



A University of Sussex DPhil thesis

Available online via Sussex Research Online:

<http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/>

This thesis is protected by copyright which belongs to the author.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the Author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the Author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Please visit Sussex Research Online for more information and further details

**Investigating Student Experiences of Learning English as a Foreign Language
in a Preparatory Programme in a Saudi university**

Sajjadllah Alhawsawi

Department of Education

School of Education and Social Work

**Submitted to the University of Sussex in fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy**

September 2013

Dedication

To my family, whom I cherish so much

Acknowledgements

I would like to express gratitude to many people around me, without whose kindness and support this work would not have existed. In particular, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my main supervisor, Dr Yusuf Sayed, who provided me with valuable and timely feedback on my thesis and introduced me to the many research communities. Also, I would like to thank my second supervisor Dr Barbara Crossoud for her genuine interest in my academic progress as well as for providing prompt feedback on my thesis.

Also, I would like to thank the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education, the Saudi Cultural Bureau in London and my workplace in Riyadh for their moral and financial support. In addition, I would like to thank those individuals who gave their time to participate in this research.

My appreciation extends to my fellow postgraduates and friends, Shadreck Mwale, Irfan Rind, Tania Shadiva, Hajeej Alhawsawi, Husain Hawsawi and Osman Albarnawi, for their provocative discussions and stimulating feedback on many aspects of my thesis. In addition, I would like to thank my colleagues in the School of Education and Social Work at the University of Sussex, who, with their constructive feedback and invaluable enthusiasm, encouraged me to complete this work. I am also grateful for the goodwill of all the students and teachers in *QU-HS* who devoted their time to participate in this study.

My appreciation is also extended to my friend Dr Rosemin Najmudin, who helped with proofreading this work.

A special salute to my dear wife Alicia Elhigazi for her support, patience and being a wonderful friend.

Above all, I would like to thank my parents, brothers and sisters for their wonderful support and prayers throughout my PhD journey.

List of abbreviations and acronyms

Allied Medical Sciences	AMS
Communicative Language Teaching	CLT
Communities of Practice	CoP
English as a Foreign Language	EFL
English language as a medium of instruction	EMI
General Aptitude Test	GAT
Grammar Translation Method	GTM
Imam Mohammed bin Saud Islamic University	IMBSIU
International English Language Testing System	IELTS
King Abdulaziz Medical City	KAMC
King Fahad Petroleum and Mineral University	KFPMU
Qudar University for Health Science	QU-HS
Native English speakers	NES
Non-native English speakers	NNES
Pre-Medical Programme	PMP
Saudi Arabian American Oil Company	ARMCO
Standard Achievement Admission Test	SAAT
Test of English as a Foreign Language	TOEFL
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	KSA
The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries	OPEC
Military Health Affairs	MHA
The Saudi Ministry of Higher Education	MoHE
United Kingdom	UK
United States of America	USA
World Trade Organization	WTO

List of tables

Table 1: Comparing two teaching and learning approaches often used in teaching EFL in KSA	82
Table 2: The student sample	110
Table 3: The EFL teacher sample.....	112
Table 4: Data sets used for addressing research sub-questions.....	133

List of figures

Figure 1: Map of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	24
--	----

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX**Doctor of Philosophy****Investigating Student Experiences of Learning English as a Foreign Language in
a Preparatory Programme in a Saudi university****Summary**

In today's world, knowledge is power; it is the capital that has the ability to transform nations. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has oil, giving it huge revenue that can be invested into the development of the country. Despite the massive expenditure to develop Saudi higher education, the question of the quality of teaching and learning is still debatable (Alkhazim, 2003). In particular, the low level of English language competency among the graduates of many higher Saudi higher education institutions is of concern to observers, as these graduates are not confident in using the global *lingua franca* that is widely used in international higher education as well as in the production of knowledge.

The aim of this research is to explore student learning experiences in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programme in Qudat University for Health Science (QU-HS) in KSA from three perspectives. The first is the institutional influence of QU-HS on student learning experiences using aspects of institutional theory. The second analysis examines the students' family educational background, using the notion of cultural capital. The final viewpoint is provided by analysing students' interaction with the teaching approaches used in the EFL programme in this university.

Thus, the main research question of this study is 'How do students experience teaching and learning in the EFL programme in QU-HS?' In order to address

this research question, a case study approach within the paradigm of interpretivism was used. The data was obtained through semi-structured interviews and observations of teachers and students. Documents related to the context of the study were gathered and analysed. The data was collected and analysed in accordance with the three main themes: the policies of *QU-HS* in relation to the EFL programme, students' family backgrounds, and the teaching approaches used by EFL teachers in the programme.

The first key findings of this study came from the analysis of the policies that the university adopted in relation to its EFL programme. It was found that these policies influence: (1) the use of English language as the medium of instruction and communication, (2) the different provisions of the EFL programme, and (3) the recruitment of EFL instructors. These policies have impacted on the EFL programme and this then affects the students' learning experiences. The second set of key findings emphasised the influence that family educational background has on the students' learning experiences in the EFL programme. The absence or presence of a family educational background significantly influences the way students approach their learning. The final key findings of this study stress the significant role played by teaching approaches in shaping the students' learning experiences. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach encourages active engagement and more independent learning practices, whilst the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) ascribes a more passive and teacher-dependent nature to the way students learn. Such teaching approaches impact differently on the students depending on how students approach their learning.

The findings of this study will contribute to the debate about teaching and learning in Saudi higher education by raising awareness about learning and the factors influencing the students' learning experiences in this specific context, which could then be used to inform studies in other contexts. Also, the

conclusion of this study will help to inform future programme planning as well as EFL teacher training in Saudi higher education and elsewhere. This study highlights to the research community the importance of exploring teaching and learning in Saudi higher education and suggests avenues for further research which can contribute to theories of teaching and learning in higher education.

Table of contents

Dedication.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
List of abbreviations and acronyms	4
List of tables	5
List of figures	5
Summary.....	6
Table of contents	9
Chapter 1: Introduction	13
1.1. Introduction	13
1.2. Rationale	14
1.3. Research aims and questions	18
1.4. Overview of the methodology.....	19
1.5. Significance of the study	20
1.6. Structure of the thesis	21
Chapter 2: Background of the study	23
2.1 Saudi Arabia	23
2.2 Education in Saudi Arabia	29
2.3 Higher education in Saudi Arabia	34
2.4 Teaching and learning English language in Saudi higher education	35
2.5 Qudar University for Health Science (QU-HS)	37
2.6 The EFL unit in QU-HS	38
2.7 Summary	42
Chapter 3: Review of the literature	43
3.1 Contextualizing learning	43
3.2 Conceptualizing the institutional influence on the student learning experiences	47
3.3 Conceptualizing the influence of families' backgrounds on the student learning experiences	54
3.3.1 <i>The origin of the concept of cultural capital</i>	54
3.3.2 <i>Conceptualizing cultural capital in a Bourdieu way</i>	56
3.3.3 <i>The different forms of cultural capital</i>	56
3.3.4 <i>Different ways of conceptualizing cultural capital</i>	59
3.4 Conceptualizing the influence of teaching approaches on the student learning experience	63

