

Running head: Saudi students' experiences learning English

Saudi Students' Experiences of Learning English
in English as a Foreign and Second Language Settings

By

Nagah Awad Alzahrani

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Mount Saint Vincent University

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

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Abstract

This study aims to shed light on the reasons that influence Saudi students' learning experiences, self-esteem, and attitudes in English language education in the EFL context as linked to their language proficiency. However, Saudi students' experiences differed in the ESL context, as the study's findings revealed. This study was conducted to understand the students' perspectives about their different language learning experiences in ESL and EFL settings. The participants in this study were ten students who had learned English in both EFL and ESL classrooms, which gave the study a clear understanding of the English language learning circumstances in both environments. A qualitative approach was used in this study to enable the researcher to discover the participants' English language learning experiences and to assist the researcher to learn extensively about those experiences. Moreover, the data analysis revealed that the students' experiences were influenced by certain factors in the EFL context. The data findings showed that the Saudi students' experiences in EFL differed from those in ESL in terms of their self-esteem, attitude. The students reported that each learning context contributed to their learning in a different manner. EFL contributed to their basic English to some extent, regardless of its accompanying negative factors; however, ESL contributed more effectively to their language acquisition, with positive factors that they found more relevant to their success in the language.

Keywords: Saudi students; EFL and ESL; attitude; motivation; performance; experiences.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The current study explores Saudi students' experience learning English in two contexts: English as a second language and English as a foreign language (EFL/ESL). The exploration includes their experiences, motivation, and performance. The focus was on their performance and enthusiasm in both learning settings, EFL and ESL. This chapter introduces five sections: the status and value of English in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, English language teaching in the kingdom, the rationale of the study, a brief description of the current study, and the purpose of this study.

Background

Status and value of English in Saudi Arabia. After the establishment of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, there was a realization of the importance of a common language to help the citizens to communicate with non-Arabic workers in the country (Alseghayer, 2005). The time at which English was introduced to the Saudi education system was not clear, since Saudi Arabia was not under the control of any English-speaking countries (Alseghayer, 2005). In fact, the Saudi government was keen to establish English in the educational system in order to enable citizens to have access to other nations' knowledge, particularly after oil was found in the country (Alseghayer, 2005). Moreover, the main goal beyond teaching English in Saudi Arabia was to equip students with an international language to enable them to access other nations' knowledge, science, and arts to participate in serving humanity, religion and their country (Al-Haq, 1996).

Generally, English has a major role in the public life of Saudis, as many private companies and stores in addition to some governmental sectors like ARAMCO, the famous oil Company and industrial factories are implementing mostly spoken English and some Arabic out of the necessity to use the language for communication (Elyas, 2008). One of the Saudi government radio stations and its second TV channel are in English as well, so it is obvious that English has value in Saudi Arabia (Elyas, 2008). Although Arabic is the official language in Saudi Arabia, English is used in the country in many situations: for instance, road signs and shop names in addition to printed materials in many places like banks, airports, travel organizations and post offices. However, not all Saudis are able to understand and speak the language; English is an extraordinary sign of the upper and upper middle classes, and educated families in the kingdom are keen to send their kids abroad to learn English language skills (Elyas, 2008).

Furthermore, English is a main component of Saudi education, since it is the first and only foreign language in Saudi public schools; however, English exposure in private schools is greater than in public schools because the students in private schools begin learning English from Grade One, and in some private institutions such as international schools, from the preschool level. These private institutions are all under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. English is the language of instruction in scientific departments (medicine, engineering, computing, etc.). The first English language department was established at King Saud University in 1957, and as a result the importance of English was noticeably increased as many tertiary institutions and universities established their own private English language centers for more intensive English for their students. Importantly, English is seen as a significant means to engage in non-threatening Western knowledge, skills, and culture in order to participate in international developments (Al-Hazmi, 2015). In terms of public school education, English was originally

presented in Saudi public schools in Grade Seven and then, in 2005, the decision was made to teach the language in Grade Five and Six, and lately it was decided to teach the language from the fourth grade (Faruk, 2013). In brief, it seems that there is a realization of the importance of teaching English in Saudi schools; however, it is hard to say that English language exposure in Saudi schools is low in terms of proficiency levels and the students' achievements in pre- and post-secondary schools. Saudi English education still suffers from all the language features that result in low outcomes (Faruk, 2013).

English language teaching in Saudi Arabia. English is taught in the kingdom with minor importance given to learning it, although it was a compulsory subject from seven grades till university level in both private and public education. (Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). The Ministry of Education recently introduced English in the grade four, however, in order to gain more fruitful outcomes (Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). Despite the importance given to the language by the regulators, unfortunately some challenges are facing the English teaching and learning in Saudi Arabia; students leave high school with a poor proficiency in English, and they are not able to construct a full sentence in English even after a long time learning the language (Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). It seems important to highlight the principal issue in Saudi education that mainly causes difficulties in learning English in the EFL context, which is the teaching strategy that the English teachers adhere to Saudi schools and universities are still utilizing traditional pedagogy, and students do not have access to the new learning styles, such as critical thinking, problem-solving and discourse analysis. Education systems in Arab countries are still traditional in that they focus on memorization and repetition (Fareh, 2010).

Furthermore, teaching in some of the EFL contexts in Saudi Arabia is fully teacher-centered, where teachers dominate the whole class time and the students simply listen and follow

the rules (Fareh, 2010). The education process cannot be successful if the teachers do not deal with students as separate cases with different levels in terms of their abilities to learn the language (Fareh, 2010). Teachers in Saudi Arabia act in a “preacher-like” way, and as a result they reflect the traditional conduct of religious teaching in their teaching practices (Elyas & Picard, 2010). Hence, the students are evaluated by the way they memorize and their vocabulary and the format of their essays in pre-selected topics that the teachers provide, instead of giving the students the opportunity to use the language independently (Elyas & Picard, 2010).

It has been difficult to implement a fundamentally different pedagogy in teaching English, and the other subjects are still taught in a traditional way by primarily just teaching the content of the textbooks (Elyas & Picard, 2010). As well, English language teacher training in Saudi education is an issue, as some teachers lack adequate training in English linguistics. Sadly, the English teachers’ main goal is to enable the students to pass the exams because their teaching does not implement contemporary methodologies, which means their methods are outdated (Al-Nasser, 2015). Several researchers have provided deep analysis into the fact that English language teaching in the Arab world does not create the expected outcomes (Rababah, 2002). Indeed, teaching English is problematic not only in Saudi Arabia but also in the Arab world generally for reasons such as communications problems, lack of proficiency and awareness of the language grammar in addition to the learning settings and the teaching methods (Rababah, 2002).

Rationale

My justification in conducting this study is to investigate the attitude of Saudi students toward learning English, since it does not seem to clearly exist in the literature, or does not clearly determine from the students’ perspectives the reasons for their low performance in EFL classrooms. The situation in the Saudi English education is that students do not connect their

classroom learning to the real world, as they do not have the ability to use the language outside the classrooms (Siddiqui, 2014). They are not able to read street names, road signs, billboards, etc. In other words, they are not able to communicate easily, either inside or outside the classroom (Siddiqui, 2014). Additionally, the learning strategies that teachers and educators use to teach the language do contribute to the students' proficiency, as Saudi classrooms rely heavily on the rote style of teaching the language. It appears that the decision-makers in the Saudi education focus on the quantity of the subjects rather than the quality of learning and teaching the subject, which has resulted in poor outputs of English in EFL context there (Al-Hazmi, 2015). However, I believe that the students could succeed in learning English in different contexts in motivating learning environments where they find more encouragement and improved strategies for teaching and learning. Despite the importance of the language, it still needs plenty of effort and time to reform the objectives of teaching the language in Saudi Arabia. According to Al-Hazmi (2015), decision-makers do not pay attention to the format of English programs in Saudi schools, which means that the English language programs are not relevant to the social and practical concepts of learning a foreign language.

Therefore, this study will add to the existing literature by investigating Saudi students' attitudes toward learning English. In addition, it will help institutions that Saudis students attend to understand more about Saudi students' attitudes toward language learning.

Current Study

The previous studies have basically investigated learners' attitudes, whether in EFL or ESL contexts, but this study combines both learning settings and measures their attitudes throughout their experiences in these two different contexts.

The study utilizes a qualitative method in order to explore students' perspectives about their English language experiences, which gave the researchers adequate time to access the students' experiences. According to Snap and Spencer (2003), the goal of qualitative research is to guide the researcher to provide a detailed understanding of a specific phenomenon and its related experiences and circumstances. Qualitative methods are used when there is a need to understand a particular or complicated phenomenon (Snap & Spencer, 2003).

This study was conducted to highlight students' perspectives about their language learning experiences in two learning settings, how they performed, and finally, their motivations. Therefore, the interviews were done to obtain the whole experience of the students in both learning settings. The interviews enabled the researcher to discover some of the major issues the participants experienced in their English language learning in the EFL context.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my study is to shed light on the reasons behind Saudi students' differing experiences and performance in EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia and ESL classrooms in Canada. The study investigates those reasons and causes by using the students' experiences in the two learning environments. English is a major course required in both private and public schools in Saudi Arabia, and students, in general education, learn English from Grade Four until they graduate from high school. Still, some of them finish high school with extremely weak outcomes in terms of language outputs. However, since King Abdullah's program has been implemented, a lot of Saudi students have had opportunities to learn outside the kingdom, and this has brought to light a totally different reality about the ability of students to learn the English language. Outside the country, students are capable of acquiring the language in a shorter period of time and with better results. The low performance, low self-esteem, and low motivation in domestic classrooms

might be results of something relevant to the learning environment or the teaching methodologies. I believe that this study could act as a contribution to understanding the reasons behind the low EFL performance in classrooms in Saudi Arabia.

In my study, the researcher addressed two main questions:

1. What are Saudi students' experiences in learning English in Saudi Arabia and abroad?
2. What are Saudi students' challenges in their English language learning in EFL contexts?

Thesis Overview

This thesis consists of six chapters which describe the content of the research. Each chapter begins with a brief overview of the chapter content. In Chapter One, I give an introduction of the topic and described the content of the study. Then, Chapter Two reviews the previous studies in the field that are relevant to the topic. Chapter Three focuses on the methods I employed to conduct my study, including the study design, the participant sample, data collection, and data analysis, and then in Chapter Four I provide the current study's findings and results and the interpretation of the findings. Chapter Five contains the discussion of the study's findings, and Chapter Six suggests the future implications for English education in Saudi Arabia in addition to the study's limitations and the general conclusions of the study.

In the next chapter, Chapter Two, I will review the previous literature and explore what has been discovered in that literature as it pertains to my study.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This review of the literature explores the English language experience of students who had learned in both second language and foreign language programs, in terms of their experience, attitude, self-esteem and correlation to the learning environment. This chapter contains a major review of the previous studies. Then, the examination of the previous studies related to the findings of the current study demonstrates the contribution of the findings to the FL/SL field through attempting to highlight the major concepts in Saudi students' English language learning.

Students' Attitudes toward Learning English

Researchers in the field of students' attitudes toward learning reported that a student's attitude toward learning English is a fundamental component in learning the language and should be integrated into the teaching pedagogy as well. The experts also attempted to note students' attitudes and their performance in language learning, although the researchers found it hard to distinguish the right attitude toward learning to ensure the learning process occurs properly and efficiently (Nair et al., 2014). Additionally, students' ability in learning the English language as a second language or foreign language might be influenced by the learners' attitudes in terms of their overall belief toward the language, and thus, in this case, teachers should acknowledge that students display both positive and negative attitudes, and that negative attitudes can be converted to positive ones by adding additional strategies that contribute to the students learning (Abu-melhim & Abdel-rahman, 2009).

Attitude tends to include three components: the first component is the intellectual, which includes the learners' beliefs about the language, or the circumstances associated with the language; the second element of attitude is the evaluation component; and finally, the behavioural component (Karahana, 2007). Furthermore, the role of attitude in English language learning is related to the type of attitude that students have, whether positive or negative, and its relationship to enhancing learning. Bnasker and Soundiraray (2013) also mentioned that L2 proficiency is influenced by the type of attitude the learners display. The learner's achievements and accomplishments in the language can be dominated by the learners' attitudes. Therefore, fears, feelings, and prejudgments typically affect the learners' attitudes toward learning English, and in addition, the learners' attitudes, skills, and strategies determine whether the students can assimilate the complexities of the language or not (Dehbozorgi & Elham, 2012).

Chalak (2010) believed that students' attitudes toward a specific language can be positive or negative and that each attitude arises for different reasons, so when the learners show a negative attitude and want to learn the language, they need to learn to adapt to people in the L2 community; however, a positive attitude is likely developed through learners' previous experiences. Likewise, a study conducted by Ghavamnia and Ketabi (2013) utilized semi-structured interview with 20 students to show silence as a type of students' attitude in English language classes in Iran. They found that Iranian students displayed silence in English language classrooms as a learning attitude toward the English language; they also added that Japanese students showed similar attitudes toward English. The reason behind the Japanese attitude was to save face; however, this attitude might be interpreted negatively in the learning context for the reason that silence in English classes is taken as "disinterest" toward the language. For instance, attitudes toward English were investigated among Saudi learners and it was found that the

students' attitudes were positive to some extent, and also the teachers and parents showed a positive attitude toward the English language (Malallah, 2010). Students who show a positive attitude toward learning English are stimulated, whereas those who display negative attitudes seem to be lacking autonomy in their learning (Tseng, 2013). An empirical study was conducted in Taiwan with 90 students to examine the correlation between their language proficiency level and their attitudes toward learning English; this study shows that Taiwanese students' attitude to English are correlated to their language proficiency (Tseng, 2013). Another study examined Filipino students' learning attitudes; a total of 473 students participated in a survey which revealed that age, gender and socio-economic status are the significant factors that affected their attitudes toward the English language (Sicam & Lucas, 2016). Additionally, English language teachers, students, and researchers should recognize that affirmative attitudes and motivation will facilitate language acquisition, but if the learners do not have an interest in the target language, the negative attitudes will result in low outcomes (Abidin, 2012).

Self-esteem and Learning the English Language

Self-esteem is defined as the judgment that a person makes about their efficacy and interactions in a given environment. This component can also be seen simply as the way that each person values his or herself. In other words, it is about the individual's self-perceived value in their surrounding environment (Asadifard & Biria, 2013). Self-esteem influences a person in their behaviours, relationships, and workplaces. Furthermore, positive self-esteem enriches a person's ability to be more confident toward their learning outcomes, and encourages them to take risks (Soureshjani & Naseri, 2011).

Moreover, researchers investigated whether self-esteem is associated with students' performance, and they found that all possible responses, whether positive, negative, or

insignificant, are all potential aspects to consider, but direct correlation is very complex since there is no direct association (Dornyei, 2005, p, 213). Furthermore, the importance of self-esteem might be relevant to individual thinking, feelings, and responses to aspects of life, as researchers have clarified that self-esteem is also linked to learners' psychological features: for example feelings of depression and hopelessness (Connor, Poyrazli, Wreder, & Grahame, 2004). On the other hand, researchers indicated that self-esteem might be influenced by additional factors regarding academic achievements in language learning contexts; for example, negative attitudes toward the school and teacher result in less motivation, being aimless, demotivating environments, and less satisfaction with the school (Nogueras, 1996). The correlation between self-esteem and students' achievements might not be the entire answer, as additional factors might influence learners' self-esteem; for instance, the cognitive ability of the learners. Therefore, self-esteem is a product of self-belief and might have an influence on the academic performance (Covington, 1989).

Unfortunately, low self-esteem is normal in second language situations. Usually, low self-esteem is recognized through a person's negative perspectives, fear of being rejected, and fear of risk-taking. There is no doubt that successfully learning another language necessitates self-esteem, self-confidence, and knowledge of one's capabilities (Asadifard & Biria, 2013). Many studies have focused on the correlation between learners' proficiency and their self-esteem. According to Holly (1987), self-esteem is about the outcomes that the learner gains rather than the reasons that make them pursue those achievements. One particular examination was done on a group of college students from America who were learning French as a foreign language, and the results found that their positive self-esteem was related to their high performance in oral examinations or assignments (Park & Lee, 2005). Liu (2012) posited that

students who have high level of self-esteem tend to be more creative and also more likely to show an active role in their social life.

Furthermore, Asadifard and Biria (2013) demonstrated the relationship between self-esteem and learning English; they identified that the association is based on people's perspectives about their success and that self-esteem was determined by certain aspects: for instance, anxiety, fear and self-esteem. This relationship distinguishes good English language learners from poor learners, as researchers have demonstrated that the motivation and self-esteem can strongly affect the academic process and academic outcomes. Klepfer (2015) emphasized that if learners do not have sufficient motivation and self-esteem, teachers and educators should be concerned; however, some of the implications should be considered as educational barriers in SL/FL particularly. Traditionally, self-esteem has been discussed as a significant educational implication, even though it has been considered an inadequate factor regarding self-belief and learners' accomplishments (Dornyei, 2005, p, 213).

Teachers' Roles and Students' Language Proficiency

Researchers have indicated that an English language teachers' role is more than simply teaching the language and being concerned about the subject matter; the researchers demonstrated that English teachers' roles extend to the students' needs and desires in the classroom. English language teachers' roles have been discussed repeatedly for many years, with researchers arguing that the teachers' role should not be limited just to classroom learning, and that they should be more supportive to the students (Yoon, 2008). Thus, English teachers are required to be personally qualified in addition to professionally qualified, and they should teach the learners how to use and benefit from the language, as a professional teacher's goal is to teach the students to practice the language in real-life settings (Gardner, 2001).

Regarding teachers' interpersonal behaviour with students, researchers have claimed that interpersonal behaviour determines the student-teacher relationship; they said that some teachers use the strategy of being friendly with their classes, while others prefer to keep a distance (Misbah, Gulikers, Maulana, & Mulder, 2015). In the educational research, the student-teacher relationship is called communication (Shefi, 2015). The student-teacher relationship indicates that teachers are responsible for the students' decisions as to whether to continue learning or not; teachers are also the main influence on the students' motivation in language classes (Shefi, 2015). Moreover, teachers' and students' relationships in language classrooms are directly associated with students' outcomes, as researchers have demonstrated that the connections between the students and teachers are linked to the students' perceptions about the teachers' feedback, communication, and classroom management (Noels, Clement, & Pelletier, 1999). English teachers' and students' connections are categorized as demotivated and so the students show rejections to learning. The behavior-outcome connections tend to be strongly related to the teachers' interpersonal behaviour in being friendly, tolerant and supportive, and are certainly related to students' learning outcomes (Goh & Fraser, 2000).

Some studies have demonstrated that teachers' behaviour consists of eight models. According to Goh and Fraser (2000), "... the model for interpersonal teacher behavior has eight sectors, each describing different facets of teacher behavior: Leadership (DC), Helping/Friendly (CD), Understanding (CS), Student Responsibility, Freedom (SC), Uncertain (SO), Dissatisfied (OS), Admonishing tor, and Strict (DO) behavior" (p. 219). Furthermore, Wei, Brok, and Zhon (2007) emphasized that students' perceptions about their teachers' behaviour were strongly connected to the students' achievements in the classroom. This study's findings revealed that Chinese teachers' interpersonal behaviour in terms of their dominance positively and negatively

influenced their students' achievements and outcomes. Additionally, they stated that ideal teachers should avoid being "strict" with their students, since negative interpersonal behavior can prevent student-teacher interactions.

