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SAUDI EFL FEMALE TEACHERS' BELIEFS: A SINGLE CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

We are facing a huge linguistic and cultural change as a result of the spread of English language in KSA. It has been an important criterion to succeed in education or to obtain an opportunity in the Saudi job market (Al- Jarf, 2008; Al-Seghayer, 2014a; Al-Seghayer, 2014b; Rahman, 2013). Therefore, the study of teacher beliefs is important as they have a great influence in EFL teaching (LiLi, 2012). This single case is about English language educational ideologies and Saudi EFL female teachers. It explores a group of six Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs who are teaching in Saudi EFL programs in Eastern Province, KSA. The goal is to investigate their beliefs on the English language, and EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia. I considered how those beliefs have influenced their understanding of EFL teaching practices, their awareness about their own practices, the ideologies that are reflected on their beliefs. The theoretical framework drew from *Critical Theory* (Habermas, 1968) focusing on: *Social Reproduction Theory* (Bourdieu, 1990), *Freire's Levels of Consciousness* (1970), *Ideology* (Guess, 1989), and *Resistance Theory* (Giroux, 1983). Semi-structured interviews

and documents (autobiography writing, EFL teaching materials) were the data collection methods. Thematic analysis has been used to analyze the data, and *Critical Hermeneutics* (Gallagher,1992) is the interpretation method. The results indicate that student-centered education has been perceived as an effective EFL teaching method that prioritizes students' interests and involvement. The hegemony of English language and the 2030 vision are two ideologies that guided EFL teachers' beliefs and EFL practices. Additionally, the data reveals that the participants believed on EFL teachers' agency as an empowering aspect to them and consequently to their students. Deficit-based perspective on Arabic language and culture in EFL teaching is a concept that has emerged from this study. Based on the findings, recommendations were given to develop EFL teaching in KSA, and to promote awareness on issues of domination and ideology in the EFL educational context.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The spread of English language and culture educational ideologies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) have led me to investigate this case by exploring six Saudi female teachers' beliefs. Historically, Saudi Arabia is an Arabic speaking country for centuries. Arabic is rated as one of the top ten spoken languages worldwide and, in spite of that, nowadays, English language has become a dominant language in all sectors in KSA. The inclusion of Arabic language has been minimized in a number of Saudi institutions including universities. Arabic is no longer the language that students employ to obtain knowledge in a number of colleges such as science, computer, and business. It is only an elective subject that students study, and the rest of the courses are taught in English, except the Islamic studies course. In this regard, English has replaced Arabic in numerous fields such as academic, social, and economic spheres (Alshahrani, 2016).

In education, EFL teachers are considered the channel at which the English language and culture are transmitted to EFL students in KSA. Students can be easily influenced by their teachers as they spend long hours in EFL classes. Teachers also have a special status in our culture and religion; they are considered respected figures. Teachers in the Saudi society are considered important figures that shape students' identities. There is a famous proverb in my culture that states: "A teacher's status in the society is of a prophet's status." The proverb indicates the great mission that teachers have in guiding and leading generations.

As an insider of the Saudi society, I have noticed that families here trust in teachers as they are the people who contribute to nurturing their children by enriching their knowledge and teaching them some subject matters. I still remember that during my school days only a small number of mothers attended parents' meetings as parents thought that there was no need to follow up with teachers regarding their children's progress. Teachers were trusted and were given the authority to shape students' personalities and intellectual achievements. Thus,

a teacher in the Saudi society is considered as a person who maps students' path in their educational journeys and in their lives. Since teachers are important figures in education, it is important to shed light on their beliefs in order to understand the way English language has been perceived, taught, and used in the context of KSA.

In the field of research, teachers' beliefs and the belief system have been widely investigated as an influential factor that affects teaching and learning (Asiri, 2017; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Saad, Sardareh, & Ambarwati, 2013). Beliefs are formed as a result of participating in a society that has its traditions, culture, or sub-cultures (Hamilton, 1993). Belief as a concept has been defined in educational studies as "attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions" (Pajares, 1992, p. 309). So, according to Pajares' (1992) definition, belief is the individual's mental understanding to a matter that leads him/her to act in specific ways and do or attend particular practices. Moreover, Beliefs are ways in which individuals envision their reality. They provide legitimacy, truth, or credibility to control thought and behavior (Harvey, 1986). The previous definitions of belief indicate that reality is not objective. Rather, the reality is subjective and social agents have an influence in forming it. Belief is not formed as a result of cognitive internalization of a fixed and an ever-changing reality. Rather, it is formed as a result of being through numerous experiences as people participate in different discourses, which makes these beliefs an important aspect to research in the field of education. In this research, I focused particularly on Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs in the field of EFL teaching in EFL college programs in the Eastern Province, KSA.

As a researcher, I position myself as an *Indigenous insider* (Sleeter, 2005) who has experienced living in the community and became familiar with its culture. It is also a person who has knowledge about the context of the study and its people. In the same vein, I consider myself as an outsider as I lived for nine years in the US, and I had different experiences such

as being an ESL student in the US between 2006 and 2008 in Cleveland, Ohio. I also lived and studied as an undergraduate and a graduate student in Albuquerque, New Mexico between 2010 and 2017.

As an insider in the KSA context, I studied in Saudi public schools from grade 1-12. Then, I joined College of Science with a concentration in Biology in my hometown, Al-Ahsa, Eastern Province, KSA where I was born and raised in. My experience as a student in the KSA familiarized me with what it means to be a student in the Saudi educational system, especially in female-only educational institutions. Currently, I am a PhD student in the University of New Mexico, USA. Also, I am an EFL female educator in one of the colleges in the Eastern Province in KSA, which makes me aware of the issues, restrictions, rules, and regulations that Saudi EFL female teachers face on a daily basis. Being an insider helped me in understanding the participants' experiences. I linked that to the sociocultural context in KSA, which deeply aided me to describe and analyze the data from this research from Saudi EFL female teachers' perspectives. While recognizing this level of connection to the context of the study, I still acknowledge that I have been through some experiences in my life that are different from the Saudi EFL female teachers, so results are also linked to my interpretation that associated the Saudi context with the American context. Further, my experience in the US made me familiar with the global context as I met friends and classmates from diverse backgrounds, and they shared with me their experiences of living in social contexts in relation to the post-colonial era in their countries such as Madagascar, Peru, and Mexico.

However, my living and studying in the US was an eye-opening experience to me on issues related to social domination. I have learned that people who belong to the advantaged or the dominant group are more likely to get opportunities in education and jobs than social groups who are less fortunate. The dominant group in the US is identified with people who are White, Christian, and middle class with the most privileged person being White, male,

Christian. Studying and reading about domination in the US led me to think about my living experience and how people perceive and live with each other in my society. The characteristics of the privileged group in the Saudi society I would say is someone who has a tribal affiliation, is a Muslim, and belongs to the middle or upper middle class. Being a tribal member means belonging to the privileged group that had been given the priority to hold higher position in the country. They think that they are more eligible than others as their ancestors ruled parts of the country in the past. However, nowadays KSA government are trying to fight this phenomenon and base job opportunities and career success on having the qualifications (Rahaimy, 2020). Unfortunately, some people in positions still have supporting tribal members mentality and trying to resist the reform. Thus, the privileged Saudi person is a male, who is Muslim with a tribal affiliation, and belongs to middle or upper-middle class. I am distinguishing a dominant group from a privileged person because discrimination can occur within the dominant group members sometimes as a result of some other characteristics such as gender.

According to Guess (1989), no individual is ideology-free. So, living in societies means participating in discourses that shape how a person thinks and acts. Ideology sometimes can be a mean to control people. Moreover, it is a world view that individuals adopt that enables them to encounter what represses them (Guess,1989). These EFL teachers' thoughts and world views are constructed as a result of internalizing and adopting ideologies by participating in the Saudi discourse (Asiri, 2017). Nesper (1987) asserted that "to understand teaching from teachers' perspectives, we have to understand the beliefs with which they define their work" (p. 323). In education, we have learned that EFL teachers' educational and social practices are often informed by their beliefs (Shulman,1987). EFL teachers are social agents who affect and are being affected by their context. They are influenced by practices in their society that are socially constructed. Subsequently,

individuals or in particular EFL teachers might filter the living experiences differently, which makes it interesting to investigate how they conceptualize and perceive English as a language and as a college or school subject. Therefore, it is important to explore not only beliefs per se, but also these beliefs interrelatedness to ideology, discourse, domination, and critical awareness.

Including female teachers in this research was fruitful. All of the participants in this research have studied in female-only schools and colleges in KSA. It is a unique and not a well-known context in the literature especially from the point of view of Saudi female educators. This was an opportunity to show an aspect of female-only educational context by exploring their beliefs. Also, I intended to present Saudi female teachers' voice in the current EFL literature. I believe that female teachers have a greater role than their male counterparts in the prevalence of ideologies. They are role models to their students, and their influence will be passed to female students who will be future mothers. In Arab culture, mothers bear more responsibilities in shaping children's thought and identities. Thus, being a female teacher to female students is more effective in spreading ideologies in the Saudi educational context and then to the whole society.

Statement of Problem

The hegemony of the English language has become evident through its prevalence in the Saudi educational institutions, especially in the Saudi universities (Al-Jarf, 2008; Rahman, 2013). English language educational ideologies have dominated education and employment. In addition, the status of the English language in Saudi Arabia is an essential aspect for employment (Al-Seghayer, 2012). Numerous Saudi high school graduates come to the university with low English language proficiency scores. Graduates from secondary schools and even college graduates experience some difficulties in finding a job opportunity if they do not have a sufficient command of English (Al-Seghayer, 2012). Although many

students have high achievements in courses that are taught in Arabic at Saudi schools, their college grade point average (CGPAs) in college decline when they start studying the subjects in the English language (Pennycook, 1994). So, to some students, the English language has become a barrier instead of being new knowledge that enriches their education for a better future. Furthermore, the English language determines the students' field of study, the future jobs, and their socio-economic status (Al-Asmari & Khan, 2014; Seghayer, 2012). Requiring high English proficiency level for attending college and employment is a serious issue that Saudi youth face, and it is worth investigating.

The domination of English in KSA is unexpected. Saudi Arabia is a country that does not have direct contact with any English-speaking countries. Also, Saudi people practice their religion in Arabic language, which makes it an important language in their everyday rituals and religious activities. Further, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has never been colonized by English-speaking countries. In spite of the previously mentioned factors that limit the domination of English, the influence of the English-speaking countries can be easily noticed in the Saudi educational, social, and cultural aspects. This rapid spread of English led me to investigate this phenomenon through critically exploring EFL teachers' beliefs in English and EFL education in EFL college programs, Eastern Province, KSA.

It is interesting to investigate EFL teachers' beliefs on English in the Saudi context as Saudi Arabia is considered a native Arabic speaking country. It is the center for all Muslims around the world for religious education. Scholars from all over the world come here to be educated in the Islam religion. Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University in Riyadh, KSA is one of those religious institutions. Also, throughout history, the well-known Arabic literature figures belonged to Arabian Peninsula, which is known now as Saudi Arabia. Their works are studied by those who are interested in learning the Arabic language and literature. Hence, exploring EFL teachers' beliefs who are originally Arabic native speakers is

enlightening to understand how Saudi EFL teachers think, act, and react to this linguistic phenomenon. Further, it is essential to explore the role that EFL classrooms play in transmitting cultural values to new generations.

A number of people in my society claim that Saudi Arabia has never been colonized. In my opinion and, based on what has been illustrated in the literature above, colonization is not only using violence over other populations but also using symbolic power to control institutions and knowledge production. Another form of colonization can be applied through legitimizing, imposing, producing, and reproducing cultural, linguistic, intellectual, and economic ideologies that have not existed before and do not benefit people in the community. Enforcing a foreign language as a criterion for success in governmental institutions is a form of colonization, too, which makes it important to explore EFL teachers' beliefs and to understand this phenomenon.

It is important to understand how EFL teachers conceptualize the teaching of English language and culture as this understanding might be informative about a number of aspects. It can enlighten us about the advantages and the shortcomings of EFL teaching. Also, it shows the degree of openness and acceptance that EFL teachers have for foreign languages and cultures, which leads to differences in perceiving foreign ideologies. These differences lead to various conceptualization of ideologies and the way teachers co-exist with them. Therefore, teachers either reproduce those ideologies or eliminate them. The problem sometimes is not merely reproducing ideologies or knowledge of a colonizer in society or education. Rather, the problem emerges when those ideologies marginalize people's social group or native language and culture as it results in identity and language shift. Therefore, I believe that there is a need to investigate EFL female teachers' beliefs and awareness about the spread of English language and culture ideologies in Saudi Arabia and the way it has impacted society and education especially the female only colleges. In addition, ideologies

that guide those beliefs are important to address in order to have an accurate interpretation of the studied phenomenon. Understanding where those teachers' conceptions came from helps in establishing an informed decision, providing recommendations for EFL education in KSA, and promoting awareness in regard to foreign language and culture inclusion in education.

Saudi Arabia Context

Population

I will describe the population in Saudi Arabia in two sections: the expat population, and the citizens population. My aim of showing the Saudi Arabia population is to provide an overview of the social groups there. Including the dominant groups as well as the minorities leads into understanding the different social statuses in the country and where individuals have been placed in different sectors.

Expats

According to Global Media Insight (GMI) (2019), the total population of Saudi Arabia is 34,059,175. More than 30% of the Saudi population are expats, and some of those groups moved to Saudi Arabia as refugees, such as Philistinians and Syrians. Nearly a quarter of the expats are Syrians escaping the war in their country. Almost 2.5 million Syrians live in Saudi Arabia, and they are given free access to education and healthcare, as well as they are encouraged to take up jobs in the country. Surprisingly, Indians are the second most numerous diasporas in the country. The Indians comprise 14% in Saudi Arabia, most of them employed in the hospitality and mining industries. Saudi Arabia is also the largest market for manual labor for Pakistani workers. They form 10% of the population, and most of them are working in manual labor sectors, such as construction.

The percentage of Egyptians in Saudi Arabia makes up 10%, while the percentage of Yemenis is almost 9%. Bangladeshis are another important migrated group occupying 8% of

the population. Other major nationalities in Saudi Arabia are 7% Filipinos, 6% Sri Lankan's, 4% Indonesians, 4% Sudanese, 3% Jordanian/Palestinian, and 1% Turkish. Apart from these, there are also 1% people from Western countries.

It is important to note that workers who work in manual labor usually come to Saudi Arabia individually without their families due to the higher living expenses. Also, the companies that import those workers do not sponsor their families' expenses. The table below demonstrates the expats population.

Table 1.1

The expats population in Saudi Arabia

Country	Millions	Percentage
Syrian	2.48	23%
Indian	1.54	14%
Pakistan	1.06	10%
Egyptian	1.06	10%
Yemeni	0.94	9%
Bangladeshi	0.83	8%
Filipino	0.71	7%
Sri Lanka	0.65	6%
Indonesian	0.47	4%
Sudanese	0.47	4%
Jordanian/Palestinian	0.31	3%
Turkish	0.09	1%
Westerners	0.12	1%

Note. Population of Saudi Arabia, Global Media Insight, March 27th, 2019, retrieved from <https://www.globalmediainsight.com/blog/saudi-arabia-population-statistics>

Saudi Citizens

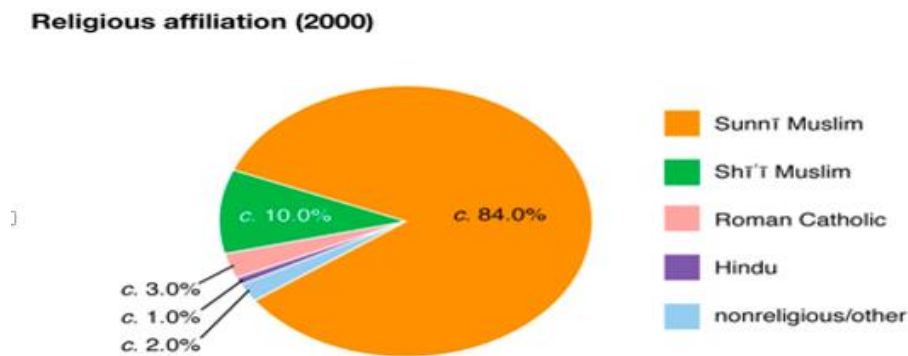
The majority of the native population of KSA is Arab. Some Saudis are of mixed ethnic origin, being descendants of Turks and Iranians. Around 10 percent have an African or Asian (Indonesian or Indian) background, most of whom immigrated as pilgrims and inhabited in the Hijaz region, along the Red Sea coast and now have Saudi citizenship (Fanack, 2019).

Today 80% of Saudi Arabians live in urban zones. The population is divided into Arab and Bedouins. The division lines between the people of Saudi Arabia are more cultural than ethnic. There are divisions between "native" Arabs 56%, other Arabs and Bedouins 27%, while these groups in other Arab countries are counted as one people. "Native" Arabs are the people of central (Najd) and western Arabia (Hijaz), while other Arabs are people originating from the borders of today's Saudi Arabia, as well as immigrants from other Arab countries (Kjeilen, LookLex Encyclopedia).

I conducted the study in a city in Eastern Province, KSA. Dammam is one of the largest cities in KSA. It has the oil company that is considered one of the main producers in the world. Dammam recruits a number of workers around the world. Saudi citizens from different regions of the country also come here for jobs in addition to the local people of this area. Figure 1.1 below shows the religious and nonreligious groups in KSA. Also, figure 1.2 below shows the religious affiliation in KSA. There are two Muslim religious groups: Sunni group which comprises 84%, and Shia group that forms 10%. Also, there are 6% of other religious groups such as Roman Catholic, Hindu, and non-religious (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019). We can notice from the provided information that the domination in KSA is to Sunni group that comprises 84% of the total population.

Figure 1.1

Religious Affiliation in KSA



Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. Saudi Arabia: Religious affiliation [online image]
Retrieved from:
<https://www.britannica.com/place/SaudiArabia/Religion#/media/1/525348/225927>

In KSA, the dominant religion is Islam, and the dominant religious group is Sunni because of its number of followers and its doctrine included in the country's constitution. In addition, males usually have more opportunities in education and employment than females due to their religious and cultural responsibilities as householders and basic living providers to their families, which makes males privileged in a number of work places. However, KSA now is embracing female's empowerment and providing more educational and work opportunities to them. People's background matters when talking about domination. A person who has a particular tribal affiliation might have more privileges as compared to other groups. Moreover, social class is one reason for favoritism in society. From my personal experience, I recognized that being from middle class or upper middle class has been represented in the Saudi media and in some educational institutions as the norm and the real living standard of Saudi people. The poverty as a social phenomenon has been dealt with as a highly sensitive and covert issue in the Saudi educational discourse. This might be for cultural and religious considerations. For example, the programs that sponsor free breakfast

meals or free school uniforms to students from working class families are not overtly known or stated in KSA educational system, which is different from some countries such as the US where some schools have been referred to as free-lunch schools.

Regarding women’s status in KSA, nowadays they are attaining more status and support from the government in numerous fields in the country. The growth of female leaders has increased dramatically in education, health, civil services, and some other areas.

According to Alnuaim (2013), middle class forms the majority of the Saudi population than upper class comes as the second dominant group in this classification, which indicates the upper class and the middle-class domination in the country. Table 1.2 shows the social categories in KSA society based on income. The upper-class group forms the majority population in KSA, and the middle class comes second. It is illustrated in figure 1.2 that the lower, marginal, and basic classes are the less dominated groups with a yearly income between 20,000-40,000 SR.

To illustrate what I have mentioned above about the social classes in Saudi Arabia, I have also included the chart below that was taken from Alnuaim (2013). It shows the distribution of monthly income of Saudis’ different classes. 1 US dollar is equal to 3.75 Saudi Riyals.

Table 1.2

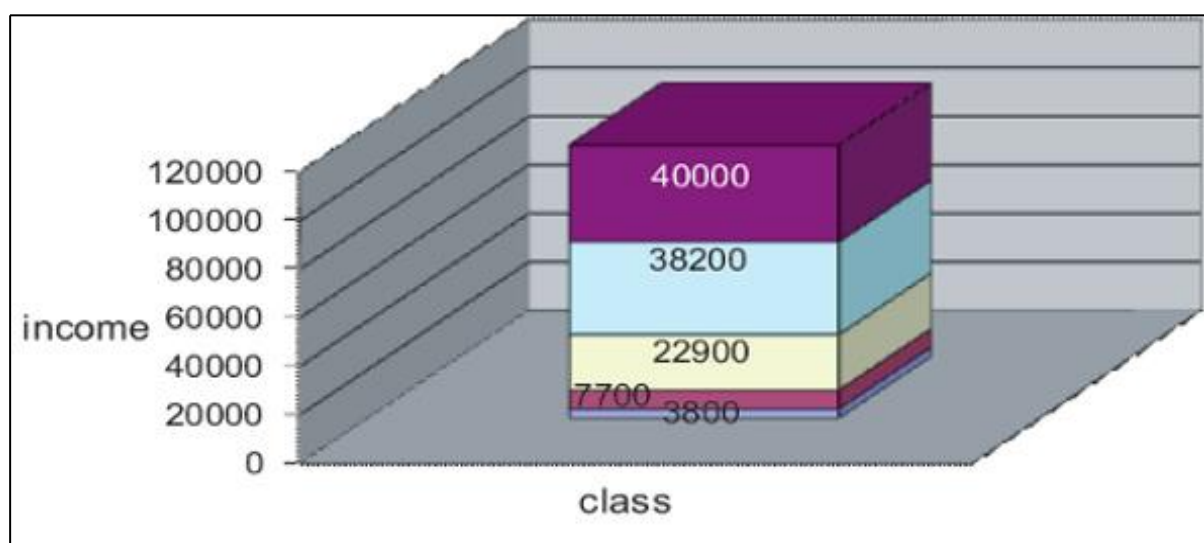
Distribution of the monthly incomes of Saudis and Saudi social classes (Alnuaim, 2013).

Peripheral (marginal) section	7,700-3,900
Basic section (middle)	7,700-22,900
Upper section	22,900-38,200

Note. Reprinted from “The Composition of the Saudi Middle Class: A Preliminary Study” (p.36), by M. Alnuaim, 2013, Gulf Research Center. © Gulf Research Center 2013. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/171150/Middle_Class_8157.pdf0.pdf

Figure 1.2

Categories of Saudi social classes by levels of income (Alnuaim,2013).



- Upper class
- Upper middle
- Basic middle
- Marginal middle
- Lower class

From “The Composition of the Saudi Middle Class: A Preliminary Study”, by M. Alnuaim, 2013, Gulf Research Center, p.36.

https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/171150/Middle_Class_8157.pdf0.pdf

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Context of the Study

Single case study was employed with six Saudi EFL female teachers who were teaching English in female colleges in the Eastern region of Saudi Arabia. The educational institutions where the participants work teach EFL curriculum to students. The EFL teachers received educational instructions from people in authority. The most common English language varieties that are taught in this context are the “British Standard English”, and the “American Standard English”. The reason for using those varieties is the historical and political relations with those countries. Thus, the Saudi EFL institutes import the books either from the US or from Britain. Four language skills are introduced: Reading, Writing,

Listening, and Speaking. Four separate textbooks are classified based on four different levels of difficulty. EFL students in their first year of college are taught books that suit their English language level such as Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced. Simultaneously, the freshmen students study some other courses in English, such as Statistics, Mathematics, and Computer Science. Students study 12-16 hours of English weekly, and they have four exams a year alongside some other online English language activities that students need to complete using the university blackboard platform. Each class has about 40 students. All of the staff are females: faculty members, security ladies, custodial ladies, and cafeteria vendors. The cafeteria usually has different restaurants and tables with chairs where female students can gather during their breaks. Also, the university campuses have bookstores that sell textbooks and students' stationary needs. Some colleges have an open outdoor field that students can use to rest and study as well.

I have provided a detailed description of the environments' major characteristics where the study participants teach. There might be slight differences, but the majority of EFL programs in Eastern Province follow this system. Also, the teaching environment is almost identical. There might be some changes that I am not aware of due to the rapid change that the country is going through nowadays. The atmosphere in recent years provides more freedom to women, which was guided by conservative ideologies in the past. The following section presents more explanation.

At the time of conducting this study between 2019 and 2020, the Saudi government is seeking to fulfill a vision of the country that is called the *2030 vision*. The vision's main goal is to support moderate thinking as the mainstream and avoid the Islamic extremists' ideologies that had been followed in the past in the majority of KSA institutions. The extremists' thinking refuses accepting other cultures or religions that are different from their own, while the moderate thinking has more tolerance for non-muslims and cultural exchange.

Nowadays, KSA wants women to be empowered and to be independent so that they can hold administrative positions. As a Saudi person who lives and interacts with Saudi people on a daily basis, I see that Saudis are expecting more changes to happen. In the future, maybe talking about female-only colleges will be a thing of the past. So, people started to change and the society and schooling have changed accordingly. I included in this research the aspects that have been changed for this particular era of time and I did not include some other changes that happened in KSA after the data collection since the changes currently are rapid and tremendous in various spheres.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated six Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs about English language educational ideologies including the teaching policies and practices. Also, the influences of those beliefs on their EFL classroom practices were examined. Further, the ideologies that guide their conceptualization of the English language and culture were important to explore as they guide them when teaching the English linguistic and cultural aspects. Additionally, I examined the extent in which they were critically aware of their teaching beliefs and practices as EFL educators in Saudi colleges. I studied EFL teachers' awareness of the English language prevalence, the role of ideologies in the way they conduct classroom practices, how they perceive learning English, and the status of the Arabic language and culture in their lives.

All of the concepts above were important in understanding how Saudi EFL female teachers practice teaching and how their teaching affected their students' world view and cultural and linguistic identities. At the same time, their EFL teaching experiences helped me to understand how ideologies and beliefs guide their actions in EFL educational sphere.

The primary research question is the following:

Main Question: What are Saudi EFL female college teachers' beliefs about English and EFL teaching in Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia?

Sub-questions:

- How do those beliefs influence EFL teachers' teaching practices?
- In what ways are EFL teachers critically aware of these beliefs and practices?
- What ideologies are reflected in Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs about English and EFL teaching and learning?

Rationale of the Study

The case study design is the research method for this investigation. A research with this design is bounded by nature and has limits (Merriam, 2009). This is a single case about EFL educational ideologies and Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs in Eastern Province. Using case study methodology provided insights into the experiences, the behaviors, or the beliefs of a specific bounded unit (EFL teacher's beliefs on English language educational ideologies) in a particular context (EFL college programs in Eastern Province, KSA). Case study was introduced to the educational field by Yin (1984) and Stake (1995) who have emphasized the importance of the subjective meaning gained through the participants or the group. Since this case study's purpose is investigating beliefs, I think it is important to focus on the subjective meaning of the EFL teaching experience that each participant provides as beliefs of one person are different from another.

The status given to the English language in KSA in education and employment formed my desire to include EFL teachers in particular in this research and not teachers of other disciplines. The English language has a special status over other world languages in Saudi Arabia for a long period of time even before the idea of globalization and the creation of the modern technology. In the past, English had been used for specific purposes in some work places. English was used as a *Lingue Franca* to enable some companies' employees to

communicate with each other (Al- Haq 1996; Elyas; 2014; Ibrahim, 1985). However, Post September 11, 2001, the Saudi school curriculums and English language teaching were the most important elements that went under change. The English language and some aspects of the American culture were taught in Saudi Arabia as a part of the educational reform movement (Elyas, 2008). Al-Seghayer (2014) states that, "English currently asserts several functions and enjoys an eminent status in various sectors at all levels within Saudi Arabia" (Al-Seghayer, 2014, p.17). For this reason, I decided to conduct this research with EFL teachers as they meet more often with students and their influence might be more than teachers of other subjects. Furthermore, those EFL teachers are teaching a culture that is different from the Arab culture to students, which makes it important to investigate the ways that they teach those cultural aspects and the teachers' goals of teaching those aspects.

Moreover, because of religious and cultural restrictions, people who are in the management positions are discreet regarding having foreigners accessing female-only places and doing research in those educational spheres. Consequently, there is a dearth of studies that explore the Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs. However, I used this privilege of being an insider who has access to female-only university educators in order to communicate with them and investigate their beliefs. The goal of including female participants is to present Saudi female educators' voice in the current literature and to show the way EFL education is implemented in female educational spheres in KSA.

Regarding the time frame, this study was conducted during the 2019-2020 period, which is a transformational stage in the history of Saudi Arabia. Nowadays this society has become more open-minded regarding giving the Saudi women authority and freedom. By the time of writing this research, 2019-2021, women got the right to drive cars for the first time in the modern world history, and they became independent in making their decisions. In addition, movie theaters had been established which are sponsored by companies that operate

this business in the US. In business and education, gender-mixed events are held in major cities, such as Riyadh, Eastern Province, and Jeddah. In female colleges, there are less restrictions regarding the dress code. For example, in the past female teachers and students were required to wear long sleeved gowns or long skirts at work as an official dress code. But in 2019, less restrictions and obligations have been enforced on women in the Saudi society, universities, and schools. Also, there are no restrictions regarding dressing publicly. They do not have to cover their hair, and there is no specific form for the long gown *abaya* when they go out; any decent clothes are sufficient to dress publicly.

Since the participants are Saudi females who have lived and experienced the new changes, I thought it would be important to include their perspectives on those reforms. There is a belief that Saudi females bear the responsibility as being culture preservers more than Saudi males. Restrictions were applied in the past on the kind of jobs and the authorities for women in a number of aspects including being leaders and having contact with male employees. The reason was to protect the Saudi society from liberal ideologies. Currently, in order to make enabling Saudi women socially accepted, policy makers consider keeping the Saudi cultural values along empowering them. There has been an emphasis on the importance of women's roles in the Saudi society by the Saudi government and the Saudi King, Salman bin Abdulaziz. The Saudi government believes that change starts from empowering women and giving them their rights. The government looked at it as a step to give Saudi women their right and not as an openness that might devastate the society. Elmulthum (2016) highlighted that when the country started the change, they started it with women as an influential figure in the societal change.

So, for the reasons given above, using the case study as a research method, I examined the beliefs of EFL educators who have been living in the Saudi context focusing on

female-only educational environment. I think there is a need to investigate the influence of those new changes on the EFL female teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices.

Significance of the Study

This single case study is about English language educational ideologies focusing on Saudi EFL female teachers who are teaching in female colleges in the Eastern Province, KSA. Investigating Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs is important to have an insight, which might lead to an informed reform decision in the field of EFL education. One of the aims of the study is to inform policy makers of the EFL female teachers' perspectives. The goal is to understand the way EFL teachers form their beliefs to avoid misunderstandings or to correct some EFL teachers' misconceptions about the goals and visions regarding EFL teaching. This study intended to promote Saudi EFL teachers' awareness about the role they play in producing and reproducing intellectual and cultural knowledge in EFL classroom. In addition, it is important to reveal the ideologies that form their educational beliefs to have an informed research-based implication for EFL teaching pedagogies that preserve the Saudi and the Islamic cultural aspects.

Moreover, this study contributes to the literature in many aspects. For the participants, it gives Saudi female teachers an opportunity to express their voices in the field of EFL education since few studies were conducted on this population. For the site, the study took place in the Eastern Province, Dammam. I have not found the same area of studies that included this particular area of Saudi Arabia. Dammam has diversity because of its geographical location, economy, and its openness to recruit people from different cultures and religions. Therefore, I think it is important to conduct a research study in this particular location to understand how this discourse impacts Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs on EFL education. Studying teachers' beliefs can inform the policymakers about the current EFL educational context, which helps to reconsider teacher education programs, professional

development courses, and the materials teachers use as a guide for teaching. I have considered EFL teachers' levels of consciousness (Freire, 1970) with an aim to promote EFL teachers' critical awareness about some hegemonic ideologies that might be interrelated with EFL education.

In the next section, I introduce the theoretical framework that I drew on to analyze the data. Then, I outline the research overview. After that, I present limitations of this study.

Theoretical Framework Overview

In this study, I used different theories under the umbrella of *Critical Theory* (Habermas, 1968): Social Reproduction Theory (Bourdieu, 1990), and I showed its connections to EFL teachers' beliefs on the English language, its teaching, and the ideologies (Guess, 1989) that are associated with that language in Saudi society. Teachers' levels of consciousness (Freire, 1970) were considered to examine the extent in which EFL teachers aware of cultural, religious, political, educational ideologies, and whether they recognize their effects on their beliefs and practices. In addition, *Resistance theory* (Giroux, 1983) was used. The *Social Reproduction Theory* (SRT) helped me to understand the way English language and culture ideologies are reflected on EFL teachers' understanding of EFL education and its practices in the context of Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia. *Ideology* (Guess, 1989) has been looked at in this research as a factor that controls the way individuals think and perceive reality. Moreover, ideology is deemed as a world view that empowers people to encounter different ideologies that marginalize them (Guess, 1989).

Research Design Overview

Qualitative research methods were used to investigate EFL teachers' beliefs who are teaching in EFL programs about English and EFL education in Eastern Province, KSA. I focused on how those beliefs have impacted their teaching practices. Qualitative research is meant to be an analytical tool to analyze specific cases in a particular time and place by

analyzing people's experiences and activities in their local context (Flick, 2014; Merriam, 2009). The case study was a tool to get a deeper understanding of the social context that has impacted the participants' concepts about EFL education. Some of the participants were teaching in one college and some of them were teaching in different colleges. Semi-structured interviews and documents (autobiography writing, teaching materials) were sources of data collection. I included some questions in the interviews and prompts in the autobiographies to help EFL teachers elaborate when they talked about their experiences and thoughts. My goal was to investigate EFL teachers' beliefs and how those beliefs have influenced their EFL teaching practices, their awareness, and ideologies that reflected on their beliefs and actions.

In the current study, I used single case with embedded units, and I applied an instrumental exploratory case study. My aim was providing a detailed description of the EFL teachers' beliefs that helped me in understanding the factors that had made them form those beliefs regarding the Saudi female educational context.

The data analysis methods include Critical Hermeneutics (Gallagher, 1992) and Depth Hermeneutics (Gallagher, 1992), both of which manifest avoiding all of the extra-linguistic ideas that have been shaped ideologically and connecting what is in the data with the principles of critical theory. To ensure trustworthiness and validity, I triangulated data across sources.

Limitations of the Study

The current study is qualitative, and the nature of this research method often involves research with a small number of participants. I conducted the research with six in-service EFL teachers, which makes it difficult to generalize the findings to all EFL Saudi teachers in KSA. This study is qualitative and its goal was to profoundly understand the experience and learn new things from it, and not to generalize the findings as it is the case in quantitative research.

In addition, I tried to have a variety of teachers in terms of cultural and educational background. They studied their master's degree in different contexts: KSA, Bahrain, and the US. However, the results might not be applicable to other groups of EFL teachers who have lived and experienced different contexts. In spite of not being able to represent teachers from all regions in Saudi Arabia, this gap might be a motivation for future research. In addition, I included the participants who were willing to participate only. Some teachers might have different perspectives, but they do not prefer to be part of the research. Therefore, there are some point of views that are overlooked unintentionally.

In addition, people's beliefs change over time. Thus, the findings that are applicable for here and now might not be applicable years later. Therefore, a follow up study is needed in the future to investigate Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs in the Saudi context.

Summary

Teachers' beliefs have been a widespread topic in the educational field in general and within EFL teaching in particular. Qualitative case study design was utilized as a research method. Social reproduction theory (Bourdieu, 1990), Ideology (Guess, 1989), the three levels of consciousness (Freire, 1970), and Resistance theory (Giroux, 1983) were the lenses through which I looked at the data. Critical hermeneutics is the data analysis method that enabled me to connect what is in the data to reach to the research findings.

Previous research projects about EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia have shown Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs about teaching pronunciation (Alsofyani & Algethami, 2017), reading strategies (Bamanger & Gashan, 2014), and practices that are related to teaching culture (Baleghizadeh & Moghadam, 2013). However, there are limited studies that looked critically at EFL teachers' beliefs and their assumptions about EFL teaching and learning. In the current research, I will contribute to the literature by examining the factors that have impacted Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs on English as a language and EFL teaching in

the context of EFL college programs in Eastern province, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia using critical lenses. The results of this study indicate that the hegemony of English language and the 2030 vision were two ideologies that guided Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs, practices, and awareness.

Definitions of Key Terminology

Belief: A number of thoughts that a person has established overtime and it guides a person's actions and leads them to adopt certain practices.

EFL: English as a foreign language.

Quraan: The holy book for Islam.

Ideology: ideas that influence concepts and beliefs formation *EFL*: English as a foreign language.

Abaya: A full-length outer gown that some Muslim women wear when being in mixed gender gatherings, or when praying.

KSA: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We can refer to it also as Saudi Arabia.

Teaching Practices: actions that teachers do in a classroom, such as classroom activities, teaching strategies, curriculum and some other actions.

Muslim: individuals who follow the religion of Islam and its doctrine and teachings.

Muhram: A male family member who accompanies a female during a journey or when meeting with other stranger males.

Awareness: having an understanding of the case of social phenomenon and the practices that are oppressive to some social groups.

Critical Consciousness: being aware of the oppressive action and finding a way to encounter it to make change that leads to justice for all.

9/11: a series of attacks by al-Qaeda terrorist group against the US in September 11, 2001.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For the literature review, I searched the databases in these areas: English teaching, Education, Cultural Studies, Sociology, Anthropology. My parameters in searching the specific literature were concepts about EFL education, EFL teaching in KSA, in-service teachers' beliefs, EFL teachers' beliefs, Ideologies, Discourse, Critical theory, Social Reproduction Theory, Resistance Theory, Freire's Three Levels of Consciousness. I tried to include concepts that are usually linked in the literature.

This single embedded case study investigates six Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs about English language educational ideologies and practices in female colleges in the Eastern Province context, Saudi Arabia. I have included in the literature the following sections: English status in Saudi Arabia, the educational system in KSA, teacher beliefs, and critical theory.

The literature review sections in this chapter are important and connected. Including literature related to critical theory, ideology, discourse, and language are needed to have a better understanding of the research topic. EFL teachers' beliefs have been formed during their participation in the Saudi social context and particularly the Saudi educational context. Each context has its own rules and protocols that are created by those who live or interact with people in the Saudi society, which leads to include the concept of discourse in the current review of literature. According to Fairclough (1989), discourse contains specific kind of the language between the addressee and the addressers. This language could be verbal or non-verbal, which leads to incorporate language as an important constituent of the discourse. However, language and discourse are usually utilized to legitimize ideas or practices that support an ideology. On the other hand, ideology is an essential part of critical theory that explains the phenomenon based on social relations emphasizing power relations and social

roles. It is a world view that people can adopt to encounter deceptive ideologies that marginalize their race, sex, religion, or knowledge.

Moreover, I incorporated some research about EFL teacher focusing on their beliefs. In my point of view, nowadays the EFL teacher is one of the major elements that affect students' education and lives as their thoughts about EFL education might influence the way they teach and support students. For the aforementioned reason, I have included literature about them to increase my understanding of their role. Additionally, reading research about EFL teachers locally and globally adds to my knowledge about these kinds of research.

In this research, I am connecting EFL teachers' beliefs with the sociocultural discourse. I think that critical theory is one important theory that ties those two factors. I will explain how critical theory was created to explore the sociocultural factors that influence people's thinking. Also, the role played by power relation in society construction will be emphasized. Power relation influences how people perceive or filter certain ideologies when living in a particular discourse. Therefore, searching Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs implicates using critical theory as a theoretical foundation to examine the extent to which ideologies inform Saudi EFL teachers' understanding of EFL teaching context and how their educational beliefs influence their conceptualization of teaching practices.

To understand the phenomenon of the spread of English language in Eastern Province, KSA, I will present in the section below literature on the English language status in the Saudi context. This kind of literature is informative about the study participants' mindset, which assists in data interpretation social context affects teachers and, consequently, their beliefs might be shaped accordingly.

