Teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP).**

12. **Do you have any suggestions to improve the program?**

Done!!

❖ Would you like to participate in a follow-up interview? If yes, please provide your preferred means of communication.

- Email: ______________________________
- Cellphone: __________________________

Kindly choose your preferred time of communication: mornings, afternoons, evenings, or at night. Check more than one choice if applicable.

☺ Thank you for your valuable and crucial input ☺

Appendix D

استطلاع الطلاب
موافقة الطالب للمشاركة في الاستطلاع

أنا أحمد خواجي طالب دكتوراه أعمل تحت إشراف الدكتور كارلوس لوبيز ليفا من جامعة نيو مكسيكو بالولايات المتحدة الامريكية. أقوم بإجراء دراسة بحثية حول تجارب المعلمين والطلاب في برنامج تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية في الكلية. الهدف من الدراسة هو تزويد صانعي القرار باقتراحات ومعلومات من شأنها تحسين عملية تعلم وتعليم اللغة الإنجليزية. تم طلبك للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة لأن تجاربك وآرائك حول البرنامج قد تسهم بشكل فعال في رفع جودة تعليم وتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في البرنامج وتطويره لخدمتك والمستفيدين من هذا البرنامج من بعدك.

يستغرق إكمال هذا الاستطلاع حوالي 25 دقيقة. يتضمن الاستطلاع أسئلة مثل "كيف تقيم أنشطة البرنامج والكتب الدراسية؟" تعتبر مشاركتك في الدراسة اختيارية. وفي حال المشاركة، يمكنك أيضا رفض الإجابة على أي سؤال لا تملك الرغبة للإجابة عليه.

لن يتم ربط أي أسماء أو معلومات تعريفية بردودك. سيتم تخزين البيانات في جهاز كمبيوترمحمي بكلمة المرور. لا أحد غير الباحث والدكتور كارلوس لوبيز ليفا سيكون بإمكانهم الوصول إلى البيانات. بعد الانتهاء من الدراسة، سيتم نقل البيانات التي تم جمعها من جهاز الكمبيوتر الشخصي الخاص بي وتخزينها في محرك الأقراص الثابت الذي سأحتفظ به في مكتب المشرف الخاص في جامعة نيو مكسيكو. سيتم حذف جميع البيانات الإلكترونية (المدخلات من الدراسات الاستقصائية والمقابلات التي تم نسخها) بعد إغلاق البحث في صيف عام 2019.

إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة حول هذا المشروع البحثي، لا تتردد في الاتصال على أحمد خواجي على [0551876429]. إذا كانت لديك أسئلة بخصوص حقوقك كموضوع بحثي ، أو حول ما يجب عليك القيام به في حالة حدوث أي ضرر لك ، أو إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على آية معلومات أو تقديم شكوى ، فيمكنك الاتصال بمكتب UNM لمجلس حقوق النشر (OIRB) IRBعلى 5052772644 أو irb.unm.edu.

من خلال التوقيع أدناه ، فإنك توافق على المشاركة في الدراسة البحثية المذكورة أعلاه

القسم الأول
معلومات عامة

1. **متى التحقت ببرنامج تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية؟** (________________)
2. **كم عمرك؟** ☐ 18-21 ☐ 22-25 ☐ 26-29
3. **حصلت على شهادة الثانوية العامة من:** ☐ مدرسة حكومية ☐ مدرسة أهلية
4. **أخطط للحصول على درجة البكالوريوس بعد الحصول على دبلوم من كلية المجتمع:** ☐ نعم ☐ لا

القسم الثاني

5. لطفا أختر ما يعكس ويشير إلى واقعك وتجربتك مع المقررات الدراسية وذلك باختيار ما يناسبك من الخيارات التالية