Moreover, Davis (2003) claimed that the nature of a teacher-student relationship contributes to the students' development; the quality of the relationship can be influenced by the teachers if they lack sufficient knowledge in building the students' cognitive and social skills. In terms of teachers' efficacy and its impact on the students' achievements, previous studies in the field have debated that teachers' efficacy might govern the students' efficacy as well, so low teacher efficacy will certainly contribute to low achievements, whereas teachers' high efficacy contributed to the effectiveness of the teaching (Chacon, 2015). Furthermore, matching teaching styles with learning styles in EFL classes develops the students' attitudes and behaviours (Peacock, 2001). Again, students in language classes tend to learn more when knowledge is transformed in a variety of methods rather than adhering to one particular style (Felder & Henriques, 1995). The connection between students' involvement in the classroom and teacher behaviour is directly linked to the students' engagement in the learning process: in other words, students' understandings of their teachers' actual behavior (Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

Teaching English as a Foreign Language and Teaching English as a Second Language

Teaching a language, generally, is the process of guiding and facilitating the learning and giving the learner the opportunities to learn, and in addition, creating potential circumstances for learning (Brown, 1980). Brown added that teaching, according to the teaching theory, is an integration of understanding the learners and the subject material. Importantly, the language was misunderstood during the last century for the reason that English teachers' goal is to teach the language itself rather than teaching the students to practice the language, and as a consequence,

the learners were not able to use the language. According to Diller (1978), “The real goal of instructions was an ability to talk the language, and not to talk about the language” (p. 15). Diller (1978) reported that failure was not a definite outcome for foreign language learning, since there are individuals who can successfully become bilingual (p.1).

On the other hand, a foreign language is a language that is taught in school as part of the educational curriculum, which means that FL textbooks are published in the country of the learners; for instance, English is taught in Saudi Arabia with Saudi textbooks and guidelines (Deusen-Scholl & Hornberger, 2010). Another interesting point is that English is now taught all over the world so that its learners could have closer relationships with other nations. However, what makes English inaccessible for learners is that the pedagogy is not fully devoted to the class time (Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill, & Pincas, 1978, 1980). Duff and Polio (1999) discussed that some foreign language classrooms are completely different from second language classrooms because the students in foreign language settings lack the opportunity to access the culture and linguistic aspects of the language in the classrooms, and thus, students do not have sufficient contact with the language. In addition, they might not understand the teacher if only the target language is used, and also, students’ undesirable attitudes sometimes show that they want to learn the language simply to succeed on the language exams (Duff & Polio, 1999). Some scholars in the field have pointed out teachers’ efficacy as a significant feature in EFL classes; they stated that the quality of teacher training boosts the quality of learning, including in foreign language education (Alhazm, 2003). Taking the Chinese English as a foreign language case as an example, EFL teaching in China also showed some issues and challenges in teaching English, most of the language issues in Chinese schools were due to the lack of qualified teachers and the traditional teaching style (Keriang, 1986).

Likewise, a second language is a language that an individual learns in addition to their original language, and is the dominant language in the classroom. Second language emphasises the acquisition process more because the learning occurs both inside and outside the classroom, which gives the learning the feature of acquisition (Scholl & Hornberger, 2008). Teachers in second language classes have to be concerned about their students' needs as well as introducing a range of learning activities to practicing the language (Tsui, 2005). Additionally, an English as a second language teacher is recommended to be more familiar with the language patterns and improvements in social interactions among their students, and also be able to implement language pedagogy in the ESL classroom that will be effective for learners: for instance, implementing a communicative approach in teaching and interacting with people (Cummins, 1999).

On the other hand, what makes second language classes effective is the greater use of a communicative approach, which is the paramount opportunity for language learners to gain personal learning and enable them to use the language, since language learning is a synthesis of learners' behaviour, strategies, actions, and techniques (Oxford, Lavine, & Crookall, 1989). There has been a great emphasis on the importance of utilizing a communicative approach in English language classes as a necessity in learning the language (Spada, 2007). This approach mainly refers to the learners' ability to interact in the English language classes, as the main aim is to make sense of their distinctive abilities (Savignon, 2008). Moreover, with regard to EFL classes, a communicative approach was found to be difficult to be implement; however, at the same time the communicative approach tends to be effective in FL classes, as teachers' perspectives showed (Savignon & Wang, 2003).

In regard to ESL/EFL teachers, teachers are crucial in both programs, since they are the dominant element in teaching; however, there are still some arguments about English teachers' efficacy. Teachers in EFL classes, who are generally non-native speakers, are challenging for EFL learners because of their lack of language awareness. According to Alomarani (2008), non-native teachers are what Saudi students expect in EFL classes; however, when they study English abroad, they expect their teachers to be native speakers, but in fact, some English teachers in ESL programs are non-native, and that leads the Saudi students to question why English is being taught by non-native speakers in a native-speaking country (Alomrani, 2008). The same matter has been raised in Chinese English education in terms of non-native teachers, as the majority of Chinese teachers have not been outside of the country, so their language proficiency in terms of the socio linguistics and classrooms' interactions is lower than students' expectations (Rao, 2013). Moreover, English teaching in Saudi Arabia is about information transmission, as the classrooms are dominated by the teachers, and therefore, English and all other subjects are teacher-centered. Saudi English teachers are characterized as information presenters and material demonstrators rather than language facilitators, and adherence to this approach led learners in EFL classes to be intrinsically demotivated to learn English, as mainly they are not involved in the learning activities (Alseghayer, 2014a).

Interestingly, Nunan (1990) had a great idea when he said that teachers should do their own research to be more aware of the issues that they and their students might face in their language teaching path to gain a better understanding of their students' obstacles. Therefore, Saudi English regulators recommend the same idea to English teachers in Saudi education (Alseghayer, 2014b).

Learning Environments for Second and Foreign Language and Students' Achievement

According to the Merriam Webster online dictionary, "Learner's definition of environment is the conditions that surround someone or something; the conditions and influences that affect the growth, health, progress etc., of someone or something." Second/foreign language learning environments are places that make the outputs of language learning enjoyable and fruitful. A study conducted by Wu (2013) revealed that the learning environment has a direct relationship with the learner's intrinsic motivation. However, the relationship between the learning environment and motivation is complex. Strambi and Bouvet (2003) claimed that a language learning environment should give learners the opportunity to engage in class interaction and negotiation. Entwistle and Peterson (2004) argued that the educational learning environment is generally the place where learning is designed based on the students' preferences of a learning environment that makes them more comfortable.

Furthermore, the classroom environment is an important factor in education that contributes in many aspects, whether the contribution is direct to the learners' outputs or indirect to the learners' engagement in the classroom. The learning environment focuses on the nature of the classroom, and shows the classroom's psychological, social and academic aspects (Bi, 2015). In other words, the learning environment is an indicator of the students' motivation to learn generally, and particularly in SL/FL classrooms. Moreover, Wu (2003) emphasized the correlation between a learning environment's variables and learners' motivation: for instance; the teacher's communicative style, learning materials, and decision-making skills, and cooperative learning approach. On the other hand, some researchers have claimed that the learning environment is a sign of the quality of learning, as good relationships between the students and teachers create the educational learning environment. It has been emphasized that

the learners' awareness of the learning environment's nature and their intellectual abilities in a healthy climate contributes to success in learners' outcomes (Madu, 2010). The educational learning environment is a critical part of teaching and learning. Creating an active learning environment, in this case for English learning, requires a specific design to empower students to develop their language skills through developing their thinking skills.

Researchers have found that a language environment needs a special emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving to allow the learners to perform effectively (Grabinger & Dunlap, 1995). Moreover, Hannafin and Land (1997) demonstrated the importance of an effective learning environment on individual learners' goals, as the learning environment assists the students to be involved in many educational sources which enable them to have proper interactions with learning activities. Interestingly, Hannafin and Land (1997) added that the effectiveness of the learning environment is directly linked to class size, school type, subject issue, and grade level. A meaningful learning environment, as Fraser (1998) described it, is an intellectual source that helps students to make sense of their learning process. Making sense of a learning environment is based on the students' opinions and values of their learning context, which impacts their educational performance aspects, and also includes multiple goals and methods, and thus accordingly the learners' strategies to achieve the target language will be categorized as tools to achieve capability in the learning environment (Locastro, 1994).

Equally important, the relationship between the teacher and the learner is part of the classroom climate, even though the learning environment has its own characteristics and importance. Some researchers have strongly linked students' achievements and the learning environment, although they argued that the learning environment is more related to the learners' attitudes than the students' outcomes (Fraser & Walberg, 2005). They concluded that a positive

learning environment and positive student-teacher relationships can strongly ease students' self-restraint issues, particularly with new teachers (Fraser & Walberg, 2005). Interestingly, a lack of motivation and realistic practicing of the language are the main issues that contribute to poor learning outcomes in English language environments. On the other hand, a student-centered learning environment is the most effective climate, as the students stimulate themselves to use a variety of intensive learning methods in the TL classes (Baeten, Kyndt, Struyven, & Dochy, 2010). Most of all, the quality of the relationship between classroom members (students) is the most important feature in the learning environment, in addition to the learning and teaching value (Dornyei, 2007). In addition to the relationships between the class members, there is an indication of the importance of the learners' understandings of the academic learning environment as well as to their attitudes as a reaction to that environment (Entwistle & Tait, 1990).

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter reviewed the previous studies in the field related to my study topic. The main focus of this chapter was the role of the teachers in English language classrooms, the environment, and the students in terms of their motivation and self-esteem. The research concepts explored the students' motivations, attitudes towards learning English, self-esteem and their learning, and the second language and foreign language learning environments in regard to the students' achievements. Teachers' roles were looked at with regard to the students' language outcomes and motivation. Also explored were the concepts of the effectiveness of teaching English as a second language and as a foreign language as regards the differences between teaching English in the two settings in terms of classroom environments, English textbooks, teaching pedagogy, and the students' achievements

Theoretical Framework

The focus of my study is to shed light on Saudi students' experiences and performance in learning English in two learning environments: ESL and EFL. My study examines their learning by examining their experiences and the differences in their experiences, and also the factors that contribute to their learning in these two environments. Grounded theory (GT) is a well-known approach in qualitative research. Grounded theory gives the researcher more space to examine topics from different angles by doing new analysis for existing problems (Carbin & Strauss, 2015). This approach was discovered by Glaser and Strauss in 1967. In this method, the theory is grounded in the data.

By applying grounded theory to my study, I will use codes to categorize the phenomena as they are indicated in the data (Pandit, 1996). According to Carbin and Strauss (2015), in grounded theory the researcher does not have any presumptions about themes and concepts; basically, the data establishes the themes and codes through analysis (p. 15). The main focus in my research is to understand how Saudi students' performance changes between ESL and EFL classrooms and then bring it to the attention of English language educators to evaluate the findings and results.

In addition, one of the advantages of using grounded theory in research is the flexibility it has in terms of its inductive strategies of data collection and analysis (Smith, 2007). Grounded theory has a unique purpose of seeking to determine individual perspectives about a certain condition and its changing circumstances. Furthermore, Richards and Morse (2013) pointed out that grounded theory is the best method to understand changes over time. They added that this

method is used in studies that need more understanding in terms of individuals' experiences in that changes are possible and expected (Richards & Morse, 2013).

Grounded theory is described as practical method that is used to conduct studies that concentrate on the interpretation of data by using interpretive analysis. Selecting the grounded theory method allows the researcher to focus on the meanings and concepts of the data that are produced in the data collection stage. Furthermore, data collection in grounded theory derives from different sources, such as interviews, observations, etc. (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). In grounded theory there is a demand for descriptive knowledge. The researcher keeps the questions "what is going on?" and "how is it different?" in their inquiries. According to Suddaby (2006), two concepts are described in this method: "constant comparison," in which data are collected and analyzed simultaneously, and "theoretical sampling," in which decisions about which data should be collected next are determined by the theory that is being constructed.

My study is based on one of these two concepts. In contrast to theoretical sampling, constant comparison is less strict in terms of what kinds of concepts and codes will be selected, since it provides the researcher more space to focus on the collecting stage and then constructing the theory by selecting the emergent codes. So, selecting grounded theory as the theoretical framework for my study, I began constructing my analysis by comparing the selected concepts and themes in my data with each other, since grounded theory is about interaction with data and the themes and concepts emerging from it.

Researchers have pointed out an essential fact about grounded theory that GT is different from other research designs. Non-grounded theory research depends on a literature review, and then the hypotheses are derived from the previous research in the field. Then, the derived hypotheses are tested against empirical facts by experimentation. However, grounded theory

does not rely on hypotheses and experiments. GT searches for explicating concepts that are formed from the data (Allan, 2003). The supporters of GT have emphasized the advantage of selecting grounded theory; according to Allan (2003), "... real advantage of GT is that analysis starts as soon as data collection begins in the first interview, " and

[A]nalysis can start during the first interview if the researcher identifies concepts that are striking at that time. However, it is not sufficient simply to inspect data and label interesting points, the data have to be analysed in a systematic and rigorous manner to discover the concepts leading to the categories (Allan, 2003).

According to Babchuk (1996), analysis in grounded theory relies on the coding. There are three types of coding in grounded theory: open, axial, and selective. Researchers usually start with breaking down, analyzing, and then comparing and categorizing the data (Babchuk, 1996). My study is based on all these three coding types. I labeled and synthesized the codes by using constant comparison. The reason beyond using constant comparison is to obtain a general understanding of the data as a whole and then elicit the concepts and themes. On the other hand, according to Pandit (1996), grounded theory consists of three essential elements: concepts, categories, and propositions. Concepts are the main core of the element of analysis in grounded theory. Concepts in grounded theory have the role of conceptualizing the data. Also, categories and propositions have a role in grounded theory. Categories develop in the analysis stage of comparing the content to find the similarities and differences that are utilized to create the minor concepts. Connecting this to my study, all the emerging themes and categories will be developed (see Chapter 4), and I will read the data several times to find similarities and differences between the participants' responses.

Heath and Cowley (2004) emphasized that the researcher who uses grounded theory for their research will not rely on this type of method without any previous knowledge about the topic. However, the literature role will differ from other research designs. According to Heath and Cowley (2004), “Discovery at the heart of both researchers’ ideas; one enters the field open to realising new meaning and, via cycles of data gathering and analysis, progressively focuses on a core problem around which other factors will be integrated” (p. 143)

Chapter Three

Methodology

In this chapter, I will discuss the methodology and procedures that I used in my study; I will clarify why I used the qualitative method in my study. In addition, this chapter includes the purpose of the study, the research questions, the research design, the participants, the instruments, data collection, and data analysis.

Qualitative Approach

The reason for choosing the qualitative approach is to answer the research questions in my study, as qualitative study assists the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of unanticipated problems in the classroom. Sherman and Webb (1988) stated that qualitative research is about individuals' interactions in their social lives. In addition, qualitative research is a way to explore the meaning and experiences people have in their lives (Sherman & Webb, 1988). The qualitative method is an approach that explores and understands the meaning of individual descriptions of social or human issues. According to Sherman and Webb (1988), "Qualitative method implies a direct concern with an experience as it is 'lived' or 'felt' or 'undergone.'" Sherman and Webb (1988) further stated that qualitative research is about individuals' interactions in their social lives. In addition, qualitative research is about the meaning and experiences people have in their lives (Sherman & Webb, 1988). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008), qualitative research studies concepts based on their natural context by creating the sense of interpreting a specific phenomenon.

Participants

I recruited 10 adult Saudis for my study (see Table 1 for the participant information). Two language schools in Halifax were selected to recruit students from. It is not necessary to mention the language schools' names, since my study focused on the participants themselves, not which school they had enrolled in. I met the participants in the first school at their lunchtime and gave an overview of my study. All of them showed their interest in participating and signed the consent form; however, two of the participants did not show up on the day of the interview, so I dismissed their personal information and shredded their signed consent forms. I started the interviews with the remaining interviewees in October, 2015, and finished all the recruitment the same month. Table 1 lists the participants' information, including their ages, gender, EFL starting grades and ESL starting level.

Table 1

Participants' Key Information

| Participant's Name | Age | Gender | EFL Grade to Start | ESL Level to Start |
|--------------------|-------|--------|--------------------|--------------------|
| D | 20-25 | F | Grade 6 | Level 3/ 7 |
| F | 20-25 | F | Grade 6 | Level 6/7 |
| I | 30-35 | F | Grade 7 | Level B/6 |
| G | 20-25 | M | Grade 1 | Level 3/6 |
| B | 20-25 | F | Grade 1 | Level 2/3 |
| A | 20-25 | M | Grade 7 | Level 4/12 |
| H | 20-25 | M | Grade 7 | Level Basic/10 |
| C | 20-25 | F | Grade 1 | Level 2/6 |
| E | 25-30 | M | Grade 1 | Level Basic/6 |
| J | 20-25 | M | Grade 7 | Level 3/6 |

Instruments

Semi-structured interviews. Using semi-structured interviews in this study allowed me to provide a clearer understanding of the topic and does not cause concern about limiting data

output, as the main point in a semi-structured interview is giving the interviewees the freedom to share their experiences and stories. Using this kind of interview protocol enabled me as a researcher to gather different information, opinions, and insights from the participants (Shank & Brown, 2007). The interviews were conducted with 10 participants: five females and five males. This number of participants enabled me as a researcher to elicit sufficient information about their experiences in learning English in two learning environments, which led my analysis in figuring out their behaviour in the two learning environments.

The pre-prepared, semi-structured questions in this study were designed to discover the participants' own perspectives about their English language experiences in EFL and ESL classrooms. To answer my research questions, the main purpose was to elicit the participants' responses about the English language experiences that had contributed to their learning. I decided to use this protocol to enable me to explore the participants' insights, opinions and perceptions (Barriball & White 1994). I used my main interview questions and also relied on some probing questions. According to Rubin and Rubin (2011), main questions and probing questions play a role in collecting data. Main questions ensure that the research questions are all answered, while probing questions are used to enhance the participant's responses by giving examples and details and keeping the conversation going (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). The interview questions included five questions that are in-depth in their design. The interviews were in English, except for three of the participants who preferred to use Arabic to answer the questions, and so I used Arabic with them and then translated their responses into English. The first question helped me to extract the detailed experiences of each participant. Each interview took around 60 minutes; I gave each participant sufficient time to share their stories and experiences with learning English in Saudi classrooms.

Data Collection

In the data collection stage, the researcher needs to ensure the accessibility of the research or the study in terms of the methods that they will use to collect the data. A large number of participants is usually what the qualitative method aims for, for the reason that multiple participants provide more perspectives about a certain experience (Polkinghome, 2005). In this study, data collection took place during October, 2015, and each interview took around 60 minutes. I determined the day and date for each interview, and met each participant in a one-on-one session, breaking the ice before the interview by talking a little bit about their school day and other things. Moreover, to ensure the participants' comfort, I asked each participant if they preferred to use Arabic or English for the interview. Three of the participants showed some worries about using English, while the rest of the participants showed confidence in using English for the interview. All the participants shared the same nationality; however, they showed different experiences and backgrounds in terms of their experiences, and so I obtained different types of experiences and stories. I asked my questions and gave each participant sufficient time to share their experiences. I also used some probing questions to obtain closer insights into their experiences. See Table 2 for the interview questions.