3.4.1	<i>Teaching approaches in higher education</i>	63
3.4.2	<i>Student-centred versus teacher-centred approach</i>	71
3.4.3	<i>EFL Teaching approaches in higher education</i>	75
3.5	Summary and research questions	84
Chapter 4: Methodology		88
4.1	The researcher's philosophical stance	88
4.2	Case study as a research design.....	91
4.3	Data collection	96
4.3.1	<i>Document review</i>	96
4.3.2	<i>Observation</i>	98
4.3.3	<i>Interviews</i>	100
4.4	Sampling	107
4.5	Data analysis.....	112
4.5.1	<i>Interviews</i>	112
4.5.2	<i>Documents</i>	114
4.5.3	<i>Observation</i>	115
4.6	Trustworthiness	115
4.7	Positionality	121
4.8	Ethical considerations.....	125
4.9	Limitations	129
4.10	Summary	132
Chapter 5: The institutional influence of QU-HS on the student learning experience		135
5.1	How institutional policies related to EFL were established.....	136
5.2	The use of EMI for instruction and communication.	139
5.3	The provision of the EFL programme	144
5.4	The recruitment of EFL instructors.....	147
5.5	Summary	151
Chapter 6: The influence of students' family backgrounds on the student learning experience		153
6.1	Families' direct involvement in developing students' cultural capital	154
6.2	The influence of discussion among family members in developing students' cultural capital	160
6.3	The family's unconscious involvement in developing students' cultural capital.....	164

6.4 The influence of private education/private English language tuition in developing students' cultural capital	170
6.5 The influence of insufficient presence of cultural capital on students' learning experiences	177
6.6 Summary	183
Chapter 7: Teaching approaches and their influence on the student learning experience in the EFL programme.....	185
7.1 The teaching approaches used in the EFL programme in <i>QU-HS</i>	185
7.2 Teachers' roles and views about their teaching	187
7.3 Teaching practices	190
7.4 Assessment.....	210
7.5 Summary	215
Chapter 8: Conclusion	220
8.1 Summary of the findings	221
8.1.1 <i>The influence of QU-HS policies in teaching and learning in the EFL programme</i>	222
8.1.2 <i>The influence of students' family backgrounds in terms of cultural capital on their learning experiences</i>	226
8.1.3 <i>The influence of the teaching approaches on the student learning experience in the EFL programme</i>	231
8.2 Synthesized summary of the main findings	235
8.3 Implications of the research.....	239
8.3.1 <i>Implications for policy makers and practitioners</i>	239
8.3.2 <i>Implications for further research</i>	247
8.4 Reflection on the research journey	248
Bibliography	251
Appendices	296
Appendix 1: Details of the programme structure	296
Appendix 2: Details of the English language curriculum	297
Appendix 3: ENG 101 (Communication Skills I).....	301
Appendix 4: ENG 102 (Language Structures and Drills I).....	306
Appendix 5: Approval for fieldwork (Arabic)	311
Appendix 6: Approval for fieldwork (English)	312
Appendix 7: Students' interview guide.....	313
Appendix 8: Teachers' interview guide.....	315

Appendix 9: Classroom observation.....	316
Appendix 10: Arabic interview guide (students).....	317
Appendix 11: Confirmation and consent	318
Appendix 12: President welcome.....	319
Appendix 13: Strategy for <i>QU-HS</i>	320
Appendix 14: Job advert in <i>QU-HS</i>	325
Appendix 15: Job contract	326
Appendix 16: An example of general observation from my diary	327
Appendix 17: Sample of students' interview transcription	328

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

In today's world, knowledge is power; it is considered to be the capital that has the ability to transform nations. Knowledge and globalization are linked together in such a way that information and communication are able to bring about a power shift in the global market (Donn and Al Manthri, 2010; Wood, 2007). This places a huge demand on meaningful education or the acquisition of academic and theoretical knowledge, which is perceived as the driving force for social change and prosperity in many countries (Donn and Al Manthri, 2010; Zughouli, 2003). Higher education in particular has come under enormous pressure to develop learners with a better understanding of their specialised subjects, such that learned theory is linked closely to its practical application (Zughouli, 2003). An example is in Nursing: being how best to look after a patient in theory alone is not very useful unless it is integrated with practical experience. In order to meet these demands, many institutions of higher education worldwide seek ways to enhance their understanding of teaching and learning so as to produce individuals who are able to learn, and to apply their learning effectively in the global community.

This global trend for increased demand for higher education opportunities is reflected in many nations in the Middle East and North Africa, where the number of higher education institutions increased from ten universities in 1940 to about two hundred in 2007 (Romani, 2009). Although the Arab states of the Persian Gulf were the last to join the race to provide higher education, they did extremely well to catch up with the world in terms of growth. For example, in 2003, KSA had only eight universities, but by 2010, this number had increased to two hundred universities and independent colleges (MoHE, 2013). In seeking

to improve the quality of education, the Saudi government has almost doubled its expenditure on education, from \$28 billion in 2008 to \$54.4 in 2012, which equals 24% of its total expenditure (Mohammed, 2013). The Alriyadh Newspaper reported that between 2004 and 2010, the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) spent more than \$5.3 billion on scholarships awarded to more than 180,000 Saudi students to study at international universities (Al-Muhandis, 2012). This massive investment in education in general and higher education in particular reflects the ambition of the Saudi government to compete in the global market and play a key role in the regional and international arenas (Asharq Al-Awasat, 2011; Romani, 2009).

1.2. Rationale

The idea of this study stemmed from two influences: one was personal and the other was professional. The first arose out of my own personal experience of EFL teaching in Saudi higher education. During my teaching experience, I was interested in ways in which students learn EFL. Initially I believed that students learn through naturally gifted abilities, by using the language for communicative purposes and from the way teachers teach them. However, when I joined *QU-HS*, I realised that there were other factors that impact on students' English language competencies. Since the university exists in a medical city where the English language is widely used, I noticed that students were using this location advantage to practice and develop their English language skills. Furthermore, by talking to the students, I realized that those whose families often travelled to English-speaking countries were better able to use English for communicative purposes. This experience of teaching at *QU-HS* made me question my assumption about what makes English language learning and teaching effective. Thus I decided to focus this enquiry on student

learning and the way in which it is influenced by the learning institution, the family and the teaching approach used by the teachers.

The second reason was that the Saudi government has invested lot of money in the development of higher education. Despite this massive expenditure, the quality of teaching and learning is still questionable (Alkhazim, 2003). The English language plays a considerable role in discussion about the quality of learning and teaching in Saudi higher education. Its importance emerges from its significant status as a global *lingua franca* that is widely used in international higher education as well as in the production of knowledge (Al-Jarf, 2008a; Findlow, 2006). Many scientific research papers and textbooks are published in English, and most international research conferences, seminars, and workshops are held in English (Habbash, 2011). Thus, in order for Saudi people to participate and compete in the global higher education arena, the Saudi government needs to pay special attention to the development of teaching and learning English (Al-Issa, 2011; Zughoul, 2003). Investment in English language teaching and learning in Saudi higher education not only enables graduates from Saudi universities to access different types of knowledge and widen their participation in the construction of global knowledge, but also better prepares them to compete in the global economy (Al-Issa, 2002; Denman and Hilal, 2011; Elyas, 2008). This is particularly important since KSA is an active member in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and in December 2005 obtained full membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO). This means that many foreign investors, professionals and labourers are entering the Saudi market to compete against Saudi citizens for job opportunities (Bakhtiari, 2004; Denman and Hilal, 2011; Depledge, 2008; Hilali, 2012). Having advanced English language proficiency is imperative if KSA and its people want to compete and find their place in the globalized economy.