English Status in Saudi Arabia

The English language has a special status in the country; it is the only foreign language that is taught in public schools. According to Rahman (2013), the English language

is used as the language of instructions in technical education, medicine and many other colleges. He also claims that the English language is the medium in both electronic and print media in Saudi Arabia. "English currently asserts several functions and enjoys an eminent status in various sectors at all levels within Saudi Arabia" (Al-Seghayer, 2014, p.17). Al- Jarf (2008) asserts that, "the new Ministry mandate stressed that English be well taught along the same lines as Arabic" (p. 198). Syed (2003) investigated the sociocultural context of English language teaching in the Gulf (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Oman). He stressed that since the area is multicultural and multilingual, policymakers should connect modernity and development with the English language and for this reason they tend to include it in all subjects and on all grade levels. Al-Seghayer (2012) claims that the status of the English language in Saudi Arabia is an essential aspect for employment. Employers in many fields such as industries, hospitals, and hotels are required to have certain level of proficiency in English. He also adds that graduates from secondary schools and even college graduates confront some difficulties when finding a job if they do not have a sufficient command of English. The Ministry of Education in KSA sets many goals for English language learning. One of the goals is providing students with a linguistic basis that would enable them to participate in transforming scientific and technological advancement that can enhance the progress of this nation. It is obvious that KSA is striving to make English teaching more intensive in many subject matters.

The literature on English language status in KSA deepened my knowledge about the importance of English in a number of aspects. It has been presented as an essential aspect in education, employment, and everyday life practices, for example, the written newspapers. I will present in the following the educational system in KSA and I will pose more details about EFL education and EFL teachers' beliefs.

The Educational System in KSA

In KSA, public education is free at all levels (K-12th grades) and for all people. The country spends about 17.5% of the annual budget on education and around 193.82 billion U.S. dollars on primary education and research (Ministry of Education, 2019). According to Ministry of Education Statistical Records, the number of students in KSA is estimated at 6,187,776 (KSA, Ministry of Education, 2019).

The students begin school by the age of six. Education consists of six years of elementary school, three years of middle school, and three years of high school. There are five school days in a week. The school week runs from Sunday to Thursday. School starts at 7 a.m. and ends at 1:00-1:45 p.m. There are usually six to seven classes a day, in a variety of subjects. For example, in high school, the students' study subjects include: Math, Arabic Language Arts, English, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, World Geography, Islamic History, Religion, and Art. There are four English classes a week. Students are not allowed to choose the assigned subjects; policymakers control the educational system, including the curriculum (Sedgwick, 2001).

The section above contains some information, such as the studied subjects at schools from k-12 in KSA, the school timing, and the allocated educational budget. However, this research is related particularly to teaching the English subject in KSA, which makes it important to include some literature about how the English language education started in the Saudi schools, and the reasons for teaching English as a foreign language.

I think, including literature about the history of English language education is important to understand the reason(s) of focusing on teaching the English language more than any other language. Also, the literature is helpful to connect the history of English subject teaching and the high status of English that it has nowadays in the KSA society.

EFL Education in Saudi Arabia

It is important to give a brief overview about the history of English language education in KSA because this research is related to Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs on the educational context in the country. This literature helps in understanding the educational context since KSA is not an English-speaking country and the participants' first language is not English. Some of the readers, such as my respected committee members, may not be familiar with the context of KSA.

Searching this literature enriches my knowledge as a Saudi researcher as well. The global educational system and the educational system in KSA underwent a number of changes and progresses that I am not knowledgeable about in regard to EFL education. I had lived in the US as a student for nine years before I moved to KSA to conduct my research. Since I lived abroad for a long time, I may have missed knowledge about changes that have occurred in the EFL education in KSA. Therefore, this literature is important as an informative source for this study about the recent studies in Saudi context education.

The History of EFL Education in Saudi Arabia

Teaching English as a foreign language started in 1924 (Al- Haq, 1996). There were many reasons to learn this language at that time. One of the most important reasons was the discovery of oil by an American company. As a result of that discovery, employees quickly realized the need to learn English to communicate with the English speakers who worked in the oil company. The company recruited many people from different countries to work there as well. Therefore, English was used as the *Lingua Franca* to enable the employees to communicate with each other (Al- Haq 1996; Elyas; 2014; Ibrahim, 1985).

In the 1930's, Saudi citizens began to study abroad. The government established many English language centers to prepare those students to study with the native English speakers in countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom (Al- Haq, 1996). English

teaching started in elementary school. In the 1940s, the policymakers decided to stop teaching English in elementary school and started to introduce English in the first year of middle school (Al-Zaid, 1981). This practice ended in 2003, and a decision was made to teach English in elementary school again. Now, Saudi students start studying English in fourth grade. So, after students get sufficient literacy in Arabic from 1st-3rd grade, they study English in fourth grades. People in authority added English curriculum in elementary school as a kind of educational reform to keep on track with the global economy development and the job market demand (Elyas, 2014).

The history of English education in KSA was influenced by the event of September 11, 2001. Post-9/11 influenced the educational system generally and English education specifically. Post-9/11 the KSA government and the US government collaborated to identify issues of concern in the Saudi society including those within the educational system. Elyas (2008) commented on the 9/11 events by stating:

Still, however, a suspicious legitimate cloud was hovering above the educational system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) looking for answers. Questions about what goes in the classroom and what is embedded in the textbooks were under scrutiny by linguists as well as educational analysts. (p. 30)

Post 9/11, the Saudi curriculum and English language teaching were the most important elements that have changed. The English language and some aspects of the American culture were taught in KSA as a part of the educational reform movement. Now, the curriculum is designed to nurture Saudi students on open mindedness by accepting and valuing other cultures and other religions (Elyas, 2008). As a student who studied in Saudi schools in the 90s, I learned the English alphabet when I was in middle school. The books and the system were significantly different from the system in KSA today.

In addition, the 9/11 attack was eye opening to the Saudi policymakers in education to misconceptions about some religious terms in the curriculum that have been misinterpreted by the curriculum developers and educators as well. The curriculum designers started to look closely at the language, the discourse, and the kind of terminologies that had been used to teach Saudi students about other cultures and religions. The curriculum designers omitted many words that provoked hatred toward non –Muslims (Azuri, 2006). For example, the word “*infidels*” has been substituted in the new curriculum with the word *Objectors* to describe non- Muslims in Saudi school textbooks.

The previous section about the history of English language education aids me as a researcher to understand the special status of the English language in KSA where the first language is Arabic. Some people might claim that the geographical location is a main reason to adopt languages, i. e. linguistic mutual exchange occurs when the areas are close. The literature above shows that despite the far distance between KSA and the English-speaking countries, the English language has spread in the country’s institutions. Economy plays a significant role in learning and teaching English. The literature aids me to realize how the English language became important in KSA over time. Therefore, I will explain in the next section the status of English language education in Saudi Arabia including research conducted in Saudi schools and universities in regard to the status of the English language, the teaching pedagogies, and the students' attitude toward teaching English in Saudi Arabia.

The history of English language education in KSA shows not only its formation over time, but also it shows the ideologies that have affected EFL education. The literature review shows me the correlation between the history of the English language education and the current status that English has gained over time.

To conduct this study, I chose EFL teachers as study participants due to their major role in the current education in KSA. Therefore, I should support my claim with literature to

explain the importance of conducting this study with this chosen population. The literature familiarizes me with the EFL teachers' intentions and the base of their beliefs about EFL education. Discussing the importance of the teachers' beliefs leads to the necessity to explore the literature about teachers' beliefs and how those beliefs have affected their understanding of EFL education. Thus, the next section includes some studies that have investigated teachers' beliefs in general and then EFL teachers' beliefs in particular.

Teacher Beliefs

The concept of 'belief' has been defined in multiple ways. In this research, since it centers on belief, the term needs clarification in order to have a clear image about what I am going to conduct my search on precisely. In the next section, I have included some definitions about the meaning of belief and its impact on teachers' concept formation and attitudes towards educational and sociocultural phenomenon.

Beliefs are judgments and evaluations that we make about ourselves, others, and the world around us. They are personal ideas based on observation or rational thinking (Khader, 2012). Pajares stated that (1992) there is no single way of defining belief because this term is used differently in different contexts. In educational studies, the term belief has been called by different names, such as "attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertoires of understanding, and social strategy, to name but a few that can be found in the literature (p. 309). According to Sigel (1985), "beliefs" are mental constructions of experience, which are often condensed and integrated into schemata or concept" (p. 351). Similarly, Pajares cited Harvey's definition of "beliefs" which states that belief is the way in which social agents vision their reality that has enough legitimacy, truth, or credibility to control their thought and behavior (Pajares, 1992).

Teachers' beliefs originated from four sources: content knowledge, educational materials, formal teacher education, and experience (Shulman, 1987). Drawing on these definitions, I use the term "teachers' beliefs" in this paper to refer to teachers' mentally internalized concepts as they participate in sociocultural discourses that guide their actions in classrooms.

It is important to note that, however, teachers' beliefs differ from teachers' knowledge. According to Shulman (1987), the distinction between belief and knowledge is based on the evaluative nature of belief. Knowledge is the cognitive component that is based on schemas in its organization. On the other hand, belief components are established through relying on evaluation and judgments. In addition, beliefs can be drawn by episodic nature, which means that a belief is constructed by the past events and experiences that an individual has been through.

Likewise, Nespor (1987) differentiates between knowledge and belief. According to him, beliefs have four characteristics that make them different from knowledge. He calls the first characteristic "existential presumption", which refers to the values that everyone holds and takes for granted about physical and social reality. The second characteristic "alternativity" is achieved when a person creates alternative situations that might be different from reality. According to the characteristics of "affective and evaluating loading", beliefs have stronger effective and evaluative components than knowledge. Van Dijk (1993) illustrated that elites (professors, educators, judges, editors) have a major role in controlling people's social cognition and social structure. The constituents of social cognition are the values, beliefs, attitudes, norms, and ideologies that are manifested in the social practices. Consequently, the elites' group is privileged as a result of having access to the public discourse.

According to Shulman (1987), teachers' beliefs originated from four sources: content knowledge, educational materials, formal teacher education, and experience. Richards and

Rodgers (2001) asserted that language learning beliefs that teachers hold usually lead them to utilize certain approaches of language teaching. In the same vein, Doğruer, Meneviş, and Eyyam (2010) conducted a study to find out whether there is a positive correlation between EFL teachers' beliefs on how their students learn English and how these beliefs impact their teaching styles. The results show that motivation and expectations of the language learners, their aptitude to language, and the nature of language learning are influential factors in teachers' beliefs.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) focused on the positive relationship between teachers' beliefs and their teaching style. In my opinion, the researchers should not put emphasis on the positive correlation only because considering negative sides in the student-teacher relation might add to the study results. It would have been more informative if the researchers had focused on the student-teacher relationship in classroom in general. Moreover, this study is qualitative which explains the factors that the researchers aim to study. In Richards and Rodgers' study, less attention was paid to express the participants' voices and opinions using their own words.

The literature related to exploring in-service teachers' beliefs is informative. It led to explore some research on EFL teachers' beliefs. One of the major goals in this literature review is to have knowledge about the EFL teachers' opinions and attitudes regarding some issues that have addressed their teaching of English either as a second language or as a foreign language. Accordingly, I will present some studies on EFL teachers' beliefs from different contexts and from the Saudi context as well.

In-service EFL Teachers' Beliefs from Different Contexts

Saad, Sardareh, and, Ambarwati (2013) conducted a study to investigate the assessment roles and beliefs of a group of EFL teachers in secondary schools in Iran. 35 Iranian EFL teachers from different secondary schools all over the country were recruited as

research participants in this study. The findings revealed that teachers' beliefs and the roles they play are important parts in improving classroom assessment practices. In general, since the top-down managerial approach was used in assessment, teachers did not participate in assessment decision making. As a result, most of the teachers in this study desired an influential role in the assessment process.

Baleghizadeh and Moghadam (2013) examined tensions between three Iranian EFL teachers' beliefs and practices that are related to teaching culture. The results indicated that tension existed between what teachers believe and their actual teaching practices, mainly regarding why to teach culture, whose culture to teach, and how to teach culture. This study emphasizes the importance of considering culture while teaching a second language. Teacher education programs creators and policymakers need to put into consideration this point while preparing teachers. Teachers' beliefs on cultures might have an influence on their students' achievement, which is a factor that cannot be ignored. This research included teachers' beliefs about the spread of English language and culture as well as using the concept of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2007) to analyze the EFL teachers' responses.

To investigate in-service teachers' beliefs, Jones and Fong (2007) interviewed 30 pre-service and 27 in-service teachers. The results indicated that teachers' experience played an important role in shaping their teaching beliefs which were teacher-centered, textbook-based, and grammar-oriented. The results also showed that a lot of teachers kept their old beliefs without being influenced by their exposures to previous different teaching methods.

LiLi (2013) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between a set of beliefs and classroom practice through an example of an experienced secondary school EFL teacher in the People's Republic of China. The results suggest that there is no strict one-to-one correspondence, but the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practice is highlighting the

influence of both macro and micro context. Teachers' theories-in-use are influenced by the moment-by-moment unfolding of classroom interactions.

On the other hand, Young and Walsh (2010) examined non-native English teachers' beliefs about target English language varieties when teaching it. The data collected from twenty-six teachers from countries in Europe, Africa, and West, Southeast and East Asia. Teachers reported a pragmatic perspective on varieties of English, with a need to believe in a 'standard' form of the language, even though this does not correspond to the reality of Englishes which are in use worldwide.

As I have pointed out previously, by the time of writing this research, KSA has undergone tremendous changes that are happening for the first time in Saudi's history. Those changes are related to economy, education, and women's status in the society and workplaces. Furthermore, English has become the medium of instruction and testing in most Saudi universities and colleges. Therefore, this study will add to the literature on Saudi EFL female teachers' perspectives and the Saudi 2030 vision and its multidimensional changes focusing on EFL education.

Barcelo's (2000) study provided rich data that shows the relationship between Brazilian ESL students' beliefs, ESL teachers' beliefs, and English language learning. This study also investigated how students' beliefs impact ESL teachers' actions and practices. The paradoxical nature of belief, identity, experience, co-presence, and the nature of classroom were main factors in understanding the relationship between students' and teachers' beliefs and language learning. LiLi (2012) claimed that beliefs have a great impact in language teaching. They help people to make sense of the world, comprehending new input, and acceptance or rejection of ideas. Beliefs describe memories and modify our understanding of phenomenon.

The previous section about language teaching and beliefs enlightened me about EFL education context in different countries such as Iran (Baleghizadeh & Moghadam, 2013), China (LiLi, 2013), and Brazil (Barcelos, 2000). The studies in the next section present EFL teachers' beliefs in the Saudi context.

EFL Teachers' Beliefs and Perceptions from Saudi Educational Context

It seems that researchers have used the term perception with belief interchangeably. The purpose is to reach an understanding about EFL teachers' beliefs in numerous aspects that can be employed in enhancing English education. Some research articles focused on EFL teachers' beliefs and perceptions and their influence on students' academic performance. In addition, the research articles entail EFL teachers' beliefs on EFL assessment, reading strategies, teaching pronunciation, factors that influence EFL teaching in KSA, using social media in EFL teaching, beliefs on autonomy in EFL teaching, the use of students' first language and different varieties of English in the EFL classroom, English language assessment, and reflective practice in EFL teaching. I will give further explanation about these studies below.

Attention has been given to EFL teachers' beliefs on assessment. Mansory (2016) examined EFL teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards English language assessment in a Saudi university's English language institute. The findings show that teachers had not been given the authority in designing and managing cumulative assessment unless they were members of the assessment committee, and most of the teachers wanted to participate and have a voice.

Asiri (2017) conducted a study to determine how Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs and values impacted the ways they understood their students' academic performance. Particularly, this study focused on the types of beliefs, values and perceptions that Saudi EFL teachers held toward the status of the English language teaching in the Saudi context. The findings illustrate that religious, political, and economic factors contributed to constructing Saudi EFL

teachers' beliefs and values towards the English language. The policies that the Saudi Ministry of education (MOE) designed and assigned regarding the Standard English and the learning objectives framed the teachers' beliefs and values regarding the ownership of English and the reason of leaning it as a foreign language. However, these beliefs and values had affected teachers' perceptions of their students' academic performance, which might be the essential reason for beginning levels of English language development.

Focusing on the status of English in KSA gives this study a strength. There are some factors that have not been investigated in the literature on the EFL teaching in the Saudi context. Thus, there is a need to connect EFL teacher beliefs with the social context that has influenced them and not focusing only on the influence of the educational environment.

Asiri's (2017) study has contributed significantly to the literature as it explored how religious, economic, and political factors have impacted EFL teachers' beliefs on the status of English in the Saudi context. In the same vein, the study of Shah et al. (2013) investigated factors that influence EFL teaching in the Saudi context through the views of five EFL teachers. The results shed light on three major barriers that affect EFL teaching comprising: social, cultural, and religious sensitivities. Further, lack of learners' motivation and unfavorable institutional policies and procedures were considered obstacles that impact EFL teaching.

Bamanger and Gashan (2014) conducted a study to explore EFL Saudi teachers' beliefs about the significance of teaching English reading strategies. The study aimed at finding out the influence of these beliefs on EFL teachers' classroom practices. The findings of the study showed that there was a correlation between in-service teachers' beliefs on the efficient strategies of teaching reading and what they really do in classrooms.

Alsofyani and Algethami (2017) examined EFL Saudi teachers' beliefs about teaching pronunciation, the way they teach pronunciation, and pronunciation training they have. Fifty-

five English language teachers at the English Language Center at Taif University in Saudi Arabia were requested to finish an online survey regarding their teaching of pronunciation. The results revealed that the teachers highly valued teaching pronunciation, and most of them considered it as important as teaching other language skills. The findings also showed there is not enough pronunciation training available to the teachers. Thus, the teachers desired having more training opportunities.

From my personal experience in EFL teaching, the skill of reading, speaking, listening, and writing are integrated. Sometimes it is difficult to specify whether the belief is related to reading strategies only or there are some other listening, writing, or speaking teaching approaches that are integrated with reading strategies. Therefore, it is important to clarify EFL teachers' point of view regarding the integration of those skills. Also, considering society and culture in language teaching is worth noting. Reading is not only teaching a collection of sentences, but it has a deeper meaning when a person connects reading to his/her own social context and experience, which leads to different interpretation of the text i.e., reading critically. For example, sometimes authors support an ideology and write articles to convince readers. So, to achieve that, students need to understand the author's background knowledge, intention, and interests. They should not take what is in the text for granted. In my research, I focused on investigating both the intellectual and socio-cultural aspects that influence EFL teachers' beliefs regarding EFL teaching as a whole.

The use of social media in EFL teaching has increasingly developed. For example, Allam and Elyas (2016) conducted a study to explore EFL teachers' perceptions of using social media as an English language teaching (ELT) tool in the Saudi context. The results indicated that the majority of the participants believed strongly in the pedagogical values and benefits of using social media as an ELT tool in EFL classes in the Saudi context. Yet, they were uncertain about the freedom and the restriction that should be given to students when

allowing it inside the classroom. They considered social media as a tool that has its advantages and drawbacks and using it might not fulfill the underlying educational goals.

On the other hand, EFL teachers' perceptions and beliefs on autonomy is an area that has been searched in the KSA context. Al-Rabai (2017) investigated the perceptions on learner autonomy of 136 English teachers in Saudi Arabia. These teachers also illustrated that they were responsible for their students' learning, and they perceived their students as passive, dependent, and lacking inventiveness. They also mentioned numerous factors related to the student, the institution, and the teacher as obstacles that confronted them when they allow autonomy in the classroom. Likewise, Asiri and Shukri (2018) pursued a research on female teachers' perspectives of learner autonomy in the Saudi context. The findings revealed that teachers believed that Saudi learners in the current situation are non-autonomous learners; they lack the knowledge and the training to apply it. Further, teachers stressed the need to appropriate training courses that qualify them to support using learner autonomy in the classroom. Alhayasony (2016) explored EFL teachers' beliefs and practices of learner autonomy. The findings emphasized the positive attitude EFL teachers had about learner autonomy as they were aware of its significance for language learning. In practice, they were less positive about the extent to which it can be employed in the EFL classroom.

Further, EFL teachers' beliefs on using the mother tongue in EFL teaching is a topic that has been addressed in the literature. Mansory (2019) conducted a study that intended to explore teachers' beliefs and practices on the use of the mother tongue as a mediational tool in Saudi EFL classrooms. The findings indicated that a number of EFL teachers still believe in reducing the use of L1 (first language) in their teaching as a medium as much as possible. In addition, it seems teachers tend to use L1 in the classroom with students who are at beginning stages of English language development. In the same vein, Al-Amir and Al-Hashemi (2017) researched Saudi female teachers' perceptions of the L1 use in EFL

classrooms. The data analysis showed that the majority of teachers are in favor of employing students' first language in their EFL classrooms. Also, the results of the study concluded that EFL teachers selected precisely when to use L1 in the EFL classroom such as for giving administrative information or giving instructions.

The literature I have searched has several studies that focused on EFL teachers' beliefs on applying reflective teaching in the Saudi context. Based on the studies reviewed, there is a significant correlation between reflective teaching and professionalism in teaching (Dewey, 1933; Shukri, 2014). In addition, Sibahi (2016) explored a group of EFL teachers' perceptions on reflective practice among college EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. The findings of the study revealed that the participants were informed about the benefits of reflective practice in EFL teaching, and utilized a variety of reflection models in order to reflect on their daily practice. On the other hand, teachers pointed out some obstacles in practicing reflective teaching, precisely, the fixed curricula and the absence of adequate professional training. Likewise, Schön (1987) demonstrated that constructing a classroom that promotes equity, inclusiveness, and relationship building requires teachers to exhibit a continuous process of reflective teaching.

Critical Theory

The literature about critical theory helped me understand the lens which guides me in interpreting the data. *Critical theory* (Habermas, 1968) concepts aided me to make a connection between the research context and how EFL teachers have been perceiving, acting, conceptualizing, and living in that educational and sociocultural context.

EFL teachers communicate using languages and the kind of language they use embraces specific discourse. Their beliefs and opinions about a phenomenon reveal ideologies that have been controlling their thinking, which justifies their actions (Fairclough, 1989). In this research, I investigated EFL teachers' beliefs and how the context of KSA and

its different discourses and ideologies shape the Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs and practices using Critical Theory as a theoretical foundation. It justifies how people respond to a phenomenon with regard to the social factors and the role played by power relations. The concepts of *Language*, *Ideology*, and *Discourse* are connected in literature, and integrated that makes one of them is connected to the other.

In the following section, I explain the emergence of critical theory as I will clarify its principles in light of some of the influential scholars (Budd, 2008; Guess, 1981; Leonardo, 2004). Then, I clarify its importance as a theoretical foundation. After that, I include literature ideology, discourse, and language as integrated elements and essential parts of critical theory.

The Origin of Critical Theory

Critical Realism as empirical method is considered the origin of the human science theories including critical theory and critical discourse analysis. Critical Realism views human actions as being affected by agency and social structure. Critical realists believe that humans have the potential to change their reality and the social phenomenon. Participating in research as well as conducting it enables individuals to understand how knowledge can be created to reach emancipation through collective actions, or arts (Clark, 2008; Sirotnik, 1991).

Critical Theory has three phases of development. The first phase began with Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse and others who are members of the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt and adopted Karl Marx criticisms of classism and utilized the same principles to critique society. They used history to analyze and understand the social factors. The second phase began with Habermas who analyzed the public sphere by observing public political and social behavior. He proposed focusing on communication and language as bases for inquiring into social action (Budd, 2008). The third phase began with Habermas's students. They stressed ideology as an element that impacts the social action, the historical

development of some human actors, and the association between ideology and ethical analysis (Budd, 2008; Leonardo, 2004; Guess, 1981). Fairclough (1989) explained “Habermas’s theory of *communicative action* illustrates the way in which our currently distorted communication nevertheless foreshadows communication without such constraints” (as cited in Fairclough, 1989, p. 13).

What is Critical Theory?

Critical Theory is a foundation that aids researchers to analyze social actions, politics, science, and other fields. The critical theorists critique actions and motivations to study certain situation or objects and interrogate the reasons of their existence. Critical Theory relies on the problematization of knowledge and its production (Budd, 2008; Leonardo, 2004). Michel Foucault’s argument (1977) illustrates that critical research is considered an epistemological thematization of subjectivity as a new era of attaining knowledge. Critical Theory rejects the object-subject framework of dialectics and utilizes the subject-subject relation of inter-subjectivity. It keeps on a specific kind of historicism by considering people as active agents who are affected by an action and participating in it (Budd, 2008; Carspecken, 2008; Leonardo, 2004). Critical Theory does not assume that the agents in society will take up the theory to have a better understanding of themselves for societal transformation. Instead, the theory is intended to be a source that informs people about the rational interests they need for enlightenment to understand ideologies that marginalize them and adopt an ideological stance to encounter them (Guess, 1981).

The *Level of Consciousness* (Freire, 1970) is important to understand the way EFL teachers view the world. As a researcher, I think my consciousness about the social issues related to the different kinds of ideologies enabled me to understand and interpret EFL teachers’ perceptions of reality. Some new perspectives have emerged by looking at teachers’

autobiographies about their insights and how they acquire those insights regarding the English language and culture.

The Importance of Critical Theory as a Theoretical Framework

Frankfurt school members argue that Scientific Theory is not sufficient to understand society. Therefore, they suggest that there is a need to adopt a new theory that helps to understand society and the historical formation of social issues. Guess (1981) demonstrated that the Frankfurt school members differentiate between Scientific Theory of investigation and Critical Theory.

In terms of aims or goals, Scientific Theory aims to discover the external world and suggests universal roles that stimulate society agents to adopt those roles in order to accommodate with the social context. However, Critical Theory aims at emancipation that is achieved by informing the social agents of the oppression and coercion, which makes them have the potential to decide their real interests (Guess, 1981).

In terms of logic or cognitive structure, scientific theorists are objectifying, which makes a person differentiate the object and the theory that refers to that object. That means a certain object will be affected by the theory. In contrast, critical theorists are self-referential, which means the theory is part of the subjects' lives. They are living with the assumptions of this theory and see the consequences in their everyday lives (Guess, 1981).

The scientific and the critical theories are different in the kind of evidence they need to determine the level of acceptance of their theory. For scientific theorists, empirical examination is needed by conducting observations and experiments. For critical theorists, their theory is applicable if they provide a deep evaluation for phenomenon to be reflectively acceptable (Guess, 1981). This distinction shows that the social agents and the researchers in the field of social science research need approaches to guide individuals in revealing the reality in their everyday lives. It is irrational to deal with human subjects the same way when

dealing with objects in environment. Hence, critical theory is the appropriate way to investigate social issues (Guess, 1981).

It is a fundamental aspect for a theory to discuss not only the social institutions or the associated practices. Instead, a theory has to discuss the social agents' perception of their reality and the degree of knowledge they have about their living world (Guess, 1981). Critical theory is not an abstract philosophy. It is a way of examining normative elements of human actions and the different materials that led to an action. It is a mechanism by which the researcher can assess honesty as well as truth (Budd, 2008). It is essential to realize that the critical theory includes some elements that serve the same purpose as the ideological economic elements that are correlated with life. Additionally, there are some other aspects of everyday lives such as mobility, schools, and association (Budd, 2008). *Social Reproduction Theory* (Bourdieu, 1990) addresses the connection between school and society and shows their integration. I explain it in detail below.

Social Reproduction Theory

Social Reproduction Theory (Bourdieu, 1990) is a conceptual framework that informs my data analysis. It is an essential social theory that is related to the purpose of schooling. This theory is important to include as it shows the interrelatedness of power, ideology, economy, culture, and knowledge. It originated from Karl Marx's Theory of Reproduction. Marx (1969) illustrated that "every social process of production is, at the same time, a process of reproduction" (As cited in Giroux, 1983, p. 257). Reproduction theorists argued that the main function of schooling is to reproduce the dominant ideologies and create social stratification by assigning the tasks and the skills that students need to gain from schools. In this research, I will utilize Giroux's (1983) theoretical analysis of the different aspects of reproduction models of schooling: the economic model, the cultural reproductive model, and the hegemony state reproductive model.

The Economic Reproductive Model

The connection between school and society is illustrated in *Correspondence Principle* (Bowles & Ginitis, 1976). According to the correspondence principle, the hierarchy structure of values, norms, and beliefs are established at schools before students get into the real workplace life. The students perceive their position in society according to the activities and the everyday practices that have been introduced to them through their society members and teachers who are participating in the discourse. Making connections between schools and the reproduction of some social groups' interests leads to the accumulation of capital (money) in one of the social groups. In this case, schools and teachers function as a bridge to aid dominant group members obtaining the best positions with financial and social advantages. Therefore, society members who do not belong to the advantaged class will work to fulfill that group's interest forgetting about their needs, identities, and heritage.

Research shows that it is important to consider teachers' beliefs about the reasons why students attend schools and particularly attend EFL classrooms (Deborah, 2015). Their beliefs might reveal some facts related to using specific pedagogy or strategies in EFL classrooms (Xu, 2012). Therefore, using correspondence principle (Bowles & Ginitis, 1976) is important to explore the extent to which EFL teachers are affected by the internalized social common ideas in their society and whether they transmit them to school, for example, the *Biological Explanation of Intelligence* (Feinberg & Soltis, 2009) that entails connecting students' level of intelligence and their racial or social background.

Examining Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs and awareness guided me to examine the applicability of the concept of *Hidden Curriculum* (Apple, 1971). The hidden curriculum concept refers to how some practices and social relations convey somehow intended messages in implicit manners. These messages can be used sometimes to legitimize a kind of knowledge or some social practices that have been conducted by social class members or

ethnicity groups in a society. The hidden curriculum at schools can be embedded in the teaching methods, classroom activities, or the ways of disciplining students. According to Apple (1971), hidden curriculum is also used to legitimize appointed social roles or to interpret authorities at the workplace. The rationale for using this concept as a conceptual framework is to reveal the existence of hidden curriculum in the everyday EFL practices and the role it plays in (re)producing particular knowledge, ideologies, power dynamics, and social orders.

Hidden curriculum is not bounded in the written materials that are used in the classroom. Rather, it is also related to the kind of the pedagogy that teachers utilize to present knowledge to students. For example, research shows that students from working-class backgrounds and non-dominant cultures are more frequently taught in ways that do not stimulate interaction. Those students usually privilege obedience and submission to authority. These practices are meant to not only control working-class students, but also to (re)produce stereotypical views about the knowledge they bring into classrooms (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Willis, 1977)

The Cultural Reproductive Model

The work of Pierre Bourdieu (2007) has significantly enriched the sociology of schooling. In his work, he connects culture, class, and domination. His major point in his analysis was showing how a particular culture becomes dominant in different institutions. According to Bourdieu (2007), the culture of the dominant group will not spread by force. Rather, it will be illustrated by the practices of the different institutions that are legitimizing the dominant group's practices and knowledge as if it is the norm and the required culture for success in a society. As a result, the social orders and the power relations will be (re)produced as if they are the norm. Bourdieu's (2007) concept of *Cultural Capital* is significant in explaining how cultural reproduction occurs in schools by assuring the

domination of one culture over others. According to Giroux (1983), “working class culture is not seen as different and equal, but as different and inferior” (p. 296).

Drawing on Bourdieu’s (2007) concept of cultural capital is crucial as it can reflect the ideologies that inform the EFL teachers’ teaching practices. I shed light on EFL teachers’ understanding of the English language inner circle countries’ (Katchru, 1985) culture and how they have been perceived by Saudi EFL teachers.

Schooling and Social Capital

Bourdieu (2007) defines *Social Capital* as the existence of social networks or connections that people rely on in different institutions to get certain privileges or benefits (p. 89). Drawing on Bourdieu’s (2007) concept of social capital, this concept is important in studying how the social connections or networking impact the participants’ beliefs related to education, learning a foreign language and culture, and social mobility.

Hegemonic-State Reproductive Model

In this study, I draw on Gramsci’s (1971) concept of *Hegemony* as a part of my conceptual framework. Hegemony refers to the use of force and ideology to reproduce social relations between social classes and control production of knowledge (Gramsci, as cited in Giroux, 1983). On the other hand, hegemony sometimes can be resisted by counter hegemonic actions or ideologies. Apple (2014) argues that counter hegemonic activities are important aspects to sustain the fight against the conservatives’ ideologies (p. 9). He argues that people, and especially educators, have to think critically of the curriculum, teaching methods, and the policies. Knowing the hidden agendas behind an educational system leads to identify who the stakeholders are. This makes teachers and students realize the meaning of the hegemonic practices and understand their right to refuse any action that undermines their identity, language, and culture. Zembylas (2013) commented on Gramsci’s concept of *Counter Hegemony*. He clarified that “Gramsci’s work facilitates an understanding of how

affect and ideology are entangled; this entanglement reveals how ideological discourses and practices are deeply affective and embodied and function to maintain or resist the status quo” (p. 15).

Power Relations and EFL Education. Fairclough (1989) states *Power Relations* are not bounded to class relations. There are power relations between men and women, young and old, between ethnic groups. That is when one group practices power or controls a social group based on the authority that normalizes certain people as power holders. The power will justify the reason people are claiming certain status over others. This could appear directly in some institutions such as requiring age limit for jobs, or English language proficiency. Furthermore, the educational authorities sometimes determine and control students’ future, such as segment students based on ability grouping or tracking at schools.

The concept of power relations gives me an insight about whether the teaching methods and classroom practices are addressing the students’ background and cultural identity. The concept of power relations provides an understanding related to the teacher-student’s relations. Considering many factors that direct teacher-students relation is important to have informed findings.

Theory of Resistance

The social reproduction theories discussed above are very important to profoundly analyze how social, cultural, and economic qualities are (re)constructed. However, domination and oppression can also be confronted by resistance. Thus, *Resistance Theory* (Giroux, 1983) has evolved in the literature to illustrate the role of the human's agency in resisting social (re)production. According to theories of resistance, humans are not always passive recipients of social domination and oppressive acts; they can be active agents who resist these acts individually and collectively. In addition, opposing behaviors are not the only

acts that reflect resistance, as resistance has many forms and acts, for example, silence could also be a form of resistance.

Based on resistance theory (Giroux, 1983), I have analyzed the participants' beliefs to explore if there is any resistant act toward English language, cultures, or ideologies. In my attempt to analyze the participants' beliefs about teaching the culture of English-speaking countries in their EFL classrooms and what these beliefs reveal about resistance and human agency, I sketched conceptually on Willis (1977) and Freire (1970) to explore the role of agency in forming teachers' beliefs and practices. Willis (1977) has contributed to the evolution of social reproduction theory. His work explains the role played by agency in reproducing culture, social class, or knowledge. After his research with white working-class students, he discovered that students' agency should be taken into account when talking about social reproduction theories. In his research with white working-class students (the Lads Group), he distinguished between resistance and conforming. Resistance could be seen as an opposing behavior or any other acts that indicates refusing subordination. In contrast, conforming exists when social group members avoid challenging the system and find a place in the already existing social system to coexist with other social groups in the dominated society.

In analyzing the data, I inferred teachers' agency from teachers' stories and experiences with their students. The goal is to show the extent to which EFL Saudi teachers believe in themselves, and their culture to make changes in education and students' lives. *Freirean Critical Pedagogy* (1970) illustrates the importance of *Teacher Agency*, also. According to Freire (1970), educators' agency is the reason for rejecting the dehumanization acts or injustice in his/her classroom. An educator who has a sense of agency will take action to protect their students' rights when they feel that education is not supportive of students, or

when their efforts are underestimated. Moreover, in Freire's view, the educator should fight against oppression and the deceptive ideologies (1970).

It is important to understand the extent to which teachers are aware of ideologies that form their world view by looking closely at their acts and practice in the classroom.

Therefore, I connected Freire's concept of *agency* with his other concept called *Levels of Consciousness*.

Freire's Levels of Consciousness

Since a person's level of consciousness greatly informs and influences their beliefs, I draw on Freire's (1970) concept of the levels of consciousness as a part of my conceptual framework. I used this concept to analyze the EFL teachers' awareness and world-view regarding English language and culture, knowledge production, classroom activities and practices, and the Saudi reforms and their impact on women's lives.

According to Freire (1970), there are three levels of consciousness. The first level of consciousness is called *Semi-Intransitivity*. It refers to the individuals who are not aware of their relationships to the world's. These people have limited knowledge about how the social system has been structured. They are not aware that their position in the society has been predetermined since the time of their schooling. In some cases, the social status will not only shape their future, but their children's future as well. For example, children who live in working- class dominated neighborhoods attend schools that are limited in effective educational resources, such as good English teachers. The knowledge at such schools is already designed to provide human capital to the second job market demand. At this level of consciousness, EFL teachers are not aware of oppression, and their educational leaders are regarded as ideal figures who seek good lives for people in society. Thus, teachers will accept whatever those leaders enforce. If individuals lack such awareness about the purpose of education, its agendas, and tools, they will be in the semi-intransitive level of consciousness.

According to Freire's (1970) classification, the second level of consciousness is the *Naïve Transitivity*. In this level of consciousness, teachers may normalize or oversimplify issues that control their lives and their students' lives. For example, instead of blaming the system or trying to change the teaching inequalities, teachers may perceive the problem as a norm. In some other cases, people who are in the naïve-transitivity phase might be aware of the social structure and the people who create obstacles, but they believe that their living situation is their fate, it's the will of God and, as a result, they live without trying to make any change or transformation.

The third level of consciousness is the *Critical-Transitivity*. It refers to the kind of consciousness that describes the people's consciousness who are aware of the social structure in which they live and they know how it shapes their lives. These people refuse to be oppressed and seek liberation and transformation. Teachers who have this kind of awareness reject to be dehumanized and do take action to transform the society towards liberation. In short, teachers who are in the critical transitive consciousness level frequently question their relation to the world in a critical way. They encourage their students to question the knowledge, the issues they face in society, and the power relations they go through in order to make change and transformation.

Transformation and change cannot exist without being aware of oppressive ideologies and create a set of ideas to encounter them. Based on *Guess' Classification of Ideology* (1981), every individual has an ideological stance (Ideology in the positive sense). All humans undergo some factors and live in some societies that form their beliefs to adopt or be against a particular world view. They act based on ideologies to fight what marginalizes them, or to support what strengthens them as humans. Consequently, I am assuming that each EFL teacher has been affected by ideologies that have formed her beliefs and world view. Critical theorists and schools of thought have conceptualized the term ideology differently.

The next section embraces some well-known scholars' contributions about the definition of ideology and its role in concept formation for society members (Althusser, 1971; Fairclough, 1989; Guess, 1981; Hall, 1982; Giroux, 1983; Max Weber, 1929).

Ideology

This section includes some definitions of ideology and how a socially constructed notion is considered an ideology. Also, the different conceptualizations of ideology will be addressed. Literature on the fundamental components that form ideology will be introduced such as language and discourse.

Ideology from Critical Perspective

Max Weber (1929) critiques the ideology behind classism as a society system and the legitimization of authority based on that system. He provides a profound foundation to understand the ideology as a concept. He analyzed the bureaucratic relations in the institutions and showed how authority allows people in the top of hierarchy to do unfair practices against people who have less status in the class hierarchy. In order to understand the authority, there is a need to understand how those people have reached to authority and being aware of their group interests. Bureaucracy allows a person to have authority over others by having people involved in and convinced with authorizing their leaders and electing them (Weber, 1929).

Rationalization of Power is the core of Weber's work. According to Weber (1929), the office power has been used to rationalize leader's authority, which makes individuals in society follow the orders that have been issued by leaders in the office and obey them blindly. The office legitimizes oppressive relationships among individuals in a society. As a result, people internalize those ideologies as taken for granted. They conceptualize those objects as if they are fixed and unchangeable. These ideologies become reified and naturalized from

people who are on the top of the hierarchy. Those objects (office power) are controlling individuals' minds and direct their relations with other members in society.

According to Williams (1976), ideology refers to "any social policy which is in part or in whole derived from social theory in a conscious way" (as cited in Fairclough, 1989, p. 78). Guess (1989) defines *Ideology* as "a form of consciousness that supports and legitimizes surplus herrschaft (hegemony)" (p. 18). Similarly, Leonardo and Allen (2008) contend that "ideology is defined as the problem of social relations of domination made intelligible through discourse" (p. 416). They added, ideology includes multiple responses to social relations of domination, sometimes distorting an accurate understanding of them and sometimes penetrating their structure" (p. 416).