Table 2

Question List for Semi-structured Interviews

| No. | Questions |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | How would you describe your English language learning experience in Saudi Arabia? |
| 2 | What challenges did you encounter in your English classes in Saudi Arabia? |
| 3 | Can you compare and contrast your experiences in these two different contexts? |
| 4 | Could you describe successful or less successful ways of how English is taught in Saudi Arabia? |
| 5 | How did your English language teacher contribute to your language acquisition, whether the outcomes were successful or unsuccessful? |

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, an inductive approach was utilized in the data analysis procedure; an inductive approach refers to detailed reading line by line, which enables the researcher to derive the themes and concepts from their raw data (Thomas, 2006). I broke down the collected data of my study and started by asking the questions what, how, why, who, and when to open the coding. My role in the data analysis went further than simply labelling the segments by codes. I wrote memos continually in each interview in order to enrich the findings of my study. The inductive approach also assisted me in understanding the meaning of the participants' experiences.

I read the transcripts line by line several times and highlighted the segments that indicated a certain theme; in this way, I could develop the codes accordingly. I read the transcripts repeatedly, looking for more details to fit with the created themes. Thus, seven themes descended from the data. The seven themes have different emergent codes underneath each one. I created a table listing all the emerging codes; each column in the table has the participant's name on top. I divided the table into four columns; each column has the theme and the emerging codes underneath it. So, my strategies to find the appropriate codes were to highlight and label the meaningful segments that showed frequently repeated points from the participants. I used the margins to write down all my ideas and thoughts during the coding, and I wrote memos to keep them for my records for the results and findings. Moreover, in this stage, the codes overlapped. So, I reread each segment to reduce redundancy in the coding stages by aggregating similar codes. The technique I used to do this was to list all the codes and count how many times codes were repeated in the data, and then I chose the most-repeated codes and aggregated them, and

then set them in the final sheet of the coding list. In addition, I highlighted interesting comments and phrases in order to mention them in the discussion.

In order to discuss the general picture of teaching and learning English in the EFL context in Saudi Arabia, the students' attitudes toward learning English, and the students' concerns about the other factors that accompanied them in their learning, according to the students' responses, I chose the following order: The first theme was students' self-esteem in language learning, from which four codes emerged. For the second theme, the EFL teacher's role and how the teacher contributed to students' language learning, three codes emerged. These codes were: teacher motivation, teacher behaviour (e.g., strict, friendly, cooperative, etc.), and language proficiency. The third theme was about EFL and ESL classrooms settings, and five codes emerged from this theme, which were: effectiveness of ESL classrooms vs. EFL classrooms, class activities in each setting, English skills in EFL classrooms, using the first language in EFL classrooms, and encouragement from teachers in EFL vs. ESL settings. The fourth theme was about teaching methods in EFL classrooms, and three codes emerged from this, which were: traditional methods, boring classes, and exam-oriented classes. For the fifth theme, the EFL learning environment and how the environment contributed to language outputs, two codes emerged: school types (e.g. private, public) and the influence of the environment. The sixth theme I examined the role of family. The last emerging, theme seven was about the challenges in EFL classrooms, and three codes emerged: EFL teacher as a challenge, peer pressure, and English language curriculum (textbooks).

Chapter Four

Research Findings

This chapter reports the findings of the study. In the data analysis stage, seven themes emerged from the data. These themes encompass the teacher's role, teaching methods, learning environment, EFL classrooms vs ESL classrooms, self-esteem, family role, and challenges encountered. The themes are the findings of my study, which will answer my first and second research questions:

1. What are Saudi students' experiences learning English in Saudi Arabia and abroad?
2. What are Saudi students' challenges in their English language learning in EFL contexts?

The First Theme: Students' Self-esteem in EFL Classrooms

Self-esteem was the first theme that most of the participants mentioned about their English learning, and how their self-esteem changed when moving from one environment to the other.

Student A mentioned that he had fear about learning the language in EFL classrooms. He said, "Because of my bad experience with the language, that's why I was afraid from the language and for me was something difficult." He refused to learn English in any other language institution in Saudi Arabia because of his pre-assumption that English was difficult and not easy to learn. He thought that if he tried to learn English outside public school, he might have the same experience, and explained that the way that English was taught in Saudi Arabia was the main reason of his fear, because he later realized that English is not difficult and that he could learn it. So, he believed that his attitude toward the language changed. His low self-esteem was because of his public school teacher who influenced his confidence in the language

Student B showed a positive self-esteem and attitude toward the language, which paid off eventually in her higher education. She declared that she had interest and enthusiasm in EFL classrooms because she found supporters who encouraged her and believed in her. So, she acknowledged that she was capable of learning English: “when they saw that enthusiasm, they appreciate it and they helped me in the process.” She said her self-esteem increased when she had support from her teachers as well her parents. She also improved her self-support by searching for extra materials to improve her reading. Besides the self-support and self-esteem, she also had a passion to learn different languages.

Student F mentioned that her self-esteem was influenced by her teacher as well the society. She said that she was shy about using the language because of her low self-esteem, and so had a fear of using the language in public. She stated that her culture affected her self-esteem because she tried to use the language and practice it, but she found that people around her were judgmental in terms of her using English in an Arab society. She used to hear from other students that speaking English in an Arabic country was not appropriate.

Student G stated that he had a good experience while learning English because of the school and the place he was in; however, he did not have a high level of self-esteem, since he was not interested in learning English. He said that he was not a good student at school, even though he had opportunities: “If I was interested back then I could be better, learning English back there was not serious, let say, yeah not serious.” Student E’s low self –esteem was reflected in his low interest in EFL classes. He explained that his low self-esteem in EFL classrooms led him to hate the language, and added that he was also afraid of private EFL classrooms because of his bad experiences in public EFL classrooms.

Student I showed her fear by rejecting learning the language outside of public school. She had the opportunity to learn English in a private language school in Saudi Arabia, but she refused because of her bad experience with public school EFL classes. She also emphasized that her fear was due to the EFL experience. Student I mentioned that his classmates skipped classes because they were confused about the language, and as a result, their language outputs when they graduated from high school were poor.

Moreover, Student C also had her share of low self-esteem in terms of fear; however, her fear was not of learning the language, it was of making mistakes. She had been influenced by her intermediate English teacher, who used to make fun of the students' mistakes. So, she had this fear because of her previous teacher, which she said affected her in ESL classrooms: "Because I didn't practice the language, I lost the confidence, I was shy to speak, I know if I speak I'll make mistakes and then people will start laughing."

Student A mentioned that he had the desire to learn English outside the EFL classroom because of his high self-esteem. He said:

I had the desire to understand the language because at that time I want to know how to communicate, I did not care how to write even though I know the basic of writing and reading, I know how to read but not that fast and not that accurate.

Student A was eager to learn English because he wanted to communicate with non-Saudis in his home town. His desire to learn and speak the language was due the requirements for jobs in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, he did not have any interest in EFL classrooms because he felt that it was not a serious enough setting.

The Second Theme: Teachers' Role in EFL Classrooms

From the interviews with 10 participants, all of them reported that teachers' motivation, teachers' behaviour, and teachers' proficiency affected their English language acquisition in EFL classrooms. Four of the 10 participants stated that their English teachers did not significantly contribute to their English language acquisition, and the majority of the participants mentioned that English teachers in EFL classrooms were not motivated to teach the language. More than half of the participants said that their teachers' proficiency in English was not satisfactory or that they had low proficiency. Figure 1 summarizes the key findings of the teacher's role in EFL classrooms.

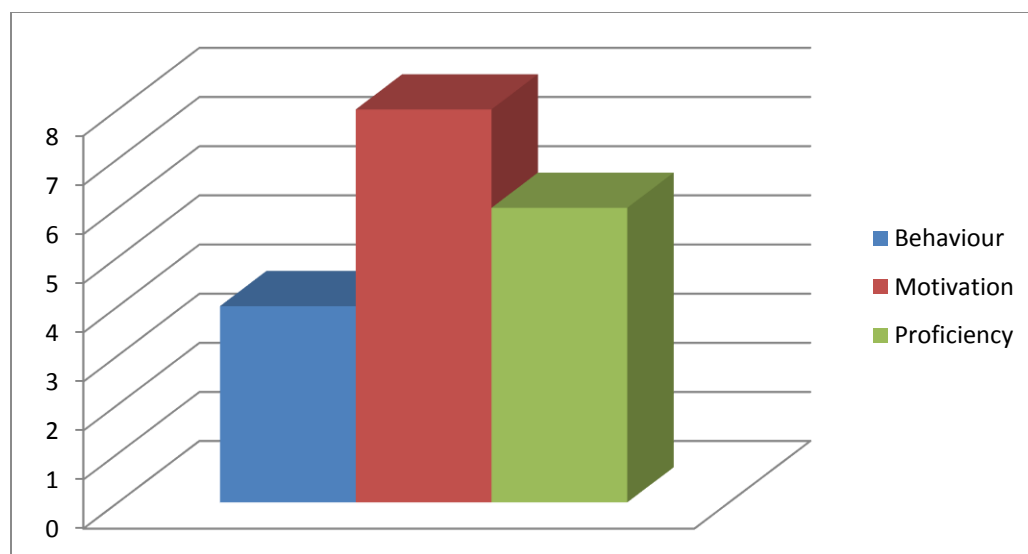


Figure 1. A summary of the key findings of the teacher's role in EFL classrooms.

Teachers' motivation. The majority of the participants stated that most of their Saudi English teachers in EFL classrooms were not motivated to teach (see Figure 1). Also, they stated that they felt that their English teachers were obligated to teach this subject, which resulted in reducing their enthusiasm in English classrooms. Those students commented that their teachers

had the belief that English was a minor subject and as a result they transferred their negative attitude to their students. One said:

I agree that the teachers teach us and we attend classes, but they are not motivated to teach..., the teacher comes to the class to explain the lesson and that's it whether we understood or not.... My teacher was not motivated to teach us the language; he explains the lesson for us but he doesn't care whether the students understood or not.

To Student A, the teacher's role was limited to delivering the contents of the textbook and nothing beyond. According to this student, his teacher lacked the inspiration to teach English, and consequently he reflected his low enthusiasm to the students in his class, and as a result of this, the students in his class felt that they were being forced to learn English, and eventually they ended up assuming that English was just a minor subject. This belief became rooted in them, since their teacher did not show sufficient interest in the class.

Student B blamed her English teacher's motivation as well in affecting her language learning and enthusiasm. She felt that her English teachers played a critical role in her English schooling. Again, the English teacher did not project enthusiasm to her students, and they, as a result, also lacked enthusiasm. In addition, Student C added that her high school English teacher was not fully motivated to teach, and she believed that the reason behind that was the large class size. She believed that her English teacher was overwhelmed with the students' numbers, and stated that her and her classmates' desire to learn English was negatively influenced by her teacher's attitude.

Student D echoed that teachers in EFL classrooms should be qualified to teach English, and described some English teachers as being only "teachers by name." She added: "I hope our teachers and principals could find really good teachers, not teacher by name but teachers by

doing to [so].” She declared that some English teachers in her school did not have the desire nor motivation to teach them the English language. She was more positive about her English teacher in her intermediate school, even though she encountered one or two teachers who were not motivated. This student revealed that she was “lucky” to have had a teacher who had a Bachelor’s degree from the United States, and from whom she benefited a lot.

Student E concurred that teachers’ motivation might be transferred to the students, and the teacher’s motivation was a huge concern for this student. This student had a negative experience since his teacher kept repeating that learning English was not necessary, so this student and his classmates failed to keep their enthusiasm in learning English. He stated: Because they believe that English is a minor thing.., I remember that one of my English teachers told me that this is not our language and I will help you to make you pass and that influenced me. I think we have a good education in Saudi Arabia but the teachers aren’t motivated. I think if the teachers were motivated and teach from the bottom of their heart, we would [have] wonderful outcomes and the students would be very good at English

Student A believed that the belief that English was a minor Subject, showed an unsuitable attitude. So, if the teacher believes that what they teach is not necessary, how can the students succeed in their learning? Student E thought that some English teachers in Saudi Arabia should rethink their beliefs toward English. Student F showed the same concern about teachers’ motivation. She did not find her English teacher enthusiastic enough, or passionate about the language. This student described her teacher in the EFL classroom as feeling obligated to teach, and claimed that her English teachers in both intermediate and high school were concerned only about being in school for attendance purposes. “They came every day to the class for 45 minutes and did some teaching and left no matter whether the students understood or not, ” and she

stated, “If the teachers were motivated enough to teach me the language, if I felt she [was] really interested in and dedicated to this, I would definitely feel motivated.” Again, most of the students stated that they had been affected by their teachers’ low motivation.

Teachers’ behaviour. The Saudi participants in this study had doubts about their teachers’ behaviour in EFL classrooms. Four of them claimed (see Figure 1) that their teachers’ behaviour in being “strict” with them created a sort of rejection inside them towards learning the language. They emphasized that the main cause of their low level of performance was due to some English teachers’ behaviour with them. The Saudi students felt that their “bad” experience in EFL classes was because of the English teacher’s manners with the students. Some of them assumed that the English teachers in their school were either too “strict” or too “friendly;” however, they claimed that if they had a friendly teacher in one grade, they would not likely have a friendly teacher in the next grade.

Student J stated that his English teacher was a rigid teacher. The students believed that the way their teachers treated them in all classes, and in English classrooms in particular, was a concern for them. The student and his classmates felt that they were stifled, as no one could speak during the lesson, or laugh, or do anything which was not allowed in this teacher’s policy. Lack of freedom in the classrooms made the students feel that the classroom was not comfortable: “I had a strict teacher in English and no one can breathe in that class, so it was hard.” So, this kind of teacher inhibited the students in learning the language, since the students felt that they were under pressure during the class, and it did influence their learning as well.

Student E remembered his teacher’s negative behaviour with him: “There is an ironic [irony] in the English classrooms; I would accept it if it comes from the classmates but it was from the teacher! Can you believe [that], it was so difficult to accept it.” This unsuitable

behaviour creates a barrier between the learner and the target language. EFL was a very sensitive subject since English was not spoken in Saudi Arabia, and the students did not feel stimulated to learn it. So, their teachers' manners led to feelings of rejection from the English language learners.

Student I discussed similar experiences about her English teacher's behaviour with her. She said that her English teacher was harsh with her, and as a result she had a negative impression about the language. She said: "The teacher was so strict with me, she was asking me to leave the class sometimes, and she was so strict. I was just doing my homework to avoid her bad reaction." So, this student had an unpleasant experience in her EFL classes. She was not concerned about her language proficiency, as she stated that the homework was her concern, without any knowledge or understanding of the language content. The undisciplined behaviour that her English teacher displayed was unprofessional; for instance, she would punish students by making them leave the classroom for petty reasons, and thus, Student I felt that English was not a favourite subject. According to her, she had a hard time understanding the language, since most of the time she was punished by the teacher, such as being asked to leave the class as a punishment. She also added that in Grade Eight, when she had a more relatable teacher, she changed her attitude toward the language and started to consider English as an important subject. So, this means that unrelatable teachers are a minority in EFL classes, and seems to indicate that most Saudi teachers are responsible in their jobs. She also decided to be an English teacher in the future, since her teacher was very friendly and supportive. Then, in the next grade, her future dream went to pieces because of the teacher's attitude.

Student C commented that her English teacher "made fun" of the students all through class. She said that this attitude did not affect her in terms of learning English; however, she felt

that her classmates were bothered by this behaviour and they felt too frustrated to speak or participate in class. She explained: “But she liked to make fun of the students when they make mistakes or something. So most of them weren’t involved in the classroom to avoid embarrassing, the teachers were very strict, actually over, over [strict]. We were like in a military school.” This teacher lacked the knowledge of how teachers should behave in an appropriate and professional manner with her students. Being a “strict” teacher in EFL classrooms means that the teacher wants the students to show respect and obey them.

Student A repeated the same point, and how his English teacher influenced his English language ability and confidence. This student revealed that his teacher not only affected his English learning, but also his confidence in English. He said that his fear of the language was because of his teacher and the way he used to be treated. Due to this teacher’s negative manner of teaching, Student A felt that English was very hard to learn. He also said that some students in his English classroom used to “escape” from the classroom to avoid this teacher’s behaviour.

Teachers’ proficiency. Students’ perceptions about their English teachers in EFL classes were (see Figure 1) that some English teachers in EFL classrooms had inadequate language proficiency; even though they did have an English background, their English proficiency was not commendable. They believed that their teachers lacked professionalism in teaching a foreign language, which caused low outputs in learning English in Saudi Arabia. Student F expressed that her English teacher lacked ability in teaching the language “because the way that they explain things to you ..., sometimes you ask question and she really doesn’t know what that is, even sometimes doesn’t know how to pronounce it correctly.” She found that her English teacher did not respond to her questions, which made her an unreliable teacher. She started to rely on herself to teach herself the language. Student B emphasized that her English teachers were not all

effective. According to her, in EFL classrooms she sometimes lost the passion for learning English: “Another challenge was also I would say not all my teachers were that good. Some teachers were only explaining the material that they got and give us the homework and that’s it.” This student explained that her English teacher was a challenge for her because she was not proficient enough to teach a foreign language. Some teachers only delivered the lessons in a very undesirable way, as most of the participants commented.

Student G complained about his non-Saudi teacher, whom he said made English harder to learn since his teacher’s English pronunciation was tough to understand. The teacher was not a native speaker, and had an accent. Student G stated, “The teacher has like no English background.” So, English for this student was problematic in terms of understanding his teacher’s pronunciation. It also caused confusion for this student and his classmates because the teacher pronounced English words in his mother-tongue accent, so it was hard to keep up with his teaching pedagogy. Pronunciation is crucial for any language learner and this I think counted part of teachers’ proficiency.

Student C added that her high school English teacher had poor proficiency in English. Her teacher’s mistakes were noticeable to the students, and sometimes they would correct her. She commented:

I remember my English teacher’s mistakes in high school. She was always making mistakes, for example, she pronounces some words wrong; like “chocolate” she says “chocalt” and also “but” instead of “put,” etc. She was always making pronunciation mistakes, and sometimes I correct her..., but she just ignore[s] us.

Student C stated that even though the teacher’s pronunciation mistakes were recognisable, this teacher was not concerned about them. The same mistakes were repeated most of the time, which

means that the teacher did not care about her language pedagogy.. Student H mentioned that his English teacher's proficiency was low, and reported that some of his English teachers were not capable of teaching the language.

Briefly, some English teachers, according to the students' perceptions, were lacking in English language pedagogy. Another significant point mentioned by the students was professionalism in teaching and awareness of the language. Student H also said that his English teacher preferred British English, and did not like to use American English.

The Third Theme: Teaching Methods in EFL Classrooms

All participants mostly shared the same responses about the teaching methods, even though they were from different cities in Saudi Arabia. The majority of the participants reported that their teachers' old fashioned methods, the boring environment, and the focus on exams and grades made English less interesting (see Table 3 below).