In addition, KSA houses the two important Muslim sites (i.e. the Holy mosques of Makkah and Madinah) which Muslims from all over the world come to visit for their compulsory spiritual pilgrimages: Umrah and Hajj. It is estimated that for Umrah, which can happen at any period in the year, about 2.6 million Muslims annually visit KSA (CBSNews, 2009). Hajj, which happens during a specific Islamic month called Zilhaj and involves a spiritual journey that every Muslim hopes to perform at least once in his or her life, attracts more than three million Muslims annually. It is among the largest mass gatherings in the world and the common language that this congregation of Muslims share is English (Mitchell et al., 2013). Thus, for KSA to be able to perform its duty as host of these sites, it is important that the Saudi government invests and supports the Saudi people to develop their English language competencies in order to be effective in managing their sacred religious duties.

Based on the recognition of the importance of English in trade and religious tourism, KSA has invested heavily in the teaching and learning of English in higher education in order to produce communicatively competent users of English. Saudi students are educated to help meet the demands of higher education in order to be able to compete in the local and global job market (Al-Issa, 2011; Denman and Hilal, 2011). English language experts are recruited both locally and internationally to develop effective language teaching and learning policies; to write and design the curriculum, the teaching and learning materials; and to re-design English language teacher training programmes in higher education. Saudi universities are encouraged by the government to include English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programmes as a part of the university preparatory year before students enrol in specific university degrees (Abu-Rizaizah, 2010; Al-Hazmi, 2003; Al-Issa, 2011).

Despite government investment in Saudi higher education, a review of the literature revealed only a few documented studies exploring learning and

teaching in higher education in general and EFL programmes in particular. For example, Altowjry (2005) discusses learning in Saudi higher education in terms of widening participation. He argues that using web-based education could encourage student enrolment in higher education through distance learning as well as providing students with different learning resources that they may not otherwise be able to access. He argues that there is a positive correlation between using technology-based distance learning and student drop-out in Saudi universities. Similarly, using the notion of blended learning, which refers to the utilization of online learning activities to replace some aspects of face-to-face teaching and learning in Saudi universities, Alebaikan and Troudi (2010) outline the learning challenges that Saudi students face when using such a web-based education. Despite the fact that blended learning is generally student-centred and self-paced, many students find it challenging, as it requires high levels of self-discipline and organizational skills. In addition, Alebaikan and Troudi (2010) highlight the perception that prevails in conservative Saudi society about the internet being a source of moral danger, which limits many students, particularly female students in Saudi universities, from using blended learning approaches. Rajab (2013) conducted an exploratory study to investigate ways in which an EFL pedagogical approach helps to improve learners' pronunciation, correct speech and writing skills in a Saudi university. The intervention was about changing the way in which English is taught phonetically. Based on oral test results, the study concludes that such pedagogy enables the students to improve their writing and speaking skills. Furthermore, using a multidimensional evaluation framework, Abu-Rizaizah (2010) evaluated an EFL programme for engineering students in a Saudi university. The evaluation concluded that the programme needed relevant teaching materials, appropriate testing and classroom practices that can specifically respond to the engineering students' specific language needs. This study

suggests that the programme met neither the student needs nor the stated objectives of ESL learning.

In summary, while these studies illustrate ways in which students' learning is discussed in the context of Saudi higher education, generally they tend to view learning from a very specific and individual point of view. These few examples of research done in the context of KSA focused only on narrow aspects of student learning. The way students experience learning and how student learning might be influenced by other factors beyond the classrooms and lecture halls in the learning context have not yet been tackled in any depth.

In order to understand student learning experiences in a wider sense, the scope of any investigation would have to be widened beyond individual aspects of learning (e.g. motivation and learning strategies). This would locate learning in relation to wider social issues that impact on learning experiences (Ashwin, 2009; Mills, 2008; Thornton, 2010). This research seeks to do exactly this using a case study of Saudi students learning in a Saudi university. It explores some contextual issues, such as the influence of the university policies on the EFL programme; the impact of the student' families' educational backgrounds; and the impact of teaching approaches on Saudi students' learning experiences in an EFL programme.

1.3. Research aims and questions

The aim of this research is to explore student learning experiences in an EFL programme in *QU-HS* in KSA. Specifically, this investigation aims to understand the students' learning experiences from three perspectives. The first perspective analyses the institutional influence of *QU-HS* using aspects of institutional theory to understand the student learning experience. The second

analyses the students' family educational background and how this influences students' learning experiences through the notion of cultural capital. The final perspective explores the different approaches teachers use in the EFL programme and how this impacts on student learning experiences. The logic of investigating students' learning experiences from these three different perspectives is to (1) understand how institutional policies influence students' learning; (2) understand how the family educational background affects students' learning; (3) and how cultural capital and institutional policies are translated inside the classrooms where teaching approaches are presented. Through this case study, these different perspectives on students' learning experiences are unpacked, investigated and discussed further.

The overarching research question of this study is 'How do students experience teaching and learning in the EFL programme in *QU-HS*?' Within this overarching question, the following questions will be addressed in greater detail:

1. How do the policies of the university affect the EFL programme and students' learning experience?
2. How do the students' families' educational backgrounds influence student learning in the EFL programme?
3. How do teaching approaches affect students' learning experience in the EFL programme?

1.4. Overview of the methodology

The aim of this study is to explore and understand the student experience of learning in a particular context (i.e. *QU-HS*). The investigation uses a case study approach, adopting a qualitative research paradigm. The data was obtained

from teachers and students as well as from documents related to the context of the study, such as policy documents about *QU-HS*, Saudi education and Military Health Affairs policy documents. The data was collected and analysed within the three main themes: the policies of *QU-HS* in relation to the EFL programme, students' family backgrounds and the teaching approaches used by EFL teachers in the programme.

1.5. Significance of the study

Learning and teaching experiences in higher education in KSA comprise a relatively unexplored field, particularly in relation to wider issues beyond the classroom. This study contributes to the debate about teaching and learning in Saudi higher education. Raising awareness about learning and about the factors influencing the student learning experiences in a specific context could inform similar studies in other contexts. The findings and conclusions of this study will inform future EFL programme planning and teacher training to improve the learning experiences in such programmes in education and beyond. In addition, this study aims to build upon the limited past qualitative research conducted in this field. This particular study highlights to the research community the importance of exploring teaching and learning from a wider perspective. It forms the basis and suggests new avenues for further research which can then contribute to theories of learning in tertiary education.