Ideology plays a major role in legitimizing power relations in everyday life. This is the case because ideology is associated with power as the nature of conversations is usually based on power relations that manage people's reactions in different situations. Social agents are exposed to different kinds of incidents in different kinds of institutions, which influence their internalization of social relations. For example, student-teacher power relation has been formed as a result of participating in society. These norms have an effect inside and outside the school as well. Schools are part of society and what is happening outside the classroom might appear explicitly or implicitly in the relations in the educational sphere.

Furthermore, the concept of commonsense is closely related to ideology. Commonsense exists as a result of power and domination in human's relations. Taking the common ideas in a society without questioning their origins or what they have been targeting leads to enhancements of those ideologies. Those ideologies usually control people's relations to their world, their understanding to themselves, and their relations with others. A claim is deemed ideological not because it is false, but when the claim does not explain the social reality sufficiently. It is ideological because it shows part of the truth as if it is

inclusive and adequate (Althusser, 1971; Giroux, 1983; Hall, 1982). Ideology does not focus on the social agent's intention. Rather, it concentrates on the function of discourse and reasons of the social construction. It is all about positioning and dispositioning subjects or individuals (Hall, 1982).

Ideology, commonsense, and naturalization. The concept of Ideology has been associated with the concepts of *Commonsense* and naturalization. Gramsci (1971) defines the term Commonsense as a form of practical activity. This means that the real meaning of the world has been represented covertly in a number of everyday life aspects such as art, law, and economic activities. However, he connected commonsense with ideology as an "implicit philosophy in the practical actions of social life, background, and taken for granted" (Fairclough, 1989; Hall, 1982).

It is essential to consider how peoples' commonsense is controlled to sustain and maintain unequal relations of power and domination. This is usually achieved when some assumptions become naturalized among individuals who belong to the same social group. This occurs when one type of discourse becomes more legitimate and widespread via representing it as commonsense, neutral, and fair for all.

There are three types of naturalization that influence the commonsense formation: the naturalization of meaning, the naturalization of the interactional routine and boundaries, and the naturalization of subjects' situation (Fairclough, 1989). The naturalization of meaning refers to how the dominant discourse interpretations and meanings are created and naturalized to sustain power. The naturalization of the interactional routine and boundaries refers to how the relations among people either in their way of speaking or in their actions become a commonsense of doing things. This happened as a result of the internalized ideologies that naturalizes power dynamics. For instance, sometimes the school curriculum is taken as an ever-changing element even if it marginalizes students' culture, or in some cases could cause

harm to some students' feelings. However, the naturalization of subjects' situation occurs when subjects (individuals) perceive their living situation, social status and position as a fixed situation rather than socially constructed and as a part of internalizing some ideologies and discourses. This is crucial to consider because the naturalization of a subject contributes to how a person constructs and perceives his/her social identity in the public institutions and in the society as a whole (Fairclough, 1989).

Different Conceptualizations of Ideology. According to Guess (1981), there are three different ways of how the term ideology is conceptualized: ideology in the descriptive sense, ideology in the pejorative sense, and ideology in the positive sense. In what follows, I will explain each one of these conceptualizations.

Ideology in the Descriptive Sense. Ideology as descriptive is related to anthropology. This conceptualization of ideology is concerned with human groups and sub-groups such as the distribution of blood types, birth rate, biological properties, kinship system, and social groups' values (Guess, 1981). In terms of the sociocultural aspect, ideology in the descriptive sense embraces social agents' beliefs, concepts, attitudes, motives, desires, and values. From the standpoint of ideology in the descriptive sense, it is normal that every human has his own ideologies. The varieties of group members' values and beliefs provide a description of the social agents' differences. Therefore, this kind of ideology is neither evaluative nor judgmental.

Ideology in the descriptive sense includes the discursive and the non-discursive sense. Discursive to Guess (1981) is the ideas and the beliefs, and non-discursive is the rituals, attitudes, or activities. So, ideology is not always a belief or a value, but it can be actions that are practiced by group members.

Ideology in the Pejorative Sense. This kind of ideology is also referred to as negative or critical ideology. According to Guess (1981), ideology in the pejorative sense refers to

how ideology becomes a criticism of beliefs, attitudes, or wants of the agents in a particular society (p.12). This kind of ideology assumes that the social agents are deluded about their society as a result of having false consciousness. Thus, these social agents need to understand the social phenomenon to free themselves from delusions.

Ideology in the Positive Sense. Guess (1981) claims that the positive sense ideology refers to constructed, created, and invented beliefs (p. 23). From the perspective of ideology in the positive sense, no individual is fully conscious about every topic and no one is ideology free. Therefore, every person (re)act towards certain incidents according to his or her ideology and worldview (Guess, 1981; Leonardo & Allen, 2008).

Guess (1981) distinguished between ideology in the descriptive sense and ideology as a worldview. According to him, ideology in the descriptive sense refers to the beliefs and morals that individuals have about their lives and society. However, ideology as a worldview refers to the set of beliefs that are held by a social group. In this sense, it is doubtful to claim that members who belong to the same social group would have the exact worldview. In fact, individuals usually have different biological formation, ethnic background, and social lives. Hence, each person perceives reality and filters it differently, which leads to adopting a different ideology (world view).

From my point of view, I think ideology in the positive and negative sense are informative ways to interpret EFL teachers' beliefs and to know how those beliefs have guided their understanding of EFL teaching practices in Eastern Province, KSA. The research results are not merely a description of their own words as a form of knowledge. However, I needed to go beyond that to understand the extent to which they were critically aware of their beliefs and the way they had understood teaching using Freire's (1970) classification of the levels of consciousness. Further, there is a need to understand the perspectives they adopt to encounter repressive ideologies.

I have analyzed how ideologies affected the way EFL teachers believe in the status of the English language and culture compared to their own. I am not using ideology in a descriptive sense. Therefore, I have not considered their responses as separate ideologies because this is a shallow understanding of ideology as a concept. However, I tried to connect their thoughts with an overarching concept or general stand point that influences their standpoints.

However, talking about ideology leads to talking about discourse as a concept that is as an essential mean to spread ideologies in society. Social agents including teachers live in society and they participate in different discourses. Their beliefs are a sum of different experiences that they have gained as being part of the discourse. Therefore, discourse is inherently connected to the idea of ideology that manifests searching literature about discourse, which will be explained in detail in the section below.

Discourse

Discourse includes social condition of production and social condition of interpretation. It is associated with three kinds of social organizations: the level of social environment in which the discourse occurs, the level of social institution, and the level of society as a whole (Fairclough, 1989). Discourse is the relationship between text, interaction, and context. It is part of social practice, and it influences the production of the social structure. The systematic constraints on the discourse constituents, identities, and social relations are influenced by values, knowledge, belief, and social relationship in society (Fairclough, 1989).

Hall (1971) claimed that “discourse had the effect of sustaining closures of establishing systems of equivalence between what could be assumed about the world and what could be said to be true (Hall, 1971, p. 75). Only by participating in discourse, people could realize the public opinion and attitude from other group agents. These attitudes could

be filtered in an indirect empirical way (Van dijk, 1993). Common people have a passive role in production of the discourse. They usually perceive the discourse and interact in it. On the other hand, elites (educators, politicians, media influencers) control this discourse in numerous aspects such as mass media, education, politics, scholarship, religious institutions, and the welfare offices (Van dijk, 1993).

Moreover, discourse is considered an object that affects how and what we learn. The surrounding environments, people, and culture are factors that influence discourse construction. Therefore, understanding the Saudi society's culture and language helped me in analyzing EFL teachers' beliefs. In addition, being an insider in the Saudi culture aided me to explain how the written or the spoken text have shaped the classroom discourse as well as the purposes of using the discourse.

Incorporating literature about discourse is informative in several ways. First, the KSA context is important to consider in this research. Since discourse and context are highly correlated, the ideas about discourse helped me in interpreting some aspects while going through the research data. For example, investigating beliefs is helpful to connect the context with social relations, language, interaction, and practices. Second, reading about the meaning of discourse as a language and a social context provides me with more understanding of different forms of oppression, and how discourse has been used to legitimize and normalize some discourses. The goal was to recognize the actions that had contributed to form their beliefs.

In addition to discourse, language plays a major role in legitimizing a particular discourse. Sometimes discourse relies on the language to convince the intended group. Language either written or spoken is a tool that controls discourse and leads to form a new way of thinking, create phenomenon, or ascribe identities to social groups. Consequently, I searched the literature about the language and its influence on people utilizing some

significant sources written by critical theory influential scholars, such as Hall (1982) and Fairclough (1989).

Language

Hall (1982) states that meaning which transferred through language is a social production practice.

The world has to be made to mean. Language and symbolization are the means by which meaning is produced. Because meaning was not given, but produced, it followed the different kinds of meaning could be ascribed to the same event. (Hall, 1982, p. 67)

Language is a tool that has been used to control social agents. The mainstream linguistic studies have not included the relationship between power and ideologies in reproducing a particular discourse. Actually, the use of language is socially determined when people who share language interact, and that is called discourse. Therefore, we need to utilize the *Critical Language Studies* approach to study the language.

Language is an important element that shapes social practices in people's lives. According to Fairclough (1989), language as a social practice embraces: language is a part of the society, language is a part of the social process, and language undergoes some other non-linguistics elements that influence the language use.

First, language as a part of society, there is an internal relationship between language and society. This relationship is dialectical, that means language is a social phenomenon, and at the same time part of the social phenomena is a linguistic phenomenon. Therefore, the individual could not free himself from social effects that are major factors in determining and maintaining relationships among individuals (Fairclough, 1989)

Second, language as a social practice entails that language is a social process. To support this point, it is important to explain the difference between text and discourse. A text

is considered a product more than a process. The written text and the spoken text are part of the discourse. There are two processes of the text: process of production and process of interpretation (Fairclough, 1989).

Third, language as a social practice undergoes some non-linguistic elements as part of the social phenomena. She talked about the concept of member resource (MR) as a mental network of memories, experiences, and ideas that people have been through. People's member recourse is cognitive because they are produced by their minds, and also, they are social because they have been influenced by socially determined ideologies. People internalize what have been presented to them in their societies through their family members, schools, and religious institutions. Accordingly, they recall their past experiences to interpret what is in the discourse in order to get engaged in a social practice. In this sense, ideologies rely on language as a source of communication controlled by the common sense, i.e., the ideology working through language. Post-modern theorists regard the post-modernism culture as post-linguistic (Fairclough, 1989).

The literature on language shows that language is not only connecting grammar to vocabularies, semantics, or phonetics. Rather, it has some other meanings that we can infer by having knowledge about how to interpret that language. Language is a relationship between an individual and his/her context. I learned from the literature review that the researcher should be knowledgeable about the language and the context alike, so he/she can give an accurate interpretation to the studied phenomenon. Thus, I used my knowledge about both languages, Arabic and English, and my knowledge about the Saudi and the American context to investigate the EFL teachers' beliefs and try to understand these beliefs' influence on their realization of EFL teaching.

Language including verbal and non-verbal properties were the core of the analysis. It is the medium that enabled me as a researcher to reach a conclusion about EFL teachers'

beliefs, practices, and level of critical awareness. Language is the medium that explains EFL teachers' actions or reactions. Understanding the base of the EFL teachers' thinking facilitated tracing some educational issues such as discrimination and other kinds of social problems that students might face in daily EFL classrooms in KSA.

Gap in the Literature

After searching the literature on EFL education in KSA, I noticed no studies connected teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi schools with ideology as a concept. The discourse where teachers use English has been normalized and considered as the way of communication in the work place and educational spheres in the literature that I mentioned above on the status of English in KSA. There has been a high level of acceptance and submission to the idea of assimilation to English-speaking countries as a common sense. The English language has been viewed as a necessity for success. Hence, this study links EFL teachers' beliefs on EFL education with the essence of critical theory, which explores phenomena and social agents' interaction in accordance with power, domination, and ideologies. So, including Saudi EFL teachers as participants enriched this research as they participated in the Saudi social and educational discourse and reflected on it.

The status of English language education in KSA has been presented in previous literature. The role of teachers' beliefs has been emphasized by a number of researchers in the educational field especially EFL teaching. The way teachers control and create classroom practices were important aspects in the literature that connect the teachers' way of thinking and the knowledge construction in the classroom. However, there is a dearth of studies on in-service EFL teachers' beliefs in KSA that connect language, culture, and discourse. According to the literature, the EFL education has been looked at as a mental skill that students need to manage. This research intended to connect EFL teaching in KSA with the social context where the language is utilized. Therefore, I think my study will add to EFL

teaching and learning in KSA by focusing on EFL teachers' beliefs in light of the social discourse aspect.

Furthermore, there are insufficient studies that explored EFL teachers' beliefs about the English language as a dominant or a hegemonic language in relation to Arabic in the Saudi educational and social, which encouraged me to research EFL teachers' beliefs on the English language. Also, the studies that the literature presents have investigated EFL teachers' beliefs in accordance with particular theories or concepts in teaching. Nonetheless, my investigation is not limited to some identified predetermined EFL teaching methods. Rather, the nature of the research question and the data collection design were more open as they had given EFL teachers more freedom to add more perspectives. They stated their beliefs on different teaching methods that came out naturally from their responses and examples without being asked explicitly about a particular method of teaching.

In addition, the studies that have explored the Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions had relied heavily on quantitative data that were gathered via questionnaires. Therefore, I think the findings of these studies will be more descriptive if the researchers had used qualitative methods to show the participants' points of view from their own words, which adds more strength to the study. Despite the number of studies that have been conducted in the field of EFL teaching, I have found no study that adequately explored the context of EFL female teachers only in KSA. The educational system nature in KSA rests on gender separation. Males and females attend college in separate buildings in all educational levels starting from k-12 to college. This specific context female-only context needs to be explored and addressed in the TESOL field of research.

Still, the studies that have explored EFL in the Saudi context have been conducted in different regions in Saudi Arabia such as the Western and Southern Region. However, I intend to do my research on my local area (the Eastern Province Region) because the

geographical location, the historical heritage, and the economic development are different from other regions. The eastern region is known for being open to other cultures. Having the Oil Company (ARAMCO) in this area forces some people to communicate with foreigners using the English language that is a different language from their own. Also, the geographical location of the Eastern area has a great influence on its people as being on the border with four countries, or what they are called the Arab Gulf Countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Emirates, and Qatar). Some of these countries have been colonized by Britain, and as a result the policies in those countries as well as the lifestyle were affected by the western culture including education. Local people in Eastern Province visit those Arab Gulf Countries and have similar aspects of the common culture. So, I thought that being on the border with those countries and having this sense of cultural integration might affect people's mentality in the area where the study participants were born, raised, studied, or taught. Therefore, I might have different findings than studies that have been conducted in different areas in KSA.

The map below shows the Eastern Province location:

Figure 2.1

Saudi Arabia map



[Saudi Arabia Governorates]. The Saudi Network. <http://www.the-saudi.net/saudi-arabia/governorate.htm>

Summary

The previous literature focused on three major sections: EFL education in Saudi Arabia, EFL teachers' beliefs, and critical theory that includes important concepts, such as ideology, discourse, and language. In my point of view, these three sections are integrated, and I have the desire in this research to show the way they are integrated and affected by each other through studying EFL teachers' beliefs.

In terms of the study context, the context is very important as it is the medium between the teachers and how certain thoughts have been reached to them. The context of teaching English in Saudi Arabia is different from the context of English-speaking countries in a number of aspects, such as the difference in first language, social norms, culture, and educational system. I hope I clarified that through this study. For the previous reasons, I focused on the Saudi EFL educational context in the literature.

In addition, I chose to search the literature about EFL Saudi teachers as they are the essence in the educational system. Nowadays, the EFL teachers have a major role in the students' achievements and their future. Many subjects that have a big influence in the students' GPA are taught in English. Moreover, the weight of the English subject forms the majority of their GPA. In my opinion, the EFL teacher beliefs about the EFL education should be given attention in the research.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the theoretical framework and the methodology that I followed to investigate Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs. First, I present the theoretical framework which is the lens of my study. This theoretical framework guided my data collection and analysis to answer the research question: *What are the theories that inform my understandings of Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs about English and EFL teaching in Eastern Province, KSA?*

After Presenting the theoretical framework, I more specifically lay out the methods implemented in this study that included a single case study research design. I also present details of how I collected the data, how I analyzed data, and how I interpret it. I lay out the way I adhered to the research ethics through showing the trustworthiness and the validation process.

Theoretical Framework

To gain a deeper understanding of the issue of English language domination through EFL teachers' beliefs, this study draws from critical theory (Habermas, 1968) as an overarching lens to analyze data. Further, it also includes important constructs under the umbrella of critical theory. These constructs supported profoundly my data interpretation and understanding for EFL teachers' beliefs and the way those beliefs impacted teaching practices from different angles, which provides more details about EFL education in KSA. Those details are crucial in understanding the underlined causes and ideologies that engender the spread of English. First, I discuss critical theory. Then, I shed some light on social reproduction theory (Bourdieu, 1990) focusing on the economic reproductive model, social reproductive model, and the hegemonic state reproductive model. After that, I explain resistance theory (Giroux, 1983), Freire's three levels of consciousness (1970), and ideology (Guess, 1989). These concepts guided my analysis and interpretation of the interview questions and the autobiography prompts.

Critical Theory

Michel Foucault (1977) argues that critical research is considered an epistemological thematization of subjectivity as a new era of attaining knowledge. Critical theory rejects the object-subject framework of dialectics and utilizes the subject-subject relation of inter-subjectivity. Critical theorists are self-referential, which means the theory is part of the subjects' lives. They live with the assumptions of this theory and see the consequences in their everyday lives (Guess, 1981).

According to inter-subjectivity, each teacher has her own belief, but also the teachers' community has its own beliefs as well. Through the lens of the concept of inter-subjectivity, I studied the way in which the EFL teachers had commonsensical thoughts that shaped their beliefs, and the extent to which they were aware of the assumptions that formed their beliefs. In this study, I regarded the EFL teachers as subjects or members of a distinguished community who were influenced by their social experiences.

Critical theory is not an abstract philosophy. It is a way of examining normative elements of human actions and the different materials that led to an action. It is a mechanism by which the researcher can assess honesty as well as truth (Budd, 2008).

As a researcher, the subjective meaning from participants' own words was important in analyzing their beliefs, practices, and awareness as it leads to understanding their perception of the English language teaching in the Eastern Province, KSA. Critical theory promoted my consciousness about the social issues related to the predominant ideologies, which enabled me to understand and interpret EFL teachers' perceptions about the socially constructed ideologies. The problematization of knowledge production as a critical theory major premise derived me to examine the superiority of English language through the Saudi EFL female teachers' perspectives. My aim is to understand the issues of power and domination and how they relate to EFL education from the perspective of the EFL teachers.

Social Reproduction Theory

In this research, I used Giroux's (1983) theoretical analysis of the different aspects of reproduction models of schooling: the economic reproductive model, the cultural reproductive model, and the hegemony state reproductive model.

The concept of economic reproductive model puts emphasis on the *Correspondence Principle* (Bowles & Ginitis, 1976), which focuses on the connection between school and society. According to the Correspondence Principle, the hierarchy structure of values, norms, and beliefs are established at schools before students get into the real workplace life. I drew on the concept of correspondence principle to analyze teachers' beliefs to understand the way they have viewed EFL college students, and how they related EFL education to home and society considering issues of culture, language, and power reproduction. In addition, I relied on the concept of correspondence principle to study EFL teachers' perception on how schools function as a social apparatus to determine the students' field of study and consequently their social status in the society.

According to Bourdieu's cultural capital concept (2007), the culture of the dominant group will not spread by force. Rather, it will be illustrated by the practices of the different institutions that are legitimizing the dominant group's practices and knowledge as if it is the norm and the required culture for success in a society. As a result, the social orders and the power relations will be (re)produced as if they are the norm. Drawing on Bourdieu's (2007) concept of cultural capital, I investigated the participants' beliefs about different dimensions related to EFL teaching in relation to the suitable culture in the classroom. I also focused on the way in which these beliefs influence the EFL teaching context. I further built on the concept of cultural capital to disclose the extent to which issues of domination have or have not influenced teachers' beliefs and practices on the cultural values they emphasize in EFL classroom.

Furthermore, I drew on Gramsci's (1971) concept of *Hegemony* as a part of my conceptual framework to study EFL teachers' beliefs about language and domination. Specifically, I drew on the concept of hegemony to explore how EFL teachers perceived the status of Arabic in relation to English in the Saudi EFL context. Also, I relied on the concept to investigate the way in which EFL teachers perceived how English is used in Saudi colleges as a mean of social reproduction.

According to Gramsci (1971), *Counter Hegemony* is the way people create ideas and discourse to challenge the dominant assumptions, and the commonsensical beliefs, and legislations that marginalize them. I sketched on the concept of counter hegemony (Gramsci,1971) to explore the EFL teachers' awareness of the hegemony and the social function of the English language in Saudi Arabia and the Saudi culture.

Theory of Resistance

Resistance theory has evolved in the literature to illustrate the role of the human's agency in resisting social (re)production. According to the theory of resistance (Giroux, 1983), humans are not always passive recipients of social domination and oppressive acts; they can be active agents who resist these acts individually and collectively. Based on resistance theory (Giroux, 1983), I analyzed the participants' beliefs about the prevalence of English in their society, and the extent to which they do or do not resist the way in which English is used in the Saudi society and culture to convey hidden foreign ideologies.

In my attempt to analyze the participants' beliefs about teaching the culture of English-speaking countries in their EFL classrooms and what these beliefs reveal about resistance and human agency, I drew from Willis (1977) and Freire (1970) to explore EFL teachers' beliefs on the role of agency in forming their teaching beliefs and practices. Willis' work explains the role played by agency in reproducing culture, social class, or knowledge. Freire (1970) emphasized that having agency results in rejecting dehumanization acts,

protecting students' rights, fighting against oppression and the deceptive ideologies. Thus, I drew on the concept of *Teacher Agency* to analyze Saudi EFL teachers' perception on teacher advocacy, which refers to the way in which teachers can advocate for their students to facilitate their education. Further, I drew on the concept of teacher agency to study the EFL teachers' perception of how a teacher's advocacy can transform his or her students' lives. Also, I drew on the concept of teacher agency to study the EFL teachers' perception on the active role that EFL teachers can play to resist hegemonic ideologies in EFL curriculum and teaching pedagogies.

Freire's Levels of Consciousness

I based my analysis on Freire's (1970) theory of levels of consciousness to explore the participants' critical awareness of their own beliefs regarding a number of aspects. I think it is important to recognize the extent to which teachers are aware of some classroom related essential ideologies to understand their influence in forming their world view. For example, their level of awareness might reveal some ideologies that EFL teachers internalize regarding social background and students' intelligence, English language status, student-teacher relations, and the appropriate culture for obtaining knowledge.

Ideology

Moreover, I relied on the concept of ideology in critical sense (Guess,1989) to explore the extent to which EFL teachers' beliefs reflect or do not reflect their level of consciousness regarding their teaching practices, EFL teaching methods, English language status in KSA, and their past experiences. I also employed the concept of ideology in positive sense (Guess,1989) to study EFL teachers' perception on English language teaching ideologies and whether they adopt a worldview to encounter ideologies that are unjust to them, to their students, or to their social group.

In conclusion, the previously mentioned concepts aided my data analysis from a critical perspective. There are a number of research articles that I presented in the literature review chapter that investigated EFL Saudi teachers' beliefs on different aspects. However, there is a dearth of studies that consider critical lenses in the data analysis and connecting it to colonization, post-colonization, post-modernism, domination, and ideology. I hope this endeavor of researching Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs showed how English language and its education have been conceptualized in Eastern Province, KSA, which is an aspect that has not been explained critically and sufficiently in the current literature.

In this section, I explained the conceptual framework that I drew on to critically analyze the data. Next, I discuss this study's research design.

Research Design

In this section, I will discuss the rationale for choosing a qualitative study and then will explain how case study is an appropriate research design for my study.

I used a *Single Case Study* design with *Embedded Units* (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2008) in this study. The research explored the relationship between English ideologies and EFL female college instructors in the Eastern Province, KSA. As part of studying this case, I focused on the views on EFL presented by six Saudi EFL female teachers who are teaching English as a foreign language in college level EFL programs. Each EFL teacher's beliefs about the case is a unit of analysis. The six teachers' perspectives become the units of analysis of this single case (English language educational ideologies in Eastern Province context). I considered how such beliefs have influenced their understanding of EFL teaching practices, their awareness about their own practices, and the ideologies that direct their beliefs.

Research Questions

Saudi EFL female teachers share the general aspects of culture, religion, educational backgrounds, geographical location, and social context. However, they differ in perceiving and filtering those experiences, which shows that each person has his/her own beliefs and practices that need investigation.

The Main Question

What are Saudi EFL college level female teachers' beliefs about English and EFL teaching in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia?

Sub-questions

- How do those beliefs influence EFL teachers' teaching practices?
- In what ways are EFL teachers critically aware of those beliefs and practices?
- What ideologies are reflected in Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs about English and EFL teaching and learning in Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia?

The Rationale of Using Qualitative Research Method

In this section, I explain the need for using qualitative research method for this research. Qualitative data is utilized to allow the researcher learn about human behavior and to assess any discrepancies emerging from quantitative data (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Qualitative research has different aims than the quantitative research method. The quantitative research method aims at testing variables and causality. On the other hand, qualitative research method aspires to an in-depth understanding of the social context in relation to its participants (Merriam, 2002). In addition, qualitative research is meant to be an analytical tool to analyze specific cases in particular time and place looking at people's experiences and activities in their local context (Flick, 2014). I believe the Saudi social context is a factor that affects the English language education in Saudi Arabia over time. Therefore, qualitative research is a suitable research method for investigations that are

bounded by place and time. In terms of place, this case is bounded to EFL teachers who are teaching in college level EFL programs in Eastern Province, KSA. In terms of time, I conducted the study in 2019-2020, which is a special era of the Saudi history in regards to the teaching of English language. The 2030 Vision governmental reforms in Saudi society have been considered as factors that might influence the beliefs of female EFL teachers. Thus, conducting the research using a qualitative single case study is the most suitable method.

Qualitative Case Study

Case study has been identified as a qualitative research method that can be employed in education (Baden & Major, 2013; Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1988). Case study was introduced to the educational field by Yin (1984) and Stake (1995) who have emphasized the importance of subjective meaning gained by the participants or the group. The responses that I received from the participants come from what the participants articulated based on their subjective meaning they formed through their past experiences. Even though the participants in the current study belong to the same country, there are a number of differences regarding the way they filtered and conceptualized the EFL teaching context in Saudi Arabia. As a result, the participants' awareness varied.

The essence of qualitative approach is to understand the experience, the behavior, or the beliefs of specific bounded unit (a person) in a particular context. I utilized the embedded case study as I had to investigate different units (Saudi EFL female college teachers) who participated in one context (Eastern Province). The case study method is bounded by nature and has limits (Merriam, 2009). A case study being bounded means that its design focuses on one entity (e.g., a single person, a group of people, an institution, or a community) to analyze and look at it in depth. In this research, the case study focuses on one group of six Saudi EFL college level female teachers' beliefs in the context of Eastern Province, KSA. The study is bounded which means the data is collected from people who meet the researcher's criteria

such as specific age group, culture, or ethnicity. In this case study, I included participants who are English language teachers, familiar with the Saudi context, females, and teach or taught in the Eastern Province EFL college context. The goal is to explore the case that is in a familiar context to me as an insider in this community.

Case Study Implementation

This single case study is about the relationship between EFL educational ideologies and EFL female teachers who teach EFL female college students in Eastern Province of KSA. To understand this case, I explored six EFL teachers' beliefs to realize the extent to which EFL educational ideologies influence EFL teachers' beliefs and perception of English language and its teaching. I focused on beliefs as they are affected by ideologies which impact participants' world-views.

Protecting the participants' cultural and the linguistic identity is my goal. I conducted this study because my community welfare is a matter of great importance to me. Each teacher's beliefs about this case have been deemed as a unit of analysis that guided me to make sense of the whole case after connecting the six cases. I tried to have variation in my study sample, for example, the place where they studied their master's. The similar and different beliefs among the different cases had enriched my knowledge about the English language ideologies in EFL female college education, which can be reflected in Saudi society. Stake (2006) explains that, "the single case is of interest because it belongs to a particular collection of cases. The individual cases share a common characteristic or condition" (as cited in Merriam, 2009, p.49).

As cited by Merriam (2009), Creswell identifies case study as a qualitative approach at which the researcher discovers bounded cases or cases that have been formed in a specific time period through in-depth data collection utilizing various methods (interviews, observations, documents and reports). The case should investigate the issue deeply, which

was helpful in my research design. In this case, interviews and participants' documents (autobiographies, some teaching materials) were major data collection methods. These methods were helpful to answer my research questions because interviews helped to focus deeply on the details from the participants' words. I have included some questions, follow-up questions in the interviews, and autobiography prompts to aid the participants to elaborate when talking about their beliefs and thoughts. The questions and the prompts went in depth to enrich my information about the research participants.

In addition, I think the research needs to focus on some bounded elements that I wanted to discover because if I kept it open, the participants might take the research to another path that is different from the studied phenomenon. Further, the research is examining the teachers' level of awareness of their own beliefs and practices. Having said that, understanding someone's level of awareness requires being very close and connected to the participants. Consequently, I employed the semi-structured interviews, autobiography writing, and some teaching materials as data collection methods to generate a new understanding when connecting what I have found with what has been articulated in the literature. Also, I related the findings with the theoretical framework that I used as lens to interpret data.

Instrumental case study is employed to support and facilitate understanding of something else. The case is utilized to provide insight into an issue or a phenomenon (Stake, 1995). The focus is not the case itself, but the phenomenon surrounding the case. In the current study, I am applying an instrumental exploratory case study to explore how EFL education has been implemented and understood. So, this case study might provide an insight to broader issues such as linguistic imperialism and how its agendas have been reproduced.

Context of Study

It is important to give an overview of the study location, its people, and its educational and sociocultural systems. Thus, in this section I discuss a number of aspects related to the educational system where most of universities follow in the first college year in the Eastern Province, KSA. The research itself had not required having a specific site. The participants chose the place that was convenient to them and, at the same time, a place that fulfilled the research criteria.

However, a description of the educational context where I practice EFL teaching is provided below. I included it as it is similar to the educational environments of this study participants.

In Fall 2018, I started working as an EFL teacher in one of the Saudi universities in Eastern Province. There are teachers from different ethnic and educational backgrounds, and they come from different countries. There are EFL teachers from some Arab countries, such as Tunisia and Jordan. Also, there are some faculty members who come from different parts of the world, such as The United States, South Africa, India, and Britain. The classes have different time periods; the first class usually starts at 8 a.m. and the last one ends at 5 p.m. There are three levels of English language proficiency: Beginners, intermediate, and advanced. Students are placed in different EFL class levels after performing a placement test at the beginning of the year. The students in the first college year also study some other courses in English, such as Statistics, Math, and Computer. The students are studying 12-16 hours of English weekly, and they have four tests in a year and some other online blackboard activities. A class has about 40 students generally. All of the staff are females: faculty members, security ladies, custodial ladies, etc. The place has a cafeteria that contains some restaurants. In the middle, there are round tables with chairs where female students can gather during their breaks, mainly lunch break from 12-1 p.m. Also, there is a book store that sells

books to students and other stationery. There is an open outdoor field where students can sit and meet.

During my interaction with my colleagues, I felt that teachers had different stories to tell about the use of English in KSA, their EFL classroom dynamics, and their students. Even though EFL teachers have the same resources and curriculum to teach, they still have different interpretation of the daily issues they face in their classrooms. Working with those teachers and interactions with the students has enriched my experience and increased my knowledge about EFL teaching in Saudi Universities, which ultimately motivates me to learn more.

The English language is the medium to teach some courses in the preparatory year that is the first year of college (freshman year) in universities in Eastern Province, KSA. The freshman year in these colleges determines the field of study and future job for the students. Therefore, I believe it is important to investigate EFL teachers' beliefs about EFL teaching to understand the teacher's role in students' academic and non-academic lives. Moreover, it is important to examine how ideologies influence teachers' conceptualization of EFL classroom practices, their EFL students' achievements, and the students and teachers' social roles in school and society. The teachers' influence might extend not only into the school, but might also impact the students' lives and their understanding of their role as social agents.

Concentrating on this group of six EFL college teachers as a single case that belongs to the Eastern Province context was a learning experience that benefits me as an educator on the foreign language education in Saudi Arabia. The learned outcomes from this research suggest implications on Saudi EFL female teacher's research. Also, learning about individuals' beliefs revealed a pattern of the way they perceived the spread of English in their society. And, learning about beliefs showed what helped teachers when constructing

assumptions and how they apply them to reality in their classrooms. The goal is to view these results for the preparation of Saudi English teachers and related educational programs.

Positionality

There are a number of characteristics that make me a qualified candidate to conduct this study. I approached this study from different positionalities: as an insider from the Saudi society, a former student in Saudi public schools, a student who attended one of the universities in the US, a Muslim female, and an EFL teacher in one of the universities in Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. Also, I consider myself an outsider when it comes to studying English BA and higher degrees in English in the context of Saudi universities. As an insider, not only do I have background knowledge about school and society in Saudi Arabia, but as a Muslim and an Arab, I am familiar with the way people think and the epistemological system they follow to construct knowledge in their everyday lives such as the Holy Book (Qur'an). Although it seems I rely on the moderate Islamic constitution in guiding my actions, I have a hybrid identity that is the outcome of my experiences of living abroad and my interaction with both local and global cultures.

As an EFL teacher, I have experienced teaching in EFL classrooms, and I have been with teachers who are teaching within the same environment. Having worked with them motivates me to learn more about how they have been constructing their assumptions about EFL education and its context. I am familiar with two cultures: local and global; the global comes from my experience of living for nine years in the United States and the local comes from my being born and raised in Saudi Arabia. This familiarity makes me think of how EFL teachers are internalizing or filtering the assumptions from western and eastern cultures and how this combination of cultural knowledge has influenced their beliefs and actions.

My reflecting on experiences studying in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and in the US has provided me insights to understand better my participants and the context of my research.

Despite being a former student in one of the Saudi science colleges between 2001-2005, the experience has not enriched my knowledge about the meaning of being an EFL learner. Back then, the English language as a subject had not been emphasized greatly. However, after traveling and studying in the US, I became familiar with the meaning of being an ESL student by reflecting on my experience of being an ESL student in a language center in the US (Ohio; New Mexico). It gives me strength to understand the EFL students' experience of being an ESL student who wants to use his knowledge and experience to acquire the language.

Furthermore, my experiences during my BA, MA, and Ph.D. studies in the US taught me new concepts and theories regarding schooling and societies, which worked as an eye opener for me. I learned about the nature of East-West relations and how this nature of relations has been normalized over time. Indeed, my self-awareness of educational issues and consciousness had a tremendous shift. I read about issues in education in general and English language education in particular in the USA. I studied how the English language has been a mean to create stratification in the American society in my different TESOL courses. In the USA, being a second language learner means a person who has less likelihood in getting accepted in higher education and high position jobs (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). I wondered if those theories, such as the social reproduction theory, are applicable in the Saudi Arabian educational and sociocultural context or not. I learned about the role of educated social agents to investigate truth and show reality about their own people. I learned about how students sometimes are victimized in classrooms when they do not receive the proper education. I have been exposed to a learning environment that discusses similar issues of power and domination. These issues have been negotiated by my international and American colleagues as well as my professors. I also read some books and some research-based articles that address those issues in education.

Additionally, as an EFL student in Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia, I spent about 16 years studying in the female only public schools. I studied in those schools and dealt with my female colleagues, teachers, and school leaders on a daily basis. I am familiar with the conservative ideologies that took over the Saudi educational system. I had spent my childhood and teenage period in schools that followed some strict rules regarding females. There were numerous life aspects that were considered taboos such as listening to music, using cameras to take photos, or wearing pants. I lived in a family who was perceived in my community as open minded. My parents, and especially my father, who is the head of the household, had given me freedom regarding a number of aspects such as the way I wanted to dress. Further, I remember I have never faced clashes with him when I wanted to go outside the house to visit my friends unlike some of my friends who were more controlled. Yet, the school system was different from the way I have been raised, which made me choose the way I grew up in my family house as my doctrine in life. So, I deeply understand what the participants said and I can relate it and interpret it as they belong to the same generation.

I am acquainted with the rules and sometimes the restrictions that Saudi female students have been going through at schools. I have learned that English is a language that I should learn as an important subject. I know how it feels to be a foreign language learner who was taught by a Saudi female teacher. As a former EFL student, I still recall the EFL teachers' way of teaching, their attitude with students, and the classroom practices. Therefore, being a Saudi student in female only schools might aid me in understanding female EFL teachers who have been influenced by this (Saudi) educational, religious, and cultural system. The participants' age group is between 33 and 37 years old. It is the same generation I belong to, which makes a degree of similarity in our educational experiences.

As a person who had attended female-only schools in Saudi Arabia, the most interesting shift for me during my studies in the US was being in a mixed gender classroom

where I was supposed to be actively engaged with my other colleagues irrespective of their genders. I had some difficulties at the beginning, and I adapted to the new situation afterwards. I have met some of my American colleagues who perceive female-only educational environment from their own Western perspectives. Some of them could not even understand the idea of female-only schooling, which made me inclined to add Saudi female educators' perspectives to the current literature. Now, I am familiar with studying in a mixed gender classroom, which extended my understanding to the participants' experiences who like myself were former students in the US.

Since Saudi Arabia has a unique culture regarding girls' education, the research needs to be informed by an insider like myself or a person who has a deep understanding of that culture. The discourse in women's educational sphere is not easily accessible for outsiders (people who do not belong to the area such as European researchers, or males). However, I took the advantage of this privilege of being an insider to conduct a research on something beneficial to my society, and to inform the literature about EFL female Saudi educators. I hope my study will clarify how those teachers have been affected by ideologies in their Saudi social context as well as the EFL context.

I considered myself an outsider when I spoke with teachers who got their degrees in English language in Saudi Arabia. I earned my BA, MA, and PhD degrees in Linguistics and TESOL in the USA, which has a different system in teaching besides learning the language in this English native speaker country. Listening to some of the participants' experiences was a learning opportunity for me. I learned about many things including the English departments in Saudi universities, the kind of knowledge they provide, the program they offer to prepare EFL teachers, and the issues that EFL learners face.

Data Collection

In this section, I explain the methods that I utilized for data collection. I used interviews and autobiography writing as my methods for data collection. First, I clarify how I have chosen the participants by stating the criteria I followed to select the suitable research population. Then, I describe the way I have carried out the interviews and the autobiographies.

Sampling

The study context of the case determined the selection criteria. After I got teachers' approval to participate in this study, I ensured that each of them is Saudi, female, EFL teacher, familiar with teaching in the Saudi college context. The single case design typicality allowed me to select teachers who had these characteristics. I have not asked teachers from different geographical areas to participate since I wanted to focus on this particular population in order to examine the way in which EFL educational ideologies influence teachers who as a result might transmit the ideologies to their female students. It is important to focus on female college students as they will be in the near future mothers who will establish new generations in KSA. Indeed, we do not want this generation to experience language loss or identity shift. In this regard, EFL teaching policies should be considered and studied.

The qualitative research is not about the number of participants. Its aim is to investigate the case by providing an in-depth description, which helps in theory building or developing a theory. I chose to conduct my study with six teachers because this population helped me in analyzing the case in detail. I reached saturation by investigating the EFL teacher's group. Therefore, I did not need to add more participants.

To choose participants, I used the non-probability sampling that is also called purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling offers the opportunity to researchers to select their sample in

order to internalize, understand, and learn about the phenomenon, or the people in the study (Merriam, 2009; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). So, this kind of research suggests choosing cases at which they are insiders in the field of education in the Saudi context.

Since my research is a qualitative design, I used substantial criteria (purposeful sampling) to choose my research participants because this way of selection is based on specifying the participants' features that I included in the sample. The inclusion criterion for participants in this research is: EFL female teachers who are teaching in EFL college programs as they help me to understand teachers' beliefs and practices. In terms of materials for data collection, I defined my sample structure beforehand, that is, before data collection. The sampling idea emerged from my inferences about certain group and how I believe this group was relatable to my study.