Table 3

Summary of the Key Findings from Teaching Methods.

| Teaching Methods | Perspectives |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Traditional teaching | Old-fashioned teaching Lack of creativity Repetitive Lack of activities |
| Boring environment | Strict rules Serious classes Teacher-centered classrooms |
| Exam-based | Passing and grading purposes Exam preparation classes Learn to perform on the exam |

Traditional methods. Student B remarked that the way English is taught in Saudi Arabia is just a typical way of teaching. Teachers, according to her, did not care about their teaching methods, and they repeated the same way of teaching for every class. She said:

It's kind of typical like today new vocabulary this and this and that, tomorrow grammar this and this and that. I can rarely remember if we had like what we do here like team work or group work or at least changing the methods from today to tomorrow, to the next class. I kind of see it as a routine and may be that was a reason why some students weren't interested.

So, Student B understood that what made English in her school not desirable or interesting was due to the teaching habits that it was used in Saudi classes. Moreover, student J added that his teacher's methods were not that effective, and that it was all about the black board and the book. Student J also thought that if they changed the traditional systems of teaching English in EFL classes, the students would get more benefit. Student J found that the outdated ways of teaching English made the students "skip" the classes or "escape" since they believed that being in English classes is not desirable. He stated: "For the ways they didn't have the variety of the ways, as I said the environment didn't give a lot of attention, they did not give it a variety of ways of teaching, it [is] always in the same classroom for six hours."

Student H emphasized that the EFL teaching approaches were old-style and lacked variety of methods. What students learned in the EFL classes was not sufficient because the language was taught in a very basic manner, and thus, students graduated from high school with low productivity. He reported that the pedagogy was the main problem in the EFL classes, and that it should be changed. In addition, Student F shared the same point; English teachers in Saudi Arabia were only repeating themselves by utilizing similar approaches in every class they taught,

and that they never came up with new or more creative methods. Student F said, “Back in Saudi Arabia, it was more of imitation if that makes sense, I mean saying and repeating things.”

According to her, she did not gain advanced English proficiency in EFL classes, and what she gained was only basic English for the entire experience. Her advanced level of English was a result of a self-effort type of learning, as she used to teach herself and search for the knowledge by finding supportive materials to improve her language skills. Student C said, “In Saudi classrooms it’s all repeating, swimming, playing etc., even the teacher in Saudi Arabia never asked us to come up with something new or more creative.” Her English outputs were generally just basic verbs and sentences. She found that the method that English teachers in Saudi Arabia used was not a productive approach to teaching.

Students commented that English language teaching in Saudi Arabia is traditional, and that they still used “talk and chalk” in their classes. Again, for Student G, “the book and the board” were what his English teacher utilized in teaching English, and according to him, that was problematic because the teachers only focused on simple, basic English and the teachers were not creative in their teaching. For him, the classroom was not sufficient, and failed to enrich his English learning. Moreover, Student E complained about the traditional methods of teaching English in EFL classes by saying that what was taught in English classes was not effective. Student E described his English learning as a duty to attend classes and listen to the teacher rather than acquiring and learning the language. He also added that the teachers never used anything beyond the textbook, and he found it a less successful way of teaching English. He added: “Using only textbook inside the classroom, as if the English book is a holy book and we can’t use something besides it, we were only following the traditional ways in learning English in the classrooms.”

Student A described his English teachers' teaching techniques as not "facilitating". For him, it was difficult to understand the language by following the traditional ways that were utilized:

I don't understand anything, I attend the class but I had no idea about the language. Also, our teaching methods in Saudi Arabia were difficult. The teachers were only using the textbook; they didn't use any other helping methods to facilitate the lesson for us.

Student A was just attending class for attendance purposes, without any idea about the lessons being taught. He blamed his teacher's strategies in teaching, and repeated that his experience was "bad" and "basic" because of the way the English was taught.

Student J emphasized the same point for her English language experience; her teachers' way of teaching was almost similar to the other students' teachers. She added that: "the teachers also did not try to draw our attention even; they were using very traditional ways to teach, for example the black board and the chalks." So, this traditional way of teaching affected her interest in learning English. She also added that the teachers were not attempting to use any instructional objects to teach. Student I declared that his teachers did not adopt successful strategies to teach the English language.

Boring classes. Students described their teaching as boring; for instance, Student B described her English classes as having "strict rules" and "rigid ways of teaching." She found this way of teaching as boring and that it made the students hate to be in school at any time, not only in English classes but in all classes. Student A claimed that EFL classrooms were not interesting and that students slept during class since they did not find any encouragement or motivation to learn English in the classrooms, so most of the students did not pay attention to the teacher. He explained, "Some of them sleep in the classroom, the other might skip the class or

escape from the school, we weren't even encouraging each other to attend the class." Student A reported that his classmates skipped the English classes or escaped (skipped) school altogether because of the boring classes.

Student I mentioned the same point that Student A discussed, about "escaping" from English classes. The students in her English class were disappointed by the repeated lessons and teaching techniques. As a result, they skipped class and found other ways to entertain themselves. Student H found EFL classrooms monotonous and repetitive, and that he lacked enthusiasm because of the boring classes. He observed that what he experienced in EFL classes was the English teacher merely following the syllabus to teach. According to him, his English teacher followed only one kind of method, which made the students become disinterested in learning English. He explained that the majority of his classmates were not fully interested due to the teachers' limited teaching knowledge.

Student I talked about his similar experience, that this kind of classroom was routine and boring since the students in his class spent most of the class time listening to the teacher lecturing, which was very boring. Student D concurred, and also mentioned boring classes as being not inspiring or motivating

Exam-oriented EFL classrooms. Student I stated that EFL classrooms were exam-oriented, and that the teachers and students only worked towards grades and exams: "Even some students when they graduate from the school they don't know English at all." According to him, the students, including him, were only concerned about final exams and grades, and therefore they only asked the teacher about test content in order to help them to pass. Student F also had the same point of view: "like I said it's something minor, and it's about grades and about passing the subject and not to have to take it in another time or fail in the class that was the most things

that feel it's really challenging.” Student F emphasized that English learning in EFL classes was “temporary learning”, and as a result, students paid more attention to grades than to learning the content itself.

Student E mentioned a critical point. He stated that what students did in EFL classrooms and the way they used to learn was problematic. Students learned to pass, and then after they moved to the next grade, they forgot everything. For Student E, learning for exam purposes was what caused Saudi students' low proficiency, and as a result they encountered difficulties in ESL classrooms at first. Student G supported Student E's point. Student G was raised in an environment with good English with the opportunity to learn English outside the classroom; however, his English language learning in school was also exam-oriented because of the learning environment and style. Also, student H stated that the learning strategies were all about exams and grades and that the goal was to get good grades in English regardless of his outputs. He said, “I didn't care much about the English, I was caring about the grades.” This attitude toward the language was due to his English teachers' expectations, because the teacher did not anticipate much from the students. Accordingly, he was not concerned about acquiring the language, he just wanted to learn to pass and get good grades.

The Fourth Theme: EFL context vs ESL context

All participants stated that learning English in EFL classrooms is completely different from ESL. They compared their language outputs in both classrooms and emphasized that learning in ESL classrooms is more beneficial for many reasons. Table 5 below summarizes the key findings regarding EFL classrooms and ESL classrooms.

Table 5

Summary of the Key Findings of EFL Classrooms vs ESL Classrooms

| Theme | Findings |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EFL learning environment | Less effective Less encouragement No class activities Use of L1 |
| ESL learning environment | More effective More encouragement Class activities English-only |

Effectiveness of ESL classrooms vs EFL classrooms. Student A stated that before he joined ESL classes it was very challenging for him to understand English even though he had learned English previously in EFL settings. He stated:

If you talked with me in English I wouldn't understand anything, it was impossible for me to understand anything in English. Then, I came here and I started [learning] in the [ESL] school, I would say in only three days I started to learn and understand English.

The way that the teacher was using is more than perfect.

He found that learning English in ESL classrooms was more than adequate for him, and said that he could learn and understand better after only three days of joining an ESL program. According to this student, the teaching methods used in ESL classrooms were more effective; he stated that in EFL classes he was not able to understand English because of the way it was taught, which resulted in low efficiency: "Some time I was just thinking what they teach, I wanted to learn but they weren't supportive enough. So, I would call it bad experience." He summarized his EFL experience as "bad" due to the demotivating environment. Moreover, he found that ESL was more enjoyable and motivating. According to him, he never skipped any English classes in ESL

classes, even if he was sick, which is obviously because of the inspiring environment. However, in EFL classes he skipped classes and was not interested to be in English classrooms, and again that is due to the differences in the two environments.

Student D acknowledged that ESL classrooms were more effective in improving the students' learning capabilities. She described the environment as "an effective environment" because she found that ESL classrooms were more supportive places to learn, as long as Arabic was not used in the teaching methods. She found EFL less effective because the students rarely spoke English and the teachers used Arabic during most of the class. Using Arabic to teach English in EFL classes made English more difficult for her because of the differences between the two languages.

Student E responded that his experience was completely different in the two contexts. He said that in Saudi Arabia he learned only simple, basic language. He reported that his experience in ESL classrooms was more positive than in EFL classrooms. He stated, "My experience is completely different in these two environments, in Saudi Arabia I learned simple and basic English, but I didn't reach my goal." He believed that the teaching strategies used in ESL classrooms were completely different from EFL, which made them more effective. He also added an important factor that he found in ESL classrooms but not in EFL classrooms: "The other thing that I want to focus on more is the respect, here, if I made a mistake, no one would laugh at me." He said that one of the issues he encountered in his ESL classes was respect from the teacher and classmates, which he reported was mostly missing in EFL classrooms. In EFL classrooms, the teacher and classmates commented on and "made fun" of his answers and pronunciation; however, in ESL classrooms they were all cooperative, supportive and were all learning and making mistakes together, and that the teachers in ESL classrooms never laughed at

the students' mistakes. He also emphasized that his attitude toward the language was positive in ESL classrooms in contrast to the EFL classrooms. He added:

I compared my English in here and there even though I was in an old age when I came here, I was like an excited child who wanted to learn everything even though they were using kids' games and activities in ESL classrooms but I liked it I learned a lot from it. So, the teaching approach used in ESL classrooms made a positive impact on the students' attitudes toward the language.

Student G said that: "Two years here equals 20 years studying back home." He found that learning English in EFL classrooms required more "personal effort" and that it needed more time and effort overall. He used to learn English by utilizing other learning methods like "watching movies and listening to English music," which made a difference in his language acquisition. He reported that the contrast between the two contexts (EFL and ESL classrooms) is huge because of the effectiveness of ESL classrooms. In ESL classes, he said, learning is done on more of a daily basis, which allows students to practice the language and gain more confidence. However, EFL classrooms did not help learners to improve due to the less successful techniques used in them. He said:

It doesn't improve you, it is just giving you the fundamental and basic information and knowledge about English and then for example how we study English back home since I was as I told you [from] first grade. So, that was 12-13 years and I didn't reach, let say I didn't reach my 30% or 50% of it, I accomplished it in here.

Student G also stated that what he learned in EFL classrooms was not sufficient, and Student C answered that EFL classrooms were about repetition: "In Saudi classrooms it [is] all repetition; for example, swimming, playing...etc., even the teachers in Saudi Arabia never ask us

to come up with something new or more creative.” However, according to student C the ESL classrooms were more effective and creative, and the students recognized that when they noticed the differences in their English output. She believed:

The teaching methods here were much better than there. We usually have group work, moving around the classroom, speaking with different people, some [times] we have group lesson we used the game board and create[d] sentences and stories by using the grammar that we learned.

Student H highlighted a very important point about EFL classrooms. He said, “You can graduate from high school, you can learn English for seven years and you can pass and you can’t even speak the language, don’t know anything about the language, yeah it was very different environment.” He also mentioned that ESL classrooms were easier than EFL classrooms because the teachers were native speakers and were more proficient in the language. He added:

I think here, it’s more easier because you take the material, kind of fresh because it came naturally from the people, from the teachers, because it’s their language, back home maybe it doesn’t come naturally because they aren’t advanced, even if they are advanced it’s not their language, because they aren’t perfectly perfect in it in somehow.

So, according to him, the teachers in EFL classrooms made learning English less effective because of the way they presented it to the students. He also said that what made ESL more effective was the students’ involvement in the class. The students can communicate and be involved in the lesson, and that was more beneficial for them than having teacher-centered classes.

Student F stated that EFL classes were more repetitive, with only basic teaching and learning, and she gave some examples of the frequent verbs and words that teachers used all the

time: “I love basketball, I love to swim, I like swimming, I enjoy hiking, see still basic, why do you have to repeat all of that for another three years.” She complained about learning the same content for more than three years and that the teachers in her school did not stimulate the students to come up with new vocabulary; they just kept on with what they had been doing, and due to this the students lacked the enthusiasm to learn. She also emphasized the effectiveness of the ESL for the reason that most of the ESL teachers were native-speakers, and as she stated, she found ESL as more of a real-life setting in which to practice the language and interact with people outside the classroom. However, she said that EFL classrooms were more about grading and passing. She stated, “If I pass, that’s it. So, I don’t have to read an English word ever again.”

Class activities in ESL vs EFL. Most of the participants emphasized the importance of using activities in learning English. This was the strategy they benefited most from in building their language skills in ESL classrooms. The students found it extremely effective to learn English by using educational activities, and Student B was surprised when she found out that ESL classroom involved different learning activities. She stated:

When I came here, they said ok [play] [a] game; I said what games inside the class, come on! because I’m not used to that way, but I found it fun, yeah I’m learning, I’m enjoying my time at the same time, when I saw that I said why not, why they won’t adopt this way of teaching[in EFL classes].

The EFL classroom is a very traditional and “rigid” environment, and thus students used to “escape” from the classrooms, which led to another learning issue.

Student H stated that what made EFL classes less effectual than ESL classes was learning in a restricted, “rigid” style. The lack of variety of methods in teaching was pointed out by most

of the students. Student H added that being in school for more than six hours in a limited, “rigid” setting made the students demotivated about the way the EFL classes were designed. He said:

It always in the same classrooms for six hours, there is no activates there is no going out or movies or any other methods beside book, you study English like any other subject. It doesn't involve you; it doesn't in the material in the subject, it doesn't make a difference with you, in how you get it.

Student C mentioned that her learning experience in ESL was more effective because of the methods the teachers used, as they implemented some learning activities. She reported that using class activates was very successful in involving all the students, whether individually or in pairs as a more creative learning strategy. She added, “We usually have group work, activities, and move around the classroom, and speak with different people.” She said that EFL is all about repetition and vocabulary and that the students became bored while learning the language.

Student E found that ESL classrooms had more tangible outcomes than EFL classrooms. He said that students in ESL classrooms were more excited about learning English: “the way they use in the language school in here, it's completely different, in here they used way[s] that make the students more interested to learn by using activities.” On the other hand, Student C mentioned that her mother had a role in her language learning because her mother used to teach her by giving her activities to help understand the lesson. Her mother was an English teacher, and knew her students' needs. This teacher realized that her EFL students lacked enthusiasm to learn English because of the traditional methods used in English classes, so she made up an activity book to give her students some entertainment aside from the target lesson.

Student J described that keeping the old-fashioned ways of teaching in EFL classes caused the students to dislike the language; however, he suggested that activities helped the

students in EFL classrooms to be more passionate about the language. He experienced learning English by using activities in ESL classes, and said that it was a great method to have fun and learn simultaneously. He added, “There was [no] activities [in EFL classes] that make us love that subject.” In other words, the lack of fun and entertainment in EFL classrooms caused a dislike of the subject, and as a result students had less desire to learn English in EFL classes.

English skills in EFL classrooms. All participants mentioned that EFL classes lacked integration in teaching English skills, and that EFL classrooms taught only selective skills, which caused poor English proficiency.

Some teachers in EFL settings focused on some skills and neglected others, which resulted in difficulties in speaking and writing. For Student D, her English teacher concentrated on one or two skills during class and paid less attention to the other skills. She reported that listening was one of the skills that she never had the chance to improve in EFL classes, and added, “We don’t have something to listen, there is no listening skill, only listening to the teacher. Secondly, reading, the teachers only focus on the excellent student and she forgets the other students.” Another point that Student D mentioned was about her English teacher, and explained that her teacher only paid attention to a few students who were more advanced in the language, paying less attention to the rest of the class. She said that her teacher never attempted to improve the students’ skills by giving extra classes or lessons and that the students only listened to her for 45 minutes at a time, resulting in no improvements. She added that her teacher did not give students opportunities to listen to the English conversations which were included in the English textbooks.

According to the participants’ perceptions, reading was another issue in her English classes, since her English teacher only presented the opportunity to those who were already

capable of reading. Student D also raised a concern about writing skills in her English classes: “They don’t really focus on writing; they only want to do their lesson and just go out.” So, according to her, three skills (writing, reading, and listening) were neglected in EFL classrooms and they rarely spoke English unless the teacher spoke with them utilizing some Arabic. Student H said that his speaking and listening skills improved by “watching movies” and playing “English video games.” He did not benefit from EFL classrooms to improve his English; his reading and writing did not improve because EFL classrooms rarely focused on these skills, and even when they did, it was only with regard to basic English.

Student F said that she acquired some English vocabulary as well as basic grammar in her EFL classrooms; however, she had difficulties matching what she learned with using it in a real-life conversation or creating a good piece of writing. She added:

We do understand these words of vocabulary and what does it mean and everything [but] when it comes to speaking, we are no[t] able to match. You know like we are not able to use the correct tenses or is it “he”? Or is it “she”? Is it “it”? So, that was challenging because we rarely speak English actually in the classrooms.

She found that English grammar was a focus in EFL classrooms; however, students were still not capable of writing a grammatically correct sentence. Moreover, English teachers in EFL classrooms focused on teaching grammar more than using it in a structured English sentence. The outcomes of the teaching were very poor because of the lack of actual language practice. The students were taught grammar intensively but were not able of writing one paragraph correctly. As a result, if there was to be a writing section on an English exam, they would just memorize and copy a paragraph. Student F said, “I would like to give them that credit but, we didn’t get the chance to do so many writing pieces.”

Student G found that learning English in EFL classrooms was not adequate since not all skills were included in his teachers' class plans. The teachers focused only on grammar without giving the students opportunities to use the grammar rules in writing or speaking. He said:

The main point, I believe, was teaching the grammar only. So, teaching grammar without giving us all the other stuff from all of the ways like I can't put it all together. Yeah that was one of the difficulties actually, they only focus on grammar and teaching us the words in English like the meanings of the words and that's it, new words, new grammar and they kept going on the same thing, there weren't focusing on the listening, writing and reading. Yeah it wasn't very helpful.

EFL classrooms were not advanced in teaching English; teachers used simple teaching methods and simple grammar lessons, and as a result, students were lacking in the ability to read, write, or even speak because they did not gain these skills in EFL classrooms.

Student E said he was able to understand English sentences but was not able to write a full correct sentence. He did not have the opportunity to practice writing or speaking in EFL classrooms:

If someone speaks with me I would understand maybe only 10% of his speech, that's why was difficult for me. I didn't know how to write a full sentence but I was able to understand the sentence and I could distinguish between the grammar tenses; the past and future and so on, but not in the English conversation.