1.6. Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. This first section outlines the rationale of the inquiry, the overarching research question and the methodology used. It also provides an overview of the different chapters that this thesis contains.

The second chapter discusses the context of the study. It starts by providing information on the country's historical and social background. This is followed by a discussion of the education system of KSA and the country's higher education system. It also discusses EFL teaching and learning in Saudi higher education and the micro context of the study (i.e., *QU-HS*). In addition, it discusses the EFL programme in *QU-HS*.

The third chapter reviews the relevant literature. It begins by discussing learning and different ways of theorising student learning. This is followed by discussing the influence of the family educational background on student learning experiences. The different effects that institutional policies have on the running of educational programmes in higher education institutions are then reviewed. In addition, the chapter considers different teaching approaches and their influence on students' learning experiences. It concludes by providing a theoretical framework for the inquiry and sets the boundaries for the research questions.

Chapter Four provides a detailed description of the appropriate methodology used for this study. It begins by outlining the epistemological and ontological stance that informs this inquiry. This helps to provide a rationale as to why a case study was employed as a research approach. The chapter then discusses the tools that were considered appropriate for data collection and the approaches used for data analysis. The issues of trustworthiness and

positionality are considered. The chapter concludes by highlighting the limitations and ethical considerations of the study.

The fifth chapter discusses the findings of an institutional analysis of *QU-HS*, focusing on the different policies enacted by the university and how they inform the EFL programme. The notion of institutional theory (Ingram and Clay, 2000; Jones et al., 2005) is used to conceptualize this influence.

In Chapter Six, the findings of the study are discussed in relation to the influence of the family, with a particular focus on the educational attainment within the family, which was conceptualized by using cultural capital. Cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2008, 2005; De Graaf et al., 2000; Munk and Krarup, 2011) is defined in terms of what factors affect it, how it is transmitted and its influence on the student learning experience.

The effect of the teaching approaches used by EFL teachers on the student learning experience is discussed in Chapter Seven. There is a close exploration of the two main teaching approaches used, namely Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Grammar Translation Methods (GTM), and how they influence the views of teachers in relation to their roles, students, teaching and assessment.

The concluding chapter summarizes the main findings of the study and offers recommendations for policy makers, practitioners and researchers. In addition, it provides reflections on the research journey and the processes used in conducting this study, including the theoretical and methodological stance employed.

Chapter 2: Background of the study

This chapter presents the context of the study. Section 2.1 introduces the national context and outlines Saudi Arabia's historical and social background. Section 2.2 discusses the general education system in Saudi Arabia. The higher education sector and the EFL teaching and learning in higher education are discussed respectively in sections 2.3 and 2.4. Section 2.5 provides information about the specific context in which the study took place, namely the Qudar University for Health Science (*QU-HS*). The EFL unit as well as the EFL programme in the university are discussed in section 2.6. This sets the scene by familiarizing the reader with the details of the context of the study.

2.1 Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia, also known as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), is the largest country in the Arabian Peninsula, comprising approximately 2,000,000 square kilometres. As the map below illustrates, KSA shares borders with Jordan and Iraq in the north; the Persian Gulf, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates in the east; and Yemen and Oman in the south. Riyadh is the capital city and is located in the middle of KSA.

Figure 1: Map of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Sources: CIA (2013)

Other main cities in the country include Makkah, Jeddah and Medina (which are in the western region) and Ad Dammam (which is close to the Persian Gulf). The estimated population of KSA is approximately 27 million: 18 million Saudi Arabians and just over 8 million foreign expatriates from different nationalities (CIA, 2013). Seventy-three percent of the Saudi nationals are under 59 years old and forty-eight percent are under 24 years old (MoEP, 2003).

Saudi Arabia is known as the birthplace of Islam and the kingdom is sometimes called “the Land of the Two Holy Mosques” in reference to Al-Masjid al-Haram (in Makkah) and Al-Masjid al-Nabawi (in Medina), the two holiest places in Islam. Each year the country experiences a huge number of Muslim tourists who visit the country as pilgrims, mainly for the Muslim Hajj, but there are huge numbers of visitors throughout the year to Makkah and Medina, especially during key Islamic festivals such as Ramadan, Eid-ul-fitr and Eid-ul-adha. Visitors expect communication to be in English and Arabic, so the

learning and teaching of English plays a huge part in the global trade associated with the Muslim tourists.

In 1932, KSA was established by the Al Saud family as a monarchy, an Arabic and Islamic state with a centralised government. There are no political parties in KSA and the country is governed by the Council of Ministers, otherwise known as the King's Cabinet. This council is headed by the monarch, who is also the head of the state (BECM, 2013). The Council of Ministers represents twenty-two government ministries. Members of the council are directly appointed by the monarch and include members of the royal family. In 2009, the council appointed the first female minister. This council is an executive government body that is in charge of the constitution of the country (BECM, 2013; Cordesman, 2002). In addition to the council of ministers, there is the Consultative Assembly, also known as the *Majlis Ash-Shura*, which is the legislative government body that plays an advisory role, but has no power to pass laws (Cordesman, 2002; Majlis Ash-Shura, 2013). Members of the assembly are appointed by the king, who selects members based on their experience and reputation. The main role of the Consultative Assembly is to advise the head of the state on issues that are important to KSA, particularly in relation to Islamic affairs, security, finance, economy and industry, education, foreign affairs, information on health and social affairs, services and public utilities, administration, and human rights (Cordesman, 2002; Majlis Ash-Shura, 2013).

In terms of religion, KSA is a Muslim country. Between 85% and 90% of the Saudi population are believed to be *Sunni* Muslims and the remaining 10-15% are *Shi'a* Muslims (Al-Qudaihi, 2009). Islam is the official religion of the country and dominates the customs, beliefs and culture of the people in KSA. The official and dominant form of Sunni Islam in KSA is commonly known as Wahhabism (a name which some of its proponents consider derogatory, preferring the term Salafism). Sharia law (the moral code of Islam) with

Wahhabi views is widely implemented in Saudi Arabia and influences most aspects of people's life. For example, all businesses (e.g. shops, restaurants and gas stations) have to close at prayer times and employers have to allow time for their workers to perform prayers.

Socially, Saudi society is ethnically diverse, though the majority of the population (90%) are Arab and 10% are of African and Asian origin (CIA, 2013). In terms of the internal stratification of Saudi society, there is no up-to-date data that addresses the structural division of the social classes. Yamani (2000) discusses aspects of the demography of KSA when she talks about the elitism in Saudi society and how the notion of being elite has changed since the political unification of the country by the Al Saud family (the current royal family) in 1932. In her analysis, she depicts certain family names to represent the elites of Saudi society, particularly in the eastern cost of the Arabian Peninsula, and how this shifted after the Al Saud family unified the country (Yamani, 2000). Ever since the political unification of KSA, the royal family and their affiliations represent the elite upper class of the society, who are politically powerful and able to influence the governing of the country. However, most of the analysis provided by Yamani (2000) is about how the struggle over power in KSA was negotiated between the old and the new elites. She does not talk in detail about the construction of the middle and working class in the Saudi society.