I considered some points regarding my sample selection. First, teachers should be females because the teachers that I am going to do my research with are females who are teaching at female-only universities. I have access to female-only spaces to collect my data. Having access made me feel more comfortable and less nervous when I interviewed the participants. Also, I have never visited or worked in any male-educational institutions in Saudi Arabia before. Also, interviewing them would get me out of my comfort zone due to cultural reasons. Therefore, this was one of the reasons I did not include male educators.

Second, I chose only EFL teachers because they are familiar with both languages: English and Arabic. Also, these EFL teachers are knowledgeable about both cultures from English-speaking countries and the KSA. Therefore, having exposure to two different contexts might be reflected in their beliefs and understanding of EFL practices, which might influence the results greatly.

Third, I included teachers who are familiar with teaching in the Saudi public colleges. As majority of the Saudi population sends their children to public institution for education, the public schools' EFL teachers' beliefs and practices can better inform us about this particular

population of students. The EFL teachers who have been teaching in the public institutions have met many students of different educational, social, financial, and cultural backgrounds unlike the private universities that tend to have more privileged people enrolled. This diversity makes teachers form different kinds of beliefs since they have been interacting with different kinds of mentalities, cultures, and socioeconomic status.

Fourth, the place where they obtained their degrees is an important criterion to consider their selection for this study. I included six EFL teachers; two of them earned their degrees from Saudi Arabia, one from Bahrain, and three from the US. The focus is not the degree itself, but the experiences and the beliefs that are associated with the places they got their degree from. EFL teachers who studied abroad might have been through different experiences about schools and society than the EFL teachers who pursued their degrees in Saudi Arabia.

Fifth, the current study focuses on Saudi EFL female teachers' language beliefs, practices, and the perceived ideologies in the context of Eastern Province, KSA. Therefore, I included only Saudi teachers to participate in the study as they have had extensive experience in both contexts growing up at school, in the community, at home as well as their experience now as adults and English instructors. This insider knowledge that I gained being a member in that society has informed me about the EFL teaching beliefs and their relevance to ideologies in the Saudi society, which is the goal of the study. For this reason, instructors from other nationalities have not been included. This goal aligns with the type of proposed case study.

Description of the Participants

All of the participants are Saudi citizens, and they have been living in KSA since their birth, and they all come from Arab ancestors. They spent their childhood in different Saudi cities: Taif, Abha, Qatif, and Dammam. Their education was in Elementary, Middle, and High schools in KSA. They were between 33 and 37 years old. They got their master's degrees from different countries including Saudi Arabia, the US, and Bahrain. Four of the

participants were married and two were single. They were exposed to the English language even before enrolling in Saudi colleges to get their BA degrees. Five of the participants were master's holders and one of them was a BA holder. All of the six participants majored in English for their BA, and they pursued their master's in Translation, Linguistics, English Literature, and TEFL. They have taught in Dammam, Saudi Arabia as EFL teachers to college level students. One of the participants had been transferred recently to teach in a high school in Southern Saudi Arabia. Five of the participants wished to continue their education to pursue higher degrees to have better job opportunities and financial stability. However, one of them preferred to not continue studying so that she could spend enough time with her child and the family.

Description of Each Participant. This section contains a description of each participant that was included in this study.

Elaf. Elaf is 34 years old. She is an EFL teacher in one of the Saudi public universities in the Eastern Province. She was born and raised in the Southern region of Saudi Arabia, Abha. Abha is considered a conservative city and is populated by local people from different tribes. The number of foreigners in Abha as compared to the big cities is very low. She has 4 brothers and 10 sisters. Her father had a Bachelor degree in Military Science from the US, and her mother has a Middle school degree. One of her brothers, who is 8 years older than her, had inspired her to study her BA in English as he has a degree in English-Arabic translation. They used to watch English movies together and contact English native speakers in the US. She studied her K-12 in public schools in her home town until she got married and moved to the Eastern Province where her husband worked. After that, she joined one of the universities in the Eastern Province and chose to major in English. Elaf is a mother of three children, two boys and a girl. She had her first two children during her BA. After her BA in English, she pursued a master's degree in Linguistics. Following her graduation, she worked

in a private English language institute for a year. She has been teaching English courses in Saudi universities for two years, and she has plans to do a PhD in the same field.

Fatima. Fatima is 35 years old and she is an EFL teacher in a public university. She has four siblings. She was born and raised in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, Qatif and she still lives there. She is married and has a daughter. Her father has a master's degree from the US in Business Administration, and her mother has a BA in Islamic Studies. She attended public schools for her Elementary, Middle, and High school education, where she was inspired by her English language teacher to be an English teacher. In addition, her father had the biggest influence on her to learn the English language as she grew up. As a child, her English language exposure was through watching American TV shows. She studies her BA in Dammam with a major in English. After that, she moved to the US with her husband and daughter to pursue her master's degree. She taught Arabic in the US as a part of her internship, also. Then she returned to Saudi Arabia after getting her master's degree. She has been teaching English for five years in different EFL college level programs in Dammam. She started studying for her PhD in the same university in the US and suspended her study due to family commitments hoping to return and continue her PhD in the future.

Manal. Manal is 37 years old, and she is an EFL teacher now in a private university in Dammam. She was born and raised in the Eastern Province, Dammam, which is a city that has foreigners and is open to multiple cultures. She has 4 sisters and a brother. She is a single mother and has two children, a boy and a girl. Her father has a Bachelor degree in Administration and her mother finished Middle school. She attended the neighborhood public schools for her Elementary, Middle, and High school education. Her English language exposure started when she was 5 years old when watching Aramco channel, which is a channel that aired American shows sponsored by Aramco Gas Company in the Eastern province. Post-graduation, she got married and moved to the capital city, Riyadh, where she

studied her master's degree in Translation. Her father and mother-in-law had inspired her to major in English at college in Dammam. Manal was inspired by two family members: her father, and her ex-mother-in-law. She said that she always looked up to her ex-mother-in-law as she was highly educated as compared to other Saudi women of her age. Manal shared, "I used to like her a lot back then she had a master's from the UK where no one can finish school even middle school. So, I thought, she's good in English. She seems sophisticated, and I wanted to be like her one day" (December,2019). Additionally, Manal greatly admired her father who got his masters' degree from the US during the 80's. Also, he has a high English language fluency. She has been working for 11 years, including five years as an EFL teacher. At present, she is planning to enroll in a PhD program in English language abroad.

Rema. Rema is 33 years old and she is an EFL teacher in a public university. She was born and raised in Taif, the Western Province of Saudi Arabia, which is considered a conservative city. She has 3 siblings, a sister and two brothers. Her parents have BA certificates. Her mother worked as an Arabic teacher, and her father worked as a biology teacher. She went to a private school for elementary, middle, and high school. Her English language exposure started at the age of seven when her mother provided her and her siblings with English language books to read. However, her family had a great impact on making her choice to major in English language in college. After that, she moved to the US with her sister to pursue a master's degrees. Rema chose to continue her study in English literature. After returning to Saudi Arabia, she got married and moved to the Eastern Province, Dammam. She has a daughter. Rema has been working as an EFL teacher for 5 years in different EFL college level programs in Dammam. She does not have the passion to continue a PhD in the future, and she prefers to develop herself at work and plans to give more time to her small family.

Ibtihal. Ibtihal is 35 years old, and she has been an EFL teacher for five years. She is a mother and has 3 children: a girl and two boys. She was born in Riyadh and raised in Dammam, Eastern Province. She has 3 sisters and 3 brothers. Her father is a BA holder and worked as a General in the naval base, Eastern Province. Her mother is a housewife who finished elementary school. They are originally from the Southern region of Saudi Arabia. Her family moved long time ago to Dammam and settled there. During her childhood, her older brother and father used to sing and speak with her and her other siblings in English. Her brother noticed her enthusiasm to learn the English language, which made him play with her in English and do conversations. Ibtihal joined KG at the age of five where she continued learning English. After that, she enrolled in government schools in three stages: elementary, middle, and high school. Then, she chose to do her BA degree in English. Ibtihal got married and had children afterwards and moved to the US to study her master's in TESOL. Following her graduation, the family returned to Saudi Arabia hoping to find a job opportunity as an EFL teacher. She had taught in different colleges as an EFL teacher for three years before moving to a girl's public high school to teach English in one of the villages in Saudi Arabia as an official assignment from the country. Those girls were 12th graders who enrolled in college after finishing that year successfully. So, she used her knowledge about the college curriculum and requirements to prepare those EFL students for the next stage of their lives, and that's what made it important to include her in this study.

Noha. Noha is 32 years old and she has been teaching English for nine years. She is originally from Southern Saudi Arabia, and she was born and raised in Dammam, Eastern Province. She has nine brothers, and they all had exposure to the English language. Her father finished high school, and he speaks English. Her mother had no formal education. At the age of seven, she was enrolled in a public school in Dammam and continued her education in public schools until she ended up at the University of Dammam. She is a BA holder in

English language, and she hopes to continue her master's in English abroad in an English-speaking country. Noah's father was always an inspiration to her. In her childhood, she observed him speaking the language via phone with his co-workers in Aramco oil company, which is a well-known international company in the Eastern province in KSA. English was all Greek to her and that is what made her curious to learn the English language to copy her father who was her role model. She started to learn English in Middle school and she has not traveled to English-speaking countries so far. She is an EFL teacher now in one of the universities in the Eastern Province.

Data Collection Sources and Procedures

For precise results, I have used more than one data source, that is, data triangulation. According to Denzin (1989), data triangulation denotes the integration of different data sources, distinguished by time, place, and person. Moreover, triangulation is defined as the use of a minimum of three research methods as data collection sources to ensure truthfulness (Merriam, 2002). I collected data utilizing the semi-standardized interviews and the documents (autobiography writing, some teaching materials that they talked about in interview) to examine closely EFL teachers' teaching and learning beliefs in Eastern Province, and the teaching materials that the participants shared with me.

In the next section, I explain the way I conducted the interviews, and I show the kinds of interview questions that were included.

Interviews

Nowadays, interviews are widely used as they express precisely the study subjects' points of view. It is about co-construction of meaning by the interviewee and the interviewer, which the subjective theory takes into account (Merriam, 2009; Rossman and Rallis, 2012). Interviewing the participants individually gives a natural response from the participants' perspectives without setting variables as it is the case in surveys or structured interviews when the participant focuses

on what is exactly he/she has been asked to answer. Actually, this is not my first attempt to conduct an interview. I have studied some courses in the Department of Language Literacy and Sociocultural Studies (LLSS) where interviewing was one of the assignments. I have accomplished interviews in courses such as Introduction to Qualitative Research course, and Adult ESL Teaching Pedagogies course.

According Rubin and Rubin (2012), “responsive interviewing aims at solid, deep understanding rather than breadth. Depth is achieved by going after context; dealing with the complexity of multiple, overlapping, and sometimes conflicting themes; and paying attention to the specifics of meanings, situations, and history” (p. 35). However, being in a face-to-face interview and having the open-ended question gives the participants an opportunity to elaborate when articulating their EFL teaching experiences. They might include new thinking or unexpected ideas, which provides a profound understanding and a rich description.

Building Trust. Responsive interviewing is a qualitative interview method that rests on a give and take relationship as a result of trust and an outlast rapport between the researcher and the participant (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Starting interviews requires trust, less confrontation, and flexibility in the question patterns (Flick, 2014). Therefore, I conducted a responsive interview by building trust and having an active conversation with the participants. Before the interviews, or the data collection in general, each participant went through the consent form. I explained to them orally and in writing that their privacy would be protected, and their participation would be risk free. I also explained the benefits of participating in the study, that being to inform ways to improve EFL education in Saudi Arabia, as well as to enhance the literature by revealing Saudi female teachers’ voices and perspectives.

To establish trust during the interview, my voice tone was friendly, and pauses were natural. I was a good listener and I gave the interviewees enough space to speak their thoughts. In addition, I did not follow a specific order to the interview questions. Instead, I preferred to

have the participants elaborate on any idea that interests them. I asked some follow-up questions when I felt the conversation started to lose track or when I needed more information.

Interview process. During Winter 2019 and after I obtained the IRB approval to conduct interviews with six Saudi EFL female teachers. I conducted with each of the participants two interviews, and a third optional interview to clarify some points. I conducted my interviews with my participants' time preferences. I met them at a time that was convenient to them. Each interview was approximately 60 minutes in length. However, meeting with some participants in person was not possible, e.g., Ibtihal. Thus, I used technology to contact her via email and phone. The rest of the interviews were conducted face-to-face. I met with three of the participants in a library, and the other two in coffee shops in Dammam city, KSA.

I conducted the interview in the language the participants preferred (Arabic or English). I wanted them to feel comfortable speaking any of the two languages to express their opinions, feelings, and thoughts. However, all of the participants chose to be interviewed in English. They are master's holders in English language fields, and have done data collection already for their graduate research projects. They selected the English language to make it easier for me, so I did not have to do the transcription from Arabic to English, which I appreciate very much. They did that voluntarily. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed except Noha's interview who did not prefer her voice to be recorded. I took notes of what she was saying. I had transcribed the recordings and written up the notes immediately so I could use them for my study as and when needed.

I used the semi-structured interview as a research method, and case study as a methodology. I asked the participants *open questions* (Flick, 2014) that are connected to their beliefs of English and EFL teaching. I formed several types of questions to ask during the first and the second interview: *experience and behavior questions* (Patton, 2002) such as: Why and

how did you become an EFL teacher? What are the challenges you have faced? I asked *opinion and value questions* (Patton, 2002) such as: What do you think your role is as a Saudi EFL female teacher? *Knowledge questions* (Patton, 2002) such as: What are the objectives you want students to achieve by using these materials? *hypothetical questions* (Strauss et al., 1981) such as: What are you going to do if a student found the material you are using not useful or does not support her/his learning?

The questions entail their experiences being in an EFL classroom, how they perceive students, their role as Saudi female EFL teachers, how they learn about the English-speaking country's culture, the English language status in Saudi Arabia, the values they want to stress in their classes, their teaching method to each English language skill, their awareness on their practices, and their attitude towards the current changes in Saudi Arabia.

The second type of questions that I included in my interview is *follow-up questions* (Rossman & Rallis, 2012) that give a deeper level of understanding when asking for more details on some points that the interviewees have presented earlier. I have altered my strategies to elicit more information such as verbal and non-verbal cues and being silent and listening carefully. I showed my interest on the participants' opinions verbally such as saying, "that's interesting", "that's great", or "that's a good strategy". The goal was to encourage them elaborating on their responses. I used Some non-verbal cues including nodding and eye contact. Also, I kept myself silent at some moments as a gesture to allow them give more elaboration or clarification. The goal was obtaining participants' views clearly without influencing their thinking processes or opinions.

I transcribed the interviews right after they were conducted. Then, I asked the participants to clarify them to ensure I understood what they had articulated. I replaced or omitted some statements according to the EFL teachers' corrections.

In the second interview, I asked the participants to bring some of the students' work from previous teaching, books they use for their teaching or want to teach, worksheets they use in the EFL classroom, or a video they like to show to students. Then, I let them talk about how they used those materials in teaching. For example, they expressed why they preferred particular websites, videos, or classroom activities.

To ensure my understanding to what the participants had said, I conducted a third interview (member checking) after analyzing the data with one participant (Noha). There were some points that needed clarification, and I contacted her to ensure that I had reached a correct interpretation. Also, I contacted two participants (Elaf and Ibtihal) to provide more details about the reason they wanted to learn English and the people who had influenced them to study this field in order to have an accurate interpretation.

Teachers' Documents (autobiographies)

The autobiography writing is another useful data collection method to receive data from the participants directly. Writing is an authentic source that comes from the writers directly who themselves have been through the experience and who have witnessed the social situation themselves without interference from the researcher. Merriam (2009) states "documents are in fact a ready-made source of data easily accessible to the imaginative and resourceful investigator" (p. 139). Personal records and public documents are considered the mostly used sources for data in qualitative research where the researcher can use public documents or personal documents to collect data. Personal documents are any documents that have been written by a first-person that shows his/her beliefs, actions, and experiences (Merriam, 2009).

Before starting the first interview with the study participants, I met with five of the teachers in person to explain to them what is preferable to include in their autobiographies. One of the teachers couldn't meet in person, so I explained to her on the phone. I have utilized the

primary source originated documents to guarantee authenticity in the study data. I asked each teacher to write an autobiography in the language she prefers (in Arabic or in English) about her EFL teaching journey including some stories, incidents, or events that had influenced her. All of the participants chose to write the autobiographies in English. The autobiography was guided using some criteria that are related to my research questions and the theoretical framework (see chapter one). I sent them the autobiographies' prompts by email and they emailed me their autobiographies after they finished them.

My goal of employing the autobiography writing as a data collection method was to understand how EFL teachers' experiences and social context have influenced their EFL teaching beliefs and practices. The implicit way of asking about the concepts is important to have real responses without interference with ideal image that EFL teachers want to present about themselves. Using the autobiographies gives EFL teachers longer time to think in a relaxed situation to avoid the pressure of being observed or monitored. In addition, EFL teachers demonstrated their thinking clearly on the writings because they had time to think deeply about the details in their incidents or stories. The teachers had six weeks for writing the autobiographies at home or in any place they preferred without my being present with them. However, they handed them to me within three weeks.

After finishing the data collection and having the interviews transcribed, I started the data analysis and connected the findings with the research questions that are considered the goal of the research. I discuss the data analysis in the next section.

Data Analysis

According to Rossman and Rallis (2012), "Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data" (p. 273). Data analysis is similar steps of sorting, categorizing, grouping, and regrouping the data into parts or piece of data that are organized in a meaningful way (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

How to Start the Data Analysis?

Data analysis is preferably done during the time of data collection. That means the researcher try to find the relevant ideas to the research question or the TFW while listening or reading the participants' responses. The purpose is to avoid confusion and difficulties during the data analysis from the collected data (Merriam, 2009; Rossman & Rallis, 2012)

However, the data analysis and the data collection happened simultaneously. While I read the autobiographies and listened to the interviewees, I reconciled what the participants had said with my research questions along some concepts from my theoretical framework (TFW), and the literature. Also, I focused on similar, different, and unique responses to answer my research questions. The research questions were the base to organize and categorize the most important codes and themes from data as they are considered the research findings. I thought of semi-structured interview guided approach as a suitable way at which the researcher asks participants about a number of topics that are related to the research questions to elicit the participants' views of EFL teaching in the Saudi context such as EFL teaching beliefs, English language hegemony, levels of awareness, etc. However, I kept the questions somehow open-ended to enable participants to articulate more perspectives and to have a balance between the researcher's interpretation or perspective (etic perspective) and the participants' thinking (emic perspective).

Coding and Interpretation through Critical Hermeneutics

Interpretation is the phase of making sense of data, providing explanations, making inferences, and reaching a conclusion of a phenomenon. I have presented a thick description, which bears out a better understanding to the setting. The critical approach helped me to go over data in the process of coding and connect all of that to the theoretical framework concepts to draw conclusions. Depth hermeneutics, which is part of the critical hermeneutics (Gallagher, 1992) was employed as the data analysis method.

What is Critical Hermeneutics?

Critical Hermeneutics (CH) is one way to interpret the text that is considered an important medium in humans' interaction. Having a critical consciousness is essential to internalize and understand the text or the discourse. This study is focused on EFL teachers' beliefs and practices who are living and experiencing education in the Saudi social context. Hermeneutics is the self-understanding that occurred as a result of reflective actions within the frame of cultural traditions. The mutual understanding is between individuals and groups (Gallagher, 1992, p. 239). A tradition in critical hermeneutical sense is an interpretation of discourses that have been shaped ideologically. Critical hermeneutics requires having awareness of ideologies of oppression that are emerged through internalizing some traditions. The ultimate goal of Critical Hermeneutics is to reach the objective reality through understanding the hidden meaning in the text and its discourse (Smith, 1991). During the text coding, I avoided the *reproduction* of the participants' thoughts about EFL teaching. I thought deeply and critically based on the *Traditions* (Gallagher, 1992) or the previous knowledge that I am aware of.

According to Gallagher (1992), reflection is a principle of possibility that leads to true interpretation. The critical reflection guides the interpreter to free his/her interpretation from distortion that is usually under the effect of traditions and extra-linguistic forces. It reveals the meanings that could not be seen when the discourse is interpreted superficially. I eluded the hegemonic ideas that might affect my interpretation, such as relying on stereotypes to interpret EFL teachers' beliefs, practices, or level of awareness. I used the critical lenses that eliminate any notion of power and domination when looking at humans' interaction.

Correct reflection is achieved by what Habermas called *Depth Hermeneutics* (Gallagher, 1992) that considers not merely the participants' worldview, but also the underlying researcher's ideological stance that guides his/her decision-making (Budd, 2008;

Leonardo & Allen, 2008). I considered in my interpretation the emic and etic perspectives to give my interpretation. So, it was not about only the participants' points of view, but also the way I filtered it and understood the data was important.

Coding

Coding is the formal representation of the analytical thinking that connects data to the theoretical framework (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 282). Coding in general is a process of labeling and categorizing data. Furthermore, coding is the work with materials for creating concepts from pieces of data onto categories in a way that links it to broader issues in the analysis processes. It can be numbers, letters, phrases, or a combination of these (Flick, 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Merriam, 2009). This phase of data analysis is essential to show how results were developed.

I had transcribed the interviews, and the participants had written the autobiographies. I kept them in a secured place until the time of the data analysis. To achieve triangulation of data, I analyzed all the written documents from the two research methods (documents, interviews) as a homogenous data.

I followed inductive reasoning (Merriam, 2009) for identifying the codes, the categories, and the themes that had emerged from the data by using my theoretical framework as a lens. Additionally, inductive reasoning necessitates using *emergent coding* as a feature of qualitative research that reflects the voices of the participants instead of having prefigured codes that limit the analysis (Creswell, 2013). I had carried out *thematic analysis* to familiarize myself with the data and then made codes and found connections across the categories that I had formed in advance in the process of creating a theme.

In the process of coding, Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) point out that “coding is a method of discovery: You determine the code for a chunk of data by careful reading and reflection on its core content or meaning. This gives you intimate, interpretative familiarity

with every datum in the corpus” (p. 73). Although not every segment of my research data was given a code, I read it line by line to familiarize myself with the data.

To have the data organized and reachable, I analyzed the transcribed data electronically in my password secured laptop and I kept each form of data in one distinctive folder, for instance, first interviews in one folder, second interviews in a distinct folder, and the same with the autobiographies. Also, inside each folder there are six documents from all the participants. I named each document using the pseudonyms, for example, Elaf - interview1, Elaf -interview2, Elaf- autobiography. Also, I created two folders for each kind of data, one prior to the analysis and one after it such as Rema’s interview before analysis, Rema’s interview after analysis, etc. It has two columns, one for the codes and the other one for the text. In addition, I gave each participant’s codes a distinctive color to help me when merging them to create categories in the second coding cycle. I wrote besides each code in the inclusive table that has categories and themes, the code source such as interview1, interview2, or autobiography.

Coding Cycles. The coding in this study was carried out through two different cycles: open coding and axial coding (analytical coding) (Merriam, 2009; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Open coding was utilized in the first cycle, and in the second cycle I used the axial coding.

First Cycle Coding. In the first cycle coding (open coding), I utilized descriptive codes, which are low inference and very useful in summarizing segments of data and providing the basis for later higher order coding (Punch, 2014). First, I read each of the electronic transcripts individually and carefully, line by line. I highlighted simultaneously any notion in the transcripts in relation to my case study about English language educational ideologies in Eastern Province, KSA, the research questions, and in light of my theoretical frame work. I noticed some segments of data (3-5 lines) were rich and juicy; therefore, I gave

them more than one code. However, some paragraphs in the data indicate one connected idea. In this sense, I gave the whole paragraph one code.

In the first cycle, open coding, I employed different types of codes: *emotion coding* that captures participants' feelings, sentiments, reactions, and sensations (Saldaña, 2013) such as EFL teaching and disempowerment. I used also *values coding* that is employed to capture the participants' beliefs, attitudes, and values (Saldaña, 2013) such as EFL teachers as facilitators (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). I also used *in vivo codes*. According to Creswell (2015), "*in vivo codes* are the best because they move you towards the voices of the participants, which you want to reflect in your realistic final report" (p. 160). I have developed the majority of the *descriptive codes* in the first cycle using *in vivo coding*, for example the 2030 vision and freedom in education. However, when *in vivo coding* was not used, I tried theming data by creating a name of a code that captured the essence and meaning of a quote.

Some segments of data were rich and supported more than one theory. According to Elliott (2014), if your project is designed to view data through more than one lens (testing the fit of different theories to the data, for example) then multiple coding is likely to be necessary" (p. 2854). I used more than a concept from critical theory, which renders using the same piece of data to illustrate two different points as being essential.

Second Cycle Coding. I carried out the second coding cycle by creating relations across the different codes from the first cycle coding to form categories (analytical coding, axial coding). This is a sense making phase where *pattern coding* (Punch, 2014) is needed to find the intersection across material and reduce the codes into more significant units, that we call them categories.

According to Creswell (2013), "categories are broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea" (p. 186). So, a category is not an idea that I

have formed from the data directly, rather, it is a result of finding the relations among codes. I copied and pasted all of the codes from each participant’s electronic document and included them in one table to find the relations among them. Categories that were overlapped or redundant had been reduced or included under one category. In addition, I omitted any codes that did not have relevance or reoccurrence. I created an electronic word table that had in the first row the most common categories from the data. After that, I classified the codes from all of the participants under those categories in the table. The next step involved interconnecting the categories in the process of axial coding to create themes, which are considered the research findings. However, a theme is defined as a declarative phrase or sentence describing a pattern, a process, or a connection across categories (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Table 3.1 is an example of how the coding was used with more than one data collection method.

Table 3.1

The use of coding and triangulation

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Interview responses from different participants.	Interview responses from different participants.	Interview responses from different participants.
Autobiographies from different participants.	Autobiographies from different participants.	Autobiographies from different participants.
Teaching materials	Teaching materials	Teaching materials

To ensure reliability of the codes, I followed Luker’s (2008) suggestion that recoding by another person needs to be done by “an unknowing coder someone who has no idea what hypothesis (or hypotheses) you are generating” as a way of keeping ourselves “honest” (pp. 202–203). So, I had two of my PhD holder friends look at segments of data, and they agreed with a number of codes I had created. Then, I created themes by connecting the codes based

on my theoretical framework, the literature, and what the participants articulated. By this stage the study themes were created.

After I formed the themes of the study, the participants' meanings underwent interpretation from my point of view, which required me to double check with the participants the intended meaning in order to have a good solid interpretation of the data. I benefited from my knowledge and awareness of issues related to domination and power in order to avoid distortion of meaning given by the participants in the transcripts. This can be achieved when having a full realization of the social and educational context. In addition, I had a critical friend involved in reading my interpretation of the findings.

Establishing Trustworthiness and the Validation Process

The research quality can be evaluated in terms of ethical manner by focusing on three elements: validity (internal, external), reliability, and trustworthiness (Merriam, 2009).

Validity

According to Merriam (2009), validity and reliability are fulfilled when conducting the study in an ethical manner. That is by careful attention to the research conceptualization and the way of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The section below explains the procedures I followed to ensure internal and external validity and reliability.

Internal Validity (credibility)

Internal validity implies the extent to which the findings correspond with reality, which requires the researcher's full understanding of the complexity in participants' experiences and the interpretation to that phenomenon. So, the reality we are looking for in the qualitative data is participants' constructions of reality and the way they envision the world. However, assessing validity has been viewed as a hardly captured element. The data do not speak for themselves; rather, there is always an interpreter, or a translator" (Ratcliffe, 1983, p. 149). According to Maxwell (2005), validity is seen as a goal more than a product,

so validity is never something that can be proven or taken for granted. On the other hand, Glesne (2016) claimed that the term validity is more connected to quantitative research, while qualitative researchers tend to use the term trustworthiness instead.

There are various strategies in order to guarantee validity. First, triangulation is one way to ensure validity by applying multiple methods, multiple sources of data, multiple investigators, or multiple theories. In this research, I applied different data collection methods such as interviews and document analysis. The data sources are interview transcripts and the written autobiographies. Also, the teaching materials that teachers shared with me had been included and analyzed. Moreover, I collected data from people who come from different educational, and social backgrounds in order to have variety of perspectives. Moreover, a number of theories under the critical theory umbrella were used to look at the data, which gave me richness in understanding the data as well as they allowed me to examine their application in the participants' everyday life.

I employed peer review during the interpretation stage; I tested the usefulness of the collected data by referring to the goal of the study, i.e., Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs about English and EFL teaching in Eastern Province. I also referred to the research questions and the theoretical framework to examine the effectiveness of the data. I involved critical friends in my explanation of certain statements and ensured that those explanations were logically connected to the Saudi EFL teachers' thoughts. The involvement of critical friends was important as they helped me to point out what I had missed, or what I had exaggerated.

Furthermore, member checking was another strategy I used for ensuring validity. The goal of using member checking was to avoid misunderstanding the participants' views and reach the intended meaning. Also, I spent adequate time with the participants until I reached a stage when the answers became repetitive, and I felt there was nothing new to add, i.e., saturation.

External Validity

External Validity can be achieved by providing a thick description to the whole situation (Merriam, 2009). In this case, the research findings cannot be generalized to another population since the study is qualitative and the investigation focused on the “here and now”, i.e., the research is with only six EFL Saudi female teachers, what have been said in this study represented this population in this particular place, Eastern Province, KSA. So, the findings might not be generalized to other EFL teachers’ groups who have different beliefs, opinions, and thoughts.

However, generalization in qualitative research is known as transferability. To guarantee external validity, I presented an adequate description to make transferability possible. In addition to thick description, I utilized the maximum variation in the selected sample, which is another way to ensure transferability when the researcher has variety of the selected sites, or variety in the research participants. In this research, even though all the participants are Saudi EFL teachers, I tried to have variety in the selection criteria, such as their sociocultural and educational background.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of the findings by the given explanation or the information from the researcher related to the data collection and the way the researcher has achieved the interpretation from the data. To have reliable results, the same strategies for internal validity have been used. Also, a description was provided of how the interviews and the autobiographies were collected, how I established categories and themes, and how I interpreted the data to reach a conclusion.

Ethics

Trustworthiness is an important element in qualitative research. It relies on validity and reliability (Merriam, 2009). In this research, I drew from Rossman and Rallis (2012) regarding

protecting participants' rights. I am aware of the issues related to protecting the participants, how to learn about the participants, and what to learn about and from them. I took attentively the meaning of the interpretation and principles they reflected.

A researcher might face some ethical dilemmas that lead the researcher to decide how to use certain principles especially those that guide decision making in the data interpretation section. Therefore, I employed Bogdan and Biklen's (2007) principles to avoid ethical dilemmas (as cited in Merriam, 2009) by applying the following:

- 1) I kept away from sites where I hold an administrative or supervisory role over study participants.
- 2) I did not select participants who were uncomfortable sharing information.
- 3) I did not choose a time and place to meet with the participants, rather, they did.
- 4) I protected participants' privacy in both oral and written communications.
- 5) I respected study participants.
- 6) I had the honesty to present the findings as they are.
- 7) I avoided risky questions.

To preserve privacy and confidentiality, I used pseudonyms to maintain the anonymity of the participants. Some participants may want to express their voices freely without restrictions when their identities are recognized. As a researcher, I protected my participants by keeping anything that revealed their identities such as their names, work places names, or any recognizable information about them. Also, I explained to them that their direct quotes would be used from the data.

Recruitment and Consent

To recruit teachers, I contacted some participants that fulfill the criteria in person, and some by phone. Some of the participants had been referred to me by friends. As an EFL teacher, I also asked some of my EFL teacher colleagues if they could participate in this research, and

they accepted that with enthusiasm. I briefly described the study topic and its significance to the participant before I started data collection, and I asked them quick oral questions related to the selection criteria, such as their living years in Saudi, their EFL teaching experience, and the kind of courses they teach. Participants who met the criteria and agreed to participate in the study had been provided with more details about the study to poll their interests. Further, I read to them the consent form in English and there was no need to read it in Arabic since they have sufficient English language fluency. I asked them to exchange contact information to facilitate communication with them. Also, I sent them the consent electronically before the scheduled meeting to sign the consent and start the data collection.

The informed consent included the study's purpose, and what was required from them. I explained to them that their participation is voluntary and they are not obligated, they can also withdraw at any time. I explained that their privacy is protected and their participation is risk-free.

In addition to what I have mentioned previously to conduct an ethical research, I got the approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of New Mexico. I followed the university rules and regulations regarding qualitative research. As long as my research does not require educational sites visits or observations, I collected consents only from my participants. The most important aspect in this research was the teachers themselves.

Implications

My research is innovative because it provides a critical lens that looks closely at the Saudi EFL female intellectual and cultural beliefs on English and its teaching ideologies and practices in the Eastern Province, KSA. I think this research will be informative to Saudi EFL teachers about the goals of teaching a foreign language. It will be helpful also to provide an understanding about the way beliefs guide teachers' actions, which makes EFL teachers interrogate their own assumptions and the taken for granted beliefs about EFL teaching.

Furthermore, the current study aims at promoting teachers' critical awareness regarding the spread of English language and culture in Saudi Arabia, and to take into account the Muslim Arab cultural and linguistic values while teaching a foreign language. This study is not considered a source for truth and reality, it is an attempt to interpret these participants' views about reality (the spread of English language and EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia). Conducting this study will add to the literature by giving Saudi EFL female teachers the chance to express their voices, perspectives, opinions, and views. I believe addressing English language domination is important to inform EFL teachers about the broader goals of some ideologies, which leads to sustain the Arabic language and the moderate Islamic culture.

Summary

This chapter includes the research methodology. Qualitative research, and particularly single case study, was used to investigate six EFL Saudi female teachers' beliefs and how those beliefs have impacted their understanding of the EFL teaching practices in the Eastern Province, KSA. Part of the research focused on the role played by ideology on EFL Saudi female teachers' beliefs about English and EFL teaching by using purposeful sampling. The EFL teachers' level of awareness had been investigated. This research took place in the Saudi Arabian context, Eastern Province. Semi-structured interviews and autobiography writing were used for the data collection with six EFL Saudi female teachers who are familiar with EFL teaching in Saudi educational institutions. Critical Hermeneutic, specifically *depth Hermeneutic*, was used for data analysis and interpretation method. Using triangulation, member-checking, internal validity, external validity, reliability, and trustworthiness were adhered to in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE FINDINGS

This research investigated the relationship between English language education ideologies and Saudi EFL female teachers who are teaching female college level students. The case explored six Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs. This case study included the analysis of six embedded units, or six EFL female teachers' beliefs on English and EFL education in Eastern Province, KSA. This chapter presents the findings organized into four major themes: Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs on the English language, Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs on EFL teaching and professional development courses, Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs on the factors that impact EFL students' English language learning, and EFL teachers' beliefs on Saudi females' agency. In the sections below, the findings will be narrated in more detail.

First Theme: Saudi EFL Female Teachers' Beliefs on the English Language

This section explains EFL teachers' beliefs about English as being the language of education and everyday life. The findings suggest that the participants' beliefs can be organized into three main categories: beliefs about the status of the English language in everyday life in KSA, beliefs about the importance of English to access knowledge, and beliefs about the role of English in economic advancement and employability. In the following pages, I report these findings at length.

Beliefs on the Status of English in Education and in Everyday Life in KSA

Expressing their beliefs about the status of the English language in everyday life in KSA, teachers revealed that English in KSA compared to other languages, including Arabic, has a unique status. Ibtihal told that English is being emphasized in KSA in numerous life aspects including schools, the workplace, and everyday life. This status of English has become equivalent to the status of Arabic language in the country, which encourages students to invest more in English language than before. According to Ibtihal, "students [in KSA] are

learning English because English in Saudi Arabia became as important as the first language” (December, 2019). This is the case because, according to her, “they need it in their graduate stage which is after high school. So, basically, they are learning English to prepare them to studying or pursuing or completing their studies” (December, 2019).

Likewise, Manal believed that English in KSA had become a frequently used language even in public schools. Thus, according to her, when students or children are taught English, they are equipped with a tool that they can use in all aspects of their lives. Therefore, she believed that English had become equal or even more important than Arabic. The following quote from Manal’s responses reflected that:

English is equivalent to Arabic or even more important, because all schools now even governmental schools started teaching English in their schools which is a good move because when studying English, you’re not only educating your students or kids, you just giving them tools to know things all around the world because it’s an international language and everyone speaks it. (December, 2019)

In the same vein, Fatima believed that the high level of importance that parents in KSA place on their children’s English language education reflects the unique status of English in the Saudi context. In addition, Fatima believed that English had become a dominant language not only in KSA, but also in other counties around the globe because it had taken over other languages such as French and Spanish in some societies. However, according to Fatima, English in KSA would be learned as an additional language besides Arabic. That’s why she believed that the next Saudi generations would be more likely bilingual. This was overtly reflected in the following quote from one of Fatima’s responses:

I have noticed that I see little kids all over the place speaking English and this is not something I grow up with. I don’t know but I expect our students, the next generation to be bilingual to some extent. To talk both Arabic and English. (December, 2019)

In addition, the participants' beliefs about the status of the English language in everyday life in KSA were also reflected in how they conceptualized the status of English in international media. According to the participants, English language media in KSA had constituted a significant part of people's everyday life. Since people are watching media and are involved in it more than before, they would need to understand English or learn it in order to understand what they watch and, as a result, they can be effective members of society. Also, the proficiency in English brings recognition for the speaker in the media. For instance, Manal believed that it is common among youth and children in KSA to follow social media influencers who usually speak English. That's why she believed that youth and kids in KSA would be more likely to be able to identify the name of the USA President successfully as compared to the presidents of other Western countries. Manal said that,

Because everyone who speaks English has something in common. Whether a language, or all in all. If you ask someone who is the president of America? they would say Trump because they know English and they know that English comes from America, but if you ask a kid as well who is the president of France or Spain? They wouldn't know because of the language barrier I think, in my opinion. (December, 2019)

Additionally, the participants' beliefs about the popularity and widespread presence of the American media in KSA (i.e., movies, Web series, TV shows, songs, and many other online materials) reflect the important status of the English language in everyday life in the Saudi context. For example, Fatima talked about how she used American movies, series, TV shows, and songs as teaching aids in her EFL classrooms. She also promotes English media in her classroom as a reliable source to learn English. She has always advised her students to watch content in English to improve their English language. Fatima mentioned that, "What I usually advise my students to do is to find a topic that they are interested in and then go look

the topic online [...] there is no one source for students to learn the language” (January, 2020). So, the English media has been used as a resource to learn inside and outside the classroom.

Likewise, Noha mentioned that the English media is popular and could be used to learn English. EFL students could use the high status that English media acquired to learn new English words, which would increase their fluency and make them able to use the language. In addition, the teacher focused on teaching the cultural aspect of the English language using media. According to Noha, “resources of teaching cultures can be communicated by idioms, reading news, and watching short videos taken from movies or trailers. It depends on what the school system allows me to share” (January, 2020). In addition, Rema encourages her students to watch any English media to improve their English skills. She said, “I usually tell students that listen to something you like, watch something you like, learn something you like and step by step you learn” (January, 2020). Likewise, Elaf considered her students as lucky EFL learners because of the access to English media they have now, which was banned in the past.

Furthermore, the EFL teachers’ beliefs on the status of the English language in everyday life in KSA can be captured through the way in which some of them viewed English as a language that adds prestige and power to a person. Manal, for instance, believed that having English language proficiency and using English fluently in KSA could lead a person to receive and build a higher and more prestigious social status compared to his or her counterparts. It also means that it qualifies a bilingual person to hold positions in Saudi Arabia. Manal did not keep this belief to her; in fact, she passed it onto her students by giving them the example of the Saudi ambassador in USA, Princess Reema bint Bandar Al-Saud. She tried to show the teenage girls that mastering the English language leads to gaining a high status in different Saudi sectors. Manal said that,

I talked about Reema bint Bandar, and I asked them [her students] “why do you think she went that far for that position?” She is not only informed, but she had the medium, the weapon, is to be like good in English. (January, 2020)

Similarly, Elaf believed that it’s not uncommon among teenagers, especially girls, nowadays in the Saudi context, to code-switch back and forth between Arabic and English to claim and reflect their higher social status and prestige. Elaf said,

Mostly the girls, the teenagers now try to make language switch, they speak Arabic with some English words to represent their class, perceiving that using English words would associate them to the higher class, so for me, specifically for girls, they think that it’s a kind of etiquette. (December, 2019)

In the same vein, Fatima expressed her beliefs on how English earns you social prestige in the Saudi context by saying that some people or the next generation are motivated to learn English to claim a higher and more prestigious social status. She said, “I don’t know but I expect our students, the next generation, to be bilingual to some extent. To talk both, Arabic and English. So, it is gaining that prestige, high status because Arabic used to occupy alone long time ago” (December, 2019).