He declared that his poor English was due to the nonexistent English practice in EFL schoolrooms. Teachers rarely provided the students an occasion to find their mistakes, or encourage them to discuss the mistakes with their classmates to figure them out.

Using the L1 in EFL classroom. Most of the participants discussed the issue of using the L1 (Arabic) in English classrooms. Some of them said that using the L1 was one of the challenges that caused confusion between the two languages' rules and structures.

Student J stated that his English teachers used Arabic most of the time and that it was a great challenge for him. He said that if EFL teachers practiced English all the time, it would be more beneficial for the students in EFL classrooms. He reported that it might be difficult in the beginning for the students to be in English-only classes, but the students would get used to it eventually. He said:

I think if the teacher speaks all the time English I think will be better for us to, even if we don't understand the word and pronunciation of the word still hear it again and again that stay in our mind or something, that's challenge.

Using L1 in English classes was challenging for the students because the students confused the Arabic and English word orders. Student E concurred that using Arabic was an issue for him. He mentioned that: "the teachers' way of explaining wasn't clear enough and I encountered this with many teachers, they explain in both Arabic and English, I would say 50% of class is using Arabic in the English classrooms." His teacher relied in Arabic to explain English, and this was a big issue for student E.

Student A asked this question: "How do they teach us a foreign language by using Arabic?" His teacher did not integrate an English-only policy in his teaching methods, and confused his students by using two languages in class. This method of teaching was not effective for him, because he finished high school without any knowledge about the language. Student G said that his English teacher used Arabic for most of the class: "The English teacher [used Arabic] half of the time, he was speaking Arabic." According to him, this approach to teaching

did not affect him directly because of the community he was raised in. He said that his community was composed fully of English speakers, because he lived in an American compound in Saudi Arabia.

Student F claimed that her teacher used Arabic most of the time in the class as well, and said, “The teacher speaks Arabic and that lead[s] us to discussion and we would discuss that in Arabic. So, like 45 minutes class with maybe 10 minutes English and then everything will be in Arabic.” She mentioned that students asked questions in Arabic and that the teacher responded in Arabic, which produced poor proficiency in EFL. Student D found that using Arabic in English classes was a less successful way of teaching the language. She said that she was uncomfortable when they used Arabic in the classroom, and felt that they were not learning a foreign language, just learning Arabic in a different way. She reported:

The less successful way when they speak Arabic, I know they are trying to help us but I want to speak English. So, I can response to you in English. I don’t want you to speak Arabic. You are an English teacher not Arabic teacher.

Student D found that using Arabic in EFL classroom was not a successful method for her, and she blamed her English teacher for the massive usage of Arabic. She said, “in Saudi Arabia, when I don’t understand, she easily tells me the answer in Arabic.”

Encouragement from the teacher in EFL vs ESL classrooms. Student I commented on her English teachers’ encouragement, and said, “The teachers also didn’t try to draw our attention even. They were using very traditional ways of teaching, for example, the black board and chalks.” Student I criticized her teacher and stated that their attitude was “over-strict” and that she was also did not receive any encouragement. Student I described her experience in EFL classes as knowing nothing other than the name of the subject, and that her learning strategy, if

she followed a strategy, was “copying” and “memorizing”: “There was not encouragement and motivational ways that make us learn or even love the subject. There was no new develop ways that might draw our attention toward the language, always traditional.” She also compared her EFL teacher’s encouragement to that of her ESL teacher, which was completely the opposite. She stated that in ESL classrooms she was encouraged by the teacher and that as a result she had more confidence, in contrast to her confidence in EFL classrooms.

Moreover, Student E explained that his English teacher used to utilize punishment instead of encouragement with him, and that his teacher punished him if he did not understand or pronounce a word correctly. Student E was disappointed about the English class because his teacher used to mock him in front of his classmates for his pronunciation. He also added that his English teachers did not make any contribution to his language leaning, and he described his English teachers as a negative factor in his English. Student E compared his teachers’ encouragement in ESL and EFL classrooms, which were obviously different approaches. He said that in ESL classrooms, making mistakes was part of the process of learning. He found ESL classrooms places where people made mistakes and learned from them; however, EFL classrooms were places where students made mistakes and were punished by the teacher or received “negative comments” or “jokes.” He said:

In here, if I made a mistake, it doesn’t matter, I’m here to learn and I’m here to build myself and my knowledge, and this thing I just noticed in the Canadian language schools, if someone made a mistakes, he would be given the opportunity to try for many times till he/she learned.

Student G had the encouragement in EFL class when he gave the opportunity to read every class because as he described himself:

I was one of the best actually there were two the teacher prefers [them] than the others, I was the one [who] read the questions all the time in the class, because I was like good, it was a motivation for me of course, and it should be a motivation for the other student[s].

Student C stated that her primary and intermediate English teachers produced some encouragement in their classes by using some activities. She added:

I remember in the primary school, my teacher used to use some activities that fit with our age as children and it was a great idea. Even in the intermediate school, my teacher used to do some activities that were beneficial but because she was all the time making fun of the students, this was so bad.

Not all students received encouragement, only some, and the rest of the class felt discouraged. However, Student C found that she had more encouragement in ESL classes when the teacher gave the students the chance to learn from their mistakes. She found this kind of encouragement really helpful because it built her confidence, as she was terrified of making mistakes: “The teacher was telling me all the time that it’s ok if I made mistakes, sometimes I just want to speak, I don’t [want] any one to correct me, I just need time and more confidence.”

Student F added that her English teacher only considered teaching English as a mandatory job but that she lacked the passion to teach. She stated:

It’s really sad for me to say that, I had my share of good teacher and bad teacher, not bad teacher as a person but as an instructor, someone who teaches you something. I had teachers who come every morning and say a few words and just leave the class, it’s really sad to know that, this only for, this just a job, and nothing else.

For her, teachers only concentrated on grading and marking, but did not show much guidance or encouragement.

Student H said that the teacher gave up eventually and felt disappointed in his students. The teacher did not encourage the students and as a result Student J showed less interest in the language because of his teacher's attitude. So, according to Student J, the students felt discouraged and only studied for the exam: "and it again like other subject, he's the teacher and you're the students and this is what we cover, it doesn't matter if you learn or not." Student J discussed his teacher's lack of encouragement as being "teacher-centered", or providing almost no encouragement. The EFL teachers were only concerned about the exams and what students should study for those exams. The students did not find any kind of encouragement to enhance their learning. In addition, Student B also discussed the issue of encouragement and said:

My teachers played an important role in this experience, they saw that I'm interested in the language, I'm a fast learner, I love learning new vocab whenever I heard new word in a movie or in any conversation. I would ask about that word, so, when they saw that enthusiasm, they appreciate it and helped me in the process.

Student D did not find any encouragement from her EFL teacher. However, she used to help herself through self-encouragement. She said that sometimes she became depressed or overwhelmed and that she needed some encouragement, but there was none forthcoming.

The Fifth Theme: Learning Environment

The school environment plays a significant role in Saudis' experiences while learning English in Saudi Arabia. Table 4 summarizes the key findings of the third theme regarding the EFL learning environment.

Table 4

Summary of the Key Findings about the EFL Learning Environment

| Learning Environment | | Findings |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| School Type | Public | Less helpful classrooms Non-supportive teachers Students' numbers in each class Bad environment Teacher-centered Inadequate classes Starting grades Six/Seven |
| | Private | Helpful Supportive environment Good environment Teacher-centered Daily classes Starting from Grade One |

Student B was in a private school and she labeled her English language experience in EFL classrooms as “good.” This student had the opportunity to learn English in everyday classes. She started learning English from Grade One, which had a huge impact on her overall experience. She elaborated, “In Saudi Arabia, I joined a private school from the primary till the high school, and that allowed me to study English all the years, it was kind of every day English class.” Her interest in the language helped her to become proficient, and the learning environment she was in assisted her in being enthusiastic towards studying English. She gave an example: according to her, the difference between her English language output and that of another classmate who had poor English for the reason that she had studied in a public school. She stated that within a year of beginning studies at the private school, her classmate had improved her English language, which showed that private schools had better English classes.

Student F found it troubling to see people graduating from high school without being able to speak English simply because the language instruction in the public schools was not sufficient. She explained: “The school maybe they will focus on that side of more [than] they need to, because it’s really bad to see someone graduating from high school in 12 years of education and they still can’t actually say a full sentence correctly.” She found that English classes in public schools began late for her age, which caused her to be disappointed about her the language outputs. In other words, private schools in Saudi education had advantages in supporting students in learning English.

Student H reported that he was in a public school, which helped him to become independent in his learning. He stated that neither his public school nor the teachers had paid any attention to improving English language outputs. The EFL learning environment was not involving the students; the English language teaching was like any other subject. He explained, “It [is] always in the classrooms for six hours; there is not activities; there is no going out or movies or any other methods beside[s] the book.”

Student C stated that her English language experience in the public school did affect her performance because of the size of the class. She found that the students’ numbers and learning environment had an impact on her, and thus she attended tow schools within one academic year because of the stressful environment, which obviously was not a positive sign about her learning environment. She added that the English learning environment was not the perfect environment and she described her English classroom as a “military school.”

In addition, Student G found the English learning environment inadequate for some learners. Although he was in a private school and his English output was good, the environment was not the perfect setting for him. He said, “The environment of course wasn’t the perfect

environment. I wasn't serious about it, and it wasn't a main thing as much as anything else [like] science anything else." Some students believed that English was not an important course, so the students became dismissive of English classes. Student E said that the value of English was only worth about 5% compared to the other subjects. He also hoped that the English learning environment would be more helpful for the next generation.

Student A had the experience of learning English in two different environments. He started his education in a public school and then he moved to a private school. He described the public school learning environment as "bad environment" since he did not benefit from English classes there as much as in the private school. Student A also stated that he did not care about attending English classes in the public school; however, he was eager to be in English classes in the private school, and this was because the private school learning environment helped him to be motivated and look forward to every class. Student I discussed that the school learning environment was not helpful in the public schools because the English classes were limited to only three classes a week and she said that the students did not advantage from it. Student I declared that besides the learning environment. Her won society affected her English language acquisition. So, she did not benefit from English classes because she could not practice English in them, nor could she practice outside school because of her society.

The Sixth Theme: Role of Family

Most participants stated that their families had a role in their English language education in Saudi Arabia, and that their families encouraged them to learn English outside the EFL classroom for the reason that English needed extra support, as it is not the spoken language in Saudi Arabia. Student F joined a language school in Saudi Arabia, and her family supported her in learning English on her summer vacations. She reported: "... there is a summer vacation

between last year of intermediate and high school, I remember in that specific year, I joined an English institution, and it was the first for me, first time, I thought I need like more improvement.” So, she benefited from the language school as well as her EFL classrooms. In addition, her father had a role in her language acquisition. Her father used to rely on her in his business because of her good language skills.

Student D added that her father also had a role in her English education in Saudi Arabia. Her father was working in an English company, and had good English, so he taught her and encouraged her to learn English. He also helped her by giving her books in English to increase her vocabulary. So, her father was a motivator by encouraging her to learn English outside the EFL classroom. Moreover, Student D also mentioned her mother’s role in her English language education. She said while her mother did not have a role in her English language education, the support that she received from her mother also helped her to be an independent learner.

Student J was supported by his family but in an indirect way. He did not mention his family’s role in his English education in Saudi Arabia, but he mentioned that when he enrolled in an English language institution, his family paid the tuition. Likewise, Student B commented that her family contributed to her English language education in Saudi Arabia when she talked about her mother’s support in learning English. She said, “My family depended on me, also teaching my young brothers and sisters English, helping them in their homework because they see enthusiasm on me learning that language.” She also said that her mother’s dream was to learn and speak English, but was not able to fulfil it. However, Student B achieved her mother’s dream by learning and acquiring the language at an early age.

Student A found that his father was supportive in terms of encouraging him to join English classes outside the school, but he rejected that because of his previous experience. He

reported that his father encouraged him to improve his English, but he was affected by his EFL teacher. He commented, “Even though my father was telling me all the time to go to a language school but I refused because of my bad experience, I was afraid from the language, my family was supporting me.”

Student G echoed that his father supported him in learning English outside school, and that his father used to teach him English. He stated, “My father speaks English and he’s the one who used to teach me English. My mother doesn’t speak English at all, so he is the one who teaches me English.” He also found that his father’s encouragement was obvious when he enrolled him with a multi-national soccer team in his city.

Student E was different from the other participants. He did not have any type of encouragement or support from his family except for his sister, who used to encourage him and help him in learning English. So, Student E had a “bad” experience learning English in EFL classrooms and had no support from his parents

Student H was supported by his mother, who assisted him by enrolling him in a language institution in his city and also encouraging him to learn English outside the school. He said that he was not serious about English in EFL classes, and he also said that his outside classes for English were helpful but not that beneficial. He did not practice the language, and also claimed that he was not interested in learning the language in English school, and so his mother eventually just gave up.

Student E stated that her mother was an English teacher, which was good for her in learning English because her mother was able to teach her. She also stated that she did not have any challenges in learning English because her mother was with her all the time and motivated her by giving her short stories to read.

The Seventh Theme: Challenges Encountered in EFL Settings

From the interviews with the ten participants, seven of them highlighted that their teachers were the biggest challenge for them in EFL classrooms. Classmates were the second-biggest challenge reported in EFL classrooms. Lastly, Saudi English curriculums were discussed by three of the participants as one of the challenges in EFL classrooms. The figure below summarizes the challenges faced by the Saudi students in their home country.

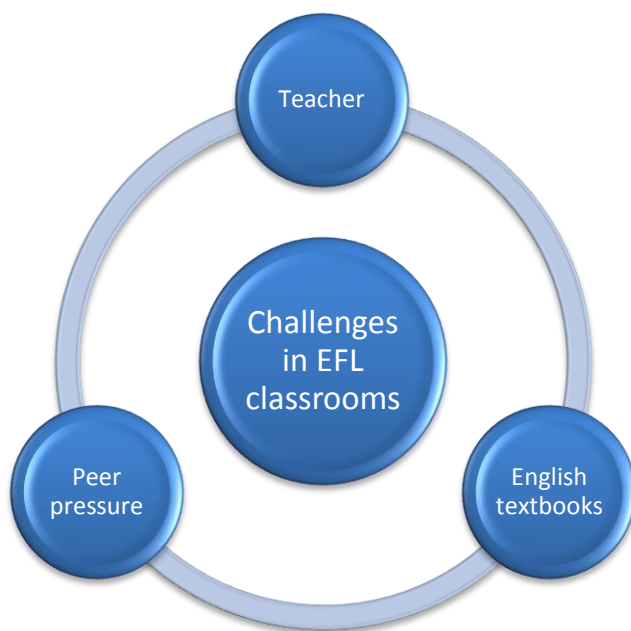


Figure 2. Challenges encountered in EFL classrooms.

EFL teachers. Student E stated that his English teacher was a big challenge for him; he did not find that his English teacher supported him when he needed assistance with his English. He said:

If the teacher did not help and explain to us, we wouldn't learn. For me, I'm the learner who learns by listening and observing not by reading and understanding. I can't read

something and then understand. I always like to listen to the teacher and look at him to understand.

This student had difficulty understanding his teacher and following his strategies in teaching English. He found that his English teacher was not always there for him when he needed support, and said that in EFL classes, his English teacher was absent in his language learning and that it was challenging to learn a foreign language. His learning strategies were observing and listening to the teacher; however, his teacher did not help him in his learning.

Student G stated that a big challenge with learning English in EFL classes was his English teacher's pronunciation, when the teacher pronounced an English word with the accent of his mother tongue. This student found his English teacher confusing due to his pronunciation, and stated, "Let say he doesn't like have the natural tongue of English." He said that he did not rely upon his teacher's pronunciation to learn English pronunciation in EFL classes, and that he looked for assistance outside class since he had the opportunity to learn English on a daily basis due to his father's job.

Student A also found his English teacher to be one of the challenges he encountered in EFL classrooms. His English teacher showed little interest in tracking his students' progress to ensure their understanding. His teacher's lack of interest in his students influenced the students' desire to learn, because the students started to realize that their teacher was not concerned about their motivation. The students' opinions of their teachers were negative, and they blamed the teachers for being such a big challenge in their learning. Student A said, "For example, if I didn't understand, he repeats what he said again, he doesn't think of another ways. So, I started to ignore and don't care if I didn't understand."

Student B's biggest challenge was different from that of the other participants. She said that her English teacher brought her "motivation down" when she spent more time with uninterested students, explaining the lesson for them. She stated that her classmates showed less interest in learning English, which led her teacher to concentrate on them to raise their language proficiency. For her, being at a different academic level, classes were challenging because, as she stated, this affected her motivation. She also reported that her English teacher's teaching strategies were challenging in the way they delivered the content of the books.

Student J echoed that his English teacher was a big challenge for him due to using the L1 in the EFL classroom. He found that learning English by using his native language was challenging because firstly, Arabic grammar and word order are different from English, and secondly, there was a lack of practice in the language.

Student D discussed a challenge that most of the participants encountered in EFL classrooms. Using Arabic to offer English lessons was a big challenge to this student, and she commented, "The other challenge, when I told you that when I have a teacher who speaks Arabic, that isn't very useful, very helpful, isn't effective." She stated that her teacher's Arabic strategies inhabited learning English in EFL classes, which led to poor English outputs. She also added that her English teacher used English when there was a supervisor in the classroom just to show that she was teaching in English.

Peer pressure. Five of the ten participants stated that their classmates were a challenge in their EFL education. They said that their peers in EFL classes did affect them in terms of their motivation to learn English. In this sub-theme, I will discuss how classmates were one of the challenges EFL learners encountered in their English learning path.

Student D found that her classmates were either less interested or not interested in learning English in EFL classrooms, which affected her in an indirect way when interacting with the language. She found that the less interested students in her EFL class were a challenge for her in learning English in a helpful environment. She said, “That’s when you have the classmate and teachers like that you won’t learn English.” She reported that her classmates in her previous EFL class made it a less than perfect place for her to improve her English. She raised a concern about her classmates’ behaviour toward the language, and mentioned that both classmates and teachers were difficult to deal with in the EFL environment.

Student F stated that her classmates treated practicing or speaking English in EFL classrooms as ridiculous if a student showed an interest toward the language and spoke the language in the class. They encountered many jokes, and that reduced the students’ desire to learn. So, peer pressure was one of the challenges that EFL learners encountered in EFL classrooms. Student F said:

English is not something we take seriously back in Saudi Arabia and that was another challenge. You imagine yourself actually like talking to your friend in English; she will definitely laugh at you for no reason because why are you speaking English. That’s so weird.

This type of behaviour caused her and other interested students in EFL classrooms to lack enthusiasm in EFL settings, and this was repeated by other participants as well.

Student J reported that his classmates were not supportive in practicing the language, which led him to refuse to speak English in front of them. He added, “When you practice with your friend maybe your friend joke of you or they will correct you.” So, for this student, peer pressure prevented him from practicing the language in the classroom, which resulted in low

language proficiency for him. He also added that if the teacher had controlled the class and inhibited laughing and joking about speaking the language, they might have had a better outcome.