An interesting source that discusses the social class structure in KSA is an article written by Rugh in 1973. Although the article is dated, it discusses the construction and the function of the social class system, which is still relevant to the current modern Saudi society. In his article, Rugh (1973) divides Saudi society into upper, middle and working social classes. The upper class is further sub-divided into an upper stratum, which consists almost entirely of the royal family of the House of Saud and its collateral branches (Rugh, 1973), and a lower stratum which consists of the "top 'ulama' (religious learned men) from

the Al Shaykh family” (the founder of what is known in the west as Wahhabism), “a few leading tribal shaykhs” and “a handful of wealthy members of successful merchant families” (Rugh, 1973, p. 7). These different groups of the upper class are seen to influence the governing of KSA and their voice is generally valued by the government. “The lower class is made up of nomadic Bedouin, seminomadic herdsmen, unskilled and semiskilled workers in government and the private sector” (Rugh, 1973, p. 7). People in this class do not have much influence on the running of the country and they are usually mobilized by the shaykhs and ulama. The middle class is defined by family ties and members who belong to certain families are automatically ascribed as middle class. What is interesting in Rugh’s (1973) analysis is the other part of the middle class, which establishes its membership of such a social class through academic qualifications.

The emergence of this social class is associated with modernization that accrued after the discovery of oil in the country in the late 1930s. After the discovery of oil and the booming of the Saudi economy, the Saudi government realised the importance of having skilful Saudi workers (e.g. teachers, managers, engineers, technical specialists and other professionals) who could participate in many aspects of developing the country. Thus, many Saudi nationals were encouraged to study locally and internationally. Subsequently, many Saudi nationals obtained higher education qualifications in all sorts of knowledge from international and local institutions. These people established their belongingness to the middle class based on their education and training which was triggered by the needs of the Saudi economy; this allowed them opportunities for upward social mobility. However, this new middle class group is divided further into secular and non-secular groups. The secular ones are those Saudi nationals who obtained their training or qualifications in Islamic and Arabic disciplines or who chose to receive their education or

training from international institutions. The non-secular middle class group are those who obtained their training and education from Islamic colleges inside KSA. In addition to the secular/non-secular division, this social class is further differentiated into upper and lower strata:

The upper stratum includes better educated Saudis such as professors, doctors, engineers, and some businessmen - secular educated commoners who achieved high civil service rank primarily because of their personal qualifications. The lower middle class includes government clerical personnel, school teachers, skilled industrial wage earners, most of whom have not had direct exposure to a modern environment that foreign educated Saudis enjoyed (Rugh, 1973, p. 17).

People in this social class hold senior government posts because of their qualifications and they compete with each other (mainly secular versus non-secular). Although Rugh's (1973) analysis of the social classes was published in the 1970s, many of its aspects still reflect the reality of today's Saudi society.

Over the last sixty years, KSA has developed rapidly due to the revenue coming mainly from oil. It has the world's largest oil reserves, which are concentrated primarily in the Eastern Province, and oil accounts for more than 95% of exports and 70% of government revenue (Aljazeera, 2013). The economy of KSA is highly dependent on oil. The significant ranking of KSA as one of the major producers of oil in the world allows the country to attract long-term financial investments from all over the world (Hourani, 2013). Most of the major industrial nations have set up investment projects in KSA and signed long-term contracts with the Saudi government. One such example is Saudi ARMCO, which is one of the largest American investments in the Saudi oil industry (Aljazeera, 2013). Charis (2007) and Karmani (2010) show that the huge and increased revenue from oil exports has not only opened up job opportunities for

Saudi nationals, but also resulted in an unprecedented number of building and development projects.

The official language of KSA is Arabic. Most of the population of KSA speaks the colloquial form of the Arabic language, and the use of standard and formal Arabic (*al fossha*) is mostly limited to government communications, education and other such official domains. However, the expansion of businesses and industries in KSA and the arrival of immigrants from Asia and expatriates from Europe have introduced a new form of hybrid Arabic language that is a mix of Arabic, Urdu/Hindi and English. This form of “creole” Arabic language has now become commonplace among workers who migrated to KSA (Charise, 2007).

Such developments in the Saudi economy and globalization encourage people in KSA to improve their English language competencies alongside their academic skills (Al-Issa, 2011; Al-Jarf, 2006; Habbash, 2011; Shaabi, 2010; Wood, 2007). Many government departments, such as the Passport General Department (or migration department) and the police, have had to start to use English as a second language in order to keep pace with the language demand that has accompanied the growth of jobs and new opportunities as the country has developed.

2.2 Education in Saudi Arabia

Education in KSA is freely provided to all Saudi students. Children enrol in the public school system at the age of seven when they start primary education, and complete school at the age of eighteen as secondary school graduates. Teaching staff in the state-run schools are Saudi and are classified as government civil servants. Although the teaching profession is financially

incentivized by the government and has high job security, most Saudi teachers join as it as the last resort for employment, as it is not considered a high status profession (Al-Qifari, 2001; Al-Soheem, 2009).

Teaching in public schools is standardized and regularly inspected by local education authorities. However, these inspections are seen as routine and teachers' promotion or salary increase is not associated with individual teacher performance. In 2012, the quality of education in state schools was criticised in terms of the poor quality of the teachers, the rigidity of the curriculum, and the short length of the school day (Al-Hazza'a, 2012; Al-Mesnid, 2009; Almokhtsar, 2012). The length of the school day and the inflexibility of the curriculum, in particular, are thought to be the main reasons why schools do not introduce extra-curricular lessons, which could help to improve students academically and socially (Al-Mesnid, 2009; Al-Qifari, 2001; Al-Soheem, 2009).

Parents who want and can afford the best education for their children choose private schools. A discussion of private education in KSA would benefit from statistics about the number of these schools and a profile of the students attending them. However, there is a lack of national data that provides such information. It is unfortunate that even Saudi universities and the MoHE do not request such data when admitting students to higher education. Due to the lack of such statistics, this discussion about private education in Saudi Arabia is mostly based on data obtained from public Saudi media.

The private education system in KSA is assumed to be teaching a similar curriculum to the public schools. However, most of the private schools have the freedom to add extra subjects and extra-curricular activities, and to alter the medium of instruction from Arabic to English. By extending the school day, the children have additional opportunities to engage in extracurricular learning and activities, which arguably improve the quality of education and students'

social skills (Al-Reshaid, 2007). In addition, private schools hire qualified teachers from overseas or the best qualified Saudi nationals, who are thought to offer better and higher quality education. It is thought that these teachers' willingness to work extra hours, provide students with additional learning materials and assist them outside the classroom differ from most teachers in the state schools (Almokhtsar, 2012). As these schools are privately owned, the government does not interfere in their recruitment policies and procedures. Instead, recruitment is managed by an internal body of trustees that governs the private schools. A local education authority manages the running and teaching within these private schools.