ملاءمة المقرر الدراسي	أتفق كليا	أتفق	لا أتفق	أعارض بشدة
1. المعلمون يستخدمون وسائل تعليمية متنوعة لتسهيل عملية التعلم.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. من الضروري للمعلم أن يربط محتوى مقرر تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية بتخصصات الطلاب العلمية.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. الوسائل التعليمية التي يستخدمها المعلمون تساعدني في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بشكل أكثر فعالية	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. يرتبط محتوى الكتب المدرسية الإنجليزية بتخصصي الدراسي.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. محتوى الكتب المدرسية الإنجليزية مثير للاهتمام ومحفز	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. الأنشطة أو التمارين في الكتب المدرسية تشجع على تفعيل الحوار والمناقشة بين الطلاب.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. تعزز الكتب الدراسية مهارات التواصل التي أحتاجها في مجالي المهني.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. تساعد الكتب المدرسية على تحسين مهارات القراءة بشكل فعال.	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. تساعد الكتب المدرسية على تحسين مهارات الكتابة بشكل فعال.	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. تساعد الكتب المدرسية على تحسين مهارات التحدث بشكل فعال	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. تساعد الكتب المدرسية على تحسين مهارات الاستماع بشكل فعال	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. يقدم محتوى الكتب الدراسية مهارات البحث العلمي التي سأحتاجها في المستويات الأعلى	☐	☐	☐	☐

يرجى استخدام المساحة التالية للإضافة أو توضيح أي من ردودك السابقة:

القسم الثالث
الممارسات التعليمية والأنشطة لتعليم اللغة الإنجليزية في البرنامج

6. لطفا أختر ما يعكس ويشير إلى واقعك وتجربتك في برنامج تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية من حيث الممارسات التعليمية والأنشطة المستخدمة وذلك بإحاطة ما يناسبك من الخيارات التالية

الممارسات التعليمية والأنشطة لتعليم اللغة الإنجليزية في البرنامج	أتفق كليا	أتفق	لا أتفق	أعارض بشدة
1. أتعلم بشكل أفضل عندما يسمح لي المدرسين باستخدام اللغة العربية في الفصول الدراسية	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. يقوم المعلمون بتغيير أساليب التدريس حتى تتناسب مع احتياجاتي	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. أتعلم بشكل أفضل عندما يستخدم المعلمون وسائل التعليمية المختلفة أثناء التدريس	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. يقوم المعلمون بتعديل ترتيب محتوى الكتب الدراسية فصول اللغة الإنجليزية بما يترافق مع مصلحة الطلاب	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. يطلب مني المدرس أن أقدم عرضا امام الطلاب مرة واحدة على الأقل كل فصل دراسي	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. عندما يسألني المعلمون أسئلة، ينتظرون وقتًا كافيًا حتى أكون مستعدًا للمشاركة	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. يقوم المعلمون بتكييف محتوى الكتب المدرسية مع تخصصي الدراسي	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. أتعلم بشكل أفضل عندما يشركنا المعلمون في مناقشات وأنشطة جماعية	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. عند تدريسنا مفردات إنجليزية جديدة، يعتمد المعلمون على اللغة العربية لترجمة الكلمات الجديدة	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. يقوم المعلمون بتوزيع الوقت والأنشطة على جميع المهارات (القراءة والكتابة والاستماع والتحدث باللغة الإنجليزية) بشكل متساوٍ حتى أطور جميع المهارات	☐	☐	☐	☐

يرجى استخدام المساحة التالية للإضافة إلى أو توضيح أي من ردودك السابقة:

القسم الرابع
أسئلة مفتوحة

7. ما هي أهدافك من تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية؟

8. ما هي أهداف برنامج تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في البرنامج؟

9. هل تعتقد بأن المدة المحددة من قبل البرنامج لتعليم اللغة الإنجليزية هو كاف لإيصالك لمستوى مرضي يتناسب مع طموحك و تخصصك؟ لماذا؟

10. هل تعتقد أن المعلمين يجب أن يختاروا الكتاب المدرسي للصف أم على الإدارة تولي هذه المهمة؟ لماذا؟

11. كيف تقيم تجربتك في البرنامج؟ لماذا؟

12. هل لديك أي اقتراحات حول كيفية تحسين البرنامج؟

انتهت الأسئلة

❖ هل ترغب في المشاركة في مقابلة لمناقشة ما تم جمعه من الطلاب و المعلمين من معلومات تخص برنامج تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية؟ إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، يرجى تقديم وسيلة الاتصال المفضلة لديك :-