Student B commented that being in a class where classmates showed low interest in learning English was a challenge, since she preferred to be in a class where classmates were fully interested in learning. She stated:

I was too passionate about learning English where other students found it difficult and hard and sometimes may they aren't interested in that. May be I would prefer to be in a class where all students are really interested to learn this language and nobody is forced to join the class to learn this language.

She claimed that her EFL classmates were not enthusiastic about learning English, which affected her. Student A noted that joking behaviour is common with Saudi students, and said some of them did the same thing when any Saudi students attempted to practice the language with other friend:

The other thing, the classmates would laugh and comment all the time if someone tries to speak English. This happens in here as well in some cases when someone wants to practice the language in here some of them would laugh at those who speak English all the time.

This behaviour challenged him in both learning environments; however, he said that in ESL classes it was more manageable than in EFL classrooms because he could practice with non-Saudis outside class.

English textbooks as a challenge. Three of the ten participants had different perspectives about English textbooks in EFL classes. One of the three said that the English

textbooks in EFL classes were too complicated and difficult for them because advanced textbooks were used even in grade one. The first student was studying in a special government school that belonged to the Foreign Ministry under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, so it was mandatory for students in this school to learn English starting in Grade One. For him, learning English at the age of six was not feasible because of the difficult textbooks. He stated: “To start by using something difficult and the materials at the time was difficult. It was so difficult. It was complicated for me at age 6 to start with something very complicated and difficult especially it was a foreign language for us.”

He said that when he came to Canada, he realized that the English textbook he was working from was the same textbook that he had been given when he started learning English in Grade One. He complained, “How can I learn something in early age that was difficult for me in age of 26 in Canadian language school?”

Likewise, Student J reported that the textbooks in EFL classrooms were advanced for that age: “The books there are more advanced and even when you read you think it’s hard, I don’t want to learn it”. He believed that the English textbooks in EFL were difficult to learn from for his age, since the teachers only used the textbooks and there were no other materials to help ease the content. He compared the English textbooks in ESL and EFL, and reported that ESL textbooks were a better fit for students’ levels.

Student F had different perspectives about English textbooks in EFL classrooms and described them as “repeated textbooks.” She said that she was disappointed when she moved to high school and found that the high school textbooks were mostly similar to the intermediate English textbooks. She found that she was more advanced than what she had been given in the EFL classrooms: “The books have to keep up with people and sometimes it’s not about like

make them harder but just upgrade the level a little bit, extend the subject, talk about politics and educations, world news, something that actually worth discussion.” She added that topics like these might stimulate students to pursue the language instead of being taught the same basic content for years.

Summary of the Interviews

This chapter discussed the findings of the study, which were drawn from interviews with ten Saudi participants. The interviews produced seven themes that emerged from the participants’ responses. The findings are related to the Saudi students’ perspectives about their experiences learning a foreign language in Saudi Arabia and then learning the same language in a native-speaking country context, and showed some disparity in their language learning in the two different learning environments. All participants reported some concerns about EFL English classrooms in Saudi Arabia and the extent of the benefits they could obtain in those classrooms. Then, they elaborated the differences in their attitudes toward the language in an environment outside Saudi Arabia.

Chapter Five

Discussion of the Research Findings

This chapter discusses the research findings of the study in relation to the previously reviewed literature on Saudi students' experience and performance in learning English in two learning environments. This discussion focuses on two aspects: Saudi students' experience in learning English in two different learning environments, and their attitude as linked to their self-esteem. I examine their learning experiences in EFL and ESL classrooms and investigate the reasons that contributed to their negative or positive learning experiences. I discuss factors that may have contributed to their English language education in Saudi Arabia and abroad. Then, in the data analysis stage, I discuss factors which might contribute to their English language outputs.

In this study I learned that Saudi students perform according to the settings and circumstances that they were surrounded with. The Saudi students reported in this study that their English language learning attitude changed depending on the environment and their teachers' behaviour. These two factors were repeated strongly by the Saudi students in this study. They commented that in EFL classroom settings, they had limited learning outputs or even unsatisfactory outcomes. Dornyei (1990) described EFL classrooms as learning in hunger, which is to some extent unlike second language classrooms, and this has been proved by the Saudi participants in this study. The following are some of the findings that the study revealed, and answer the first and second research questions.

Research Question 1: What are Saudi students' experiences learning English in Saudi Arabia and abroad?

Students' self-esteem in EFL /ESL

Students' self-esteem was one of the themes repeated by the participants; students' self-esteem is a crucial phenomenon in learning an SL/FL because students cannot reach the target language fluency if they lack it. Some participants stated that their self-esteem was not sufficiently strong to survive in the EFL classes because they had issues of fear of capability, which created a barrier between them and the language. However, the students believed that they could overcome their low self-esteem in ESL when they mastered the language. Hassan (2001) demonstrated that self-esteem in English language classes affects learners' evaluations of their ability to succeed in the classes in terms of language use, achievement, and attitude toward the language. The absence of self-esteem resulted in less successful production because no learning activities could be achieved if self-esteem was missing (Ostadian, 2008). Having self-esteem means the learner is boosting themselves to achieve their aims, and English acquisition is the case in this study. Saudi learners did not attempt to boost themselves to learn English in EFL classes, or they did not find suitable circumstances to do so; however, they could boost their self-esteem if they found a helpful environment that aided them to learn English in a proper manner.

Furthermore, Saudi students' self-esteem was influenced by classroom circumstances; their evaluation of themselves was impacted by the learning environment and the teachers' behaviour. Self-esteem is how an individual designates themselves as a person, and is how an individual evaluates their confidence, self-evaluation and self-efficacy. Researchers have claimed that low self-esteem usually occurs when students have negative assessments in their

English classes; they believed that there is a correlation between the negative evaluations and the students' fear and anxiety. Because of the negative evaluations and this situation, teachers were blamed because teachers who create stressful environments affect their students' fears. There is no doubt that fear is one of the main components of self-esteem for language learners, since fear impacts their evaluation of themselves as a learner. SL/FL learners who have a high level of self-esteem tend to achieve more than those with lower self-esteem, and they are more likely to engage in the learning process and effectively succeed in the target language (Liu, 2012).

English Teachers' Roles in the EFL Context

In terms of the roles of their teachers in their language outputs, the teachers' motivations, behaviours, and proficiency were reported by students as the three components that students believed that they were influenced by.

Teachers' motivations. Saudi students believed that EFL classrooms were, to some extent, unsuccessful English learning settings, and they felt that teachers were one of the negative factors they encountered in EFL classrooms. The students believed that English teachers in EFL classrooms influenced the students' effectiveness. My study finds that Saudi English teachers were less motivated to teach English, as students sensed that their English teachers showed less interest and less desire to communicate, and the students also noticed this attitude when the teachers attend each class.

Teachers in EFL classrooms were the only source that students were relying on; they were the only point of supply for motivation, encouragement, and language production, along with their responsibility for their attitude in the classes (Nikolov & Djigmovic, 2011). However, the students felt that their EFL teachers lacked the extrinsic and intrinsic motivation for teaching because of the surrounding circumstances, and students might be one of the reasons that resulted

in decreasing the teachers' self-motivation. Moreover, some well-known factors in teachers' motivation were listed as follows: students' motivation, students' achievements, and positive relationships with the students (Hettiarachchi, 2013). So, connecting these factors to my study participants, Saudi students were lacking the motivation, having low achievements, and showing tense relationships with their teachers. Hettiarachchi (2013) added English teachers' motivations in Saudi public schools were likely to be similar to those of "Sri Lankan" teachers because of the absence of motivation in both groups, which resulted in negative attitudes being reflected in the students. Teachers' demotivation was connected to some factors which affect their students' enthusiasm in the classrooms; these factors were the circumstances in class, i.e., "teacher demotivation is often associated with five main factors, stress nature of work, inhibition of teacher autonomy, insufficient self-efficacy, content repetitiveness, and inadequate career structure" (Hettiarachchi, 2013, p. 2).

According to the students' perceptions, teachers' motivations in EFL classrooms were limited to the delivering of the book content and nothing else, which caused low enthusiasm in students learning. The students felt that they were affected by their teachers' lack of inspiration, which had negative consequences on their English learning outputs. The students in this study argued that their English teachers appeared to be demotivated and that they seemed to be obligated only to attend the classes, and the students successively sensed the same attitude toward the language. EFL classrooms seemed like just a schoolroom where they learned a minor subject, as they used to believe, where they might learn or not, and in either situation they were not any more concerned about their language outputs than any other subject because of, as they said, the discouraging environment. The students sensed that this attitude might be due to some teachers' beliefs which could be eventually transferred to the students. The students realized that

the teachers' characters in the classrooms seemed to be mismatched with the students' needs. On the other hand, one of the causes of teachers' demotivation in EFL classrooms, according to Sugino (2010), was students' attitudes in the classroom; for example, if the students have no interest in EFL classrooms, that definitely affects the teachers' motivations. Also, they believed that the curriculum was one of the factors in teachers' demotivation in EFL classes; English textbooks in the Saudi educational system are more repetitive, and sometimes it is a challenging task because some students felt that the content was too advanced.

Saudi students elaborated that their teachers were somewhat demotivated, and that was interpreted as them being "less qualified" because they believed that teachers should be fully enthusiastic. Teaching quality is one of the main factors in having successful outputs in EFL classrooms. On the other hand, qualified teachers can help their students to be involved in tangible understanding and logical thinking during the class, rather than making the class about themselves, or in other words, being teacher-centered (Chen, Brown, Hattie, & Millward, 2012).

The students believed that their Saudi EFL teachers lacked the methods of analytical thinking and conceptual understanding which might have assisted them in engaging their students' collaboration. Furthermore, some EFL teachers were also described by the students as being demotivated for being only concerned with attendance; students felt that some of their English teachers tended to only be concerned that they attended the class to show that they were in the class and marked as attending, no matter if they were doing their jobs or not. As a result, some Saudis were less interested in EFL classrooms for the reason of less involvement. So, this demeanor consequently might influence the learners, which contributed to the students' weak language proficiency. Moreover, some students believed that some of their English teachers were teachers in name only because of the unexpected attitudes that the teachers displayed. Wittrock

(1986) stated that teachers' motivations have an impact on students' accomplishments and education.

Teachers' behaviour. The most surprising findings with regard to the students were around teachers' behaviour, which was the second theme that emerged from students' perspectives about their English teachers' role in EFL classrooms; what was meant by "behaviour" was the teachers' attitudes and reactions, and the term "teachers' behaviour" did not refer to the teachers' manners. Furthermore, most of the participants in this study felt distress about their EFL teachers' behaviour with them in class. The students pointed out some negative teachers' mannerisms: for instance, undisciplined actions (making fun of them, shouting), ignorance, and neglecting students' problems were all causes of students' failure (Shahmohammadi, 2013). According to the students' perspectives, some teachers in Saudi classrooms showed some of these behaviours with their students, which resulted in less encouragement. The consequence was students' rejection of the subject and the teachers themselves. Additionally, "strict teachers" were the most pointed element that students presented in this study; they believed that their teachers were overpowering in the classrooms, which impacted the students' language learning. Shahmohammadi (2013) likewise mentioned that a tense relationship between teacher and student is likely to result in undisciplined behaviour and a rejection of classroom rules.

Saudi teachers' behaviour probably influenced Saudi students in EFL classrooms in terms of their confidence to practice the language. Most of the participants mentioned that their confidence was shaken to a large extent, and they believed that it might be due to their teachers' interactions with them. The students indicated that EFL teachers were strict and not-motivating, and their behaviour produced barriers between the students and the language. A good teacher-

student relationship is mainly the outcome of a vigorous educational environment which enhances the educational achievements in EFL classes and in all other subjects' classes, not just English (Shahmohammadi, 2013). However, according to the participants in this study, Saudi EFL classes, as a result of the relationship between the teachers and students, appear to be a quite bit stressed because of the teachers' behaviour. Teachers, as the main pillars in EFL classrooms, must have sufficient psychological knowledge on how to interact with the students by knowing their needs and wants, besides stimulating their cognitive learning (Adalsteinsdottir, 2004). The teachers' role in EFL classes is to facilitate the tasks for the students; however, as the participants assumed, some of the EFL teachers tended to do the opposite, and additionally, the EFL teachers seemed to lack the proper skills in interacting with their pupils. Interestingly, teachers' behaviour was not relevant to the class size (students' number). The behaviour could be related to the teachers' confidence, knowledge, experience and teaching skills. In other words, teachers need to dedicate their school time to understanding the learning process, besides their personal behaviour, since students are influenced by any reactions by their teachers (Adalsteinsdottir, 2004).

Teachers' negative feedback on students' mistakes were reported by most of the participants. Some of the participants in the current study had a negative experience in terms of mistakes in their oral feedback. Teachers' awareness of the students' sensitivity over their mistakes resulted in a better climate for both the teachers and learners (Hendrickson, 1978). Teachers' thoughtful responses to students' mistakes creates a good interaction between the students and teachers in EFL classrooms, which make the feedback more acceptable and effective (Hendrickson, 1978). In some cases, the students doubted that the teachers provided the students opportunities to solve their mistakes. Some English teachers in EFL classes directly

correct their students' mistakes to save time, or in some situations neglect oral mistakes: for instance, the pronunciation mistakes which result in low proficiency in English. Generally, teachers are expected to provide students sources of the necessary knowledge, and their reactions to students' mistakes contribute to the students' achievements (Hendrickson, 1978). Moreover, the participants believed that inappropriately correcting students' mistakes during classroom time might lead to discomfort if the teacher lacks the educational skill of giving feedback to the learners, because error correction is a sensitive topic between classmates; for example, one of the participants reported that in his opinion his teacher's feedback on his pronunciation was unsuitable, which eventually caused him anxiety in class and as a result, poor outputs. Teachers' negative attitudes toward students' mistakes might strongly affect the students' behaviour towards learning from those mistakes, instead using the mistakes to create barriers between the learners and the target language, which occurred in EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia (Tuils, 2013).

In addition, students in this study believed that they had strict teachers in English classrooms, which caused barriers to the students' and teachers' interaction. In EFL classrooms, there were miscommunications between the teachers and students. As the participants suggested, this miscommunication was due to the teachers' behaviour. They were "authoritarian" with students, and that might be one of the main challenges that students encountered in EFL classrooms.

Brock, Brakelmans, and Webbels (2004) stated that some studies clarified that language teachers have, to a great extent, more influence over their students than other courses' teachers. Teachers' behaviour with individual learners has a great impact on the students' interaction with the teacher (Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

Teacher's language proficiency. EFL teachers' proficiency component was reported by most of the participants as being unsatisfactory in terms of the quality of the teaching. The students stated that their EFL teachers were using the first language in most of their construction, which resulted in students' confusion and poor proficiency in the target language. Moreover, when the teacher counts on the first language as a tool to facilitate their pedagogy, the student was deprived from gaining successful outputs (Turnbull & Arnett, 2002). The Saudi participants in the current study believed that due to the exaggerated usage of Arabic, the students showed less interest in asking questions in the target language; When they used Arabic to ask questions for clarification, grammar explanations, and meaning interpretation, they displayed less interest because of their belief that they could not learn English; all the participants indicated that the teachers should use 100% English instruction instead of Arabic. Teachers' language proficiency is mandatory in some Asian countries, which results in good proficiency in terms of teaching English in these countries (Butler, 2012); however, the situation seems to be different in the Saudi context, as some of English teachers are not adequately proficient in teaching English. Teachers should have a high level of proficiency in English because they are not native speakers of this language, and this requires them to be highly attentive to the language they teach (Butler, 2012). In addition, a progressive level of English language proficiency is anticipated from EFL teachers (Park & Lee, 2006).

However, the interview data revealed that EFL teaching in some English classrooms was done with less than 50% English instruction, thereby causing less desire in students to speak and use English confidently. English teachers in EFL classes in Saudi Arabia believed that students would not understand the lesson if they spoke all in English, so using Arabic eased the teaching process for both teachers and students, but as a result students graduated from high school with

poor proficiency in the target language. Some English teachers in EFL classrooms might fail to create a suitable environment for the students, which led to language barriers and as well as poor outputs. Therefore, teaching English in Saudi classes did not fulfil the desired objectives of teaching a foreign language. Furthermore, researchers of EFL teaching have classified Saudi English teachers as inadequately qualified due to the insufficient training they had prior to the actual job. According to Al-Seghayer (2014a), Saudi EFL teachers are inadequately trained to prepare students to be good English learners. It is publicly acknowledged that the proficiency level of the majority of Saudi Arabia's English teachers is insufficient to the degree that they barely understand the materials that they are attempting to teach to students

At the beginning of the 1980s, Saudi teachers were trained to teach English through a four-year English program in Saudi universities in order to gain a Bachelor of Arts degree in English (Alseghayer, 2014). These English programs trained the instructors to teach in public and private schools through three stages: primary, intermediate, and secondary (Alseghayer, 2014). However, in the English programs, teaching methodology was only 10% of the whole platform (Alseghayer, 2014), which means that the teachers' knowledge of methodology was inadequate. They need more professional training such as English teachers used to receive in the 1970s, when the Ministry of Education offered qualified English teachers the opportunity to obtain an English Diploma from British universities to prepare them to teach English in Saudi schools (Alseghayer, 2014).

Teaching Methods in EFL Classrooms

Traditional method implementation. According to the participants, an ordinary teaching style in EFL classrooms was reported by most of the participants in this study. This kind of teaching caused the EFL learners to be disinterested in English, and they continued

throughout their compulsory levels of schooling to give English less value than other subjects. EFL classes in the Saudi context were treated the same as any other course. Teachers did not consider the differences between English and other courses, and EFL is a sensitive case since it needs more appreciation from the teachers and learners because of the fact that English is not spoken in the country, nor do students have a background unless they have travelled abroad. English teachers teach English on a traditional basis, which has led to poor proficiency and less interest because students lost their enthusiasm. Teachers should generally simplify their teaching language, but some teachers in Saudi EFL classrooms tend to ignore this and instead concentrate on finishing the textbook content during the scheduled time.

The participants complained about the way that English was taught in Saudi classrooms, and stated that if they could have learned English in a motivated manner, they would have loved to learn the language but the English teaching approaches were not advanced. The complaints continued on the teaching methods of English in the Saudi classrooms, and they stated that learning English in a traditional manner made them unwilling to learn the language because their teachers did not stimulate their learning desire; the teachers mostly adhered to the 45-minute period time to finish the lesson to meet the syllabus instructions and deadlines for the subjects.

The English classes in Saudi Arabia are teacher-centered, and book-centered, and involved grammar translation; Saudi teachers still use traditional methods, and thus the EFL classrooms were boring for the students, which caused some students to skip the classes. Most of the participants reported that learning English in EFL classes was not interesting at all; they found that English in EFL settings was just a class they should attend no matter whether they learned or not because there was no encouragement to study it in EFL classrooms. In fact, the traditional classes and boring teaching style caused further low proficiency and poor production;

most of the participants stated that they did not want to learn the language, and they always looked for an excuse to stay outside the classrooms during the class time.

Teachers should dedicate their efforts to delivering the lessons with the intent to teach the language with passion in order to encourage the students to acquire the language, instead of teaching basic English for purposes of passing the exam, which is the main concern in English education in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, EFL teachers are supposed to be heavily involved in their classes; however, it seems that in Saudi English classrooms, they were involved physically but their concentration was absent in terms of integrating entertainment and activities in their teaching. Teaching English requires extra effort from both learners and educators; EFL needs more attention and has to be implemented in a variety of methods to deliver the textbook content, and also beyond that content in terms of accuracy and fluency in the target language.