From a different yet relatively relevant perspective, Rema believed that English language proficiency could relate to a person’s sense of superiority and confidence. According to her, the students who had higher level of English language proficiency in her class seemed to feel more confident and superior than their peers. That is why, according to her, many families in KSA work hard with their children to master the language. She explained this point by saying that, “The other one (student) always feels inferior and shies out and does not participate, so yeah, I would say that people who did not have the chance to learn English would feel inferior” (December, 2019).

Moreover, some of the participants believed that people in KSA could be treated in a more respectful way just because they could speak English. This was revealed through the way in which Ibtihal informed her students about how she was being treated more respectfully when she spoke English in public. She felt that being fluent in English would give her a higher status. Ibtihal explained this point by saying that,

When I go to the hospital and they know I do understand English or speak English, they change the way they speak to me, they change the way they interact with me because I only speak another language. (December 2019)

Additionally, three of the participants believed that English in the Saudi context is conceptualized as a language to claim a higher social status because it could reflect a person's open-mindedness and sophistication. Manal, for instance, believed that English is a highly developed language and thus it could reflect a person's high academic level. She emphasized, "I think, sophistication comes with language" (December, 2019).

Likewise, Fatima believed that using English in educational settings by some people could indicate their sophistication and open-mindedness to other cultures. She said, "I think everyone considers it (English) as I will say an indicator of sophistication, of open-mindedness, of being cultured and civilized even if someone doesn't really have all these qualities, we would already associate these qualities to them, the fluent English language speakers" (December, 2019).

By the same token, Rema believed that learning English or any other language can open new horizons to people. That is, it could allow them to not only be able to understand other people's cultures, but also to be better than their own people in education and civilization. She said: "we need to understand all other cultures around the world, we need to speak their tongues in order to be like them or be better than them" (December, 2019). It was obvious from Rema's speech that she looked up to the English language especially when she

stated “to be like them”. So, to Rema, reaching to the English-speaking countries is something desirable.

The participants’ beliefs about the status of the English language in KSA was also reflected through their views on how English could promote a person’s sense of independence. Rema, for instance, expressed these beliefs by informing her students about how English language fluency could make them independent and secure, especially in situations where no further support could be provided by others. She said,

I usually tell them [her students] that you need to be independent, you need people to need you, you need people to call you for help, you don’t want to be the one calling people for help. So, they usually like that, they don’t want to be dependent. (January, 2020)

Similarly, Ibtihal believed that English could promote a person’s sense of independency and power. This was revealed through the way in which she described the importance of the English language to her students as an essential language not only when they study or live abroad, but also in KSA as it could empower them and make them effective society members. This is captured in the following quote by Ibtihal in which she stated that,

When you learn English, you do not only help yourself; you help your family, you help people around you because you are in a place where not many people speak English, you can be a helpful member, and not only in your family, in your district, in the hospital everywhere” (December, 2019).

In the same way, Manal had always been informing her students that English could support its speakers and make them independent in the sense that they could rely on themselves in situations where they would need to use the language. This was reflected through the way in which Manal explained that to her students. The following quotes from Manal’s response captures that:

I keep on telling them let's say that you are ordering Uber and you can't give him directions. He speaks English and his English is bad. Let's say that his English is second or even third language to him. You can't give him even simple directions what a shame! (December, 2019)

Interpretation

Gee's discourse theory (1989) helps to clarify the interrelationships between social relations, social identities, contexts, and specific situations of language use. Gee classified discourse into two types: the big "D" that is associated with beliefs, values, and thoughts, and the small "d" that is correlated with language in use that includes ways of talking, listening, writing, and reading. However, Gee thinks that knowing this language makes a person familiar with one element of the big discourse. Therefore, mastering a particular social language, or discourse, means that a person belongs to a particular Discourse as it forms their social identity.

The results in this subsection indicate that the EFL teachers perceived English as "Discourse", with a big "D", rather than "discourse", with a small "d" (Gee, 1989). Specifically, they viewed English not merely as a vehicle of communication and interaction in educational contexts, i.e. schools. Rather, it has been perceived as an aspect that reflects a person's high academic level, social status, and prestige. In this way, according to the EFL teachers, English has indicators that are beyond using the language itself. For example, it was emphasized in the data that being fluent in English makes a person respected in public places as it reflects a person's open-mindedness and sophistication and increases their sense of superiority and confidence.

In addition, the findings reveal that the EFL teachers believed and normalized the domination of the English language culture in education and in everyday life. These findings are connected to the concept of the culture capital of English (Bourdieu, 2007). To them, English

language and its culture are considered essential for the students in KSA to facilitate their learning of English in school. For example, the EFL teachers believed that it is important to incorporate American media into the teaching and learning processes. They believed that EFL students need to be familiar with the American culture through media. Even though some students were not familiar with English language and culture, the teachers advised them to search for English sources to learn more about these aspects. Likewise, five of the EFL teachers (Manal, Fatima, Noha, Rema, and Elaf) also encouraged their students to follow English native speakers' influencers on social media to help them learn more about the culture of English language speakers. What the participants have mentioned illustrates their belief in the importance of the English language and culture exposure in EFL students' learning. However, it is important to mention that fifteen years ago such practices were considered unacceptable in educational institutes in KSA. A teacher who encouraged her students to watch Western movies or to listen to Western music might receive a warning. This was the case because such an act would be considered liberal and against the country's conservative agenda, which was the dominant ideology at the time. Yet, using the social media as a medium to improve English language proficiency and learn new English words, supports the findings of Allam & Elyas (2016) research study that illustrated the pedagogical values and advantages of using social media as an English language teaching mean in the EFL classes in the Saudi context.

Further, the data showed that one EFL teacher (Rema) believed that an EFL female student might feel inferior when mixing with peers who are more fluent in English than her, which was a surprising finding. Previous studies, such as Bowles & Gintis (1976), Willis (1977), and Wilson (2009), demonstrated that people who did not have access or managed the dominant language in their social context, were looked at as inferior. Actually, it is unexpected because the EFL teacher's first language is Arabic, and she is teaching English to Arabic speakers. It is an unforeseen result that she thought an EFL student might feel inferior

as a consequence of not speaking a foreign language in the context of KSA where Arabic is the mother tongue and the official language and is being used by one billion Muslim in their everyday religious practices. This finding indicates the English language hegemony took place not only in contexts where English is the official language. Rather, this notion has spread globally and has affected educational contexts other than the English-speaking countries such as education in KSA.

In this sense, I would call the belief on the sense of feeling inferior when not speaking English in the Saudi context as deficit-based perspectives on Arabic language and culture in EFL teaching. A person feels inferior as a result of not speaking another tongue that is different from the one people speak in his/her social context in order to gain a better status and will be considered inferior otherwise. In this study, the findings indicate that one EFL teacher believes that students who do not have high English language feel inferior as they lack this educational and social advantage.

As I have said earlier in chapter one, KSA has not been colonized. Nevertheless, the results showed that there are some western ideologies or what is called the white man western ideologies that have been embedded in the Saudi educational system and the life aspects. As a result, teachers, students, and policymakers consider giving more status to English, and as a consequence the usage of the Arabic language has become limited.

Monolingual Arabic speakers were looked at as less educated than bilingual Arabic-English speakers. In fact, what is happening in KSA now is a form of colonization that has not used symbolic power to fulfil its agendas. English language and culture have been perceived as aspects for modernity and for obtaining higher status, which can be connected to Giroux (1983). He claims, “working class culture is not seen as different and equal, but as different and inferior” (p. 296). Further, I connected this finding with the concept of *Globalizing White Supremacy* (Allen, 2001). That is, when white people’s variety of the

English language and culture takes over the world. They also hegemonize the local people's heritage and mother tongue in the KSA context, which is very different from the western culture. The aim is to find a suitable living and working environment globally for the western, especially whites. I am not anti-western, but I believe it is an advantage to learn more languages and cultures without eliminating the Arabic language and culture and the moderate Islamic heritage.

Reaching to a stage when not speaking English makes people perceive themselves as inferior is not a desirable goal as it leads to language loss. It also leads us to rethink the English language and culture when it influences students' identity and the way they perceive themselves. There is a need to rethink the English language and culture, what to teach about them, and also how to teach them.

The Importance of English to Access Knowledge

In the previous subsection, I reported the findings that show the participants' beliefs on the status of the English language in everyday life in KSA. In this subsection, I report the results that show the participants' beliefs on the importance of English in accessing knowledge.

The participants believed that English is an essential linguistic medium to access knowledge and learn about other cultures. Fatima, for instance, believed that English is the language that opens the door to students to educate themselves and learn about others. She said, "you'll open up to the whole world when you have access to English. So, I think English is their (the students') door to a lot of opportunities in life" (December, 2019). According to Fatima, the importance of English in gaining knowledge can also be realized through the attention that is being given to scientific research and how English has become the language of scientific research and publication nowadays. She said:

Now there is a focus on scientific research in Saudi Arabia. We have to improve our students' English language, because whether we like it or not, most of the scientific research published or being published is in English. Starting this (English language education) from college will not be enough. (December, 2019)

Likewise, Elaf believed that English plays a significant role in gaining knowledge because it is the language of modern science that can keep people internationally connected. This is the case because English is the language of many, if not all, conferences, symposiums, as well as other scientific gatherings. She said,

The conferences in any field, medical, engineering, fashion, or whatever the field of the conference is, are in English. If you would like to be up to date, it would be in English. So, this is the global language I can say. (December, 2019)

Rema believed that the students who are more fluent in English would be more likely to achieve better at colleges in KSA. This is the case because English is the medium of instruction in most of these colleges, which means that these students would need less time and effort to study and memorize information. In this way, the students who are more fluent in English become more privileged to succeed academically. This was reflected in the quote from one of Rema's responses:

They [the college students] would not spend much time learning the language and study science or computer in English but those who don't have the chance would spend much time studying not as much as those who do not speak English because those who don't have to translate and then memorize the information but who speak English only memorize. (December, 2019)

To summarize, EFL teachers believed that the English language is the medium in which a person learns about other cultures and increases their knowledge in various subjects. It is deemed as the language of scientific research. A researcher's voice and their academic

work would be conveyed to the vast majority of intellectuals if s/he publishes in English. Finally, the findings showed that high English language proficiency is the way to succeed academically in most of Saudi colleges as English serves as the medium of instruction at colleges.

Interpretation

The findings above illustrate that the EFL teachers perceive English as a form of *Cultural and Linguistic Capital* (Bourdieu, 2007). In other words, all of them believed the English language and culture are essential for accessing, gaining, and producing knowledge in scientific research, publication of research, and attending conferences in different fields such as the fields of medicine, engineering, and fashion. So, it is not specific to the English language related disciplines only. English has been perceived by the EFL teachers as a powerful language. Even though the participants live in a country that does not have a large population of English speakers and its people do not speak the language, they considered it as the official language of knowledge. The data show that EFL teachers associated the students' family high social status with being a fluent speaker of English and a high achiever in school. To them, speaking English means speaking the elite group's language in the Saudi society. So, EFL teachers perceived students from the bilingual families as advanced, confident, and independent individuals. So, one of the characteristics of the elite's culture, or particularly the white American or white British culture, is mastering English. The EFL teachers recognized English as a privileged language over other languages, and sometimes they gave it a higher importance than the students' mother tongue.

The results above are connected to Gee's discourse (1989) and Allen's globalizing the white supremacy (2001). Moreover, those findings can be viewed within the framework of Apple's (2014) idea of the *official knowledge*. He states that "what counts as legitimate knowledge is the result of complex power relations and struggle among identifiable class,

race, and religious group. Thus, education and power are terms of an indissoluble couplet" (Apple, 2014, p. 4). According to the findings, knowledge that is written in the English language has been legitimized as the preferred version of knowledge. People who have this advantage have the privilege to attend international conferences and publish research. So, the English language knowledge and being fluent in this language is deemed as a gateway to learn about various kinds of disciplines that is written in English such as the field of science and medicine. Even if people studied the exact kind of knowledge in their mother tongue, they would not have the same opportunities. The findings above stresses that accessing knowledge is not neutral, but there are issues of power and linguistic domination that determine having this access.

Moreover, the data revealed that EFL teachers consider English language as a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2007). It has been normalized and legitimized as the dominant language and culture to succeed in different Saudi higher-education institutions. To them, mastering the English language skills before joining college in KSA leads to high achievements and a promising future. The fluent English speakers are prepared for college life as they have been exposed to that language and culture in an early age. As has been demonstrated by EFL teachers, students who are fluent in English are privileged to succeed academically as their study journey is easier, and they can obtain knowledge faster. On the other hand, they felt that students who have low English level might spend much time in learning the language. Their time is wasted on translating concepts and trying to understand utterances while those who are fluent in English focus on learning new knowledge and concepts, which is connected to previous research results that fluent EFL students achieve better in schools and college (Al-Asmari & Khan, 2014; Seghayer, 2012). In addition, the English language was envisioned by the EFL teachers as a necessary language in schools, and

universities in KSA as well as the Saudi society as a whole, which supports previous studies (Al- Jarf, 2008; Al-Seghayer, 2012; Al-Seghayer, 2014; Rahman, 2013).

The Role of English in Practical and Economic Advancement and Employability

In this subsection, I report the findings of the participants' beliefs about the role of the English language in economic advancement and employability, as one of the aspects that reflect their overall beliefs about the English language in KSA.

Fatima believed that although having English language proficiency might not be the only requirement that job applicants would need to develop or acquire, it is still an important skill. To her, this even becomes more critical in jobs that require a direct contact with clients who do not speak Arabic and then English becomes the common language. The following quote from the participant's response revealed that:

It's not the only skill that they might would need to get a job, it's [English language proficiency] definitely a plus in their CVs when they go. They would give an impression considering the value that English language has in Saudi Arabia.

(December, 2019)

The way in which the participants conceptualized how English can provide its speakers with more and better opportunities to succeed in life uncovers their beliefs on the crucial status of English in KSA. To the participants, as former students, English was the skill that can empower people to achieve their goals. According to Manal, she pursued her MA in English Language Translation to overcome the difficulties she confronted to have job security. Despite being a KG teacher and having some family issues, she decided to seek EFL education in order to support herself through getting a higher degree and getting a better job opportunity afterwards. She reported that:

The attempt to get my master's degree while working in a kindergarten as an English teacher and going through divorce shaped my initial teaching skills, strengthened my

personality, and paved the way for me to become the EFL teacher I am today.

(December, 2019)

English language education had been always viewed as a support to her. After finishing her master's in Translation, she got hired in one of the Saudi universities as an EFL teacher. The university gave priority to those who were TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) certificate holders. Therefore, she felt the need to update her knowledge by registering in one of the courses that is called CELTA (Certified in English Language Teaching for Adults) program in order to be a certified English teacher. She stated that: "being constantly told by my employers that my master's in translation does not make me eligible to become a proficient and an experienced English teacher encouraged me to pursue a teaching certificate, CELTA" (December, 2019).

However, Elaf's master's degree and her thesis in Applied Linguistics gave her a better understanding of language acquisition and learning, which helped her to be hired and has improved her EFL teaching. She mentioned that, "it helped me a lot in deeply understanding the various aspects of the language and how they should be taught, as well as the effect of different pedagogical methodologies in enhancing the learning process" (December, 2019)

On the other hand, to Rema, the idea of learning English to support herself had been transmitted to her from her mother as a young child. Rema commented that, "my mother had a belief that if you want to excel in life, you are going to have -at one point- to learn English" (December, 2019).

Rema's mother encouraged her and her other siblings to learn English by providing grammar books and huge lists of vocabulary to be memorized. As a result, she decided to choose English language as her college field of study and tried constantly to improve her English

language. In addition, she studied her master's in English literature to have a better job opportunity, which illustrates her strong belief in the English language as an essential requirement of economic advancement and employment.

According to the participant, Saudi students tend to learn English and be professional in it more than before for various reasons. English is an important criterion to get employed and has a higher social status. In fact, one of the main goals of the Saudi 2030 vision is recruiting international companies to establish new branches in KSA. In addition, one of the goals of the 2030 vision is enabling women through providing them as many opportunities as their male counterparts. In this sense, to be a part of the economic development a person needs to have a decent level of proficiency in English.

Interpretation

The findings demonstrated that all of the EFL teachers believed that English cultural and linguistic aspects are hegemonizing employability in KSA. As a result of the English language and culture domination in KSA, job applicants who are fluent in English get employed faster and get better positions in the Saudi job market. For instance, the EFL teachers themselves illustrated that they chose the field of English to study in order to have well-paid jobs. According to the EFL teachers, the English language fluency is an important requirement for employment in a number of companies and universities in Eastern Province, KSA. The EFL teachers showed a positive attitude towards having international companies in their region as this helps in creating more jobs and promotes a high-quality life in society. To them, the English language is a necessity in the work place, especially companies that recruit people from different backgrounds and use English as a lingua franca, which is also associated with Allen's globalizing white supremacy concept. In order to provide a suitable work atmosphere for English speakers to work in Saudi Arabia e.g., Americans working in the oil company in the western province, the standard English language has been a

requirement to get a work opportunity there. According to the data, English fluency had been viewed as an important skill that adds to job applicants' C.V. The findings in this section align with what has been found in other research studies (Seghayer, 2012; Al-Asmari & Khan, 2014).

The results reveal that EFL teachers viewed the 2030 vision as a new ideology that influenced numerous institutions in Saudi Arabia. To them, it helped in increasing the demand for women's work in different fields and companies. Also, bilingualism is desired more than before, which makes Saudi women consider improving their level of English to have a better chance in the Saudi job market. Unfortunately, there can be inequalities in women's social mobility as learning English is not available for free to every woman. If women are fortunate enough and have the financial support to join English courses, they will have a good opportunity to learn English and be certified English speakers. Unfortunately, Saudi women sometimes encounter financial or social obstacles. Some women might be privileged more than others. Those women who have connection to people in power, *social capital* (Bourdieu, 2007), can have access to places where other women could not have. They can receive free English language education besides other important skills for employability in KSA. Therefore, there is a need to re-think how all Saudi women could be empowered equally irrespective of their class and background. So, either all women get access to English classes, or consider Arabic as a valuable language in different workplace and use English when it is necessary. However, the Saudi government is supporting women to get leadership positions and they are taking this point into account seriously. For example, they have launched Saudi women leadership platform. Figure 4.1 illustrates a picture of women during the launching of the Saudi women leadership platform.

Figure 4.1

Launching enabling women platform



Sharq awsat New (March,9, 2020). Platform for enabling Saudi women [online image]. Retrieved from <https://aawsat.com/home/article/217033/>

In conclusion, the first theme about the findings of this research indicates the hegemonic status of the English language in KSA. English language hegemony can be seen through EFL teachers' perception of it as a language that has the same importance or more importance as the students' mother tongue in education. Also, EFL teachers normalized the American media domination as a source that helps them to increase their English language fluency in school and in their daily lives. The EFL teachers have viewed English as a necessary language for proper education and economic advancement. They also believed that English is essential for accessing and producing knowledge and for sharing it internationally. So, all of the essential aspects in everyday life cannot be achieved without having a sufficient knowledge of English, which indicates English language hegemony in KSA, which is align with Gramsci's (1971) concept of "hegemony". According to Gramsci (1971), hegemony refers to the use of force and ideology to reproduce social relations between social classes and control production of knowledge.

Second Theme: Saudi EFL Female Teachers' Beliefs on EFL Teaching and Professional Development Courses

This section introduces the EFL teachers' beliefs on EFL teaching and teacher training courses. The findings are organized into four different categories: (a) the role of the teachers in the EFL classroom, (b) the use of the students' L1 and the target language culture in EFL classroom, (c) classroom activities type, and (d) the role of the past experience.

The Role of EFL Teachers in the EFL Classroom

The findings reveal that EFL teachers consider themselves as facilitators. The teachers inculcate the spirit of independence in their students. They were aware of their role in providing the lesson's instructions and resources, assisting students when facing problems, and explaining the crucial and new points to them.

According to Fatima, the teacher's role in the EFL classroom is to facilitate students' learning processes via supporting the students in finding the ways and locating the resources to learn English. The following quote from Fatima's responses captures the way in which she conceptualized the teacher's role in the EFL classroom: "I can't really feed them each and every sentence of the language, right? I am supposed to help them use that language properly in the right situation" (December, 2019).

Likewise, Manal believed that the teacher's role in the classroom is to facilitate the students' learning via providing them with some guidance that helps them in employing their textbooks to create their own sentences using the vocabulary in these textbooks. The following quote from Manal's responses reveals this.

Another important aspect that had been uncovered by the participants responses was their beliefs on how teachers can relate to their students in EFL classrooms. All the participants believed that teacher-student relation is a vital factor that needs to be considered in an EFL classroom. According to them, such relations are usually formed over the time, and

are affected by a number of socio-cultural factors. Rema, for instance, believed that teachers need to deal with their students as their equivalent in the sense that no one is superior to the other in the context of teaching. Rema also believed in the importance of strengthening the rapport between the teacher and her students, as it was revealed in the following quote of her in which she talked about the students in her class:

They feel safe, they feel maybe loved, they feel appreciated, they feel like grown up, they are not my students, we are maybe friends [...] I made it very clear that we're at the same level [...] I wanted my students to feel at ease. (December, 2019)

She planned to make her classroom as their second home. As a result, her students considered her classroom as a comfort zone where they are all equal and their teacher is one of them.

Similarly, Elaf stressed the principle of “equity” in the EFL classroom. According to Elaf, this would help the teacher to create successfully a strong bond with her students to understand their interests and concerns. In addition, Elaf believed that the teacher in the classroom should act as a role model to the students to support them academically and help them shape their character. She stated,

The English class is like a workshop. It's like an interaction [...] we have to feel about each other and it's not my success in class, it's our success [...] it is the time [the college period] to polish the students' character. (January, 2020)

In the same vein, Noha believed that the teacher's relation to her students should be based on trust and assistance. According to her, the role of the EFL teacher is not only to aid the students with the English language learning but also “to assist them to be better people and not just better English speakers”. So, Noha's classroom goal was not only to support them academically. Rather, she strived to build a relationship of trust. That is when students started to learn how to develop their life skills and create a better version of themselves.

Likewise, Fatima believed that the teacher always needs to put herself in the shoes of her students to understand their needs, problems, and concerns. According to her, this could be achieved if the teacher considers herself as an older sister to her students. Fatima stated that,

It's a big sister relationship to them. I try to think and put myself in their shoes, to think of what they need and I want them to feel that way towards me and whether that's true or not, the important is what I feel towards that class if they have any problem, anything they need, worries and concerns they can come to me and more than that, more than my relationship to them is about. (December, 2019)

In addition, the findings reveal that the participants believed on the importance of the teacher's role in establishing a democratically safe classroom environment. According to the participants, such an environment could enhance the students' learning and achievement. It could exist when teachers make their classrooms safe zones where all students are treated equally and have the right to freely participate without being anxious of being judged.

Rema stated in her autobiography that creating a classroom environment where students feel comfortable to speak up their opinions can encourage them to learn new aspects and concepts in the EFL classroom. In this regard, students can share their experiences and learn from each other. In practice, she created such an environment by inviting her students to talk about their lives, their likings and disliking.

Similarly, Fatima emphasized the importance of creating a community in the classroom where students support each other. She considered it significant for teaching and learning. She stated,

If the tension is high, they [the students] won't be able to concentrate in the classroom. They're here as a team not as individuals. So, they are not working against each other, they are working together as a community to learn the language and that's

what I tell them that you have to be present in an English classroom because language cannot survive without the community. (December, 2019)

Elaf also highlighted the importance of making the classroom a safe zone where all students can freely write or talk about any topic in English without being anxious of making mistakes or being judged by the teacher.

Interpretation

The analysis of the previous sub-theme's findings indicated that EFL teachers did not believe in the traditional way of teaching or what is called *the Banking Education* (Freire,1970) where students are considered passive recipients of knowledge delivered by the teacher. Rather, the EFL teachers believed in their role as of *facilitators* (Freire,1970) that supports the students in finding the ways and locating the resources to learn and improve their English language in the classroom and outside the classroom. Fatima and Manal facilitated the students' learning via providing them with some guidance to use their textbooks to create their own sentences using the vocabulary in these textbooks. So, the EFL teachers viewed students as constructors of knowledge and not passive recipients of it.

In addition to the participants' beliefs about the role of the teacher as a facilitator, they believed that there should be no *power relations* (Fairclough, 1989) that determines teacher-student rapport. Fairclough (1989) states power relations are not bounded to class relations. There are power relations between men and women, young and old, between ethnic groups. In addition, Weber (1929) claims power holders usually have authorities that are socially constructed to control people' relations such as creating the authority of office to determine what orders to follow (Weber, 1929). For example, the data above shows how Rema, Elaf, Ibtihal, Fatima, and Noha dealt with their students as their equivalent in the sense that no one was superior to the other in the teaching context. Their relation was based on trust and assistance, and the goal was not only to help them be skillful in the English language, but also

to assist them be better people. They did use their authority as knowledgeable and older in age, but students were considered as co-constructors of knowledge.

The data indicates that EFL teachers emphasized the importance of building a *Community of Practice* (Wenger,1998) as an aspect that needs to be established in the EFL classroom. It was essential for EFL teachers to create a friendly classroom atmosphere and a democratically safe classroom environment. The teachers and the students worked together to fulfill their intended goals, and students felt their positive role and the sense of belonging by participating in that community. According to Fatima, building a community of practice encouraged students in learning new aspects and concepts, and built a learning community, as Fatima illustrated: “language cannot survive without the community” (December, 2019). In addition, teachers created a community that had a stronger relationship of trust through letting students express their interests, problems, and needs without being anxious of making mistakes or being judged. Elaf also considered her classroom as one community working to reach the goal when she stated that “It’s our job to make the class interesting and we have to feel about each other and it’s not my success in class, it’s our success” (December, 2019).

The Use of the Students’ L1 and the Target Language Culture in EFL Classroom

The findings indicate that the participants had different beliefs about the use of the students’ L1, Arabic, and the use of the target language culture in the EFL classroom. By the target language culture, I mean the different aspects of thinking and living of countries where English is considered as the official language such as USA, UK, Canada, or Australia. While some teachers favored the first language, Arabic, alongside English, the others were against the use of students’ first language in an EFL classroom.

Manal believed that the use of students’ L1, Arabic, in the EFL classroom could promote students’ understanding and engagement to the lesson. This belief had an impact on her way of teaching, as explained in the following excerpt:

If they [the students] don't understand, and it is frustrating. I have to use Arabic, and I have to repeat these questions in different ways and try to just give them like gestures and still they don't understand. I would draw on the board and then they can get it [...] I try to facilitate and ask them in English and they tend to speak in Arabic and I don't mind, as long as it makes them interested in the classroom. (January, 2020)

However, Fatima had a relatively different belief about the use of the students' L1 in the EFL classroom, which also impacted her way of teaching in a different way. According to her, she could use Arabic only with beginner English language learners whom she believed would need further support in learning the language. She stated, "I explain the thing in English, and if I feel they need more support in Arabic, I would do that for beginners" (January, 2020).

On the contrary, Noha and Rema believed that English should be the only used language in the EFL classroom activities and curriculum. According to them, the use of the students' L1, Arabic, in the EFL classroom can be allowed only if it is extremely necessary. Rema explained that, "they aren't going to learn the language if they think they could use their native language they will not get out of their comfort zone" (December, 2019). Likewise, Noha thinks that teachers should use English as the medium of instructions in the EFL classroom, and she criticized teachers who use Arabic language in an EFL classroom. She stated that, "some teachers still teach in Arabic while the course books are written in English" (January, 2020).

The analysis yielded that participants believed in the importance of incorporating the target language culture in the EFL classroom. However, some teachers illustrated the significance of making EFL teaching culturally sensitive. For instance, Manal and Fatima believed in the importance of teaching the students about the target language culture in EFL classrooms. According to them, learning about the culture of the English-speaking countries

not only could promote the students' learning of the target language, but it would also expand their *Funds of Knowledge* (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Manal stated,

[the reason students need to learn the culture with the language is] because of the whole geographical position of our country. So yeah, we're going to be introduced to different things. Now let's say that we are talking about unit in music. We're going to learn different kinds of music. (December, 2019)

However, Fatima believed that the classroom materials need to be culturally sensitive when incorporating any aspect of the target language culture. That is, such incorporation should not be at the expense of maintaining their own cultural values, as she explicated in the following quote:

If there is an unfamiliar thing like friends of the opposite sex hanging out together, I mean that is not something that they don't know about even they don't participate actively in this country, but if there is a scene I would really remove it because it is something they are unfamiliar with, or something like a scene happening around Christmas or Thanksgiving, they know what Christmas is or at least they have seen a video, I would not remove this of my scenes, because this is something they need to be exposed to understand that those things exist around the world. (January, 2020)

Likewise, Rema believed in the importance of exposing the students to the target language culture. According to her, it is one of the ways through which the students could learn how to use the language properly. However, she experienced some challenges teaching the target language culture with her beginner level students of English language. That is why she advised her students who are beginner English language learners to just try to immerse themselves in the target language and culture to learn it better. She stated,

I don't know why, but they [beginner English language learners] don't seem to get the culture, especially for American or British, and I don't know why, not like the

advanced; they're more immersed in the culture. Maybe because they studied in international schools. I don't know. Maybe they have travelled a lot with their parents, but they seem to get the cultural content more than beginners do [...] There are some certain phrasal verbs. You may know the meaning of the verb, but as a phrasal verb and as a part of phrasal verb or a part of a specific phrase, it can carry a different meaning. So that's why they need to immerse themselves as much as they can in culture. (December-January, 2019)

According to Rema, teachers used to be restricted from incorporating any aspect of the target language culture in the EFL classroom in KSA due to the predominant Saudi conservative culture in the past. Therefore, teachers were not allowed to expose their students to any Western movie or song. However, this is not the case anymore in KSA. Rema disclosed that,

To be in a restrictive space and to have most of the material you believe are essential and constructive labeled as taboos is somewhat depressing to a young EFL teacher. I was consumed by a feeling of powerlessness; I felt paralyzed by not being able to play music or display pop culture related material. (January, 2020)

Also, she commented on the current changes in some cultural aspects in the Saudi educational institutions of giving EFL teachers more freedom in the classroom: "We have recently encountered huge cultural changes in the kingdom, allowing us to use what was previously classified as taboos like music, movies and TV shows in our teaching approaches" (January, 2020).

Interpretation

The findings indicate that the participants had opposing opinions regarding the use *Culturally Relevant Teaching* (Gay, 2000). Precisely, they had diverse opinions on incorporating EFL students' first language (L1), Arabic, in the EFL classroom. According to

the participants, the use of the students' L1, Arabic, is valuable in the EFL classroom as it might promote the students' understanding and engagement in the lesson. In addition, Arabic has been viewed as a tool that can be used only with beginner level English language learners who need further support in learning the language. On the other hand, according to the participants, the use of the students' L1, Arabic, in the EFL classroom can be allowed only when it is extremely necessary. It should be the only spoken language in the classroom activities and curriculum so students do not rely on Arabic in an English class, which is a similar finding to (Al-Amir & Al-Hashemi, 2017; Mansory, 2019).

Similarly, the findings indicate that the participants thought of the English language culture as a source of knowledge that can benefit its learners because it could enrich their funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). So, the target language culture has been perceived by the participants as a desirable culture and enriching culture that could develop EFL learners' language. Moreover, there has been an emphasis on the importance of applying culturally relevant pedagogy in the EFL classrooms to construct knowledge that arises from students' social and cultural experiences. EFL students' cultural backgrounds were valued and considered. For example, Fatima has been practicing teaching with taking into account the culturally sensitive concepts or practices that did not suit the Saudi culture or religion.

On the other hand, the analyzed data reveal *counter hegemony* (Gramsci, 1971) towards the English language *hegemony*. The necessity of keeping the Arabic linguistic and cultural values was stressed by Fatima. In her classroom, learning another language and culture was encouraged alongside keeping the Arabic heritage. Fatima said that, "they [students] should understand to value their own culture even if they are learning the culture of another country, a performing country, doesn't mean that it makes their own culture inferior to that one" (December, 2019). Fatima illustrated the importance of teaching and

acknowledging all of English language varieties and the associated cultures not only the standard English. For example, she was against teaching one variety of English and neglecting others. Fatima had presented to her students some English language varieties that are different from the standard English. Since they have been marginalized and presented sometimes in a stereotypical way in the textbooks as well as in the media, she showed her students that how those cultures are different and equal.

What Fatima practiced in her EFL classroom illustrates her critical awareness of the English language and the standard English hegemony. She tried to make change related to this ideology by informing her students about the existence of other varieties of English. She included them in the presented classroom materials showing them the importance of valuing, accepting, and respecting these language varieties. The results demonstrated that one out of six participants showed awareness to issues related to English language hegemony, which leads to think of the importance of including those issues in teacher education and professional development. EFL teachers need to be familiar with those kinds of ideologies in order to keep their cultural and linguistic identity.

The Classroom Activity Type

The findings indicate that the participants asserted the significance of developing the lessons and the classroom activities considering students' interests, their everyday lives, and the sociopolitical status such as the Saudi 2030 vision. The ultimate goal is to attract the students' attention, which keeps them connected and increases their fluency.

According to Rema, developing classroom activities that are based on the students' interests could promote their learning and engagement. To her, a teacher might not be able to help her students if she is incapable of incorporating their passions and interests into her teaching; the students could become more engaged when they find a common ground between them and their teacher, and for her this was the pop culture. Thus, she said, "to get

on the right foot with the students is essential, and there is nothing better than talking their own language. Now, other than being a great introduction to a class, pop culture can be a mean of teaching” (December, 2019).

In addition, when Rema was asked to describe a sample activity that she would do in her class based on the students’ interests, she provided the example of an activity in which she showed her students a famous American TV show, “Friends.” She used the show to teach them about some adjectives that Rachel (a character in the show) used when she was trying to make a trifle (a kind of dessert). Her purpose was to let the students listen to some adjectives and collocations, and to explain them different adjectives that they could use to describe colors, textures, and flavors, and then asked them to describe their own favorite dishes. Her goal was, as Rema put it in one of her responses.

I will do everything in my power to ensure my students develop a passion for learning, which is a key to excelling at anything. One needs to be appreciated, to be able to share his interests and to feel at ease in order to develop that passion.

(December, 2019)

Moreover, one of the activities that Rema selected to spark her students’ interests was the conversational exercises where students had to debate and explain their reasons.

She told about her activity:

I decided to make the topic more interesting by having a debate and I have set what I think interesting in reading the question. The question was whether we should or should not use a photo ID prior to registering in social media? I asked the students whether they think it is necessary? To have a photo ID or whether they think it is needed and unnecessary? I have set a couple of rules; I had given them items and things that may help them in preparing their arguments. (January, 2020)

Similarly, Elaf believed that the classroom activity shouldn't be open-ended kind of activities prior to meeting with the students; and it should be designed after being acquainted with the students so that a teacher can better understand the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of their students. To her, the activities should be conducted in a way that combines English and students' way of thinking to feed their curiosity without letting them feel that they were forced to do so. In addition, Elaf did not believe in the traditional style of teaching, or "banking education" where the students are placed as passive recipients of the predetermined knowledge that is imposed on them by the teacher (Freire,1970). Instead, she believed in getting the students involved in and how they want their classroom to be because she believed that the students know what they lack and what they need. She believed in the importance of students' feedback about teaching; she considered this method as a way to have an efficient learning and a better outcome. She implied that:

One of the strategies that helped me improve my teaching was asking the students about their feedback on my methods and their suggestions about any techniques they want them to be implemented in our English class. I had altered some of my lesson plan procedures to be aligned with their demands, and it worked! I reached to a belief that most of the learners know what they lack, and what they need. (January, 2020)

Likewise, Manal believed in connecting the classroom activities to the social media that interests her students. For instance, she developed an activity to teach her students how to use English words in websites and social media. She said, "I try my best to relate those units to the thing they use the most, like going into a website, social media, how would you pronounce a word? It is our job" (January, 2020). She felt that the EFL teachers' job is to use what students use and like the most and use them to teach English.

Additionally, Fatima believed that it is important to design and prepare age-appropriate classroom activities. For example, Paperman is one silent short video that she had

projected to students. It's a story that was relevant to the teenage age group of her students.

Follow this link to access the video that Fatima showed in her class:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4dIgUgYCxQ>. She showed the video and asked them to articulate a series of events in the video to practice the vocabulary they had studied. The story of the video was narrated as the following:

One video I love to use in our class is the short Disney movie Paperman; and in that clip, we see a man with a boring job on a desk and had a lot of his paper work, but he meets this girl in the train station and then he sees her again in the building next to him and how he uses his papers, the same paper he has finished his work, he used them as a paper plane to get her attention and then how this story developed, until they met again in the end. (January, 2020)

Additionally, all the participants believed in the importance of connecting the EFL classroom activities to their students' everyday lives; and this belief influenced how they taught English. English influenced not only the educational institutions, but this effect was seen also in the life aspects of Saudi people. For instance, Manal addressed in her classroom the importance of using English inside Saudi Arabia as a medium of communication in restaurants and transportations. Therefore, she directed her students to use some English language teaching apps that supported them in learning how to interact in English in their everyday lives. She mentioned,

If they don't want reach the theme of that unit, they will not use the language in this unit, they will not learn, it is not nice, but if you tell them Camply can teach you how to talk in a restaurant or in an airport- they would be happy to learn. (January, 2020)

In my opinion, reinforcing English language and culture in the everyday aspects leads people to seek English language learning to keep on track with modern life. Also, it is a form of spreading the domination of English.

In the same way, Elaf believed in and emphasized the importance of connecting her teaching to her students' real lives to motivate them to learn. She said, "I give them questions related to their experiences just to be motivated to have a new subject you know. If you are in writing and listening class and all of them [EFL students] wrote about the same subject, they will not be motivated to do them [essays]" (January, 2020). The following excerpt is a sample classroom activity that Elaf demonstrated to show how she got her students motivated to learn the language via connecting the topics they covered in a class connected to the real lives of the students. The topic of the unit was about "nutrition":

I start to talk about the concept itself, translate it, give it synonyms, opposites and connect it with other words and also the collocation of the word to try to convey and make sure that they understand the concept fully. After that, we start connect the concept itself with their life and actually it's a very good chance for me because I always want them to feel that what they study at school or university is useful so they can feel the value of the language and they can relate to it. (December, 2019)

The participants revealed that the socio-political and socio-cultural condition have an impact on selecting classroom activities topics. This was obviously stated about the 2030 Saudi vision and how that has greatly determined the kind of conversations and the activities. Ibtihal, for example, conducted a dialogue with her students explaining the role of women in the job market drawing a comparison between the past and present day. She showed them how women's work was restricted to teaching or nursing only and how it has become diverse nowadays. Also, she informed her students about the skills needed to be successful in the 21st Century including being a critical thinker or a creative soul. Sometimes she discussed those topics in Arabic to get them to profoundly understand what is required from them as women in the job market. This kind of discussion is an indication that the rapid changes in Saudi women's lives have also influenced the EFL classroom teaching. Also, she believed that

keeping in view the vision 2030, the students need to learn how to conduct job interviews and write cover letters and resumes in English for different jobs. Her goal was to prepare her students for the economic advancement in the highly competitive job market in KSA. That is why, Ibtihal said that, “so you as a student should be prepared, and you should work and make many efforts to reach the highest level in these skills” (December, 2019).