Most private schools claim to offer students the best learning opportunities, often based on a Western model of education, which is perceived as helping pupils to develop better academically (Al-Hazza'a, 2012; Prokop, 2003). This premise is based on models where proficient teachers are perceived to be at the heart of developing pupil learning. Teachers in these schools are trained and assessed regularly and their progress is reported to the board of trustees. Thus teachers in private schools need to work to a high standard, pass management scrutiny and work extra hard to keep their jobs secure (Almokhtsar, 2012).

In addition to the internal quality assurance that these schools have, they are also monitored and supervised by the local educational authorities, which observe the implementation of the national curriculum and adherence to the Saudi employment law. Private schools charge different fees depending on the quality of education on offer and their reputation (Al-Mesnid, 2009; Almokhtsar, 2012). Some private schools offer English language and computer courses to their pupils at an early stage of primary education. Others offer more courses on the Qur'an and religious studies. This makes the quality and content of education very different in various private schools (Al-Mesnid, 2009; Al-Soheem, 2009).

In terms of English language teaching and learning, state schools have been heavily criticised. Despite the fact that students spend nine years learning EFL in state schools, many graduate with poor English language competencies (Al-Hazmi, 2003; Al-Sughaer, 2009; Alsaif, 2011; Sheshsha, 1982; Zaid, 1993). The reasons for low English language proficiency among the students is the poor quality of the teachers' knowledge, the teaching approach and the time allocated to English in the public school curriculum (Al-Jarf, 2008b; Alsaif and Milton, 2012; Rabab'ah, 2005; Zainol Abidin et al., 2012). At grade 6, when the English language is introduced, primary education students have only two 45-minute English language lessons a week, while in intermediate and secondary school, English is taught for four 45-minute lessons a week (Al-Sadan, 2000; Alamri, 2008). Private schools allocate similar slots for English language teaching; however, those schools that teach in an English medium obviously provide the pupils with a better grasp and access to the language. In addition, the private schools offer extra-curricular English lessons (Alamri, 2008). Most of the private schools introduce English as a compulsory course from kindergarten level as well as increasing the number of hours for which students study English outside of the prescribed curriculum as the children get older (Al-Reshaid, 2007).

Rabab'ah (2005) and Al-Hazmi (2003) argue that many English language teachers in public schools are not confident about their knowledge and use of English as a medium of instruction. The reason for this is that their initial teacher training did not provide the English language competency required (Al-Hazmi, 2003). Thus, when teaching English, some of these teachers use Arabic as a medium of instruction and consequently pupils lack spoken English practice (Rabab'ah, 2005; Sheshsha, 1982; Zaid, 1993). In contrast, private schools that teach in an English medium hire teachers with higher qualifications and a better grasp of English with an offer of better salaries, and they do not

usually hire Saudi teachers. They often hire expatriate teachers who are native English speakers.

In addition to the ability of EFL teachers to use English as a medium of instruction, the teaching approaches used in the state schools have been criticized (Al-Hazmi, 2003; Al-Jarf, 2008b; Rabab'ah, 2005). Much of the learning is rote and theory-based. Teachers use an approach that helps them to disseminate English through abstract textbook knowledge - i.e. grammar and vocabulary in Arabic - without expecting much spoken interaction from the students (Al-Jarf, 2006; Zaid, 1993). There is no scope for the students to practice speaking English in these lessons, as the instruction and communication are mostly conducted in Arabic. State schools in KSA generally treat English language teaching as an academic subject. Students are expected to learn a set of rules and tricks in order to be able to pass exams (Rabab'ah, 2005).

The teaching approach to learning English in private schools is comparatively more effective. The majority of the English language teachers in the private schools do not speak Arabic and English is used as medium of instruction and communication. Also teachers use a variety of teaching approaches that encourage student interaction with each other and with their teachers, even if the teachers in the private schools follow the traditional way of knowledge transmission such as rote learning (Al-Hazmi, 2003; Rabab'ah, 2005). Despite the fact that not all EFL teachers in private schools use teaching approaches that encourage student involvement in the construction of learning, some argue that the fact that these teachers are using English for instruction and communicating enables students to *speak* and *communicate* practically in English (Al-Hazmi, 2003; Al-Jarf, 2006; Rabab'ah, 2005).

These different provisions of EFL in state and private schools impact significantly on the types of learning experiences that the students have. Those

who study in private schools are seen to have a more advanced level of English language competency in comparison to the pupils from state schools (Al-Sughaer, 2009).

2.3 Higher education in Saudi Arabia

When KSA was established in 1932, there was no university or official higher education institution in the country. The history of higher education in KSA dates back to 1957, when the provision of higher education began as a small Saudi educational institution with twenty-one male students and a staff of nine teachers. This pioneering institution was King Saud University in Riyadh, which started as an institution and reached university status in 1982 (Rawaf and Simmons, 1992; Saleh, 1986).

The Saudi government embraced the Islamic philosophy in education, which promotes the notion of "*learning from the cradle to the grave*" and consequently invests a large amount of the country's GDP in improving and developing the higher education sector (Majid, 2008). Thus, new universities and colleges have been established and many scholarships are awarded to Saudi nationals (Krieger, 2007; MoHE, 2010a, 2009). In less than five decades, the number of higher education institutes has increased to 192. This includes twenty-one government universities, eighteen primary teacher colleges for men, eighty primary teacher colleges for women, thirty-seven colleges and institutes for health, twelve technical colleges and twenty-four private universities and colleges (MoHE-Ministry of Higher Education, 2010a). These institutes offer a range of degrees in various disciplines for both male and female students. However, the majority of educational facilities, administration staff, teachers and students are separated along gender lines. Although the language of

instruction differs from one institute to another, Arabic is still the dominant language in most Saudi universities. This is changing and some now complement Arabic with English, and a growing number use predominantly English. This unprecedented expansion of higher education in KSA is due to the fact that the Saudi government is trying to increase the number of academically trained professionals in order to keep abreast of the needs of a fast evolving and increasingly modern Saudi society (Sawahel, 2010). Despite greater expenditure in education in KSA, many researchers, such as Al-Hamdan (2011), Alkhazim (2003) and Hamdan (2005), believe that the quality of higher education needs to be improved.

2.4 Teaching and learning English language in Saudi higher education

The Saudi policy regarding English language teaching in higher education is torn between the desire to preserve the Arabic language and the pressure of globalization and the trend to moving towards communicating in English. This can be observed in the following statement from the MoHE regarding language policy:

Arabic is the language of instruction in universities. Another language can be used if necessary; however, this should be made by a decision from the council of the university concerned. (MoHE, 1999:17)

Today, Saudi universities have started to introduce English as a preparatory course or even as a medium of instruction in some undergraduate courses. However, only a few universities have managed to fully transfer to using only English as the medium of instruction. For example, King Fahad Petroleum and Mineral University (KFPMU), which is associated with the biggest Saudi oil company, was the first university to declare the use of English as the medium of

instruction in the 1970s (KFPMU, 2010). Al-Hazmi (2005) explained that the increased demand for using English in many Saudi universities is because they are trying to provide their graduates with up-to-date knowledge and to improve the graduates' global employment opportunities. Al-Jarf (2008a), Chapelle (2003), Tumulty (2001) and Zughouli and Hussein (1985) add that the importance that the English language has in the field of Saudi higher education is associated with the fact that most of the industries that rely on technology, sciences and businesses in KSA value English as a communication tool for trade. Therefore, despite the attempts and desire by the MoHE to preserve the Arabic language, the practice of institutions is to move towards a greater use of English. The MoHE has consequently introduced a policy that now allows English to be taught as a compulsory subject in all Saudi universities. Thus, since 2010, English has formed an integral part of the preparatory programme in all universities in KSA (MoHE-Ministry of Higher Education, 2010b; Yushau and Omar, 2007).