Additionally, previous studies in the field mentioned that language teaching and learning methods are a complicated task for both teachers and learners. It is not easy to obtain an effective approach and select them for their teaching and learning; thus; teachers must be aware of the learners' needs and implemented variety of approaches to meet the learners' satisfactions (Pica, 2000). Again, a foreign language is a bit challenging for teachers and learners, but English is an interesting language because of its status in the world, and this language is a necessity nowadays.

In addition, when the learner's impression about the learning environment is negative and they classify it as a boring place, they lack the enthusiasm and the motivation to learn. Also, there is a lack of integration of the learning elements, which are the desire, the need, and the achievements, and some learners in Saudi classes lacked these three components. The sustainability of satisfactory language outputs needs a combination of these components to provide the learners sustainable knowledge. When the language learning becomes an exam-based

setting, the learners will only be concerned with their grades on the exams, because the teachers prepared the students for this purpose and no other. EFL classrooms in the Saudi context were only formulating the language learning towards examinations, which limits the students' attention to performing in the exams. However, the classroom stream is entirely the contrary in ESL context; participants reported that ESL classes work more on the learners' cognitive ability, and that the ESL context transfers the students from the learning stage to the acquisition stage, as the ESL teachers are more eager to have good student outcomes. The data analysis exposed that the effectiveness of ESL learning on the Saudi students' language outputs. The organization of the classrooms, integrating educational approaches such as critical thinking, peer feedback, cognitive learning, brainstorming, and communicative learning, were new approaches for the Saudi students; however, they paid off eventually and the students could acquire the language because of the teaching methods.

EFL learning environment. English is a foreign language in the Saudi context, and students learn English from Grade Four as a compulsory subject. English is taught on both public and private schools in the Saudi educational system. Khan (2011) mentioned that English is taught in all school levels but it does not seem to have as plenty of significance in the curriculum compared to other countries in the region such as the Gulf Cooperation Council. In fact, the production of English is mismatched with the major objectives of teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi schools, which brought concern to the education regulators in the Saudi English education field because of the low proficiency in EFL classrooms, which were not a sufficient source for English learners in Saudi classes. Interestingly, students looked for other sources such as private English institutions, which helped them to learn the language further, and some students utilized additional resources such as watching English movies, listening to English

music, and playing English games, so the students reported that they did have the desire to learn English, but the surrounding circumstances seemed not to be supportive. In the Saudi context, English is valued differently between the public schools and the private schools; some participants in this study were in private schools and they reported that English in the private schools is a bit intensive since they learn this subject in daily classes, whereas in public schools it is only three 45-minute periods a week, which shows an obvious distinction between the outputs of private and public English education. Also, in the public schools, English education is considered to be late, since students do not begin learning English till the fourth grade, while in private schools students learn from the first grade.

From the students' responses, the environment where they learned English did impact them to a great extent and this influence in fact affected their behaviour to learn English, since the English atmosphere in Saudi classes were unsatisfactory and did not support the students to learn English in a helpful manner. The absence of technology (e.g., computer programs, tape recorders) in the English classes in both types of school was another issue that contributed to the students' demotivation to learn. The schools in Saudi Arabia provide these resources to the teachers; however, teachers might think it is not necessary, or using additional materials besides the books causes the teacher to lose control of their classes. When asked about the learning environment, most of the interviewed participants responded that the absence of technology and activities makes a difference, since they had had the chance to experience learning English in an ESL environment and noticed the differences between the two environments. Ilter (2009) discussed the importance of using technology in English language classes as it affects the learners' attitude toward the language in a positive manner. Technology generally and in EFL

settings particularly provides many advantages to the learners; they can have an access to real learning setting via technology in addition to enhancing their motivation as well.

To further explain how the learning environment influenced the learners, those students who had been in a public schools had a strong claim about how the English classes were outlined; the students focused on the class settings, and English classes in particular, because EFL was taught in regular classrooms, which provided the students the negative conception that English was a minor subject. For instance; science teachers distinguished that physics and biology need certain materials and that they should be taught in science labs to provide the students with all the potential items that the students should have in order to succeed; however, English did not receive the same treatment or value, so the students had this belief that English is a minor subject.

According to the participants, the EFL classrooms were restricted by the teachers' roles and instructions, and they were deprived from some freedom in the classrooms in terms of classmates' or teachers' interaction, which resulted in learning difficulties because of the learning environment's influence. On the other hand, the private school students shared the same concerns about the learning environment; although the private schools were providing more intensive English, the environments did not differ from the public schools. Again, the issue of the learning environment is linked to the traditional teaching style in both environments, which shows the disparity between the two environments (ESL and EFL). Another distinction in the two categories of schools (private and public) was the teachers' support in both types of schools; students reported that private school teachers were more supportive and helpful in terms of facilitating the language for the learners, whereas the public school teachers were less compassionate about their students. In addition, the 100% teacher-centered classes were what

marked the English learning environment as an inadequate place to learn English; in other words, the participants assumed that EFL was 0% learner-centered, since learners were the receivers in all the classes and the teacher was dedicated to lecturing the students, even though learning English required additional communication, more interaction, and less lecturing.

Such an interpretation suggests that there is a disconnect between the teachers' approach in EFL classes and the learners, because the teachers' concern is to deliver the lesson within a limited time and the students were not able to practice the language. Li (1998) emphasized that the teachers' disconnect with their students in Korea is likely to be due the teachers fear of face loss of not being qualified in their teaching. Answering the students' questions is highly concerning the teachers in Korea because they think that it is embarrassing for the teacher if they did not answer their students' questions (Li, 1998). Such a connection between the students' outputs, the teachers' strategies, and the learning environment was undoubtedly a huge concern in re-thinking the English classroom settings and the teachers' teaching strategies.

EFL Classrooms vs. ESL Classrooms

In my study, the participants compared their experiences in the two contexts. The students revealed that the two learning environments had powerful influences on them; however, because of their experiences in both contexts, the participants in this study believed that each environment impacted the students in different ways. All the participants claimed that not only did their performance improve, but also their attitudes and beliefs toward the language changed ultimately. Interestingly, the students reported that the effectiveness of ESL classrooms contributed to improvements in their language behaviour, since their previous attitudes had been negative. Therefore, their learning habits accordingly changed with their new settings and language production. Most of the participants stated that the major part of their negative belief

was due to the challenges that they encountered in their previous environment. The students felt that the efficiency of the ESL classrooms was linked to the issues inside the classrooms: for instance, the teacher's role, the environment itself, and the teaching methods employed in the new classrooms. As a result, they believed that these factors negatively influenced the learners in their previous classrooms, but the same factors impacted them in different ways, and was a positive influence regarding their language outputs.

Most of the interviewed participants stated that ESL classrooms were the place which successfully filled gaps in their knowledge that they had from their previous learning experience, resolving their language problems and rebuilding their confidence toward the language, which resulted in successful outcomes. Students modified their perspectives and personal beliefs about the language and reported that English is a very interesting language. They also realized the importance of this language in their lives and future careers. Moreover, the issue about the ineffectiveness of EFL teaching is due to the lack of a balanced approach in teaching the language in Saudi Arabia. ESL classrooms, however, seem to have balanced approaches which are known as the instructional approach and the cooperative learning approach; these approaches underline improvement in English, as learners have the opportunity to learn together in a minor groups to develop their skills (Shaabaa & Ghaith, 2005). The students in this study presented some good examples of successful approaches for cooperative learning, such as activities that helped them to increase their learning enthusiasm along with their productivity. Most of the participants reported the importance of using activities in ESL classrooms as a helping approach to hold students' motivation in the classrooms, because if the students lack sufficient motivation in the language classroom, the learning process might be affected, which was obviously the case in EFL classrooms.

The participants also added that using technology was one of the effective methods used in ESL but not in EFL classrooms. The students' responses to the interviews' questions revealed an evident difference between the production in the two classrooms; the students assumed that technology was offered in Saudi schools but that some teachers tended to ignore this opportunity to enhance the students' attention. The students commented that non-technology classes resulted in less interesting subjects, because technology makes a difference in any subject plan. Using technology in EFL classrooms helped in improving the students' attitudes toward receiving the instructions, and also it contributed to adjusting the teachers' guidelines (Pope & Golub, 2000). Technology was a missing component in the English language classrooms in Saudi classes and caused an unsatisfying environment, as the students emphasized. Using technology in English classrooms creates opportunities for the students to use its advantages by learning in a real-life setting. Technology also contributes to keeping the students motivated in class, and encourages both the teachers and students (Gencilter, 2009). The students reported that technology for them was not limited to computers and software, but also things like tape recorders, DVD players and other materials that some English lessons need. The English curriculum in Saudi education mostly covers (listening, reading and writing) three of the four skills; the books were designed in chapters, with a listening section in each chapter, and the students were supposed to listen to this section by using cassettes. The teachers were supposed to use tape recorders to play the cassettes; however, some teachers disregarded the listening sections, and as a consequence this led to a technological absence in English language classes.

The role of activities in English classes. Most of the interviewed students stated that using activities was the best method to stimulate them to learn the language in ESL classes; however, activities were not provided for them as a learning tool in EFL classes, although most

of the students found the lesson activities a helpful process to gain more knowledge and work cooperatively with classmates. Students were more involved in the ESL classes, since the activities were integrated into them, which facilitated the learning process and made the students more involved. The nature of EFL classes was very dry in its construction; the period time was limited to homework revision and covering the lesson syllabus. Moreover, the activities in ESL classes could encourage the students' interest and motivation in the classes. English activities helped learners to improve all four English skills, whereas the four skills were not sufficient in the EFL classes; most of the participants reported that not all skills were integrated in everyday classes. The classes were fully grammar-based, but if the teachers would utilize lesson activities, the students will have a better chance to work on their skills, as the activities encourage the learners to work in pairs or groups, providing them more opportunity to practice the language. EFL classes were simply places where pupils would repeat after the teachers, but sometimes without understanding the lesson, whereas activities help the students understand the lessons more meaningfully because they are working with classmates.

Indeed, the four English language skills are the most significant components for learners to build their language acquisition, but do EFL classes provide all these skills in their daily classes? The answer is no. EFL classes in Saudi education concentrate mostly on grammar and vocabulary memorization, with lack of application of realistic practice of the language (Vernier, Barbuzza, Giusti, Moral & Cuyo, 2008). Moreover, using activities enabled the students to use their English skills by working on activities in indirect ways as they work with their answers with classmates. Shawer (2013) pointed out the non-communicative methods that English teachers provided in EFL classes, which proved the failure of this technique in teaching English because interaction is missing from both learners and teachers. Furthermore, teachers who teach

in a non-communicative setting seem to have been taught in the same environment, so it might be hard for them to change their language habits. Shower (2013) stated that researchers have showed that non-communicative teaching does not adequately support students to learn English. The students in my study stated that their language classes were merely grammar classes that led to poor outputs on the other English skills. In their view, the EFL teachers did not implement the English skills in daily teaching because of the non-communicative approach that they followed.

Using first language in EFL classes. Using the L1 in English classes was the second-biggest issue for the students in this study; the students argued that using Arabic in English classes confused them about the target language because of its excessive use. Besides the confusion the students had, the lack of opportunities to speak and use the target language was another issue in EFL classes, since they were mostly surrounded by their native tongue. Students reported that using Arabic inhibited them from acquiring the language; the students felt that English was not the target language in the class since the teachers used Arabic to illustrate English, and as a result the English language proficiency was definitely poor. Moreover, successful language teaching is determined by separating the first language from the second teaching, and dismissing the L1 from second language/foreign language classes is the solution (Cook, 2001).

Some participants said that their English teachers thought that using Arabic might ease the language instruction for the students, but that resulted in a completely opposite result. The English teachers in Saudi classes rely on a non-communicative approach, and using the first language is part of this approach; the students believed that using the first language was necessary to understand English, and if teachers adapted their method, the students would be confused. On the other hand, according to Cook (2001), being successful in the L2 might need

the avoidance of the L1 in order to reach the proper acquisition level. In contrast, using the L1 in second/ foreign language classes is not always harmful for the learners, since the native language can help the learners to obtain a clearer idea about the target language, but L1 usage should still be minimized. The L1 should be used whenever the teacher senses that the task is overwhelming and the students' capabilities are insufficient for the task; a limited use of the L1 helps both teachers and students in this case (Nation, 2003).

Participants in this study reported over-usage of the first language in their English classes; some teachers used Arabic over 50% of the class time, with the result that students asked questions in Arabic and the teachers responded in Arabic. On the other hand, Storch and Wiggiesworth (2003) emphasized that researchers have proved that using the L1 aids students with their cognitive approach; the use of Arabic assists the learners to understand the language and learners can also reach a higher level than when restricted to the second/foreign language only. Some researchers believe that an L2 should be taught in the same way as an L1 is taught to a young child, and that the learners should acquire the language rather than simply learning it. In addition, opponents of using the first language in second language classes argue that teachers should not interfere with the target language (TL) by using the first language; they claim that doing so results in inadequate proficiency in the TL (Campa & Nassaji, 2009).

Moreover, some researchers acknowledge that using the L1 in the target language classroom is linked to some extent to the students' motivation. Extensive use of the L1 leads students to have low motivation, which creates a misconception about the TL, and the students end up by understanding the task in the L1 and dismissing the use the TL (Turnbull & Arnett, 2002).

Teachers' encouragement in EFL classes. Teachers' lack of encouragement was reported by some of the participants in the current study; the participants believed that one of the causes of their low motivation was their teachers' lack of reinforcement, as the EFL teachers rarely encouraged the students, either verbally or nonverbally. According to the students, this behaviour affected them in their language outputs, besides their attitude toward the language. Some teachers might demotivate their students without knowing it, which resulted in language barriers in the TL. The interviewed students assumed that their teachers were not supportive or that their support did not match the students' needs; they neglected the psychological needs of the language learners, and the students who had a negative experience in the English classes will build their future knowledge along with this issue.

The traditional manner of teaching involved less encouragement for the learners because the monotonic learning style that the teachers themselves learned in was the main cause of their lack of encouragement; the teachers followed the methods that they had learned in as students, and then they applied the same methods with their students. Greene et al. (2004) emphasized that utilizing different types of learning approaches leads to a variety of positive outcomes that aid the learners in achieving their main goal. When teachers enhance their students' cognitive learning through encouragement, the learners will increase their learning production, resulting in a higher level of performance. Furthermore, the interviewed students reported that the encouragement they received in ESL classrooms was the major reason for their achievements. They stated that their English teachers in the ESL program used to reinforce their enthusiasm in verbal and nonverbal ways; for instance, motivated phrases, extra points, and simple gifts. This type of encouragement helped both learners and teachers to achieve good outcomes.

Researchers have proved that there is a relationship between achievements and teachers' and students' strategies (Greene et al., 2004). Additionally, teachers' encouragement might be done through their feedback to the students, and according to previous studies in the literature, teachers' feedback plays a vital role as an educational tool in the students' achievements (Ferris, 1997). Teachers' feedback or encouragement influences students' achievements in SL/FL classes in particular.

Most of the participants found that their teachers did not contribute to their language learning outcomes because the teachers did not deal properly with their students' language issues, including encouragement; they either were not supportive, or they lacked the supportive behaviour to help their students. In fact, the EFL teachers in Saudi English classes were performing as transmitters for the book content only, which was a minor part of their job as educators; their way of teaching required more encouragement, as they teach a sensitive subject. Consequently, the students lost motivation and the desire to learn English. Furthermore, teachers misunderstood that encouragement is a long-term goal that will assist learners with their English language learning both in and outside their school. Indeed, teachers' encouragement is linked to their efficacy in their classrooms; each teacher has the responsibility to produce a good learner, and through encouragement teachers can create motivated learners.

Role of Family

Parents and family members played a role in Saudi students' experiences in EFL classes. The results revealed that most of the participants' parents were assisting them in their English language Education outside school, which reflected that the parents valued the importance of learning an additional language, even though most of the interviewed students' families do not speak the language. However, "one hand cannot clap, " and if the Saudi students had a good

learning environment and a supportive family, they would be more successful learners in FL classes, and the learning outcomes would be more noticeable. There is a lack of research in the literature that explains parents' roles, since no studies have discussed how supportive parents are important in their kids' education. The parents' role was clearly showing when they encouraged their kids to attend a language institution on their summer vacation time, which is a good sign that the parents want their children to not only learn the language, but speak it fluently.

Research Question 2: What are Saudi students' challenges in their English language learning in EFL contexts?

EFL teachers. Most of the interviewed students claimed that some of their English teachers were a challenge. The impact of teachers' comments and feedback is highly concerning in EFL classes because these comments indirectly inhibit the learning process; teachers in general have an impact on the students' personalities and performance. The teacher's role, according to Uluga, Ozdenb, and Ahu Eryilmaz (2011), is to build their students' knowledge and characteristics; teachers impact their students' perceptions of learning as a process of production, and they can manage learning settings by guaranteeing the continuance of the process. English teachers are not an exception. EFL teachers in Saudi classes were a challenge for some students for different reasons; for instance, their behaviour and interactions with their students. According to Uluga, Ozdenb & Ahu Eryilmaz (2011), teachers are more than just persons who transfer information from the textbook to the students; teachers' roles involve more than just teaching, since they can build the students' confidence and self-esteem, as well as their academic level.

The students in this study had differing assumptions regarding their EFL teachers. The students assumed that some of them tended to be demotivated in their classes because of the teachers' negative impact on them. They said they were influenced by their teachers'

commentary and when some of the teachers overreacted when the students misunderstood the lesson; this behaviour resulted in low proficiency in the language since the teacher did not understand their students' attitudes. Students' rejection of their teachers' behaviour was not limited to the negative comments and reactions; they reported that some English teachers were not eager to correct their students' mistakes or their pronunciation, even though the students recognized their mistakes and wanted their teachers to correct them. Furthermore, teacher behaviour influenced the students' outputs; for example, behaviours like precision, comments, classrooms settings and teacher interactions. These factors are the main domain of teacher-student relationships, but few studies have discussed the differences between English language teachers' behaviour as compared to other subjects' teachers (Brok, Brekelmans, & Wubbel, 2004).

Moreover, the students in this study stated that EFL teachers indirectly prevented students' engagement in class, since the teachers did not understand the students' language needs and ignored the influence that their behaviour might produce in terms of the students' personalities. As Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy (1998) said, "teachers develop and hold implicit theories about their students about the subject matter that they teach and about roles and responsibilities and how they should act" (p. 233). Thus, teachers' roles are too wide in their influence; some teachers might discard this impact and believe that the students are responsible for their teachers' negative behaviour, because teachers sometimes lose their temper in class due to work overload. However, teachers are not supposed to blame the students for their own demotivated behaviour or overreactions because of the permanent affect it might have on the students' interest in English. In addition, as stated by Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy (1998), "teachers' efficacy has been defined as the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the

capacity to affect student performance.” (p. 202). Furthermore, researchers in the English teaching domain have argued that some of the EFL teachers in the Saudi education system were not sufficiently ready to teach English due to the gap between the teachers’ preparation programs and the students’ needs. They added that some EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia have insufficient knowledge about teaching methodology, language proficiency, and capability in FL/SL (Al-Hazmi, 2004).