Moreover, to Fatima, the 2030 vision is a sign of hope for both students and teachers. It is related to job security and social mobility, which motivates EFL students to work harder to reach their goals. In her classroom, she discussed with students the influence of 2030 vision on older generations and how the students should introduce those changes to them. Furthermore, she highlighted the importance of being tolerant to the elders’ disapproval of the vision 2030 and asked them to try hard to bridge the gap among generations, a topic that has not been widely addressed in EFL classrooms previously. The following quote showed the way Fatima clarified that to her students:

I gave them an example of women’s driving, and they said that their grandmothers are still not accepting the idea of women’s driving and for them, I tried to go over the word backward or conservative. I just wanted them to realize that the transition happened really fast and for you as young people you might not realize it, but for older people it just transforms their lives completely and if you were in their shoes, you might not be as accepting as you are right now. (December, 2019)

Finally, for this section, Manal thought that some other topics should be added to the EFL curriculum in order to familiarize students with leadership and to prepare them to be leaders, since the government now is enabling women to hold administrative positions. So, to her, the classroom topics need to be updated and teaching English should include a kind of content that enriches the female student’s English language vocabulary. These EFL students might

think of joining business organizations or might be administrators in the future. However, they need to get exposed to this kind of topics to align with the new norm.

Interpretation

The data shows that the EFL teachers' beliefs about the classroom activities reflected the *hegemony* of the English language. This was reflected through three of the EFL teachers' beliefs (Manal, Rema, and Fatima) on the American media as a tool to establish a common ground between them and their students. The participants assumed that every student should be familiar with the American media. Therefore, they advised students to watch them in order to aid them learn the English language. Also, the teachers employed the American media in the classroom activities.

The findings indicate that the participants believed in and emphasized the significance of using *Reflective Teaching* in the EFL classroom activities. According to Dewey (1933), reflective teaching means teachers and students collect materials about teaching, assess their assumptions, beliefs, and teaching practices, and use those materials to identify areas where they need development. Rema, Fatima, Manal, and Elaf followed reflective teaching by developing the lessons and classroom activities based on their students' interests because, in their views, it could promote EFL students' learning and engagement. According to the EFL teachers, the classroom activities shouldn't be predetermined prior to meeting with the students. Rather, they should be designed in a way that can make the students do the activity without feeling being forced to do so. Students need to get involved in constructing the way they want their classroom to be as they believed that the students know what they lack and what they need. The results are consistent with a number of studies on reflective teaching as an effective way to construct knowledge in EFL classrooms (Schön,1987; Shukri, 2014; Sibahi, 2016;). Additionally, the findings of this section correlated with the notion of *Post-*

Method (Brown, 2002) in teaching; when teachers use the kind of knowledge that is convenient to their students after meeting them without predetermining it in advance.

Further, the EFL teachers' responses mirrored their perception of the 2030 vision. It was perceived as an ideology that impacted all of the life aspects in KSA, especially women's work and study, which was also reflected in their classroom activities. The 2030 vision has been used as an ideology to encounter the extremist's oppressive ideology to Saudi women in the past. Women did not have as much rights before this vision was established. For example, Saudi women did not drive and were not allowed to make their own decisions without a male guardian. Also, the school materials were controlled and less accepted to foreign cultures. For example, according to Rema, teachers used to be restricted from incorporating any aspect of the target language culture in the EFL classroom in KSA due to the predominant Saudi conservative culture in the past in Saudi society. Therefore, teachers were not allowed to expose their students to any western movies or songs even if they were used for educational purposes only. However, she believes the new vision in KSA aided the classroom activity selection and offered more freedom to choose materials. She commented, "We have recently encountered huge cultural changes in the kingdom, allowing us to use what was previously classified as taboos like music, movies and TV shows in our teaching approaches" (January, 2020). Manal felt that it is important to include topics in textbooks that are related to enabling women in the job market and women's leadership in KSA. Therefore, she included an example in her classes of a Saudi female ambassadors in the US. Also, Fatima discussed how to tolerate elders' rejection to the new changes related to women in KSA. This finding aligns with what Kumaravadivelu (2013) asserted in his claim that "teachers have to implement their own theory of practice that is responsive to the particularities of their educational contexts and receptive to the possibilities of their sociopolitical condition" (p. 548).

The Role of EFL Teachers' Past Experiences

The first part of experience at which the participants formed their EFL teaching beliefs is being former EFL students, EFL teachers, and attendees of professional development and teacher education programs.

Manal's past experience as an EFL student in the Saudi public schools had formed her beliefs and conceptualization about a good EFL student and the challenges they might face. She spoke about her classmates who had not been exposed to the English culture before. Nevertheless, they were good in English as she explained: "Some of them [her classmates] didn't even get out of their houses except for school or their cousins or something, but they've worked hard till they got it" (December, 2019). So, she learned from that experience that being a hard worker brings about mastering the English language albeit the students have not been to English-speaking countries where a person could develop his/her language via interacting with people and attending English courses.

Similarly, Elaf believed that her experience as a former EFL student enabled her to better understand her students and the challenges they face when learning the English language. Elaf narrated her experience as an EFL student and how studying English was hard in her generation during the 90s because of the lack of meaningful authentic linguistic resources to learn the target language, which made her find her own way to get the resources, and set her own studying strategies. Elaf believed that all the issues that she had faced as an EFL student contributed to shaping her EFL teaching beliefs and practices as a teacher. She said:

These obstacles [that she faced as a student] actually encouraged me to try also help my Saudi learners to get the right education and because as we know that not all students can go abroad and have courses because of the cost, because of the circumstances. So, we have to find a substitution and we have an alternative and it's

our job to learn and to be better in this field and compensate the situation. (December, 2019)

Similarly, Rema believed that her experience of watching movies in English as an informal learning resource was successful to her as a student. Thus, she implemented informal language learning when she was teaching her EFL students because she believed that it could help them increase their vocabulary and language.

In the same way, Ibtihal's experience of studying abroad as an ESL student in the US and her experience as an EFL teacher in KSA have influenced her teaching goals and vision. This was clearly stated in one of Ibtihal's statements in her autobiography. She said: "I can say that my experience in the states as an ESL student besides my experience in the university as an EFL instructor have refined and impacted my current and future EFL teaching vision and goals in the public school in KSA" (December, 2019). As an EFL teacher, planning, reading and cooperation with the other expert teachers in the same field was an experience that benefited her. Further, her master in TESOL from the US prepared her to teach K-12 students, which is a job that she started after she had left teaching in college.

Likewise, Rema's experience as a student influenced her beliefs about teaching and her role as a teacher. This was captured in one of Rema's statements in her autobiography when she overtly stated: "most of what I put into my teaching is derived from what I have seen during my period as an ESL student" (January, 2020). Also, Rema believed in the effectiveness of dealing with the students with less formality, a belief that she had formed since she was studying English in the US. In the US, she liked how her professors used no titles when addressing each other, and she liked how they were all equal in the classroom.

The participants had not only expressed their beliefs that stemmed from being former EFL students. Rather, they articulated that some of their beliefs were formed after attending

the professional development courses such as the teacher education programs and the professional development sessions.

Actually, not all the participants got their degrees in EFL education. They got their degrees in English literature, Linguistics, and Translation. Consequently, they needed to enroll for extra courses to qualify for EFL education field. However, Manal, Rema, and Ibtihal had not greatly benefited from learning extra degrees in EFL education. Even though Rema and Manal chose to continue English language as a field to boost their teaching skills themselves by getting education in that field, the programs they enrolled in have not had the expected outcomes, which makes them believe that attending extra teaching methods courses in education is not always supportive.

Ibtihal believed that what a person studies during the EFL teacher preparation program should align with their needs. For example, her experience after her master's study was not supportive to her during her EFL college teaching. She was well trained on how to teach students from K-12. She had taught in different Saudi colleges, which made her master's degree irrelevant to her field back then. Ibtihal reported that: "since my master's degree was in teaching students whom their ages are from KG until 18, I had some challenges in teaching university syllabus" (December, 2019).

Likewise, Rema did an educational diploma after she had finished her bachelor to be a certified English language teacher. The diploma is considered part of the EFL teacher education program. The experience was not pleasant to her as there were some drawbacks. First, she believed that there should be a direct communication between the trainers and the trainees. She said that,

My educational diploma was with a male [professor] so the communication was not really available not like teaching by a female, so the communication was whether you have a question or not, was not really available. It was a big issue basically. TVs

explained all of ideas and theories in education. There was not really much communication between us, no e-mails no phones so yeah that was a big deal (December, 2019).

The second dilemma that Rema had faced during her educational diploma was the course duration. She believed that a three-month period to practice in-class teaching was not sufficient to train EFL teachers. Third, the teaching method course was in Arabic and inclusive to all of other subjects. She believed that there must be special courses that offer EFL teaching methods only. What made that course ineffective was the provision of general teaching methods it provided only. Even teachers who were teaching math, history, and biology were taking that course. She stated that, “what was applied to science and math that was not necessarily applied to teaching a language as a second language or as a foreign language” (December, 2019).

Finally, Manal believed that master’s in translation and CELTA (certified in English language teaching for adults) courses were not helpful in learning and applying the recent teaching methods in the EFL classrooms in the context of KSA. Her masters in translation had not included EFL teaching training courses. Moreover, she had studied a one-month course, CELTA, to develop and update her teaching. She felt that the course had not adequately prepared her as a teacher. While Manal’s language classes are about 40 students per class, in CELTA course she was trained for classes that had a smaller number of students, which made CELTA useless to her. She said that, “yet this CELTA is good but it’s good to teach under 17 students” (December, 2019).

Interpretation

Shulman (1987) stressed that in education, EFL teachers’ educational and social practices are often informed by their beliefs. EFL teachers in this study revealed that their experiences and participation in their sociocultural discourse (undergraduate and graduate

students in Saudi Arabia, graduate students in the US, and professional development attendees) have informed their beliefs and their understanding of the EFL teaching practices. Their past experiences as undergraduate and graduate students, as family members, or as EFL teachers have shaped how they perceived EFL teaching now. The findings in this section support the previous research studies in chapter 2 (Asiri, 2017; Barcelos, 2000; Hamilton, 1993; Jones and Fong 2007; LiLi, 2013).

Third Theme: Saudi EFL Female Teachers' Beliefs on the Factors that Impact EFL Students' English Language Learning

The third theme addresses the participants' beliefs on the factors that can influence their EFL college students' English language learning in Eastern Province, of KSA. According to the EFL female teachers, these factors can be categorized into two types: internal factors (motivation, self-confidence, and autonomy) and external factors: (family and friends' support, teachers' support, and social support). In what follows, I report these findings in more detail.

Internal Factors

The teachers described factors that support students' EFL learning. The internal factors referred to aspects related to students themselves, within them. These are related to their way of thinking and psyche. All the participants believed that motivation is the first internal factor that can influence EFL students' learning in KSA. Fatima demonstrated that students who are motivated will create opportunities for themselves to learn not only inside the EFL classroom, but also outside of the classroom. If they are motivated, they will use some resources such as the different kinds of social media to learn. In practice, Fatima motivated her students by thanking them for putting an effort into the English classroom activities that aren't in their first language. She thinks that their hard work should be acknowledged so they do not get frustrated due to the difficulties they might face when doing

the class work. She emphasized that, “I believe there is some sort of vulnerability in attempting to be yourself in a language that is not your native tongue- a vulnerability that should be acknowledged, respected and appreciated” (December 2019).

In the same vein, Elaf believed in the significant role of motivation in students’ learning. Thus, in practice, she prompted her students’ motivation via showing them motivational videos about different topics to encourage them to participate, express their opinions, and share their experiences about the topics of the videos. Follow this link to watch the motivational video that Elaf shared with her students: <https://youtu.be/4reKWuJ8jvE>

Similarly, Ibtihal believed in intrinsic motivation as a main factor to learn English. She came to this conclusion as a result of her recent experience of teaching. In that context, students were able to learn English although they neither had access to internet nor had a chance to practice the language outside the classroom. She said about these students:

They are intrinsically motivated. Their parents are not educated. Some of them have, you know, difficult conditions, but they love to learn. They have the passion to learn intrinsically. They came to me and asked for an advice, “What should I do? What I shouldn’t do?” So, the main factor is motivation. (December, 2019)

Likewise, Manal believed that the students’ motivation that can result from their willingness and love for learning the language can also greatly influence EFL students’ learning. According to her, a good student in other subjects must be a good student in English, too, regardless of the personal differences among people. Even though she was aware that some students were better and quick in acquiring the language, she insisted that a good student can study any discipline. She commented that, “a good student is a good student. He will study, and he knows that they are integrated. He will be good in Arabic or English” (December, 2019).

As an EFL teacher, Manal's belief about the significant role that motivation plays in learning English influenced her way of teaching. She conducted her class implementing some activities and telling her students some motivational speeches as she wanted them to be encouraged to learn the language. For example, she explained to students that English has less vocabulary items than Arabic to motivate them to learn the English words. She explained to them that understanding the root of the word in English can help in forming many words that they can use in different parts of speech. She made this differentiation between their mother language (Arabic) and English to show them how English is easier to learn as a second language.

Furthermore, Elaf believed that the students' willingness and love of learning that result from their motivation can encourage them to find their way to learn English. She stated, "if there is a will, there is a way" (January, 2020). She had built this belief based on her students' own experiences who graduated from public schools where English language education is usually limited. However, those students were fluent in English. Her curiosity about what made those students good at a foreign language pushed her to create a simple survey asking the class about what motivated them to learn. She found in those fluent students' responses that love to learn the language was the reason behind their desire to seek resources in order to improve their language.

Likewise, to Rema, learning the language should be through having love for learning and should not be an obligation, which can be achieved by letting students select the materials of their interest. She explained, "I usually tell students that listen to something you like, watch something you like, learn something you like and step by step you learn, you will start to utter words, utter sentences, and then maybe, full paragraphs, surprise us" (January, 2020).

On the other hand, Ibtihal believed that EFL female students need to be motivated not merely to learn the English language, but also to continue their education, especially those students whose families had not received formal education. As a result, one of Ibtihal's former students came to her after finishing high school to show her gratitude to Ibtihal for giving her a push to continue her education and working hard until she got accepted to the university. Ibtihal commented, "the student was not enthusiastic to pursue her bachelor study, but then as she said that she worked hard until she achieved the required score for admission in the university" (December, 2019).

EFL teachers believed that the lack of motivation brought about low EFL students' performance. Despite the fact that participants tried hard to motivate their students, they had some students who were not willing to learn. For example, some students in Fatima's class were demotivated as they did not choose to study the English language on their own; they were forced to choose it. She said "all they care about is grades" (December, 2019). Manal mentioned that some students were forced by their families to attend, and they have to pass the course. She stated that, "they wait for the minute you finish to sneak out of the class, it is frustrating" (January, 2020). Also, they do not want to get involved in the classroom activities for that. She said that, "they only want to pass, they don't even try to get high grades" (January, 2020). Likewise, Ibtihal's students would not search for the origin of the word or go beyond the curriculum, rather they would be worried for their grades, they prepared only what they thought important for the exam. Similarly, Noha shared her moments when she felt frustrated due to her students' lack of motivation. She noticed negligence on their part regarding classroom work. As a result, they got bad grades. When I asked her about any moments she could recall when she felt powerless in her classroom, she replied that, "students' unwillingness to meet assignments' deadlines because they are demotivated to learn English. They believe it is not worth learning" (January, 2019).

In addition to motivation, the analyses also indicated that the participants believed that self-confidence is the second major internal factor that could influence the EFL students' learning. This belief influenced their way of teaching and daily practices as it reflected in their responses and the classroom activities they described. According to Elaf, the EFL teacher should consider and pay attention to her students' psychological conditions because such issues could prevent them from learning. That's why she believed that teaching is more than just explaining the lesson and taking exams. There were some strategies that Elaf utilized to enhance her students' self-confidence. Not being shy of making mistakes and learning from them was a value that she grew in her students. She narrated an incident when an excellent student hesitated to present in front of her classmates and how she encouraged the student to do it successfully. She added that, "she did it successfully and cried at the end. I really felt proud that I could assist her. Without exaggerating, she became one of best in oral participation" (December, 2019).

In addition, Rema believed that increasing the students' confidence is one of the goals of any EFL classroom. She enhanced students' confidence and enabled them to express the prevailing social and cultural issues in English. She reported that, "I want them to feel confident and proud to express it in English" (December, 2019). Rema tried to facilitate learning to her students so they do not feel overgrown. She wanted them to understand and produce the simple components of the language before they started managing the skill itself so they can feel the achievement. Then they started some activities such as reading a passage or writing a paragraph. She shared, "I don't want them to feel this is difficult and they are not going to do that, or they are not able to do that so I give them easy ways to learn the language, fun ways, exciting ways". She also added, "even if it was just a sentence made of 3 parts a subject, a verb, and an object, when they write a correct sentence, they feel the achievement, when they do that, they want to keep going; they want to be better" (December,

2019). In her autobiography, she clarified one way to boost students' confidence is by encouraging and praising her students' work. She thought it's a successful way to lift up the students' spirits and direct students to learn more about the target language. This happened through giving students on a weekly basis a couple of idioms and common phrases. Later, she prompted different questions about those idioms and phrases. She said students did not pay attention at the beginning, but when a classmate started to use them in her speech, they were eager to learn those idioms and phrases she provided to them on a weekly basis.

The findings revealed that some of the participants linked the importance of enhancing the students' self-confidence with encouragement by the teacher, especially encouraging them to learn from their mistakes. Fatima demonstrated that willingness to make mistakes and acceptance of other points of view are also important to create independent learners. She explained how excellent students in other subjects were struggling in the English course especially grammar and vocabulary. However, she found out that sometimes their fear of making mistakes obscured them from practicing the language and improving their fluency. Fatima motivated her students to practice speaking in English by saying to them that, "your tongue is a muscle just like any other muscle in your body; you have to use it in order to make it stronger" (December, 2019).

Likewise, Manal tries to convince her students that they should not feel self-conscious when speaking the English language in the classroom since they are not appearing in a TV show or on snapchat as a social media influencer. So, she encouraged them to use the language without being afraid of judgment from others. She said that "for us, regular people, we can use the language freely, you can make mistakes. You can make mistakes freely with me in class. None is going to judge you. I am not going to judge you. I am going to help you" (January, 2020). Manal thought that some students did not want to speak English publicly in

class because making mistakes while speaking English in front of the class would make them appear less intelligent and might shatter their good image.

Rema believed in the significant role that students' self-confidence can play in their learning. Thus, she enhanced her students' self-confidence via following a strategy in order to make her students feel comfortable in expressing their thoughts without being worried about grammatical mistakes. She would allow her students to talk freely in class to express their thoughts. As soon as they finished talking, she would paraphrase what they had said, as she mentioned, "I want them to be confident" (December, 2019).

Similarly, Ibtihal felt so proud that her students had reached a level where they were feeling unrestricted to ask her or their classmates some questions related to the curriculum. They also spoke the language and practiced it without being under the pressure of making mistakes. She mentioned that, "I always tell them that having mistakes that means you are learning. Having mistakes means you are developing. Having mistakes that means you are progressing, so I'm very happy that my students never ever hesitate to ask. Never hesitate to try" (December, 2019).

Likewise, Elaf advised her students to not be shy of making mistakes and recommended them to keep learning. In her perspective, at the end, students would get the language as long as they believe in themselves and in the importance of developing their English language skills. Therefore, in Elaf's writing class, raising students' confidence was one of the main goals. To her, developing students' fluency to create solid and interrelated argument came first. However, accuracy and having a correct grammar came after fluency in her class. Her teaching strategy of writing with beginners is explained in the following quotes:

I always encourage them to just write and to be careful of grammatical mistakes and not to be for example afraid of doing spelling mistakes, I encourage them to be correct

but I don't always refer them or for example cutting marks on spelling mistakes.

(January, 2020)

Also, she added,

I push them, it is like a start kick so to push them to write and once they have the confidence to write, they will automatically be aware of spelling through practice of course so it is totally different. (January, 2020)

In addition to the students' motivation and self-confidence, the findings indicate that the participants believed that the students' autonomy is the third major internal factor that could influence the EFL students' learning. To Noha, Fatima, Rema, and Elaf, students' autonomy is a value that EFL teachers should reinforce in their classrooms. As illustrated in her autobiography and her responses to some of the interview questions, Fatima increased her student's autonomy in various ways depending on the students' level of proficiency. She believed that doing a simple activity like "show and tell" with beginners can increase their autonomy. Also, she believed that giving advanced English language learners the freedom to select a topic to write or speak about could also increase their sense of autonomy. Fatima said, "I trust the advanced to make it on their own, but for the beginners I think it is difficult making it a student-centered, they need a lot of instructions" (January, 2020).

Noha believed that it was more challenging to be accomplished with beginner English language learners as they need more assistance. Therefore, Noha adjusted the activities to make them align with the students' level. She said that, "beginner-level students could not write notes while listening to an audio file. Hence, I wrote the notes for them and had them choose the answers instead of writing them. It was tailored to their level. After that, I had them in blanks a few words until they were able to write main phrases" (December, 2019) (see Figure 4.2 that guided the Listening class and Figure 4.3.A and 4.3.A activities that were utilized in her beginners' listening classroom).

Figure 4.2

Classroom Listening and Speaking lesson

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Listening Skill Listening for main ideas and details

When you listen, focus on the main ideas (the most important points about the topic) and any important details. Remember that details include examples, numbers, facts, names, and reasons. Ask yourself, "What information is important for me to know?"

Lecture: International Advertising

Main Ideas	Details
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Language mistakes can cause problems for companies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Product name has funny or strange meaning in another language

iQ ONLINE Go online to watch the Skill Video.

A. Listen to an excerpt from a lecture. Complete the T-chart with the missing information.

Lecture: International Advertising

Main Ideas	Details
International companies should _____ _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Numbers _____ in one culture, bad in anotherSome languages in _____, word for 4 _____Ex: company put 4 _____ in package, no one in _____ bought them

B. Listen to another excerpt from a lecture. Take notes in the T-chart. Then compare notes with a partner.

Main Ideas	Details

iQ ONLINE C. Go online for more practice with listening for main ideas and details.

▶▶▶▶ | Listening and Speaking 29

A listening lesson for beginners' class, from copyrights © Oxford University Press

Figures 4.3 A and B

Listening Activities

Activity 4.3.A

A. While you listen, choose the correct option. (Adaptation)

International companies should learn about (numbers/locations) in different culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Numbers can be (good/bad) in another culture• Some languages in (Asia/India) words for 4 sound like words for (death/health) Ex. Company put four golf (balls/flags) in package, no one in (Korea/Kuwait) bought them.
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Activity 4.3 B

B. While you listen, fill in the blanks with correct word/s. (Adaptation)

Main ideas	Details
Companies should be careful about _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For example: sports or T.V. _____; they can give _____ feeling about _____• Car maker used American star in _____• People in one country did not like _____• People stopped buying that company's car

Activities that *Noha* created for beginners' students

Further, Elaf believed that students' autonomy in learning the English language relies on their English language level. She gave an example of how using videos was successful with students who were having a high English language proficiency because they could take the lead and negotiate different topics in English with the teacher as well as with their colleagues, which is something beginners could not do. She said that, "They [advanced

students] understand anything who will be displayed so we are talking about practicing the language more and having more vocabulary, it is not about teaching them the language, but for beginners you have to concentrate on the textbook and not to distract the students with more activities” (January, 2020). However, Rema encouraged her students to be autonomous in learning speaking. She did so via directing her students to follow her own way of learning the new English words to provide a sort of gaudiness to them. She provided an example in the following excerpt:

I told them just to look at the mirror try to talk to yourself; we also talk to ourselves, just write it in a paper and repeat it ten, twenty or maybe fifty times we don't care how many times you repeated as long as you mastered it. Try to pronounce these sentences as fast as you can and not stop and then you will feel more comfortable with saying them. (December, 2019)

Rema explained that sometimes English does not have the word that students wanted to explain in Arabic, and it is the students' role to find it regardless of their level. She reported that, “so I would like to encourage them to find a closer equivalent as a way to maneuver expressing the culture issues” (December, 2019).

The analysis of the data stressed EFL teachers' awareness of the internal factors that might influence EFL students; and those factors are inspirable from the external factors that I will mention below. Therefore, the interpretation of both sub-sections is joined together at the end of this theme.

External Factors

EFL teachers described external factors in learning that relate to any environmental aspects that are associated with the social context surrounding the learner's language learning. These could refer to both micro level such as family, friends, and teachers, or to the macro level such as the society or the country. The findings indicated that the participants

believed that the support which the EFL students receive from their families and friends is one the most important external factors that could support student EFL learning.

Manal believed that an encouraging family atmosphere and a cooperative family could help the students to overcome the challenges that they might face while learning. Additionally, to her, the influence of peers or friends cannot be denied. In order to support her point, she narrated her experience as a student and how she got affected easily by peers who were sitting next to her in school. Manal believed that the support she got from her family as a former student was what enabled and encouraged her to continue learning and get higher degrees.

Likewise, Fatima believed that EFL students are more likely to learn English successfully if they are surrounded by family members who are familiar with the English language and culture. Also, she believed that EFL students are more likely to learn English if their families provide them access to the needful resources. She gave an example of the opportunities that students have outside the classroom to learn the language. In her view, students can get a good English language education not only when attending bilingual schools where English is taught intensively. Rather, a fluent English family member could contribute to enhance EFL students' education. She said that, "if students receive consistent good instructions in English, they usually tend to be better. These are the students who get private education or go to international school [...] or when students have someone in the family who is committed to teach them the language, and those family members spend enough time outside the classroom to teach them" (December, 2019).

Rema believed that being a member of an educated family or a friend of fluent English speakers could encourage a student to work harder so that he or she does not look inferior when comparing herself to others. When I asked her about what impacts students' performance, she replied that, "peer pressure; maybe relatives, friends, classmates as they all

advanced, they get you the pressure to learn or you are going to forever feel inferior” (December, 2019). To Rema, being socialized with members who are sophisticated in English leads a person to seek knowledge in that field to avoid the feeling of inferiority.

Likewise, Elaf believed that being surrounded by friends who are willing to learn could influence a student’s learning experience. She stated in one of her responses, “If they [the students] have been surrounded by friends who really like to learn to improve and also to watch together for example English movies. So, yeah, I think they will be stimulated to improve also and do well in English” (December, 2019).

Additionally, Ibtihal believed that the family social circumstances might change a student’s performance even if the student sometimes is intelligent and enthusiastic to learn. She built her judgment based on an incident she had faced with one of her students. The student was good at the English language and keen to learn. Surprisingly, her level in the English class had declined, which made Ibtihal curious about the sudden change in her performance. She asked the student and the student replied by saying that, “my mom just got divorced and now I am responsible for my siblings” (December, 2019).

Noticeably, the data analysis also revealed that the socio-economic status (SES) of a family is a fundamental factor that determines how EFL students accomplish at college in general and in EFL classroom in particular. The SES can influence EFL students in different forms such as having access to resources, or attending private schools. Ibtihal, Rema, and Fatima believed that the family’s SES is a major factor that could lead to improving the students’ achievement. The required resources to accomplish the students’ educational goals was one important point that has been emphasized as a consequence of the family’s SES. Ibtihal’s experience in teaching girls from one of the villages in KSA was the reason that made her think of the family’s SES as an obstacle sometimes. She explained that: “Sometimes students are very eager and very keen to learn, but they don’t have internet

because financially they're broken" (December, 2019). She gave students some online activities, but they never did them, when she asked them about the reason, they replied that they did not have internet connection. Also, they did not have smart phones, they had phones that they use to make calls only. In a similar manner, Rema added that having resources such as tablets or internet are important for students as they assist them in immersing themselves in the English-speaking countries' culture. Also, Elaf believed that access to books and information could highly affect EFL students' learning.

Correspondingly, Fatima believed that the family's SES is a factor that overlaps with some other factors as it could impact the students' EFL learning. She explained how some families can afford international schools' tuition fees where children could learn about different subjects in the English language, or they can travel abroad to study. This is shown in the following quote: "This [students' English language learning] might also overlap with some economic factors because they will know that those students who have these opportunities are also students who are well off, whose families afford such education or afford sending them for example abroad to other countries" (December, 2019).

Similarly, Rema believed that students from low SES families should work harder since their parents might not be able to provide them with the means to have a better EFL education. To her, having a financial support is one way to have better English educational accomplishment and attainment. Thus, students from high SES families' chance to get high GPAs and enroll in prestigious universities is higher as their schools and families adequately prepared them to join such universities. She further stated, not having an access to a good school may affect the learning process of the English language. Private schools provide a better English language education to students and get them familiar with languages, which is the opposite of the public or governmental schools. International schools in KSA are usually located in big cities where people have well-paid jobs. She claims that, "if you are not lucky

enough to be living in a big city that offers a lot of options schoolwide, that might affect your learning journey” (December, 2019).

In addition to the socio-economic (SES) as an external factor, parents’ educational level was considered by the participants as a major external factor that could influence the students’ EFL learning. To Rema, educated parents, who had the chance to study in good universities especially those who studied abroad, are opening more educational opportunities to their children. She predicted that the next generation will be more aware of the importance of learning English because of those educated parents who want their children to get the same opportunity as them.

Furthermore, When I asked Elaf about the factors that influence students’ performance, she replied that, “The family encouragement also if the family is well-educated and they know the importance of expanding their kids’ knowledge and the importance of knowing other language” (December, 2019). Elaf believed that well-educated families would be more likely to have the means and the expertise. They may know more about the importance of learning a second language in their children’s lives. As a result, they would encourage their children to expand their knowledge and learn English. So, to her educated parents are well-informed about the path to success and will pass it to their children.

Fatima looked at the role of well-educated parents in the learning experience of EFL students from a different perspective. She believed that students whose parents are well-educated and speak with them in English might be more confident to speak English in the EFL classroom compared to some of their peers. She believed that it is not uncommon to have well-educated parents speak with their children in English. Thus, these EFL students would have the chance to practice English with their parents. When I asked her about what influences EFL students’ achievement, she said that,

Students who have this opportunity already ready to assess their children so even students who have family members who speak the language [.....] so those are the social factors that would influence their performance in the class because they have already mastered a good deal of the language itself and then they are also confident to perform in it. (December, 2019)

Moreover, the data reveals that according to the participants, the learning experience of the EFL students could be influenced by the EFL teachers, especially those teachers who would feel that they are accountable for their students' success. Ibtihal, who is an experienced college EFL teacher, had been providing an emotional support to her students. She encouraged her female students who came from Saudi villages to continue their higher education. Also, she promoted their families' awareness about the importance of education. She got affected by some incidents such as the incident she narrated in the following quote:

I had an excellent student in the second year of the secondary school. She told me that her parents never let them go to the university because of family and social constraints. I did not believe her until I contacted her parents who shocked me with the truth that yes, we never let girls go to the university. I did my best to convince them and show them how their daughter is an excellent student and she supposed to have her right to pursue her undergraduate studying, but without any positive response. (December, 2019)

Manal believed that EFL teachers could influence their students' learning through providing them with academic support. She gave some tutoring sessions to one of her students who was accompanying her sick mother for lengthy hospitalization. This incident changed Manal's relationship with her students. She said, "this thoughtful gesture made me more compassionate towards my students' circumstances and their ability to pay back" (December, 2019). Likewise, Fatima believed that the EFL teacher has a significant impact on her students' achievement. She mentioned that, "sometimes they get good English teachers and sometimes

they don't. So, one teacher can lift them up, another teacher might take them down" (December, 2019).

Furthermore, the participants believed that the social support that students receive from schools, communities, and country could influence their learning in various ways. King Abdullah Scholarships and the Saudi 2030 vision are examples of governmental support. Rema and Ibtihal believed that King Abdullah's Scholarship Program, which started about ten years ago, sends Saudi males and females to study abroad in different countries to attain their BAs, MAs, and Ph.Ds., which inspired many Saudi students to learn English.

Regarding the Saudi Vision 2030 and EFL education, Rema believed that many students became eager to learn English after the vision to achieve their future goals of employment. This is the case because increasing the job opportunities for women is one of the 2030 vision's goal. Of course, having a higher English language proficiency would increase one's opportunities of employment.

Likewise, Elaf believed that the goals of the 2030 vision encouraged Saudi students to learn English. Specifically, she believed that the students now are eager to learn English more than before because it is the mean to participate in the world's events such as conferences that are attended by people from diverse backgrounds and used English to communicate.

Similarly, Fatima believed that the 2030 vision increased the demand of learning the English language as a number of international companies had started investing in KSA. However, those companies hire only those who are fluent in English as a job requirement.

The data above presented the EFL teachers' beliefs on the external and internal factors that influence EFL students learning to the English language. The internal factors embrace: motivation, self-confidence, love of learning, and autonomy. However, the role of family, friends, and the teacher were emphasized as external factors. Further, some other

factors were stressed: the socio-economic status, parents' educational level, and the social support.

Interpretation

Meritocracy (Young, 1958) has been understood as a solution to ensure equality in education and consequently in society. Young's meritocracy formula is: $IQ + effort = merit$, which means all the person needs to achieve is intelligence and hard work. This assumption had been challenged as it has not taken into consideration some other factors that influence education. Actually, the educational system considers one kind of language or knowledge as a valid one for high attainment, and the placement tests are designed in a way that measures students' understanding of that particular knowledge. In this case, the Meritocracy concept is a mean for legitimizing and perpetuating the inequalities in social mobility and not vice versa.

The findings illustrated that EFL teachers believed in *Education-Based Meritocracy* (Young, 1958) to accomplish in EFL classroom. The student's mental ability and their effort were viewed as a major reason to achieve in EFL classroom. The EFL teachers clarified that learning English requires students to be motivated, confident, and autonomous to create opportunities for themselves in order to learn not only inside the EFL classroom, but also outside the classroom. For example, Ibtihal believed that intrinsic motivation is what made students achieve in the EFL classroom. Likewise, Manal stressed that a good student can achieve in any discipline including the English language subject.

In addition, the data analysis demonstrates that EFL teachers believed that students' autonomy is one value that should be reinforced in the EFL classroom. To the teachers, students need to rely on themselves and be independent learners in order to learn inside and outside the classroom. However, the findings also revealed that the students' English proficiency level is an element that determined the degree of students' autonomy. For example, EFL teachers believed that activities given to beginner students need to be more

guided and classroom related as they need more explanation from the teacher, which supports the studies of Al-Rabai's (2017) and Asiri & Shukri's (2018). On the other hand, the advanced students were believed to be more autonomous than beginner students, and the classroom activities had been given accordingly, which supports Alhayasony's (2016) findings that EFL teachers were mostly positive about learner autonomy and aware of its importance for language learning.

According to the economic reproductive model (Giroux, 1983), students who are financially advantaged and belong to the dominant group achieve highly in school and obtain social privileges. The results of the data analysis indicated that four of the EFL teachers (Rema, Fatima, Ibtihal, Elaf) believed that a student's social class significantly influences his/her EFL achievements. According to the data, the EFL teachers believed that belonging to an educated community or family and coming from a high socioeconomic status family would influence positively EFL students' educational attainment. For example, they thought that parents or family members might teach English to their children, equip them with the tools to expand their knowledge, and provide an environment to practice the English language, which calls attention to issues of classism and domination and who is obtaining a better education. This finding is connected to research studies which emphasized that students from non-dominant group enroll in school with a different set of tools for learning than their counterparts from the dominant group, and these differences have consequences in their performance in schools (Bowles, & Gintis, 1976; Coates 2011).

Moreover, the EFL teachers demonstrated that social support (school, community, and country) is an element that influences students' accomplishments including their performance in an EFL classroom. The kinds of social support include having recourses such as access to books, good schools, technology, and governmental scholarships. Those findings support Wilson's (2009) study that reported that the lack of readiness and the ability to

succeed in college for minority and low-income students stem from the chances they have lost prior to leaving high school such as receiving poor instruction in middle and high school, and not being provided with highly qualified teachers and resources.

Fourth Theme: EFL Teachers' Beliefs on Saudi Females' Agency

According to Freire (1970), *Agency* is the ability to act in the world to change it. Educators' agency has been presented in his work as the reason of rejecting dehumanization or inequalities in the classroom. An educator who has a sense of critical agency takes an action to advocate his/her students' rights when he/she feels that education is not supporting them, or when their efforts have been underestimated and not being acknowledged. Moreover, in Freire's view the educator should resist what is disempowering via supporting the students' education and providing the means to succeed as possible.

The study results indicate that the participants believed in the importance of teacher's agency (Freire,197) in the EFL classroom, and this also was reflected on how they understand and implement the classroom practices. However, the findings in this theme could be characterized into three main categories: EFL teachers and growing a sense of empowerment, the 2030 vision and Saudi females' empowerment, and EFL teaching challenges and teachers' sense of disempowerment. In what follows, I report these findings in more detail. At the end, I will lay my interpretation of this theme as one integrated whole.

EFL Teachers and Growing a Sense of Empowerment

This sub-section presents two aspect of EFL teachers' beliefs related to teachers' agency and empowerment: unconstrained agency in teaching, and teaching towards change.

Unconstrained agency in teaching

Results in this study also indicated that the participants believed in the importance and significance of having unconstrained authority in selecting the kind of the presented knowledge and how to assess EFL students' understanding of that knowledge. Sometimes the institutions

enforce curriculum or way of assessments that do not align with what teachers face on a daily basis, which requires teachers to do some tweaks in order to make it beneficial knowledge and for the students' interests. Fatima, Ibtihal, and Rema believed that having a control over curriculum, assessment, and classroom materials empowered them as EFL teachers and boosted their agency. Fatima believed that allowing the EFL teacher to apply the knowledge he/she studied during her master's program would influence the teaching experience positively. Fatima had taught Arabic course in one of the universities in the US as one requirement to receive a grant. She talked about her past experience as a teaching assistant. The pre-planned teaching aspects to her were the classroom time and the textbook. However, she was given the opportunity to choose the supporting materials and the assessment tools that she provided to the students. In spite of the challenges, she had faced in creating activities and implementing assessment tools, she had a positive attitude being through that experience. This experience was positive as her agency was unconstrained as she contributed to forming the curriculum. Through the provided classroom materials, she conveyed the knowledge she wanted her students to attain. She described her Arabic teaching experience as "an opportunity that hasn't repeated itself in the EFL context yet, unfortunately" (December, 2019).

In addition, Ibtihal believed that having the unconstrained agency in selecting the course curriculum is one of the factors that could empower EFL teachers. She formed her belief based on her previous experience. After finishing her master's study from the US, Ibtihal got hired in one of the colleges of education in the Western Province in KSA as a contractor. She reported to the head of department (HOD) that the curriculum they provided to her was out-of-date and thus needed to be replaced. The HOD gave her the approval to design her syllabus and choose the textbook for the course she was teaching. After utilizing the new textbook, the students' results were high, and the department had approved the text to be a major textbook to teach. Ibtihal was

proud and said that, “I felt very grateful and empowered until this moment that I am writing this autobiography” (December, 2019).

Moreover, Rema was positive about the new open-minded thinking regarding accepting other cultures that are different from the Arabic or the Islamic culture in Saudi Arabia. It is important to mention that music and Western media, such as movies were not acceptable to use as educational materials in the past. Action might be taken against teachers who used those materials in Saudi EFL classrooms. However, Rema felt empowered as an EFL teacher because the new changes in the Saudi educational system after the 2030 vision gave her some sort of freedom to choose the classroom materials. She found music and the Western pop culture media as a way to enhance her students’ English language and teach them about new cultures. Rema commented that, “we have recently encountered huge cultural changes in the kingdom, allowing us to use what was previously classified as taboos like music, movies and TV shows in our teaching approaches” (December, 2019). Elaf believed having agency comes from being a teacher who employed the English language to enlighten her students and promote their awareness. She reported that, “I feel proud and happy that my subject enables me to be someone productive, to be someone who can raise their awareness” (January, 2020). Additionally, Elaf added about her students that “they are the only source that makes me happy because when you feel that you are doing something to achieve” (December, 2019).

Teaching Towards Change

The participants believed that the change they made in their students’ lives through EFL teaching boosted their sense of agency and empowered them. The empowerment in the classroom was mutual. Teachers were empowered when they noticed that they were part of the change in their students’ lives. So, it is not always about teachers empowering students, empowerment can be also vice versa when teachers notice their effort has finally resulted in

changing students' progress. Each teacher had a different event that provoked that feeling on her such as: receiving good words from students about the change that the EFL teachers contributed to, being the one who introduced a new kind of knowledge to them, or noticing enhancement in the EFL students' performance.