- البريد الإلكتروني:____
- رقم الجوال:____

يرجى اختيار وقتك المفضل للتواصل: الصباح، بعد الظهر، أو المساء. يرجى اختيار أكثر من وقت واحد إن أمكن. و للحصول على معلومات أوفر بخصوص المقابلة، يرجى التواصل على akhawaji@kau.edu.sa

☺ شكرا على مساهمتك الفعالة في إنجاح برنامج اللغة الإنجليزية ☺

Appendix E

OFFICE OF
THE INSTITUTIONAL
REVIEW BOARD

DATE:	November 21, 2018
IRB #:	16818
IRBNet ID & TITLE:	[1329931-2] A Collective and Communicative Formative Evaluation Approach: A Case Study of Teachers' and Students' Experiences in an English Language Teaching Program in Saudi Arabia
PI OF RECORD:	Carlos Lópezleiva, PhD
SUBMISSION TYPE:	Response/Follow-Up
BOARD DECISION:	APPROVED
EFFECTIVE DATE:	November 21, 2018
EXPIRATION DATE:	N/A
RISK LEVEL:	Minimal Risk
PROJECT STATUS:	Active - Open to Enrollment

DOCUMENTS:

- Application Form - Project Info Application (UPDATED: 11/20/2018)
- Consent Form - Consent Student Focus Group (UPDATED: 11/20/2018)
- Consent Form - Consent Form-Student Survey-CLL (UPDATED: 11/20/2018)
- Consent Form - Consent Form-Teacher Survey-CLL (UPDATED: 11/20/2018)
- Consent Form - Consent Teacher Interview (UPDATED: 11/20/2018)
- Data Collection - Observation Protocol (UPDATED: 11/10/2018)
- Letter - Response to IRB Review (UPDATED: 11/20/2018)
- Questionnaire/Survey - Student Survey (UPDATED: 11/10/2018)
- Questionnaire/Survey - Teacher Survey (UPDATED: 11/10/2018)
- Questionnaire/Survey - Contact info sheet Teachers (UPDATED: 11/10/2018)
- Questionnaire/Survey - Contact info sheet Students (UPDATED: 11/10/2018)

Thank you for your Response/Follow-Up submission. The UNM IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an acceptable risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks to participants have been minimized. **This project is not covered by UNM's Federalwide Assurance (FWA) and will not receive federal funding.**

The IRB has determined the following:

- Informed consent must be obtained and documentation is required for focus groups and interviews. To obtain and document consent, use only approved consent document(s).
- Informed consent must be obtained and documentation has been waived for surveys. To obtain consent, use only approved consent document(s).

- Informed consent has been waived for classroom observations.

This determination applies only to the activities described in the submission and does not apply should any changes be made to this research. If changes are being considered, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to submit an amendment to this project and receive IRB approval prior to implementing the changes. A change in the research may disqualify this research from the current review category. **If federal funding will be sought for this project, an amendment must be submitted so that the project can be reviewed under relevant federal regulations.**

All reportable events must be promptly reported to the UNM IRB, including: UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to participants or others, SERIOUS or UNEXPECTED adverse events, NONCOMPLIANCE issues, and participant COMPLAINTS.

If an expiration date is noted above, a continuing review or closure submission is due no later than 30 days before the expiration date. **It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to apply for continuing review or closure and receive approval for the duration of this project.** If the IRB approval for this project expires, all research related activities must stop and further action will be required by the IRB.

Please use the appropriate reporting forms and procedures to request amendments, continuing review, closure, and reporting of events for this project. Refer to the OIRB website for forms and guidance on submissions.

Please note that all IRB records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the closure of this project.

The Office of the IRB can be contacted through: mail at MSC02 1665, 1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001; phone at 505.277.2644; email at irbmaincampus@unm.edu; or in-person at 1805 Sigma Chi Rd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. You can also visit the OIRB website at irb.unm.edu.