Peer pressure. In this study, peer pressure was one of the factors affecting the process of learning in the FL/SL domain. Peer pressure or classmate influence was reported as a negative factor in EFL classes, and most of the students said that their peers had an impact on their language learning when they commented on their pronunciation or answers. Indeed, some studies have examined the influence of peer pressure on students’ behaviour, and mentioned that peer pressure might affect the way students think and act in a particular manner (Sautor, Messervey, & Kusumaker, 2000). The findings of this study demonstrated that some peers were negative motivators in EFL classes and that they could influence each other by producing some negative comments or jokes which led to a language barrier in an indirect manner. The students in the current study found that their classmates were frustrating factors for them because those peers themselves had issues in learning the English language. Most of the participants revealed that they avoided speaking in English classes because of their classmates’ criticism. Those who were interested in the EFL classes found their peers a challenge because they were a negative motivator when the students wanted to practice the language. Roskams (1999) indicated that Asian students had a fear of making mistakes in their EFL classes because of the peer pressure influence. Moreover, by reviewing previous studies, I learned that the literature still lacks focus on the negative impact of peers in EFL classrooms. An empirical study by Jahin (2012) showed

that a positive impact from peers can help students enhance their learning in ESL and EFL; that it can stimulate their motivation and attitude toward the language; and that it can also assist the students to evaluate their language proficiency. Indeed, classrooms are the one and only place that learners have access to the English language if they do not select additional sources to learn. However, if the students are deprived of assessments from peers and teachers, the outputs may barely be achievable. Furthermore, students who have a positive relationship with their classmates are revealed to have a high level of self-confidence and engagement in class. In other words, students who have positive relationships with their classmates seem to achieve more academically than those who do not (Elliot & Dweck, 2005).

Moreover, the importance of positive relationships between peers and the role that serves in the students' motivation and engagement demonstrates that there is an influential relationship between peer interactions in the classrooms which might affect overall outcomes (Wentzel, 1998). The impact of peer comments while learning appears to be critical to comprehend which aspects most influence the learning process (Gielen, Peeters, Dochy, Onghena, & Struyven, 2010); however, the case with the Saudi students was that peers' negative comments inhibited their engagement in the classroom because of fear of making mistakes and "losing face". Peer pressure influenced the students' behaviour and engagement, which caused long-term distress (Bursztyn & Jensen, 2015)

English textbooks. English textbooks in Saudi EFL classes were a concern. Some students assumed that the English textbooks were too advanced and hard for them to understand. A minority of the students reported that the English curriculum was higher than their level, which made them discouraged about learning English. However, those who were interested in learning the language in EFL classes said that the English textbooks were lower than their level,

and they actually used to look up more learning sources outside the classroom. Those interested students said that the content of their English textbooks in high school was rather repetitive, so there is a disparity in the students' perceptions about the English curriculum. Moreover, in terms of the state of the English curriculum in Saudi Arabia, Alfares (2014) mentioned that EFL textbooks were planned and printed by the Ministry of Education and that they meant to design them based on the students' culture, which was based on Islamic beliefs and concepts. They highlighted that English teaching in Saudi Arabia was done through a very Saudi-centred lens, keeping the original culture of the students and avoiding the promotion of any concepts that might be against Islamic beliefs (Alfares, 2014).

In addition, Alseghayer (2014b) argued that the English curriculum in Saudi Arabia is mismatched with the learners' needs. He said: "... the current curriculum lacks a clear link between its content and the teaching methods and the assessment measures that it employs. Furthermore, it seems that the curriculum is developed without an assessment or analysis of the students' needs at each school level" (p. 22)

The English curriculum in Saudi Arabia has undergone several attempts at development to meet each generation's need; however, the modern curriculum was developed on some general modules which assist students to build their English language skills, so the main objective the curriculum is aimed at enabling students' proficiency in speaking, listening, and reading, in addition to comprehension (Alseghayer, 2005a). Moreover, the analysis of the interviews revealed that the English curriculum was repetitive to some extent; the students said they learned mostly the same grammar and tenses for several years, which created a negative perspective inside them about learning English. Specifically, learning a language requires more diversity in methods and teaching skills because of the uniqueness of the subject, as it needs more

concentration from both teachers and learners to achieve acquisition. They added that their EFL teachers used mostly the same verbs and sentences in each class and that the textbooks also tended to repeat the same verbs in the grammar lessons in classes, which emphasized the English curriculum's repetition.

Although the department developing the English curriculum worked on it for an extensive period of time, students still believed that English textbooks were overwhelming for them. In the EFL context of Saudi Arabia, . English textbooks have to be fully English in their content and topics, which I believe, will strengthen the students' curiosity to learn and know more about the language and its culture. Moreover, the English textbook content was mostly about local topics such as "before Hajj", "Five pillars of Islam, " "The early spread of Islam, " "Ramadan, " and so on. So, these topics already exist in the Islamic subject matter and the students learn it in Arabic, and I believe that repeating the same topics in English is what causes most of the students to become disinterested, since it is repetitive. I strongly believe that teaching English culture has no effect on students' Islamic beliefs since they grew up in a conservative and religious society, and changing the English curriculum content would not harm the students' religion.

Furthermore, some experts have stated that because of the English curriculum, Saudi students have misunderstandings about the language and its rules (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). Even though there is huge emphasis on grammar rules in the EFL curriculum, teachers focus on those rules more than other skills because they think that reading and grammar are the most important components in learning English. However, grammar outputs are not the strongest elements for EFL students in Saudi Arabia (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). In another note about Saudi linguistic skills, Saudis overuse the article "the" and omit "an/ a" in their writing because of their confusion about the definitions in English and Arabic. Mahboob and Elyas (2014)

argued: “[L]inguistic analysis of the textbooks used in Saudi Arabia indicates that there is a range of linguistic features that are used in these books that are different from standard American and British Englishes” (p. 138). So, I think this is another dangerous issue that the language in English textbooks in Saudi Arabia is different from the American and the British versions of English.

Chapter Six

Implications and Conclusions

This chapter discusses the implications of the study and provides conclusions. It contains four sections. The first section deals with the implications of the current study for Saudi English teachers. The second section addresses the limitations of the current study. The third section points to some future directions for English language education in the Saudi context. Finally, the conclusions section summarizes the findings of the study.

Implications of the Study

There is no doubt that this study has some limitations; however, to date, some studies have focused on Saudi students' perspectives on their English language education in terms of their attitude and the influence of the learning environment on their learning experience. Therefore, this study has implications for EFL language education in Saudi Arabia with regard to teachers' language proficiency and training, in addition to the classroom environments that the students receive their education in. In fact, these three factors were the most influential ones for the participants, as the study's findings revealed, in addition to the students reporting that the EFL context was not adequately motivating, with the result that their motivation and desire were influenced accordingly. Therefore, teachers need to be more aware of their students' needs and weaknesses, and they should dedicate part of their time to monitoring their students and adopt a communicative approach in their teaching to enable the students to interact with the language. Also, they should work on their teaching methodologies and should have sufficient knowledge about the learners' psychological learning styles and academic levels in order to provide each learner what they need.

From my research, Students who received extrinsic motivation from their teachers showed more interest toward the language, whereas those who were disappointed about their teachers' behaviour and proficiency showed disinterest (Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 1999). In this study, the participants felt that the learning environment had an impact on their attitudes, as Saudi students are very responsive to the surrounding circumstances, whether positive or negative. According to the participants' responses, the main problem with EFL classes in the Saudi context is completely teacher-centered environments, as teachers lead the class and the students dedicate their time to listening to the teachers. Saudi EFL learning environments need a huge change in order to provide the students a suitable comfort zone to learn English.

Importantly, in another implication regarding teachers' language proficiency and training level in EFL settings, it is sad to hear students repeat that English teachers were one of the challenges in their English language journey; therefore, teachers should reconsider their teaching style as an important component for successful teaching. Additionally, English teacher programs in Saudi education should be more intensive to prepare the teachers to teach the language itself, not just teach about it.. Also, teachers should avoid fragmentation in teaching English skills, as each skill should be given adequate time in order to enable the students to achieve language acquisition. Moreover, more experience should be required for teaching EFL. I believe that English teachers should have more experience in teaching the language before they teach it in the schools; for instance, English teachers should acquire TESOL or CELTA certificates after they obtain their English degree but before they begin teaching the language.

Moreover, regarding English use in the classroom, English is not the spoken language in some English classes during class time, as teachers and students have replaced the target language with Arabic. An English-only policy should be put in place in Saudi classrooms as a

procedure to implement a communicative approach. English-only use would increase the students' awareness of the importance of their own responsibility in improving their language proficiency, because while the teacher's role is definitely to help, the students also have to work hard on their own, as the language will not come naturally.

Limitations

The current study has some limitations, one of which involves the absence of teachers' perspectives, as the study only explored students' perspectives. Teachers were not involved in this study because, as discussed in the methodology chapter, the participants are Saudi adults who are studying or who have studied English as a second language abroad. Although the study revealed important results, there are some limitations that should be considered in future research. The small sample in the study prevented the researcher from an extended understanding of further potential subjects as well as the cultural aspects that some other students may have in terms of their weakness and challenges. Another challenging factor for the researcher was that the participants had a fear of losing face because the researcher was from the same country. Importantly, the researcher here used her teaching experience in EFL classes to conduct the work done in this study. Regarding the bias in this study due to only using the perspectives of students studying English outside the kingdom, teachers' voices can help to provide some triangulation. Additionally, there is also the possibility that those who do not have the opportunity to study the language abroad might have other experiences. Indeed, the main aim of this study from the researcher's point of view is to help to improve the Saudi EFL context.

Recommendations for Future Research

The most important aspect that needs to be taken into consideration for future research is that of further in-depth study of Saudi English teachers' training and responsibilities: for

instance, continuing undertaking to reform teachers' education and professionalize teaching in the Saudi system. In addition, the learning environment in Saudi schools need also to be taken in consideration, the schools classrooms need to be more involving to the students because if the students feel that they are encouraged, this will definitely contribute to their learning.

Conclusions

The current study has explored Saudi students' experiences in learning English in two learning environments (EFL/ESL) and their motivation and performance in these two contexts. Through the study's interviews, I realized that the learning environment and the teaching methodology were the most reported factors that the students showed concern about. Moreover, the absence of investigation into the relationship between the students and teachers is a huge concern. The relationship between EFL students and their teachers needs more a communicative style, as the teachers in EFL classes are known for excessive time-taking. Also, the gap between the importance given to English language education in Saudi Arabia and the outputs of the students is huge, as the general purpose of teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi public and private schools is to prepare the students to utilize the language for communication with other nations' citizens. However, the students finish all their general education with very humble language proficiency, and some of them cannot speak the language properly nor structure a simple English sentence.

Above all, teaching in Saudi EFL classes is implemented through traditional methods of teaching, and some English teachers lack proper teaching strategies that would certainly help in assisting students to acquire the language. The students linked their language experiences in EFL classes to their teachers' motivation and the classroom variables because they believe that these two components are the most challenging features affecting the learners' language and possibly

their attitudes and perspectives toward the language. Last but not least, English teachers in EFL classes should receive more intensive training in teaching English because the practical period that student-teachers receive for training in the Saudi education system does not prepare them effectively (Alsegahayer, 2014).

In light of the present study's findings, the ESL setting would certainly help to make the English language in Saudi Arabia more accessible to learners by applying ESL teaching procedures, including making classrooms less teacher-centered. According to the students' responses, Canadian ESL contexts, as the study showed, are where the students most strongly build their knowledge about the language; this learning setting enables learners to write and use grammar in a practical manner, and they also speak and practice the language instead of only listening to the teacher. Therefore, these variables in using the language have highlighted the students' perspectives about learning English because they found more support and engagement in English (ESL) classes, thereby contributing more to their language learning.

Study's Future Contribution

As a researcher, my role centered on interpreting the students' perspectives on their experiences. All the participants in my study raised concerns about English language education in Saudi Arabia, although they were optimistic for the future. I heard different stories, perspectives, and experiences, and the participants shared all their EFL language experiences. Moreover, I have a strong belief that the learners are the most important indicator of any educational issue. I obtained good responses from the participants that will shed light on my research focus. My role centered on being keen to ask for more details about the whole experience, from their first day in EFL classrooms until they later joined ESL classrooms.

This study might be a direct message to Saudi English teachers and educators to consider the students' perspectives in order to improve their performance, and to rethink their behaviour with their students. Some of the participants stated that their teachers' behaviour influenced their desire and motivation to learn. I believe those teachers should look outside the box and consider the students' opinions about their teachers. As an English teacher, all the responses I heard from the participants will be considered in my classrooms, since the students are the beneficiaries.

This study might contribute to the knowledge on language acquisition, since if the learner finds an appropriate environment to learn in, they will improve their performance in the language, and as a result they will also transition from the learning stage to the acquiring stage.

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Appendices

A: Letter of Information and Consent Form for Students

My name is Nagah Awad Alzaharani, and I am currently enrolled in the Master of Arts in Education (General Curriculum Studies) program at MSVU. I am inviting you to participate in a study that aims to investigate the reasons beyond Saudi students' low performance and demotivation in EFL classrooms as compared to their performance and motivation in ESL classrooms. This study is called "Saudi Students' Motivation to Learn English in Two Learning Environments". The goal of this research is to shed light on the potential reasons for low performance and low motivation in EFL classrooms; however, the situation seems to be different in ESL classrooms for the targeted students. This study has the potential to enhance educators' knowledge and understanding of the issue from the students' perspectives when they experience different kinds of learning environments.

All participants will be Saudis 19 years old or older. The participants will have received their basic education in Saudi Arabia and been in Canada for six months or longer. They will be ESL learners. The ethical components of this research study have been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Board and found to be in compliance with Mount Saint Vincent University's research policy.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned research goals, I will conduct interviews, which will take about 60 minutes each. We will discuss the reasons for low performance and motivation in EFL classrooms as compared to the motivation and performance in ESL classes. The interviews will be recorded for the purpose of educational research, and the recordings will be deleted as soon as the interviews are transcribed. Your name and any other identifying information (other names mentioned and school names) will be replaced with pseudonyms during the transcription

of the interview. The digital data will be deleted after three years from the interviews being transcribed, and your name and identification information will be replaced by pseudonyms during transcription.

I do not foresee any risks involved in your participation in this research, and your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study for any reason at any time with no effect on your standing in your courses or as a student in your school. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any or all of your information be removed, and none of the data will be used. All responses will remain anonymous, confidential, and securely stored in an MSVU database. Only the researcher, the supervisor, and thesis committee members will access the data. The findings of this study will be shared at conferences and in journal articles. There will be no information in written or oral reports that will identify you, your school, or your teachers.

Thank you so much for considering this request. If you have any questions, please contact me at nagah.alzaharani@msvu.ca/ nagah_z@hotmail.com) or my supervisor, Dr. Hong Wang, at hong.wang@msvu.ca. If you have any questions regarding how this study is being conducted, If you are interested in the study's results and wish to obtain a copy, please provide your contact information by e-mailing me at nagah.alzaharani@msvu.ca/ nagah_z@hotmail.com, or the thesis supervisor, Dr. Hong Wang, at Hong.wang@msvu.ca. If you have any concerns of being distress, upset and need consulting, you can contact the consult student services. They can be reached at (902) 457-6567, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3M 2J6. If you agree to participate in this study, please read this consent form, sign it, and return it to Nagah Alzaharani.

- I have read and retained a copy of the Letter of Information and the consent form. I have had any questions I had answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that I am being asked to participate in the research study entitled “Saudi Students’ Motivation to Learn English in Two Learning Environments”, conducted by Nagah Alzahrani from Mount Saint Vincent University. I understand that the purpose of the study is to investigate Saudi students’ performance and motivation in EFL classrooms as compared to ESL classrooms and whether the learning environment has a role in their motivation and performance.
- I understand that if I agree to participate in the study, I will participate in a recorded interview. I understand that a data-collection assistant will attend the interview, and that my name and any identification information will be removed during the transcription of the interview.
- I understand that there are no known risks, discomforts, or inconveniences associated with participation in the research study.
- I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that withdrawal will not affect my standing in any course or as a student in the school. Further, if I choose to withdraw, I understand that I can request full or partial removal of my data and that none of the data will be used.
- I understand that the data from this study will be published in academic and professional journals and presented at academic conferences.
- I have been assured that the data are confidential to the extent possible through the use of false names and secure data storage.

- I have been notified that I am welcome to contact the researcher if I have any questions or concerns regarding this study via the researcher's e-mail, nagah.alzahrani@msvu.ca, or the thesis supervisor, Dr. Hong Wang, by email at hong.wang@msvu.ca or by phone at (902)-457-6192.
- I have been notified that if I have any concerns regarding any distressed or upset, I can consult the consulting student services, and that they can be reached at (902) 457-6350, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3M 2J6.
- I have notified if I have any concern regarding the study, I can contact The UREB at MSVU, and I may contact the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) office at (902) 457-6350 or via e-mail at research@msvu.ca.

I agree to participate in the study by Nagah Alzahrani ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name: _____

Email address: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

B: Language Schools Consent



CLLC Toronto Campus
20 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite No. 500,
5th Floor, Toronto, ON, Canada, M4P 1A9

CLLC Ottawa Campus
333 Preston St, 4th Floor,
Ottawa, ON, Canada, K1S 5N4

CLLC Halifax Duke Campus
5251 Duke St, Suite 203, 2nd Floor,
Halifax, NS, Canada, B3J 1P3

CLLC Halifax Citadel Campus
1741 Brunswick St, 5th Floor,
Halifax, NS, Canada, B3J 3X8

July 13, 2015

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to confirm that the Canadian Language Learning College (CLLC) has approved Nagah Alzahrani, under the supervision of Dr. Hong Wang, to conduct a study amongst Saudi Arabian students enrolled in the higher level classes at CLLC.

The study will consist of in-person interviews for the purpose of collecting data. We support her chance to do research with our students, and wish her the best in her data collection.

Please note that any research being done cannot interfere with the in-class study time of participating students at CLLC.

All the best,

Natalie MacIsaac
Senior Academic Manager
CLLC, Duke Campus

email: natalie@cllc.ca
tel.: 902-461-9577

C: Language School Consent



July 17, 2015

Re: Najah Alzahrani - Research

To whom it may concern:

The purpose of this letter is to confirm that ECSL has approved Najah Alzahrani, under the supervision of Dr. Christine Doe, to conduct a study amongst our Saudi students at the lower levels.

If you have any questions about the above information, please contact me at (902) 491-1526 ext. 205.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brandon MacNeil', is positioned above the printed name.

Brandon MacNeil
Director of Academic Services

D: Interview Questions

1. Would you describe your English language learning experience in Saudi Arabia?
2. What challenges did you encounter in your English classes in Saudi Arabia?
3. Can you compare and contrast your experiences in these two different contexts?
4. Would you describe successful or less successful ways of how English is taught in Saudi Arabia?
5. How did your English language teacher contribute to your language acquisition, whether the outcomes were successful or unsuccessful?