The preparatory programme is an introductory programme that helps to prepare Saudi high school graduates for studying in higher education. Students in all Saudi universities need to successfully pass the courses of the preparatory year before they start studying for their academic programmes. This programme includes different subjects, like Arabic language, Islamic culture, physics, mathematics, chemistry, and EFL. In most universities the EFL course constitutes a large portion of the preparatory programme. However, the number of hours allocated to the EFL courses varies from university to university, and sometimes from the preparatory programme of one course to another within the same university.

2.5 Qudar University for Health Science (*QU-HS*)

This university was established as part of a health affairs department that is associated specifically with an influential and elite wing of the Saudi armed forces – Military Health Affairs (*MHA*) (pseudonym for ethical considerations, cf. 4.8).

MHA is associated with a number of ‘medical cities’: military compounds in different locations in KSA. The term ‘medical cities’ refers to self-contained complexes in KSA that consist of all medical specialties as well as housing, shops, parks, mosques, and schools. *MHA*’s main and largest medical city is the one in Riyadh, which commenced operations in the early 1980s. It contains, in addition to a large hospital, many other prominent and specialist medical centres. This medical city offers a number of postgraduate programs in various medical fields and subspecialties as part of the medical training programme for the staff in *MHA*. Around the mid-2000s, these courses were changed to diploma and postgraduate courses when *QU-HS* was inaugurated by the General Executive Director of *MHA* as Vice-Chancellor for *QU-HS*. In the late 2000s, the university started to offer undergraduate courses. Then, in 2011, the university expanded to different campuses attached to the various medical cities associated with *MHA*.

In 2011, when this study was conducted, the main campus of *QU-HS* in Riyadh had a student population comprising 850 male undergraduates. As it was established by *MHA*, the university specializes in health care, offering courses in medicine and allied medical sciences (*AMS*). Based on their grades in high school exams, the General Aptitude Test (*GAT*) and the Standard Achievement Admission Test (*SAAT*), students can apply to study either medicine or *AMS*. Students with better grades are selected to study medicine and students with lower grades are allowed onto different *AMS* courses.

Students normally study for four years in their specialities (such as medicine, respiratory, emergency) through a four-year international medical curriculum adopted from a western university, which is ranked among the top 100 universities globally (World Ranking Guide, 2012). This curriculum is community-oriented, integrated, problem-based and student-centred, and is taught in English (*QU-HS*, 2006). It exposes the students from the start to different clinical experiences which support them in learning from experience. These experiences are provided through a range of web-based medical cases that students are expected to study and discuss among their groups using the medium of English. In order to be able to deal with the English language demands of such a curriculum, Saudi students need to pass a compulsory one-and-a-half year EFL programme, which is part of a two-year Pre-Medical Programme (PMP). The PMP includes physics, chemistry, biology, statistics, Information Technology (IT), Islamic ethics, and Arabic language. However, the EFL programme comprises 80% of the PMP. This is because the university is trying to bridge the gap between the English taught in schools and that required at the university curriculum. The university believes that a lengthy and diverse EFL programme with heavy science content will enable students to improve their English language competencies to study medicine.

2.6 The EFL unit in *QU-HS*

The EFL programme part of the PMP is designed and delivered by the EFL unit in *QU-HS*. The EFL programme was designed locally and adopts international EFL materials such as American Headway (Soars and Soars, 2005) and the Azar-Hagen Grammar Series (Alamri, 2008; Azar, 2011). The aim of the programme as stated in the English Language Curriculum (see appendix 2: 1) is:

...to provide students with extensive daily practice in academic reading, vocabulary, oral communication, grammatical structures and writing. It also aims to help [the] students acquire the language skills necessary for pursuing careers in the health sciences and undergoing practical training in an environment where English will be the principal medium of instruction and communication.

Based on their results on an in-house English placement test that is administered at the beginning of the PMP programme, students within each group (medicine/AMS) are further divided into smaller groups. In the PMP, medicine students are referred to as pre-med and AMS students are referred to as pre-AMS. The average number of students per EFL classroom is fifteen, so the student-teacher ratio in the EFL programme is 15:1.

The EFL programme has twenty male instructors; twelve are native English speakers (NES) and eight are non-native English speakers (NNES). Nine of the NES instructors are from the United States of America (USA) and three are from Canada. The majority of NNES instructors are from Jordan (six), while two are from KSA. The EFL instructors' years of teaching experience range from three to twenty-five years. All the NES instructors hold EFL teaching qualifications from their country of citizenship (i.e. the USA and Canada). The NNES instructors, particularly those from Jordan, hold EFL teaching qualifications from Jordan. The Saudi instructors possess EFL teaching qualifications from the UK and the USA.

The EFL programme in *QU-HS* is taught through eight modules. These modules are taught for at least fifteen hours per week over three academic semesters: three modules in the first and second semesters and two modules in the third semester (see appendix 1 for details of the programme structure). Each

module aims to develop specific linguistic skills, although some aim to develop more than one skill.

In the first semester, there are three modules: 'Communication Skills', 'Language Structures and Drills' and 'Academic Reading and Vocabulary'. The 'Communication Skills' module includes two courses: five hours per week of 'Oral Skills' and four hours per week of 'Supplementary Reading and Discussion', as well as an 'Introduction to Writing'. This module aims to develop the linguistic communication skills that the students need in order to be able to communicate effectively in an English-medium setting. It focuses on developing the students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills for communicative purposes. Discussions in written or oral forms are encouraged in this module, and the focus is on fluency rather than accuracy. The 'Language Structures and Drills' module, which is taught for five hours per week, aims to improve students' accuracy and language usage. It raises students' awareness about the different structures/grammatical points of the English language. The third module is 'Academic Reading and Vocabulary', which is taught for five hours per week and aims to develop students' ability to read academic texts in English and to critically evaluate and analyse them. In addition, it aims to enrich the students' vocabulary and enable them to understand different academic styles of written texts.

In the second semester, similar but more advanced modules are taught, except for the 'Communication Skills' module. The components of the 'Communication Skills' module change: the 'Oral Skills' part is reduced from five to three hours per week while the 'Supplementary Reading and Discussion' part is also reduced from four to two hours per week, and the 'Introduction to Writing' part is substituted with three hours per week of 'Workshops on Academic Writing'. The reduction in the Oral Skills component as well as Supplementary Reading and Discussion is based on the assumption that the

students' targeted skills in these areas will be sufficiently developed to the extent that they will not need much guided discussion and reading compared to when they began. The introduction of the 'Academic Writing' component is also aimed at increasing the challenge for the students and smoothing their transition from writing for general communication purposes to more structured academic writing.