Fatima felt empowered due to noticing her students' academic progress. When students make progress despite the numerous challenges they have faced, that means this development was a consequence of her efforts in delivering knowledge. The change in students' lives was what made her satisfied as an EFL teacher. She stated that, "I can still derive satisfaction when I feel my students engaged in a task, able to challenge themselves, or when I notice the difference between their performance at the beginning and end of the semester"; also, she added: "I find joy in opening new doors to the students, successfully delivering a message to them, and taking their hands up to a new step" (December, 2019).

On the other hand, Noha believed that receiving positive feedback from students was empowering. She received stimulating comments on the change she made in her students' lives and the progress in their academic performance. She felt her efforts appreciated when students expressed their gratitude and articulated positive feedback, such as "you made us love English" (December, 2019). To Ibtihal, empowerment was derived from noticing the improvement in her students' level after she gave them extra classes. Because Ibtihal's secondary school students in beginning levels of English language development compared to students at their age, she believed providing extra classes and materials as well as providing new information would help them reach to the appropriate level. She commented that, "Those low-level students became able to read 30% correct after it was 0% and the same for other language skills. Such an incident made me happy and satisfied about my self-performance" (December, 2019). She also was pleased to be the first one who introduced new information to them about key terminologies and concepts in English education and testing. She said that, "I'm very happy that, believe it or not,

my students just knew or just heard about what is IELTS and what is TOEFL (exams that measure English language proficiency). I'm very happy that I'm the first person who told them about these kinds of tests" (December, 2019).

Rema thought it was empowering to observe the students' progress in applying some new English idioms, vocabularies, and grammatical rules. Using extracurricular phrases and grammar was a feature of Rema's teaching. Her goal was to have students remember them and employ what she had presented in class in their discourse to be part of their everyday speech not only for the testing and classroom practices. She felt proud when one of her students was able to use some words in her speech. Rema reported that, "At first, they didn't really pay much attention because they probably thought it was just another activity to pass the time, but once a classmate of theirs was successful in incorporating an idiom into her speech, most of them had the desire to do the same because they conceived their classmates experience as inspiring" (December, 2019).

The data analyses showed that they had awareness of their role as EFL teachers in creating change in their students' performance. This was captured in the way in which they supported their EFL students.

The 2030 Vision and Saudi Females' Empowerment

As far as female-only education is concerned, I asked my participants about the 2030 vision and its influence on women's education in particular and women's lives in general in Saudi Arabia. I focused further on how this vision is connected to EFL education. The 2030 vision is a new thinking in the country that encourages the moderate Islam and keeps away from the conservative ideology that took over in the past in all of the country's sectors. As a result of the vision, reforms related to enabling the Saudi females in education and society were included and applied. However, all of the participants believed in the positive influence of the vision and its values in supporting and empowering Saudi women focusing on two aspects: more job opportunities to women in Saudi Arabia, and more freedom in education.

From the participants' perspectives, the vision gives women the means to increase their agency and consequently empowers them to change the way society has been perceiving females and their potentials. Also, the EFL teachers deemed the English language as the mean that aids them and qualifies them for the current Saudi job market.

EFL teachers' beliefs on the 2030 vision in providing more job opportunities can be seen through the following. For example, Elaf discussed the vision and how it has been supportive to women, she reported that, "Nowadays there is no difference at all between female and male in our country fortunately and eventually" (December, 2019). She distinguished between the Saudi women's position in the past and nowadays. In the past a big number of women were depending on males in the family such as fathers, brothers, or husbands to provide their life needs. In the past, the general view about females were getting married and raising their kids, which is in comparison very different now. The job market is supporting women more than men to find the jobs that suit their qualifications. The country does not only provide jobs to those who are holding high degrees. Rather, Elaf said, "It's about creating chances. Creating, I mean, different opportunities for all levels not for bachelor degree holders it's also for diploma holders" (December, 2019). She explained how people's views about diploma holders has changed. According to Elaf, diploma degree used to be looked at as an inferior degree. However, currently diploma holders have a number of job opportunities such as cabin crews, vendors, or restaurant waiters. Elaf claimed that, "Nowadays these positions are taken by Saudis and you can see the difference now and we appreciate any kind of job as long as you are a productive person that you have a role and you depend on yourself and you are doing what you really like" (December, 2019). From her perspective, families now are more supportive to female's education and work, and many of them consider having a job and prioritize it over marriage.

Likewise, Ibtihal, Manal, and Rema believed that the Saudi Vision 2030 offers numerous job openings, and everyone would like to get a job. However, developing a high

level of English language proficiency is one of the essential requirements of employability in the highly competitive Saudi job market. That is why, according to them, many Saudi students have become more encouraged and motivated to learn English and be fluent in the language. This was reflected in the following quotes from the participants' responses.

Rema stated that,

When she [the female student] sees how much she can achieve, how many jobs she can get, the chances she has been given, the woman will try to work harder to update her English just to be as fortunate as those who has a chance to either study abroad or go to international schools. (December, 2019)

Manal added that:

Now under the vision, everyone wants to work. And in order to work in such places [competitive companies], you have to have English. You have an English test. You'll never be hired in Aramco [the Saudi oil company, which is considered a desired place due to its competitive salaries] if they feel your English isn't good, or you don't have a certain level of English mastery. (December, 2019)

The findings revealed that EFL teachers believed that Saudi women have been given more freedom related to their educational choices from multiple sides: travel on their own without a male guardian, being independent in getting their paperwork without the need of the house holder's permission, having control over the way they dress publicly.

Noha, Manal, and Rema discussed how the 2030 vision gives women more freedom in decisions related to their education. Manal and Noha believed that the vision does not change education, but it facilitates female students' path to get their degrees, and gives them authority and control over their educational choices. Similarly, Fatima perceived the vision as allowing students to have more options when thinking of educational fields in the

universities, which were limited when she was a college student in the era between 2002-2006.

However, Manal mentioned the prosper in King Abdulla's scholarships had started before the vision was created. Those scholarships have been extended until the current time and the government still gives grants to the high achievers. This educational progression was not a restriction-free for Saudi women in the past. One of the obligations for studying abroad was traveling with a male guardian from the family. Now, this is no longer compulsory, it is optional and up to the family. One of the positive points is that the Saudi government provides scholarships to the scholarship recipient's companions. Thus, females who study abroad benefit their male family members by providing study abroad opportunities to their male relatives such as brothers, fathers, and husbands, which can continue their education and have a better chance in life. Noha illustrated that, "Females traveled abroad to seek better education and get sponsored, and they opened doors for their male relatives (maharams) to study with them too" (January, 2020). She added that in spite of this support, they were not independent to attain their paperwork regarding traveling without a male guardian's approval. Noha also commented, the vision is not the reason to provide a better education and it was there already, but it adds more freedom in terms of the studying place, and it becomes easier to get the paperwork since no guardian is required.

Likewise, Rema said that the vision is supporting women's education by giving them the option to select the place and the field of study without waiting for permission from a male guardian. Saudi females can join fields that were not accepted socially before such as engineering, military, and some medical fields. She added that, "I cannot say a specific number but 50 or 60% of women were waiting for the male power to either allow or not allow them to study or travel abroad" (December, 2019). Rema shared that being independent

without the need for male approval to continue their education is one source of empowerment that the vision provided to the Saudi women.

Manal has the same point as Noha when she said, “There is no more him controlling her thanks to the vision” (December, 2019). Even though she comes from an open-minded family and has never had any obligations, she felt it for those whose families have control over their life choices such as the way of dressing, or their work or study options.

Additionally, the new dress-code in the Saudi universities to Rema gave female students more freedom in choices related to the way they dress. In the contemporary time, 2019, female students had been given the choice to dress publicly. They could wear the color and the shape they prefer for going out gown (Abaya), which is supposed to be the black color or limited dark colors in the past. Students who did not abide those rules were given notes. The university where Rema teaches permitted also wearing pants on campus, which was prohibited in the past. She thinks that giving female students more control over their appearance made them more eager to learn and be more productive as the dress-code became a secondary interest to them.

EFL Teaching Challenges and Teachers’ Sense of Disempowerment

EFL teachers believed that having limited agency in the classroom is disempowering. The EFL teachers declared that the challenges they faced during their EFL teaching journey has limited their agency in changing some classroom aspects and helping students to achieve. I asked the participants about moments where they felt disempowered. Their answers were related to challenges they faced such as the students’ age group, the number of students in a classroom, and not having control over curriculum and testing.

Manal and Elaf believed that teaching adult EFL was “challenging”. Manal’s previous job as a kindergarten EFL teacher had not prepared her well to teach adults, hence, teaching adults was demanding as she stated, “the audience in the first case is friendlier and less

judgmental. As for the second case, the audience is very selective of the teacher's method of delivering the data and their state while receiving it" (December,2019). To Elaf, teaching EFL is complicated as the teacher needs to understand her adult students' problems and help them to overcome them. She emphasized, "teaching EFL is a very complicated process and needs more efforts to handle it effectively" (December, 2019). Despite this, Fatima enjoyed teaching Arabic language to adults in the US, it was not a challenge free. She had to prepare for the first time some materials and assessment tools that were supposed to be age and level appropriate. This experience was not easy when she had started as she described: "it felt overwhelming at the beginning; but it didn't take long before I started rising up to the challenge, supplementing the textbook with materials and classroom activities, creating engaging, communicative assessment tools" (January, 2020).

The teachers had issues with teaching adults as they come to class with a specific background on concepts that they have learned and the way the school should be. This burdens the teacher when thinking of changing students' thought about socially constructed ideas, which is easier to achieved with youth.

On the other hand, big student numbers were difficult to manage for Noha. She believed it was difficult to give students "a constructive feedback" especially in the writing class where she should give them feedback on their weekly writing in a class that included 50 students and sometimes more. Noha could not use her class to make changes in students' accomplishment and writing level as these big enrollments were difficult to manage.

EFL teachers believed the institutions, the rules, and the standards that they need to follow are sometimes disempowering to them as they do not suit the Saudi EFL students. One of the issues that annoyed Fatima as an EFL teacher in a Saudi college occurred when her job was limited only to conveying information without having the authority over choosing curriculum or designing assessment tools. She reported that: "This sense was especially

intensified when I feel unable to choose the materials my students' study, or to design the appropriate assessment tool for their level and the content covered" (December, 2019).

Ibtihal believed one of the disempowering aspects is teaching EFL level inappropriate textbooks to EFL students, their level was high below the book, and the students did not master the basic skills. Ibtihal felt frustrated when her students were demotivated to learn English or to continue their education. She felt that her agency as a teacher was limited and her job was only transmitting the knowledge in the textbooks without having her own voice and her students' voices. Also, Rema felt unfulfilled being in a constructive space before the new changes took place in KSA, which made her feel powerless as she could not share some materials with her students.

This theme showed how the EFL teachers think of Saudi women's agency and how it has been developed as a result of being in social and educational context that determined the degree of it. Teachers addressed some factors that aided them and empowered them in the classroom such as having control over the provided knowledge and the way of assessing it. The second factor is noticing the change in students' lives. The 2030 vision was perceived as an empowering factor that provides more jobs and study freedom for Saudi females. However, they also mentioned some pitfalls in teaching that were considered challenging such as teaching adults, large student enrollments in the EFL classroom, and lacking authority over curriculum and testing.

Interpretation

The data reveal that the participants believed in EFL teachers' *agency* (Freire, 1970) as an empowering aspect in the EFL classroom. Particularly, being unconstrained and being given some authority in their EFL classrooms boosted their agency. For example, they felt empowered when they had control over selecting the knowledge they provided to students, choosing curriculum and assessment, and deciding the classroom materials. All of the previous aspects

made them feel that their role is not merely teaching blindly without having their voice heard. Rather, they felt that they were trusted and their knowledge was valued. They were aware of their role as teachers in providing the kind of knowledge and the assessment methods that suit their students' level and make them succeed. Yet, they have not reached to a high level of critical consciousness or what is called critical-transitivity (Freire, 1970) that enable them to understand the long-term effects of inequalities in EFL education. They were not deeply critical on the unjust aspects and did not relate them to broader issues, such as the unfair assessment methods or the irrelevant curriculum to students. Moreover, there is no mention in the data of English language education role in social reproduction. Precisely, using English language in education to determine students' future college and thus their profession and their social class a point that has not been emphasized.

Willis's (1977) work explains the role played by agency in resisting inequalities and reproducing social classes, dominant culture, or knowledge. He further distinguished between resistance and conformity. Resistance is seen as opposing behaviors or acts that indicate refusing subordination. In contrast, conformity exists when social group members avoid challenging the system and find a place in the already existing social system to coexist with other social groups in the dominated society.

The findings of the data analysis yielded that EFL teachers have a sense of agency that made them conformed into the system instead of resisting it. They realized their role in making change in the EFL students' lives and worked toward that. These findings are similar to Willis' (1977). He came across that the participants who were white working- class (the Lads group in the UK) had not resisted the system that supported white middle class. Rather, the participants tried to find a place to themselves in the existing system without trying to demand changes that supported their education to help them succeed. The results of the current research demonstrate that the EFL teachers avoided challenging the system and tried

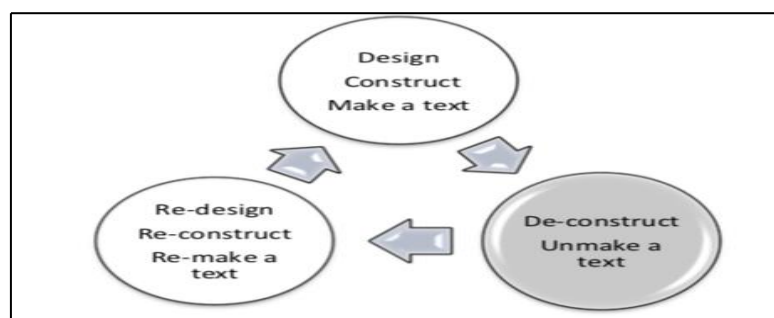
to find a place in the already existing one to coexist with the hegemonic educational and economical ideologies.

To the EFL teachers, having agency was not merely having control over their classroom aspects of curriculum or testing. Rather, teacher's agency was important to them as it has been a way to change their students' lives for the better through education. It can be understood from the EFL teachers' beliefs on teachers' agency that making change does not necessarily manifest objecting or challenging the system. Rather, it can be in the form of promoting change in people's lives and helping them to be self-empowered by realizing the arbitrariness of hegemonic and develop tools to breakthrough them. Teachers felt empowered when they noticed the change they made in students' lives. The participants expressed satisfaction after they noticed the positive change in students' progress, heard students' words of appreciation, and introduced to students new and important information.

However, transformation needs to be elevated to a higher level by teachers' collective actions, which is the essence of critical literacy. Maybe what teachers had done is a starting point for future reform in EFL teaching. For example, Janks suggested *The Design Cycle* (2010) at which critical literacy can be implemented by teachers to create change. Transformation can be achieved through following what is illustrated on figure 4.4 below that explains the cycle: un-making the text > re-making a text > making text.

Figure 4.4

Janks's re-design cycle



The redesign cycle (Janks, 2010, p. 183)

At first, EFL teachers start this process through thinking critically of EFL context and understand its purposes. The text is not a language per say, but the discourse in general that includes the sociocultural factors that impact EFL education. Then, educators should work on de-constructing the text by analyzing it to understand the reason of creating it and the stakeholders of that discourse. The final phase is to re-construct the text through building it in a way that benefit students as well as the Saudi society by thinking of it as an additive language. They need to consider keeping the Arabic cultural and linguistic values.

I linked teachers' advocacy with a verse from the Holy book (Qur'an) that states: "Whoever killed a soul, except for a soul slain, or for sedition in the earth, it should be considered as though he had killed all mankind; and that whoever saved it should be regarded as though he had saved all mankind" (The Quran 5:32). From a Muslim perspective, I view fighting injustice acts or corruption in EFL students' education as a form of advocacy. It helps in saving lives in human mankind by increasing their chances in life so they do not end up harming themselves or their societies as a consequence of oppression that causes numerous psychological, social, and physical problems.

Moreover, the data shows that EFL teachers considered Saudi 2030 vision as a new ideology that contributed to Saudi women empowerment in all life aspects and sectors including education. To them, the 2030 vision boosted Saudi women's social mobility by providing more job opportunities to women who hold different educational degrees and not only to those who hold high degrees. As a result, they became independent and do not need a male family member to take their financial responsibilities. The picture below present a number of Saudi powerful women.

Figure 4.5

Saudi most influential women examples



Destination Riyadh (May, 2015). Saudi Arabia's most powerful women [online image]. Retrieved from <https://destinationksa.com/saudi-arabias-most-powerful-women/>

Figure 4.5 above contains some influential Saudi women. It is important to mention that a number of those women were enabled to get their higher education and got high positions before the vision of 2030. For example, number 1, Hayat Sendi is known as one of the world's leading bio-technologists. Number 2, Mishaal Al-Shemaimary, is an aerospace engineer; she designed and analyzed a new thermal nuclear rocket engine for Mars Missions for NASA. Number 3, Khwala Al Khuraya, is a Cancer Specialist. The 2030 vision was not the starting point in women's education, but it helps in joining more study and work fields. It also makes them independent in getting their paperwork and traveling, and that will be explained in detail below.

The findings reveal that the EFL teachers believed that the 2030 vision empowers women by giving them the freedom of choice. First, Saudi females have more choices in

education. The government opened to them the educational fields and the jobs that were occupied by males only. For example, females now can study engineering, military, and hold governmental high positions. To the EFL teachers, the 2030 vision gave females the freedom of selecting the place where they can study and get their degrees. It is important to mention that Saudi women were not permitted to travel and get their degrees without a male family member that is called in Islam *Muhram*. Also, they could not travel alone without the *muhram*'s approval by signing governmental papers showing his approval. However, in July, 30th, 2019 the Saudi government had ended the male guardianship and women started to have a full responsibility in issuing their travel paperwork (تعدیل نظام وثائق السفر, 2019). After this decree, women could travel alone to continue their study, which gives women freedom and power to live and make their own decisions. However, EFL teachers believed that the vision was not the reason for providing a better education to Saudi women. Actually, it was there already, but the 2030 added more freedom to women to travel alone and obtain their paperwork without the need for a male guardian as before, which has been illustrated in the study of Elmulthum (2016).

In addition, EFL teachers believed not having control over testing and curriculum is another obstacle that they have faced. The teachers were given specific rules, and they need to follow what they have been asked by their institution. This limits their agency in choosing materials that are related to their students' culture or interests. Also, the EFL teachers thought the testing was not fair to all students. They felt teachers are the best people who can evaluate their students' progress. However, not being authorized to create assessment tools made them feel disempowered in their EFL classrooms. Those results are connected to Shah et al. (2013) that highlighted factors that make teaching English challenging: lack of learners' motivation and unfavorable institutional policies and procedures. The results also are similar to the Mansory (2016) research that emphasized that most teachers wanted their voices to be heard

and be more involved. They had a limited role in the continuous assessment in the EFL classroom. Thus, they felt the need for more involvement in the choice of materials/topics employed as well as more freedom regarding the way they were administered.

Summary

This chapter presented an analysis of the data collected as it related to the case study presented in the study's framework. The study presented an analysis of six Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs on English and EFL education in Eastern Provinces through the two phases of data collection: EFL teacher semi-structured interviews and EFL teacher documents (autobiography writing, teaching materials). This chapter exhibited the data analysis of the case study. Four major themes were discussed: Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs on the English language, Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs on EFL teaching and teacher and training courses, Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs on the factors that impact EFL students' English language learning, and EFL teachers' beliefs on Saudi females' agency. The next chapter presents a discussion of the results, and attempts to draw conclusions from the research findings to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to investigate EFL Saudi female teachers' beliefs in English language educational ideologies in female colleges in Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is important to understand how teachers perceive EFL practices and policies that have been enforced in education and their lives. My aim is to preserve the Arabic linguistic and cultural identity in my social context. I focused my investigation on the following: The situational case of the relationship, in the eyes of Saudi female college EFL teachers, between English ideologies and their EFL teaching practices. More specifically, I focused on: (a) six Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs about English and EFL teaching; (b) how those beliefs influence EFL classroom practices; (c) the extent to which teachers are critically aware of their teaching beliefs and practices; and (d) the ideologies that guide their conceptualization about the English language and culture as well as EFL teaching. I drew upon Critical Theory (Habermas, 1968) including: Social Reproduction Theory (Bourdieu, 1990), Resistance Theory (Giroux, 1983), Freire's Levels of Consciousness (1970), and Ideology (Guess, 1989) as lenses to go over the data.

Main research Question: *What are Saudi EFL college level female teachers' beliefs about English and EFL teaching in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia?*

Sub-questions:

- How do those beliefs influence EFL teachers' teaching practices?
- In what ways are EFL teachers critically aware of these beliefs and practices?
- What ideologies are reflected in Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs about English and EFL teaching and learning?

The data collection methods were semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

The method of data analysis was the thematic analysis using critical hermeneutics for data interpretation. The participants are Saudi females who are teaching English as a foreign language in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. They were between 33 and 37 years old.

Five of the participants hold a master’s degree and one of them holds a BA degree. They obtained their master’s from different countries: KSA, USA, and the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The first section provides a summary of the findings exhibited in Chapter 4, which is followed by a discussion of the results in relation to the research questions. The second section contains implications for theory, methodology, and practice.

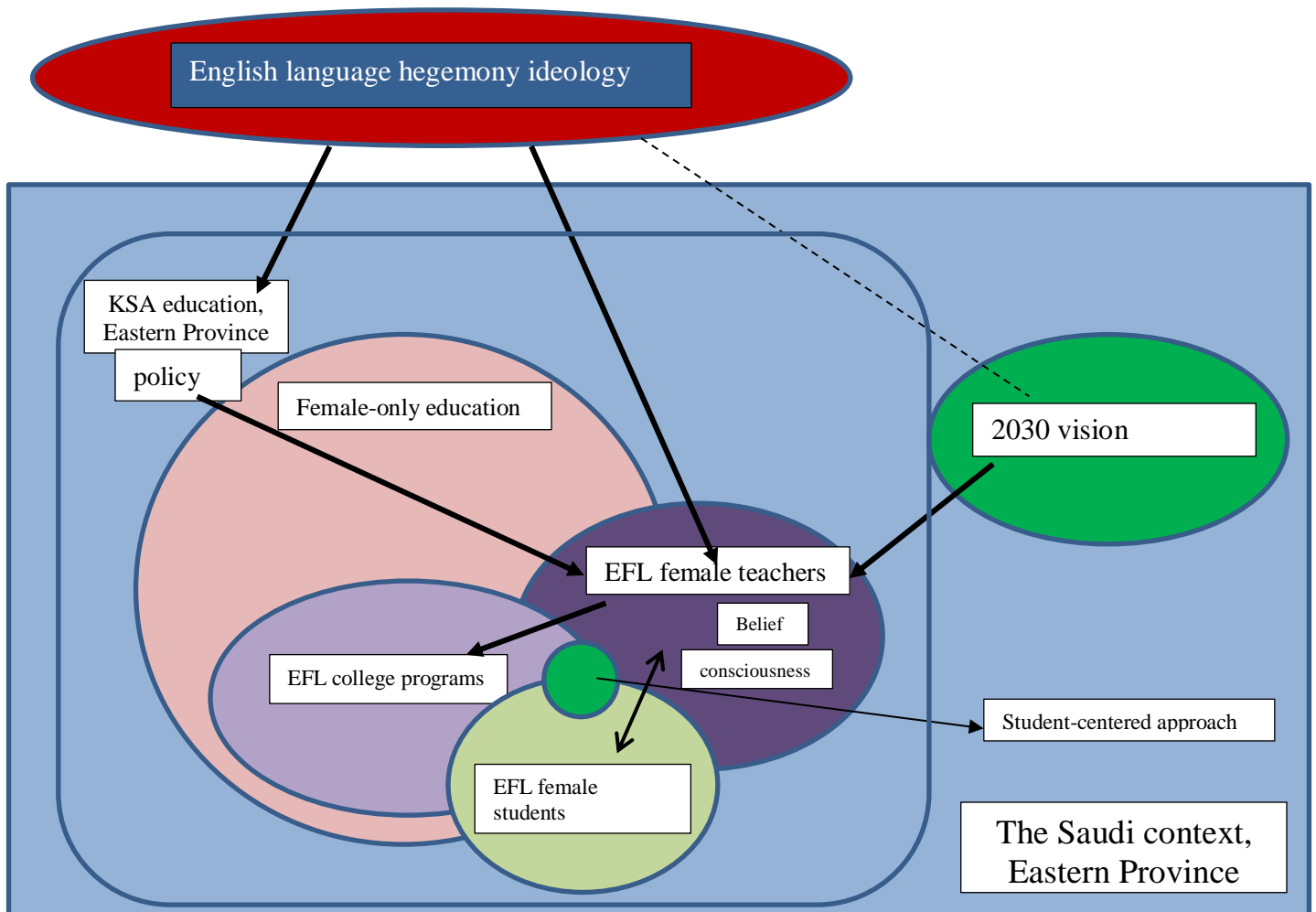
General Discussion of the Study Results

Summary of the Findings

After reflecting on the findings in Chapter 4, I developed the diagram below to discuss the key results of this case study.

Figure 5.1

Saudi EFL female teachers’ beliefs on English and EFL education in Eastern Province, KSA (the Study Findings)



As portrayed in figure 5.1, the Saudi EFL female teachers in this case study believed in student-centered education as a teaching approach. They dealt with their students as their equivalent, and their relation was based on trust and assistance. In their classroom activities, they considered students' interests, their everyday lives, and the sociopolitical status quo such as the Saudi 2030 vision. Their teaching was reflective as EFL students got involved in selecting the way they wanted to be taught.

Second, the ideology of English language hegemony and 2030 vision have affected how EFL Saudi female teachers believed in English and EFL education in the Eastern Province. EFL teachers' beliefs and practices have enacted and perpetuated the ideology of English language and culture hegemony (superiority) in college level EFL programs in the Eastern Province, KSA. English has been viewed as a fundamental aspect to perpetuate *commonsensical* views of the nature of the English language for communication, study, social status, employment, and everyday life.

Also, EFL teachers were not fully aware of ideologies that connect EFL teaching and learning with issues of power, domination, or linguistic imperialism of English that might be conveyed to their college female students and then to the next generation. This level of awareness had been reflected in the way they perceived and practiced EFL teaching.

The deficit-based perspectives on Arabic language and culture in EFL teaching is a concept that has emerged from this study regarding the English language learning and usage in the Saudi society. As stressed in the data, a person might feel inferior when not speaking a foreign language or when not being familiar with its culture as it has been associated with belonging to the educated and the high social status community.

Interpretation

Before reflecting on the key results, I think it is important to explain the concept of hegemony. Hegemony refers to the use of force and ideology through institutions to

reproduce social relations among social classes and control knowledge production (Gramsci, 1971). The findings indicate that EFL teachers' responses reflected English language and culture hegemony. In the past during the 80s and 90s in KSA, what a person needed to be employed or to be enrolled in a prestigious college in KSA was having high grades in college or high school. However, a number of elements indicate EFL teachers' beliefs in the linguistic and the cultural hegemony of English. From the EFL teachers' perspectives, it has changed the majority of life aspect's identity in KSA in numerous sectors such as education, employment, and everyday life. For example, in education and employment, they perceived English as a mean of success as it opens more opportunities to a person not only in KSA, but also globally. In society, they believed that it gives a higher status to its speakers as teachers being affected by the system that supports incorporating more English in the majority of important life aspects. Also, media has been viewed as means to strengthen the learners' English language proficiency as EFL teachers have advised students to watch English content. However, it seems making all the sources available to learn English in the Saudi society was not by chance, but to push more people toward learning English.

The data reveal that the participants believed in the superiority of English, which is an ideology that impacted EFL teachers' thinking about the status of the English language and culture in their society. Obviously, the intensive English language education nowadays is increasing in all educational sectors, and this occurred as a result of the dominant ideologies that are prevalent. For example, the event of 9/11, 2001 has been used to spread an ideology in Saudi society that has never existed before. English has become a requirement for success now. English is being considered the official language in numerous educational institutions in KSA. The goal is to eliminate some ideologies that were considered anti-Western before the 9/11 occurrence. Elyas (2008) claims that, in order for the English language to spread all over KSA and change what was called "radical ideologies", English has been introduced in many

Saudi people life aspects: schools, everyday life, and social media as a kind of a reform. To me, what is happening now in the educational system is not only the elimination of anti-Western thinking. It appears to be an instrument reinforcing English domination over Saudi society, which is not merely making a reform. To this end, the previous findings are evidence that using force for hegemony is not the only mean to have a control over societies, but ideology also plays an essential part of it.

The spread of the English language in KSA has occurred neither by force nor by colonization. The power of English has been sustained through the educational institutions as the necessary culture of knowledge and success (Alzahrani & Rajab, 2017). According to the findings of the case of EFL teachers in Eastern Province, the English language has been viewed as an equalizer of students' academic achievements, and this notion has been normalized in numerous Saudi institutions. From my participants' perspectives, English also determines students' field of study, which consequently reflects their future social status. EFL teachers in this study agreed that those students who belong to educated parents from middle and upper middle class can afford private schools, international schools, and English resources and ultimately succeed academically. They acquire the skills needed to enroll in good colleges such as medical schools, engineering, and administration. Consequently, their salaries are higher, and they have connections with people who hold high positions. However, those who do not manage the skills needed such as the English language either do not enroll in college or they join vocational and less demanding fields. They get minimum wage salaries and do not have connections with people in power. As a result, society will be reproduced and the rich will stay rich and the poor will be poorer. So, a student from the working-class might face many obstacles to join high status colleges. However, these findings are connected to the correspondence principle (Bowles & Gintis, 1976) that stipulates that the hierarchy structure of values, norms, and beliefs are established at schools before students get into the

real workplace life. However, I am not against learning and adding new languages at schools as additive languages, but I am not for using the English language to reproduce stratification in the Saudi society since there is no equity in providing high quality EFL education to all students in public schools.

According to the EFL teachers, the English language has been viewed as a language for life rather than as a language for communication with foreigners or as a school subject. It has been considered important for social mobility, understanding the world and being part of it, and an indication of social class and educational level, which aligns with Kubota's (1998) study about ideologies of English in Japan that conceptualized language ideology as social world-views brought into the language.

The data reveals that the Saudi sociocultural discourse and ideology had informed the EFL teachers' beliefs on English and their understanding of the EFL teaching practices in the Eastern Province of KSA. For example, EFL teachers' beliefs about the spread of English and EFL students' achievements were influenced by social, political, educational, and economic ideologies. I found in the existing literature that Asiri's (2017) findings illustrated that religious, political, and economic factors contributed to constructing Saudi teachers' beliefs and values towards the English language. This current study adds the influence of the social factors in EFL teachers' beliefs on English such as gaining prestige and respect, and appearing sophisticated. Also, I found some intellectual factors: attending conferences and doing academic research. However, surprisingly, even though the study took place with teachers who have been living in the Saudi context, no religious factors were emphasized, which indicates the dramatic change that took place in the Saudi society that tends to avoid incorporating conservatives' ideologies in education. Additionally, the data reveal that the participants believed in EFL teachers' agency as an empowering aspect to them and, consequently, to their students.

In my view, the English language domination in education and in the Saudi society that has been illustrated in the case of Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs in Eastern Province is not an aspect that appeared promptly in the Saudi society. Rather, it has been embedded gradually in the educational system, in particular, to spread the idea of its (English) status and make people think of it as a language to excel in life. The ideology of English language hegemony is taking over and some people, even the educated ones, have not been exposed to the idea of critically analyzing and understanding this phenomenon. The participants asserted that people in KSA, especially the educated figures, strive to teach their children the English language even before teaching their mother tongue. Surely Saudi parents seek the best study and work opportunities for their children, but sometimes without focusing on issues of domination, language loss, or identity shift. They might consider it a language and a culture for school and work. However, some of the participants illustrated that English is important in Saudi people's everyday life. For example, two of the participants (Elaf and Fatima) noticed that children and teenagers were playing and speaking English in the neighborhoods and in the shopping malls in the Eastern Province, which leads to rethink the whole picture of incorporating the English language in our lives and children's lives. However, not being aware of the inclusive picture of the spread of English in KSA is one ideology that has been internalized in the Saudi society, which can be viewed within the framework of Hall (1982), Althusser (1971), and Giroux (1983) about ideology as a concept. These scholars stressed that the claim is deemed ideological, not because it is false, but when the claim does not explain the social reality sufficiently. It is ideological because it shows part of the truth as if it is inclusive and adequate (Althusser, 1971; Giroux, 1983; Hall, 1982).

To analyze data, I drew on Freire's three levels of consciousness in chapter two as a part of the critical theoretical framework. The case of EFL teachers' beliefs in Eastern Province mirrored a semi-intransitivity (Freire, 1970) level of awareness. As a result of the

spread of the English language hegemony ideology, the analysis of five EFL teachers' responses did not show critical awareness regarding English language domination in education in the Eastern Province of KSA. This ideology has been internalized without questioning its consequences such as Arabic language marginalization, or cultural and identity shift. It has been perceived as the way to succeed without mentioning the all-encompassing picture or the consequences. However, one participant, Fatima, emphasized the importance of keeping the Arabic linguistic and cultural identity and learning English as an additive language, not as a replacement for Arabic. According to the data, connecting low English fluency with school failure has been naturalized as common sense in Saudi educational institutions. Unfortunately, sometimes this naturalization to English happens in education without considering those students' potentials and what they are capable of in their society when giving their first language the same intellectual and social status. This idea was mentioned in the literature as *the naturalization of subjects' situation* (Fairclough, 1989) that occurs when internalizing a context as fixed rather than socially constructed. So, the English language domination has been internalized as an ever-changing reality not as a phenomenon that is affected by sociocultural and globalized factors. This naturalization makes a person blame himself instead of blaming the system. The workplace also might justify not recruiting applicants with low English level as they do not meet the criteria, which is called blaming the victim.

According to Freire (1970), people who have naïve transitivity level of awareness might be aware of the society structure and the people who create challenging policies in education, but they believe this situation is their fate and the will of God. Thus, they proceed without trying to make any change or transformation. The EFL teachers in Eastern Province case knew that the policies and the assessment tools were controlled by policy makers and did not benefit Saudi college female students in Eastern Province. Nevertheless, they did not

challenge policies to create change. Teachers relied on their agency to advocate at the classroom level but not at the institutional level. To defend their students' rights, they provided some extra academic and psychological support as well as students were getting involved in selecting the teaching methods they preferred. Also, they provided a friendly learning environment and extra help to students. For example, Ibtihal gave her students extra writing classes to prepare them for college.

According to the data, the EFL teacher's agency was restricted as they needed to follow the institutions' regulations, which meant that English language education was controlled by native speakers of the English language and their supporters. Saudi teachers in the case of Eastern Province did not get involved in co-constructing the knowledge presented in EFL classrooms. Their role was limited to teaching the curriculum without adding anything to it. The experts do not only spread the ideas of English, but also the knowledge that should be presented to students in English. The book publishers take financial advantage by selling their language teaching materials, and they present themselves as experts. Indeed, they are experts in the linguistic aspects, but also there is a need to include an insider's perspective in the curriculum.

In conclusion, English language teaching and the Western ideologies have been widely investigated and mentioned in the literature. My study's general results connect English language teaching and learning with hegemony as an ideology, which might trigger inequalities and social reproduction in the KSA. The way EFL teachers perceived English language teaching policies was an indication that English is a mean for westernization in numerous educational and social aspect in the Eastern Province. The English language hegemony in Eastern Province has not spread by force, but through the necessary life aspects, which can be identified as a form of linguistic imperialism. The general results of this study resonate with previous studies. For example, Lidi (2008) problematized the implications of

the spread of English in China. Likewise, Chang (2004) argued that English language teaching caused various forms of social and economic inequalities in China. In addition, English and Westernization have been discussed as an important issue in KSA (Al-Haq & Smadi, 1996). Al-Issa (2002, 2005) referred to colonialist and culturalist interpretations as important ideologies that control ELT in Oman. Similarly, Addison's (2011) study researched how English could be implicitly carrying the ideological discourse of colonialism through internationally used ELT resources. Ricento (2000) discussed the interconnections of ideology, politics, and language policies in relation to the English language. Further, Modiano (2011) presented the notion of ideology as beliefs embedded in the language education enterprise and transmitted in its field either as language ideologies or as imposed sociocultural ideologies.

In this case study, I included females who were teaching females as well. The EFL teachers' belief on the English language hegemony has been transferred implicitly and explicitly. Sometimes they explained in their classes that English has more status than the Arabic language especially after the 2030 vision that supports women's work and education in KSA. Also, they discussed how being fluent in English makes them more privileged to get more work and study opportunities. However, these EFL female students will be future teachers or mothers who will be responsible for nurturing the next generation. So, the idea of English language hegemony will be transmitted and reach to their future children and students. Therefore, it is important to rethink the English language domination in Saudi society and why and how to teach it with regard to the next generation's linguistic and cultural identity.

Implications

This research suggests implications for theory and methodology. Also, it provides implications for practice to educators, policy makers, students, and parents in order to

promote critical awareness on the importance of keeping the Arabic linguistic and cultural values alongside learning other languages. I will conclude with the limitations of this study and implications for future research.

There is a dearth of studies about English language ideologies and Saudi EFL female teachers in the Eastern Province. Further, numerous studies have utilized quantitative research method as a data collection method. However, qualitative instrumental exploratory embedded single case study is what guided this research. Since introducing the Saudi female voice in the literature is worth consideration, my study gave EFL Saudi female teachers an opportunity to express their opinions freely without the researcher's interference.

After I reviewed the literature, I found the following studies about EFL Saudi teachers' beliefs.:

- Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs about teaching pronunciation (Alsofyani & Algethami, 2017).
- EFL teachers' beliefs on applying reflective teaching in the Saudi educational context (Sibahi, 2016; Shukri, 2014).
- EFL teachers' perceptions of using social media as an English language teaching (ELT) tool in the Saudi context (Allam & Elyas, 2016).
- Perceptions on learner autonomy (Alhayasony, 2016; Al-Rabai, 2017; Asiri & Shukri, 2018).
- EFL Saudi teachers' beliefs and values impacted the ways they understood their students' academic performance (Asiri, 2017).
- Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs about the significance of teaching English reading strategies (Bamanger & Gashan, 2014).
- Beliefs on English language assessment (Mansory, 2016).

- Teachers' beliefs and practices on the use of the mother tongue as a mediational tool in Saudi EFL classrooms (Al-Amir & Al-Hashemi 2017; Mansory, 2019).
- Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs and values impacted the ways they understood their students' academic performance (Asiri, 2017).

However, none of the studies used a critical lens in exploring EFL teachers' beliefs about the English language and EFL education in Saudi Arabia. A reason for that could be these authors might have not been exposed deeply to critical theory and its application to Saudi education. Another reason could be that those scholars avoided including such a theory as English language is taking over globally and to them there is no point of challenging the consequences of it. Therefore, I utilized critical theory to analyze EFL teachers' perspectives in order to reveal whether issues of power and domination are related to the English language teaching in Eastern Province, KSA.

Implications for Theory

Critical theory and, precisely, social reproduction theory (Bourdieu, 1990), Guess's concept of ideology (1989), and Freire's three levels of consciousness (1970) aided me in looking at the research data from a perspective of a critical researcher. They guided me in reaching a conclusion after analyzing the data. There are a number of concepts that aligned with the emergent themes and categories from the data analysis such as the correspondence principle, the culture capital of English, hegemony of English, and EFL teachers' level of consciousness.

Ideology as a concept brought about more understanding to different ways of ideology conceptualization as it assisted me to take a position as a researcher. I understand ideology as socially constructed interpretations of reality that people internalize in their context. As a result of using critical theory framework in the data interpretation, I found that EFL teachers'

teaching practices reflected deficit-based perspectives on Arabic language and culture, which can be viewed as an embedded ideology in the educational and social context in KSA. To a certain extent, Saudi students' first language and culture were viewed as intruders in the EFL classroom more than as a source of learning. Those students live and study in the Saudi social context, nevertheless, teachers believed that not being knowledgeable about the foreign language culture decreases EFL students' language learning. For example, Rema illustrated that in the quote below:

I don't know why, but they [beginner English language learners] don't seem to get the culture, especially for American or British, and I don't know why, not like the advanced; they're more immersed in the culture. Maybe because they studied in international schools. I don't know. Maybe they have travelled a lot with their parents, but they seem to get the cultural content more than beginners do [...] There are some certain phrasal verbs. You may know the meaning of the verb, but as a phrasal verb and as a part of phrasal verb or a part of a specific phrase, it can carry a different meaning. So that's why they need to immerse themselves as much as they can in culture (December-January, 2019).

Further, she explained the elements that impact students' performance. She stated that, "peer pressure; maybe relatives, friends, classmates as they all advanced, they get you the pressure to learn or you are going to forever feel inferior" (December, 2019).

Manal also stated, I keep on telling them let's say that you are ordering Uber and you can't give him directions. He speaks English and his English is bad. Let's say that his English is second or even third language to him. You can't give him even simple directions what a shame! (December, 2019).

In the EFL classroom, Rema believed that a student might feel inferior when he/she does not speak English as a foreign language that was perceived by the EFL teachers as a

necessary language for success and modernity. This notion shows how people's perception of themselves and then the way they conceive reality influence how they live with this negative idea about themselves, which can be viewed as the framework of the *Trialectics of Spatiality* (Soja,1996). On the other hand, ideology is not always a negative term as it can be a world-view that one adopts to encounter unjust ideologies.

Analyzing the participants' quotes above using critical lenses led me to think of the importance of incorporating *Asset-Based Approach* (Valencia, 1999) in professional development courses. Scanlan (2007) explains that the asset-based approach views linguistic diversity as a source for learning. It looks at the second language as an additive language rather than as a language that eliminates students' first language i.e., subtractive approach in English teaching. So, we need to increase the capacity of teachers to teach ELLs in a way that enhances the two languages Arabic and English and keep away from the defect perspective in English language teaching.

Implications for Methodology

In my dissertation, I utilized the embedded single case study. Choosing this kind of methodology fits my research well. My goal was to obtain more descriptions and details to understand the Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs and experiences in a bounded context. The case study helped me to gain this understanding and led me to draw conclusions. In addition, using embedded case study, in particular, assisted me in analyzing each EFL teacher's beliefs as a unit and then I included what those teachers shared in common as they are one single case that belongs to the Eastern Province context.

Semi-structured interviews and document analysis (autobiography writing, and the teaching materials) were two data collection methods that I utilized for data collection. This research was an attempt to get Saudi EFL female teachers involved and to make their voices heard in the literature. Therefore, using these two data collection methods was fruitful in

presenting teachers' perspectives from their own words without interference from the researcher.

Implications for practice

This section portrayed implications for the following: policy makers (EFL college programs and governmental schools K-12, and teacher education), EFL teachers (classroom, curriculum, pedagogy), EFL students, and EFL students' parents.

Policy Makers

EFL College Programs and (K-12) Policy Makers. The EFL program is taught in the first year at college in Saudi Arabia to enable students be fluent in English language in various aspects and skills: Reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These programs are similar to the programs in the English language centers of the foreign universities. Actually, I was a former student in one of those centers between 2007-2008 and 2010-2011, and I know how this kind of program functions with second language learners and foreign language learners. Studying the language in its native country gives students an opportunity to interact with people around them using English. So, people that surround the learner will be a source to listen to the language. In this regard, the classroom is not the only place to learn the language.

However, EFL teachers in this research were in favor of private school education as governmental schools do not provide a proper EFL education. Thus, teaching English in Saudi public schools should be in a way that aligns with the college requirements coming later in student's educational life. So, consistency between school knowledge and college knowledge is what I suggest among different kinds of curricula that students' study in order to make the college studying experience smooth and an extension to what students have learned. I think an arrangement needs to be established between EFL program policy makers

in private and public education to design curriculum, objectives, and the expected outcomes that render the EFL college studying experience more successful.

As was illustrated in the literature, despite government support and the allocated budget to EFL education in KSA, unfortunately the outcomes are below expectations (Al-Seghayer, 2012). students in private schools have high achievements in the EFL classroom. Since those classrooms are located in KSA, the governmental schools that are affiliated with the ministry of education could benefit from those schools. The ministry of education needs to follow their steps in the kind of English books, in class-English language exposure, the teaching resources, and the number of classes a week.

Moreover, the EFL teachers emphasized the importance of technology and social media in EFL learning. We are in the technology era; students are using their devices. It would be an effective way to incorporate technology by cooperating with some platforms such as Camply. EFL students could meet with more fluent ones around the world and learn from them about many aspects of the English language with keeping the students' cultural values that determine this kind of activities. In addition, Ibtihal mentioned that some students in rural areas had difficulties accessing the online activities due to not having internet and smart devices. Therefore, I suggest providing schools in these areas of Saudi Arabia with computer labs and internet to expose students to this technology that is essential in the modern literacy to improve EFL teaching.

According to the findings of this study, teachers faced issues of not having authority over education, especially testing and curriculum. They teach the curriculum without knowing the test type or the underlying goals. It is unfortunate to say that some policymakers are deemed experts, but they are not fully aware of the educational issues. Some of them might have not been in an EFL classroom, which does not give an inclusive vision about how teaching has been practiced in these classes. In this regard, I recommend carrying on periodic

meetings with EFL teacher representatives to have an informed decision on the EFL students' needs and EFL teachers' needs. In addition, policymakers should visit EFL classrooms before taking any steps or making any changes to understand the EFL teaching in its context.

Furthermore, large class sizes appeared to be an obstacle in EFL teaching. Sometimes EFL teachers did not have the chance to cover all of students' needs due to the limited time allocated to each student. On the other hand, it is not guaranteed that their family members can aid them in understanding the subject. However, some other students might come to the classroom or to the exam with a big number of vocabularies and grammar rules that are memorized by heart without having knowledge on how to use them in different contexts. Therefore, students might perform poorly in the English subject. Some of them cannot produce a good piece of writing, or cannot hold a short conversation. As an EFL teacher, I have seen some college students who use this way of studying English because they got used to it in schools. For this reason, when the allocated class time is not adequate to all students, I suggest providing extra support to weak students either online, or by establishing support programs to help students get enough help and learn the language correctly. Moreover, the same thing can be provided in universities in KSA.

Actually, large class size in EFL classrooms was a major problem that EFL teachers could not solve as it was beyond their authority. Therefore, it is noteworthy to consider the number of students enrolled in the class before blaming teachers or students for low achievements. I am an EFL teacher, and I have taught writing and speaking skills to a large number of students. I found it challenging to allocate enough time for each of them. Policymakers should highly consider decreasing the number of students in EFL classrooms so that enough time is spent on productive skills such as writing and speaking. Those skills need more effort when producing a piece of writing or giving a presentation.

Teachers' Education and Professional Development. As mentioned in the findings, three of the participants stressed that the extra EFL training courses were not sufficient in preparing EFL teachers. Actually, in this research, I have interviewed some English teachers that had not benefited from teacher education program, master's study, and professional development (PD) courses. I am a student who has been studying in the US in a college of education, and I have seen the differences in preparing ESL teachers in TESOL programs in universities in the US. According to my experience, I provided some suggestions to the teacher education program policymakers. Teachers need to communicate with their professors periodically. In Saudi universities, female campuses are separated from male campuses. Usually, girls are taught by male professors using TV screens and not vice versa. Females could contact their professors by phone or email, which is insufficient especially if they are their advisors. I remember some female students' struggle who studied in KSA, their professors neither responded to their email nor answered their office phones. To end this dilemma, I suggest creating more communication channels where female students have their queries answered such as scheduling video meetings from the department to guarantee quality education in teacher preparation programs. Also, the universities should provide qualified female professors as they can communicate easily.

In addition, some EFL teachers explained that they did not benefit from their master's study because what they studied did not align with what they taught. Also, one EFL teacher considered the CELTA course insufficient in enriching the teachers' knowledge. It focused on the utopian classroom situation that is different from reality. In my view, those courses need to consider appropriate professional development sessions that suit the real classroom context, its knowledge, and the new rapid changes in education and in technology. They need training that is associated with their reality that is applicable in the EFL classroom setting. The PDs should not only be a list of theories in EFL teaching and learning, but also efficient

applications in EFL classrooms combined with a set of activities that are level and age appropriate.

Moreover, teacher education programs should prepare EFL teachers to question knowledge and to not present it to them as a taken for granted. They need to study about the history of language evolvments in KSA as well as other parts of the world. It is important to understand the reasons for the spread of the English language in the world. Keeping the students' cultural and linguistic identity is important and should be incorporated. I suggest asking them to write research papers such as transformational intellectual knowledge (TIK) papers where teachers can investigate an aspect in education and look at it from different perspectives. Also, they can search to learn about a topic or a group of people that they have not come across before. The goal is to transform their thinking and look at knowledge or social groups as a source of knowledge. Education should be about learning about others not showing the superiority of one group over other groups. I conducted one of these research projects for one of my master's classes, and I found it an eye-opening experience on issues of domination in knowledge construction. So, it would be an insightful point to include in teacher education program to encourage pre-service teachers think deeply on how to teach English and what aspects to teach.

Implications for EFL teachers (classroom, curriculum, pedagogy)

I will be suggesting a number of recommendations for teachers focusing on three aspects such as: classroom, curriculum, and pedagogy.

Implications for the EFL classroom. In terms of the EFL classroom, the findings of this study suggested a number of factors for successful EFL learning. First, EFL teachers should provide a classroom atmosphere that stimulates learning and grow the team-work spirit in students and create a community of practice. In addition, they need to establish a power-free relation in the classroom addressing the following aspects: knowledge, classroom

dynamics, and student-teacher relation. Finally, EFL teachers must fulfill equity in dealing with students and resources distribution.

EFL teachers should encourage students to work in groups and be a part of a team. This can make the class more interesting to them since their Arab culture is known for being a collective culture. Arab and Muslim students are raised in communities where individuals should support their small families, and their extended families. So, stimulating them to work in teams and creating goals and missions in each of the teams will be something familiar to them. Starting a new academic year means establishing a new community that its members care about each other and have a goal that needs to be achieved. A teacher must clarify to students from the beginning that the problems they might face throughout the year should be declared in order to solve them and avoid any obstacle in students' learning.

In addition, one of the findings revealed that EFL teachers believed in establishing friendly and healthy relations in the EFL classroom where no one is superior to the other in order to obtain positive outcomes. I highly value having a friendly relation with students as it makes them love learning and become more eager to search for new information. I advise teachers to focus on their relation with students at the very beginning and before teaching the curriculum. Their relation should be tension free and the teacher-student relation should be equal in a number of aspects: knowledge, classroom dynamics, the student-teacher relation.

In terms of knowledge, the provided knowledge to students should address all of the students' cultures and social issues. Students need to feel that their cultural knowledge and experiences are appreciated, and they are not living in isolation from school. The school should not be perceived as something that is disconnected from their reality. Rather, they need to use school to address their problems and try collectively with their school community to suggest solutions. Their knowledge about first language and culture should be incorporated. Sometimes an EFL teacher, especially Arabic-English bilingual teachers such

as the research participants, have background knowledge on both cultures and languages. This knowledge should be perceived as an asset that can be used to familiarize students with the target language by showing them the similarities and the differences between the cultural and the linguistic aspects in both languages. Furthermore, it is noteworthy to mention that their culture is not portrayed as the one that is less important when showing differences between the students' culture and the target language culture. They should not place the English language in the center, but it should be presented as one of the cultures in the world that has its values. The first language should be presented as different and valued but not as different and inferior. The kinds of books and the provided materials also ought to include and acknowledge the effort of scholars from various cultures and not only western scholars. Some scholars' contributions need to be known to all generations in KSA such as the Arabs' and Muslims' influence in the field of science. Sometimes books acknowledge the scholars after the modern European civilization without mentioning the root that this culture based on to flourish. So, the teacher's role is to grow in students the sense of acknowledging other scholars' efforts.

Additionally, achieving equal power relation in the classroom dynamics is essential to make progress in the EFL classroom. However, the teacher can apply numerous strategies to reach an interactive classroom where all students have a sense of belonging. The classroom activities should be chosen based on students' needs and their level of proficiency. The teacher should evaluate her students on creating activities that are enjoyable and meaningful at the same time. I interviewed teachers who are teaching adult EFLs, and they clarified that the strategies with adult learners are different from children. Adults come to the classroom with a specific target which they need to achieve by the end of the year. Therefore, the classroom dynamic should be adult oriented. Respect also should be a priority; I mean by that respecting the students' opinions, desires, and cultural and racial backgrounds when selecting

classroom materials such as readings, media, assessment tools, and assignments. Students also must be given the opportunity to be involved in bringing knowledge to the classroom and teach other students about their culture. The classroom members can work together in constructing classroom knowledge. Teachers might say that they do not have the freedom to choose the textbooks or the kind of curriculum for their students; thus, they cannot get their students to be involved in constructing classroom knowledge. Actually, I would argue against that because teachers can create classroom activities and make textbook topics related somehow to their students. The students are educated in their first language, Arabic, which is something that they can use to produce ideas in English. Students' culture sometimes has some cultural differences and that does not prevent them from sharing those ideas in their second language and express themselves and their relation to other cultures.

According to the data, EFL teachers encouraged the informality in student-teacher relation especially Ibtihal and Rema. I think it's time to change the traditional way of perceiving students as passive recipients of knowledge. Students need to feel connected to their educator and deal with each other on equal terms. For example, the beginner level students need to communicate with their teacher and ask her about things they do not comprehend in the target language. Having a formal relation and being a strict teacher can make students lose the chance to have informal conversations. They might feel shy and uncomfortable to share their stories when they cannot relate to the lesson. In my opinion and from my teaching experience, students usually suggest more topics and present aspects of their lives whenever they have a strong bond with their teacher. The students usually talk about funny incidents that happened to them and their happy and sad moments. For example, my students were not shy to present something from their family lives, and they were not afraid to make mistakes because they did not feel that I was their superior. I was a person who was always there to help them. Therefore, I strongly suggest EFL teachers be more

informal with their students. They need to treat their students with humility and they should have a friendly relation with them.

Applying equity is important in teaching. I do not mean by that only providing all of the students with the same resources. Rather, equity is accomplished when every learner gets their needs addressed. An EFL teacher knows her students the best and can decide the kind of help they might need. So, providing books and recourses to all of them is not sufficient as some students lack guidance in areas where they need help. The teacher should not do extra teaching to help students, but could direct them to use certain websites, books, and visit the student support centers where they can strengthen their skills in a specific area. For example, language centers abroad provide conversation partners that ESL students can meet outside the classroom to improve their speaking skills. Truly, I hope we can apply this idea in EFL programs in Saudi Arabia where our students can have conversations with English speakers. I think meeting digitally would be more convenient to Saudi girls because in the Saudi culture meeting stranger males is not accepted by the families. However, they can meet with English-speaking girls in person in case they both live in the same area, or they can meet digitally to practice the language and learn new cultures. In the past and when the conservative culture was controlling KSA in all knowledge aspects, there was a famous proverb about learning the English language. The proverb states that: “whoever learns a people’s language will be safe from their plot.” People used to refuse whatever came from West including the language, except learning it to be protected from the enemies. I would say, we should teach students that learning a language is a tool to get connected to people in the world and correct the misunderstandings and the misconceptions instead of dealing with each other as opponents. We meet with other people from different cultures to construct relations as human beings and not to compete for domination.

Implication for Curriculum. Curriculum is an inclusive concept that includes not only the textbook, but also any plan which teachers follow to achieve the designed objectives. I suggest not providing a fixed plan of teaching that teachers conduct in their EFL classes. Rather, they should be given a space where they can add resources that suit their students' age, culture, geographical location, and English proficiency level. The teachers know better what interests their students as they interact with them on a daily basis. Therefore, teachers should be given freedom to add to their classroom what they think would enrich their students' knowledge and make them more engaged.

The curriculum should be culture based. Students need to learn about the world and what is happening in other countries and cultures. Simultaneously, they need to study knowledge that benefits them in their everyday lives such as when interacting with people from other cultures. These students will not be able to explain aspects of their culture if they have not studied how to explain it to others in English. So, there is a need to emphasize a culturally relevant curriculum. When teachers implement culturally relevant materials, they do not only teach the aspect of cultural appreciation, but they also construct the students' identity to find their place in regard to other cultures. When students know about who they are, they participate in providing more knowledge and resources to their classroom.

I suggest teachers think and search deeply about the purpose of their teaching materials before including any materials in their classrooms such as books, articles, or websites. This includes understanding the point of view of the authors and having knowledge about what they support and what they disagree with. From my personal teaching experience, I have noticed that Saudi students usually take knowledge in books for granted. Thus, going through the previous processes is important in determining what to include, what to exclude from the books, and what values to teach to students. The purpose of having this inclusive

picture on the curriculum is to assure that no student or a group of students feels less valued to other peers.

Implications for teaching pedagogy. The EFL classroom should be interactive, and students need to practice the language as much as they can in the four skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). Hence, it is the teachers' role to provide engaging activities to make full use of the class time. In addition, EFL teachers should create activities using scaffolding to elevate students to a higher level of learning. This can be achieved when mixing students from different English proficiency levels. The teacher can be part of the group as well by interacting with students and be close to them to understand their needs and support them in the area they need help with. So, taking students from one level to a higher level can occur when providing the necessary tools or what is called mediations (Vygotsky, 1978). Those mediations can include showing videos, creating handouts, or inviting guest speakers. Any unique classroom experience that reaches a students' level of understanding can be an efficient learning opportunity.

Further, students and teachers need to be critical thinkers, and they can reach to a such level when given opportunities to do so. In this regard, the teacher's role is not merely teaching her students aspects of reading and writing. Rather, s/he should enlighten her students to understand their reality and what is repressive to them. This can be accomplished through employing critical literacy in the EFL classroom. Teachers can guide their students through understanding the purpose of obtaining knowledge and how to value themselves and their culture. They should learn how to question knowledge and accept what is only convincing to them. It is the teacher's role to incorporate critical literacy pedagogy in her classroom activities and familiarize her students with this kind of thinking. They need to adopt an ideology as a stand point where they can utilize it to encounter ideologies that marginalize them.

To implement critical literacy pedagogy, the teacher ought to avoid using *banking education* (Freire, 1970) and strive to use *the problem-solving education* (Freire, 1970) instead. In banking education, the teacher selects the teaching materials objectively and the students' role is to receive knowledge without thinking critically about it. The classroom materials are enforced on students as the necessary knowledge to learn regardless if this knowledge values their culture or not. As a result, students learn some aspects at school that portray their cultural knowledge with ignorance. Those recourses limit "the other culture" to historical events or traditional occasions and the European culture as the culture of modernity, technology, and education. The base of teaching is the cultural differences that represents the non-dominant culture as different and unequal to the dominant one.

On the other hand, using *problem-solving education* (Freire, 1970) manifests stimulating all of the EFL learners to think and question the knowledge given to them. They not only question knowledge, but also, they add to it some aspects that the teachers missed unintentionally. Of course, teachers are not always informed about all of the cultures or the kind of life people confront on a daily basis. Therefore, having students involved in sharing their point of views can add to the knowledge gained by the whole class. So, EFL teachers must make it clear that each student can participate and question the knowledge such as content, pictures, authors, or assessment tools. Critical literacy is not a teaching method that is restricted to the scientific subjects. Rather, it is a teaching method that can be employed in social science and humanities. Students are facing issues, problems, and ideologies in their everyday lives that can be included and interrogated in any aspects of curriculum. Thus, promoting awareness on how to question knowledge starts from the classroom with a critical thinker teacher.

Learning the English language should not be used to weaken students or legitimize some acts in education that are against them. We have seen how some schools in the US use

English language proficiency as a measure for intelligence to determine children's future since elementary school (Feinberg & Slots, 2009). In reality, these students are victims of the educational policies that look at students from the defect orientation. However, policymakers classify them as second language learners who are placed in classes that do not prepare them to compete with native speakers of English. Thus, those students end up joining the second market jobs. So, in order to avoid what has already happened in the US in KSA education, the EFL teacher should be aware of those facts and what is happening in the world. Using the language to determine students' future in Saudi Arabia should be discussed as a controversial issue and find solutions to it in education. There must be one of two solutions: either to consider Arabic as a language of education in the Saudi universities in courses other than English, or designing efficient English language programs that support all of the students starting from elementary school. According to the data of this study, numerous students might get lost when enrolling in college. They face difficulties not in understanding the knowledge or the concepts, but due to the challenges in EFL classes.

Implications for EFL Students

According to the findings, EFL teachers encouraged EFL students' autonomy. However, there is an important condition for student autonomy, which is making sure that the learners have the needed recourses such as technology and books. Also, these students need to have their basic needs fulfilled such as being sheltered and well fed; otherwise, the school should help in providing a safe environment for those students.

When students have all of their basic needs and the necessary recourses fulfilled, they can benefit from them to enrich their knowledge about the English language and culture. There are some ways that they can be followed to be independent learners. First, asking the teacher to provide authentic resources or learning strategies since some teachers, especially the bilingual ones, have been through the experience in learning a second language. Some

participants, such as Rema, narrated her strategies on how she learned to speak in English. Second, EFL students should increase their self-confidence by not being shy of making mistakes. Making mistakes and realizing them leads to have a successful learning experience. Third, take full advantage of technology and social media. Interacting with people in English is no longer an obstacle. University campuses in KSA provide free Wi-Fi to their students. They can use the free time they have to learn English. In addition, each university campus has a physical and a digital library that they can utilize to search books, articles, and get free access to journals. So, EFL students can utilize the available resources to increase their autonomy and fluency outside the EFL classroom.

In addition to being independent learners, I recommend EFL students be critical thinkers. Learning English is the second language that students learn in KSA. They should think critically when they study the language and take what suits their culture. In addition, it is crucial to them to think of their actions and negotiate their identities. They must think of their place in the world in relation to other cultures and languages. It is their duty to refuse any aspect that marginalizes their own mother tongue or the Arabic or the Islamic heritage. They should also correct the misconceptions about their culture that people from different cultures internalized when interacting with them. For example, during my study journey in the US, I met different people from different backgrounds: colleagues, neighbors, and professors. They have been always eager to learn about me as a Muslim woman such as my decent clothing or the reason Muslims practice some rituals. I felt it was my responsibility to provide them reliable information that is different from what they hear from different unauthentic sources.

In terms of reading books to learn English, I advise EFL students to search the writer's intellectual background before taking the presented knowledge for granted. They need to distinguish between authors who are more supportive and knowledgeable about other

cultures and authors that their writings are full of misconceptions and have a shallow understanding to cultures that are different from them. So, it is significant to understand the point of view of the writer and try to argue against it if they read false claims about their heritage. If they need help in that, they can ask their teachers. They need to learn not only to read the words, but also to read the world (Freire, 1970). Learning language is not merely mastering vocabulary or grammar, but it should be keen on understanding the whole context.

Students need to remember that education is for everyone and no race, class, or ethnicity is better than the other. They need to ask for their rights and speak up when they see unjust acts. In this way, they benefit themselves and the next generation as well. As females, it is important to consider the new reform that supports women's rights in KSA and work towards having them for their interests. As Saudi females, they must believe in their capability and prove to those who think of them as weak that they are strong and worthy of holding high positions.

Implications for EFL students' families

EFL students' families play a big role in EFL students' education. The findings showed that EFL teachers thought that families now in KSA have become more supportive to their daughters' education. I would highly encourage families to keep developing this path to have educated females and who can then educate society and the nation. English language education is considered one of the means to blend in the job market and to be independent in KSA. So, families need to be aware of this fact and they should help their children to get an effective EFL education. Since it is an important criterion to study and get employed, the families need to look closely at this aspect and keep in contact with English teachers and the school administration when they feel their children are not progressing in this subject. It is important to pay attention to this point at a young age to prevent their children from facing problems when it is late to resolve them.

On the other hand, parents and family members' role in keeping the EFL students' cultural and linguistic identity is significantly important. Therefore, parents should show their children that it is essential to learn their first language and give it a priority over learning new languages. Their Arabic and Islamic culture must be valued, respected, and acknowledged so they grow up with considering these values.

In conclusion, if the whole system is based on English, there is a need to inform parents, teachers, and policymakers about the importance of keeping students' first language and use bilingualism in education positively and for societal interests. Also, there is a need to have well prepared English teachers who are aware of issues of English language domination in education and try to prioritize students' interests. English should be taught as an additive language, but not as a second language that reproduces the society structure and inequalities.

Limitations

The results of this study cannot be generalized to another population as it is the case with using single case study research design. My aim was having a profound understanding of EFL teachers' beliefs and practices in a particular context (Saudi Arabia, Eastern Province) and time (2019-2020) rather than generalizing the results to a larger population.

A second limitation of this study is not having access to those teachers' classrooms since it was hard to get the approval for classroom observation from people in authority. They want to keep their students at ease and avoid exposing them to stress when having an external observer. Also, the EFL teachers work in different places and some of them in remote areas, which renders reaching those classrooms challenging. In this regard, more studies need to be conducted in the future by observing teachers in the field.

In addition, I tried to have a variety of teachers in terms of cultural and educational background. However, the results might not be applicable to other groups of EFL teachers who lived in different contexts, and had unlike experiences. In spite of not being able to

represent teachers from all regions in Saudi Arabia, this gap merits future research. In this case study, I included participants who were willing to participate voluntarily; thus, participants with different perspectives may have been overlooked unintentionally.

Further, people's beliefs change over time. Thus, the findings are applicable for here and now and might be not applicable later. Therefore, a follow up study is needed in future to investigate teachers' beliefs.

Further Research

This research project investigated six EFL Saudi female teachers who experienced teaching EFL college students in KSA, Eastern Province. A future study could expand the research to look at similar populations, which can increase our understanding of the EFL teaching context in KSA and the issues that might emerge in EFL education. Also, a study that focuses on more diverse populations in other areas of KSA is recommended, which leads to have a variety of perspectives especially when including more conservative or liberal areas other than the Eastern Province.

This study aimed to explore the EFL teachers' beliefs to understand how the English language has been perceived and utilized in educational spheres and the ideologies that might influence EFL teachers' views. However, future researchers can expand beyond the participant groups to directly include EFL students' perspectives in a study as they are the recipient of that knowledge, and who are affected directly by the cultural and linguistic changes.

As mentioned earlier, the 2030 vision as a new ideology in KSA causes rapid and dramatic changes in all sectors especially in women's work and education. I have included in this study the changes that took place until the data collection. So, future research needs to be conducted in order to connect future reforms with EFL teachers' beliefs, their teaching practices, and ideology.

Males and females nowadays in KSA are counterparts and they have been through the educational and cultural changes in KSA. They are part of the educational system and their perspective is important on EFL education in light of the new vision of KSA. For example, a comparative study on EFL female only and EFL male only teachers' beliefs can be conducted to include EFL males' viewpoints on EFL education in relation to some ideologies. However, especially face-to-face interviews between males and females, which is something to be considered.

EFL teachers' beliefs on teaching have been presented by interviewing them and collecting the autobiographies they wrote. However, in the future we want to see the teaching practices in context. Therefore, classroom observations would enrich our understanding to the Saudi EFL teaching context.

Conclusion

This study aimed at exploring Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs on English and EFL college level education in Eastern Province, KSA. My goal was to understand how the spread of the English language educational ideologies impacted education and employment in KSA from the educators' viewpoint. I chose to include EFL female teachers as there is a dearth of studies that present Saudi female voices qualitatively using critical lenses, and particularly in the Eastern Province, KSA. Open-ended question interviews and autobiography writing were the data collection methods. Thematic analysis has been used to analyze the data, and *critical harmonics* is the interpretation method. Aspects from critical theory are what guided this research: Social reproduction theory, Ideology, theory of resistance, and Freire's three levels of consciousness. By analyzing the EFL teachers' beliefs, this study has shown that the English language hegemony as an outsider ideology and the 2030 vision as an insider ideology were what guided EFL teachers' beliefs on EFL teaching practices. Deficit-based perspective on Arabic language and culture is a concept that emerged from analyzing the data

in this study as a result of English language hegemony in KSA. It has been considered as an important language in social mobility, understanding the world and being part of it, and an indication of social class and education level. Further, the results indicate that student-centered education has been perceived by teachers as an effective EFL teaching method that prioritizes students' interests and involvement in Eastern Province, KSA. Additionally, the data revealed that EFL teachers' beliefs and practices indicate that they were not fully aware of ideologies that connect English language teaching with issues of power, domination, or linguistic imperialism.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Autobiography writing protocol

At the first meeting with the teachers about the autobiography writing, I will ask the teachers if they are feeling comfortable to share their autobiographies and include stories or incidents from their EFL teaching experiences. Also, I will clarify to them that their explanations of the incidents and their influence on them are valuable to me. I will distribute documents to them after obtaining their approval and keep them with them for five weeks. Then I will collect the documents when meeting with each teacher for the second interview. Also, they can submit the autobiographies by email. However, I will make it clear to the teachers that this process should not stress them and will take about 120-240 minutes of their time. I will ask each teacher to write 3 -5 pages autobiography (in a language they prefer Arabic or English) about her previous experiences in EFL teaching including some stories or incidents about her EFL teaching and how these stories have influenced who she is today. The autobiographies will be prompted so that the provided responses would help to answer the research question. For this, EFL teachers can use the following prompts when writing their autobiographies:

General Prompt: What have been the major experiences in your career that have helped you be the EFL teacher that you are today? How have those experiences impacted your current and future EFL teaching vision and goals?

Supporting prompts: Use some of the prompts below to write about your perspectives and experiences in teaching EFL.

- a) A moment when you felt empowered as an EFL educator.
- b) An academic and non-academic support you had provided to your EFL students, and how did you feel about it?
- c) A moment when you felt weak or powerless as an EFL teacher.
- d) An incident that made you happy about your EFL teaching.
- e) A moment when you felt disappointed as an EFL teacher.
- f) An important change you made in the curriculum, or your EFL teaching methods.
- g) Have you realized that you need to add or change some assigned activities or practices to enhance your classroom learning? Explain.
- i) What is your teaching vision before 2030, what is your teaching vision after it?

After collecting and reading the autobiographies closely, a third interview will be conducted if needed when I need more clarification to some points in the interviews or the

autobiographies. It will aid me to ensure that I gave accurate interpretation to the participants' words and thoughts. If I have a participant who does not prefer to be interviewed for member checking, I will send my inquiries via email.

Appendix 2: The Interviews Protocol

I will be conducting two face to face interviews, and a third optional interview. The first and second and will be approximately 60-90 minutes long. The third interview length will be based on the points that need clarification and it will be no more than 60 minutes. The interviews' length aligns with the interview questions that I have designed. They will be conducted in a language that the participants prefer (English or Arabic). The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed. However, if in person interview with any of the participants is not possible, I will use other technologies such as phone, Skype, or any other venue that the participants prefer. Personally, I prefer face-to-face interviews as a data collection method to observe the participants' facial expressions and non-verbal language that have some meaning in my language and culture.

The first interview

In the first interview, I will use *open questions* (Flick, 2014) because they are unrestricted and give more freedom to teachers to speak about their EFL teaching experiences. I will ask teachers some questions related to their beliefs about English language teaching in Saudi Arabia. The goal is to learn the way that experience have influenced their understanding of the EFL teaching practices, their attitudes with students, their beliefs about English language and culture, and their self-awareness about their own beliefs. Furthermore, the changes in Saudi Arabia related women's status and education will be discussed. At the end of that interview, I will thank them and ask them if they could meet one month after the first interview and bring with them some educational materials that I will explain in detail later (interview 1 questions in Appendix A)

- Interview 1 questions.**
1. Why and how did you become an EFL teacher? What are the challenges you have faced?
 2. Do you think it is important to teach and learn about the culture of English-speaking countries? If so, why yes or why not?
 3. What information sources do you use to learn and teach about English-speaking countries cultures?
 4. In your opinion, what are the characteristics of a good EFL student?
 5. What are the factors that might impact students' performance and achievements?

6. What do you think is the status of the English language in Saudi Arabia? Why?
7. What are the values would you enhance or change through your teaching to EFL students?
8. What do you think your role is as a Saudi EFL female teacher?
9. Describe your relationship with your students in the classroom. Why is it so, do you think?
10. What do you think about the new changes in the Saudi society regarding (2030 vision) such as allowing women to drive, establishing movie theaters, changing the dress code in universities?
11. How do you think the Saudi 2030 vision would influence your EFL teaching?

The second interview

One month after the first interview, I will conduct a second interview to give myself some time to transcribe and understand what the participants have said deeply. I will contact the participants before the second interview takes place and remind them to bring some of their students' work samples from previous teaching experiences, textbooks they taught or would like to teach, or any other document or materials such as their lesson plans, videos they usually utilize with their students in the EFL classroom. Also, in that day I will collect the autobiographies written by them. The second interview will provide me with a greater insight about how teachers' beliefs impact the selection of the implemented teaching practices and the EFL teaching methods. For this, during the second interview I will ask them to talk with me some teaching materials that they select to make me learn more about how they view EFL teaching. (Interview 2 questions in Appendix A)

- Interview 2 questions.***
1. Why are you sharing those materials with me? Could you please tell me more about them?
 2. Why are they important to you?
 3. What are the objectives you want students to achieve while using these materials?
 4. What are you going to do if a student found the material you are using not useful or does not support her/his learning?
 5. What activities will you develop using those materials?
 6. What EFL teaching methods do you use when teaching reading, writing, listening, and speaking?

Appendix 3: Consent to Participate in Research

TITLE: Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs about EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia.

Name: Eman Bosaad, PhD Candidate at the University of New Mexico.

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Purpose of the research: You are being asked to participate in a research study that is conducted by Eman Bosaad, PhD candidate and Dr. Carlos LópezLeiva in the LLSS Department. This qualitative single case study aims to investigate Saudi EFL female teachers' beliefs about English and EFL teaching (e.g., curriculum, pedagogies, classroom activities). I will focus on how those beliefs affect Saudi EFL female teachers' understanding of EFL educational practices. Learning about Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs might be informative to help us understand the way teachers perceive English language education and what need to be done with those teachers to develop and enhance EFL education in Saudi Arabia that benefit both teachers and students.

This study utilizes Qualitative case study as a methodology to explore the main research question. The used qualitative data collection methods are: interviews, and autobiographies. Purposeful sampling is important for this research study. You are being asked to take part in this study because you fulfill the criteria mentioned above and you are an adult teacher. This form will explain what to expect when joining the research, as well as the possible risks and benefits of participation. If you have any questions, please ask the presenter of this research study.

What you will do in this study: In this study the total number of participants is six (you as well as five other EFL teachers) who will participate in personal interviews and write an autobiography about your EFL teaching experience as data collection methods. There will be two interviews, one optional third interview, and a meeting three months after the interviews to discuss the results. Before the meeting, I will explain the study and let you sign the consent form. The first meeting is to clarify how to do your educational autobiography. Then we will meet for two personal interviews (60-90 minutes each) and they will be in a place where you feel comfortable. A third interview might be conducted in case I need more clarification about points you have talked about in your previous interviews or your autobiography. You will not be interviewed for the autobiography, but it will be a homework that you will write yourself. It will take from you approximately 120-240 minutes and you will be asked to include some stories from your own EFL teaching experience that you can write it in Arabic or in English. All of the interviews will be audio-recorded. The total time you will spend for this research within a three-month period is a total of 8 hours.

- We will have a meeting to explain the way of writing your EFL teaching autobiography, and you will receive a digital, or hard copy document to write your autobiography.
- You will hand in the hand written or typed autobiography five weeks after you receive it to me in person when meeting for the second interview or by email.
- You will choose a quiet place where you feel comfortable, for us to meet for the interviews.

- When we meet for the first interview, you will be asked to express your thoughts freely about your EFL experience by responding to the questions set by the researcher.
- When meeting for the second interview, you will share some of your students' work, books, or contents you like or dislike to teach, sample of your lesson plan, some visuals.
- We might have a third interview 30-45 days after collecting the autobiographies and the two interviews. The goal is to clarify some points that I need explanation for, and to ensure having accurate interpretation to what you have mentioned in the interviews and the written autobiography. If you do not prefer to be interviewed for that, we can exchange emails.

Funding Sources

This research is not funded.

Risks or discomfort to subjects

This research project will not cause to you any psychological, physical, social, economic, or legal risks. You might feel stressed at the beginning by being observed or being under the focus, but the interview will be in a friendly setting and for the benefit of the EFL education in Saudi Arabia. I will ensure that the information given by you will not be recognized as risky information, or a reason of a legal act. Moreover, you can skip any question when you are not feeling comfortable to answer. In addition, due to your family responsibilities, or long working hours, I will give you the control to choose the appropriate time and setting that is convenient to you and fulfill the research criteria.

Usage of data and Protection and confidentiality of the proposal records

If you allow me to audio record you during the interview, I will transfer them from the recorder to my password-secured laptop at my earliest convenience after finishing the interview. After that, I will transcribe them and delete recordings after I finish the transcribing. The consent forms and the journals will be kept in a locked cabinet in my house to use them during the data analysis, and I will be the only person who has access to them. In addition, identifiers are stored separately from consent forms as well as project data. I will be the only person who knows the computer password and I will shut it down when I do not use it. When the research finishes, all the documents will be destroyed. To protect your privacy, your real name will not be declared. Rather, I will only use pseudonyms in this research. I will use numbers, such as participant 1, participant 2, to code the data, and then I will use fake names (pseudonyms) to maintain the anonymity.

Best measures to protect the security of all your personal information will be taken, but full confidentiality for all study data may not be guaranteed. The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (IRB) that oversees human subject research may be permitted to access your records. Your name will not be used in any published reports about this study. Also, your information collected for this project will NOT be used or shared for future research, even if we remove the identifiable information e.g. your name, email...etc. At the end of the study, a third interview will be conducted for member checking (if needed) where the participants could share and discuss with me my interpretation to the data. Also, at the end of the study, I will have an informal meeting with the study subjects who are interested in knowing the study results. The dissertation and the data will be accessible through the UNM library. In addition, the data might be published in future after finishing the dissertation as journal articles, or a book chapter.

Right to withdraw from the study: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any point in this study without penalty especially when the responses you are given might put you under a risk. There are a number of aspects that are considered risky in the Saudi community, such as when your responses to the interview questions or the journal prompts might result in any political, national, social, or religious conflicts according to the Saudi common traditions and the country's law. Also, the information is deemed risky when they lead to an investigation, a legal action, or recognizing your real identity. In case you decide to withdraw from the study, your digital and hard copy data will be destroyed immediately from all the folders.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research study, please contact: Eman Bosaad, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. ebosaad@unm.edu or Dr. Carlos LópezLeiva, Hokona Hall 292, (505) 277-7260, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131. callopez@unm.edu

If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team or have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the IRB. The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving people:
UNM Office of the IRB MSC02 1665 1805 Sigma Chi NE Albuquerque, NM, (505) 277-2644, irbmaincampus@unm.edu. Website: <http://irb.unm.edu>

Consent to take part in research

- I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in: dissertation, conference presentation, published papers, etc.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.
- By signing this consent form, I agree to participate in this study. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

Researcher's Name: Eman Bosaad
PhD Candidate
University of New Mexico
ebosaad@unm.edu Phone # 00966544665988

Signature of research participant

Signature of participant Date
 Signature of researcher
 I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher Date

Appendix 4: Timeframe of the data collection and the study

Data collection	Data source	Mode of interaction	Time
Autobiography writing	Documents will be distributed to the teachers in a meeting by the researcher at which they will write their EFL teaching autobiographies.	It is going to be a homework without the researcher's supervision.	I will keep it with them for five weeks and collect them when I meet with each of them for the second interview. It will take about 120-240 minutes from their time.
First interview	Audio recording of the conversation that will be transcribed afterwards.	Informal conversation about EFL teachers' beliefs	60-90 minutes
Second interview	Audio recording of the conversation that will be transcribed afterwards.	Informal conversation and sharing some educational materials The goal is to investigate how beliefs have impacted the EFL teachers' understandings of EFL teaching practices	60-90 minutes

Third interview (member checking) if needed.	Audio recording of the conversation that will be transcribed afterwards. Or Email exchange with the participants (if they could not meet)	Informal conversation asking about unclear points to me.	No more than 60 minutes.
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Data Collection.....December, 2019
 Data Analysis..... February, 2020
 Composing the Cases.....March, 2020
 Dissertation Defense..... March, 2021