In the third semester, only two modules are taught. 'Language Structure and Grammar' and 'Academic Writing Skills' are merged into a seven-hour weekly module called 'Advanced Grammar and Rhetorical Writing'; four hours are allocated for teaching structure and grammar and three hours for developing the students' academic writing skills. The second module comprises seven hours per week of 'Advanced Reading and Vocabulary'. This is divided into two components: four hours per week are allocated to developing students' academic reading skills and three hours per week are devoted to introducing the students to medical jargon and terminology.

The structure of the EFL programme in *QU-HS* is different from the one students have been used to in their schools. In their pre-university EFL learning, students often studied all the academic language skills from one book and sometime practical skills such as listening and speaking were not taught at all. In the EFL programme in *QU-HS*, different courses are assigned for the equal development of academic and practical skills, i.e. speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

In relation to teaching approach, it seems that the EFL programme at *QU-HS* does not have a clearly stated approach that each teacher should follow. However, reading through the general objectives of the EFL programme (see appendix 2 for details of the English language curriculum) as well as the specific aims of different EFL modules such as ENG 101 (see appendix 3 for

details of the ENG 101 module) and ENG 102 (see appendix 4 for details of the ENG 102 module), one could infer the appropriate communicative nature of teaching from these modules. This suggests that students are taught using modules so that they best achieve the stated aims and objectives of the EFL programme.

The assessment of the EFL programme in *QU-HS* is heavily reliant on exams, as is shown in the English Language Curriculum document of the PMP (see appendix 2). In addition to passing the final exams of each module, comprising 40% of the total grade, students are also expected to pass various written quizzes during the term, which comprise 50% of the total grade. Although exams have huge significance in the EFL programme, there are two other ways in which students can also accumulate marks to gain a total grade. These are from classroom participation and through homework. This mode of assessment, which comprises 10% of the total grade, is not described in any detail in the course outline. It is left to the instructors to implement it in the way they see fit. Exams are based purely on the information contained in the textbooks used and thus teachers have to cover the material that influences the different teaching and learning practices (Al-Roomy, 2013).

2.7 Summary

This chapter began with a brief introduction to KSA, followed by a discussion of the education system in KSA, with a special focus on EFL teaching and learning within schools. It also discussed the higher education system and the history of *QU-HS* and how EFL education is provided. The next chapter discusses the relevant literature that establishes the framework for this inquiry.

Chapter 3: Review of the literature

In an attempt to set out a theoretical understanding to allow us to investigate students' experiences of learning EFL, this chapter discusses the influence of the institution, the family background and the teaching approaches on student learning. This discussion draws from three perspectives: (1) that of the policies of the institution, (2) the perspective of the families' educational backgrounds and (3) the teaching approaches. The chapter begins by providing a historical analysis of different research about learning in order to contextualize the theoretical framework of this debate.

3.1 Contextualizing learning

Student learning experiences are influenced by various factors. These factors can be researched according to the different perspectives used to investigate and understand learning. The behavioural view of learning draws on the work of theorists such as Watson and Skinner, who believe that learning depends on the notion of stimulus and response (UNESCO, 2004). In this view, learners are perceived as empty vessels that need to be filled with knowledge, which they can recall when they are provided with the right stimuli (Hartley, 2012; Hinton, 2007). Understanding learning in this view depends on scrutinizing the different individual factors such as motivation and learning strategies that influence the student learning experiences in higher education. This can be exemplified in the work of Biggs (1993) and Entwistle and Ramsden (1982), who used different learning inventories such as the *Revised Two-factor Study Processes Questionnaire* and *Approaches to Studying Inventory* to understand the various learning strategies, such as surface and deep approaches. Deep learning has been associated with well-structured knowledge production, an appropriate

motivational environment, learner activity and interaction with others (Biggs, 2001). Surface learning is seen to be associated with “a heavy workload; relatively high class contact hours; an excessive amount of course material; a lack of opportunity to pursue subjects in depth; a lack of choice over subjects and the method of study; and a threatening and anxiety-provoking assessment system” (Gibbs, 2005, p. 9). Marton and Booth (1997) state that these inventories help to explain what has been learnt, how it was learnt, why it was learnt and how the learning could be applied. This perception about learning approaches is criticized, as it fails to explain why the same students are not motivated or able to apply similar learning strategies in different learning contexts (Laurillard, 1997; Murray et al., 1998). It fails to account for the complexities of the location and context, as Haggis (2003) argues. She states that while these learning approaches “may be successful in creating a generalised description of the ‘elite’ goals and values of academic culture, [they say] surprisingly little about the majority of students in a mass system” (Haggis, 2003, p. 1). This suggests that individualistic motivation and learning strategies are not the only ways to explain the student learning experiences (Baeten et al., 2010; Kember et al., 2008).

Sociologists (e.g. Becher and Trowler, 2001; Becher, 1994; Kember and Kwan, 2000; Lea and Stierer, 2000; Lea and Street, 1998; Solomon, 2007; Trowler, 2009) see learning as an action outside the students’ control, which is influenced by wider social structural issues, such as gender, race and social class, rather than something that can be simply manipulated in terms of individual motivation and learning strategies. In this view, learning is regarded as a social phenomenon that is affected by different elements of social structures, such as power-relations, identity, social class, gender and ethnicity, and thus, it has to be understood in relation to social structures (Lea and Street, 1998; Trowler, 2009).

Kember and Kwan (2000) argued that structural factors associated with educational institutions (such as academic disciplines, the curriculum and the nature of the students) can also affect students' learning experiences. Lindblom-Ylänne et al. (2006) suggested that the nature of disciplines (i.e., 'pure soft', 'pure hard', 'applied soft' and 'applied hard') and the context of the teaching (i.e., the department and the university) influence the way teachers teach and the learning experiences of the students. It was observed that teachers in 'hard' disciplines like science or medicine were more likely to adopt a teacher-centred approach in their teaching, while teachers in 'soft' disciplines such as the arts and languages were more likely to adopt a student-centred approach to their teaching. Although this view has received many critiques, among which is its overly determined understanding of teaching and learning (Kreber and Castleden, 2009; Stes et al., 2007), it still provides insight about the influence of structure on teaching and learning.

A differing view of the impact of the social structures on teaching and learning is provided by Wenger's (1998) notion of 'Communities of Practice' (CoP), which refers to "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and they learn how to do it better as they interact regularly." Using the notion of CoP, Becher and Parry (2005) conceptualized learning as social activities that take place in everyday life, and viewed it as a production of daily interactions. It is the interaction between the different social agents in certain communities that produces learning and shapes learning experiences. This implies that learning is a collective endeavour that is developed by a community rather than by individuals. Thus, individual learning is seen to be shaped and reshaped by accessing these communities, which have the power to change the individual's practices (Lave and Wenger, 2001, 1991). Different academic settings provoke different versatile sets of complex skills that are required for a person to function effectively in various disciplinary

communities in a university (Lea and Street, 2006, 1998). In this view, learning is perceived as comprising practices that are a production of certain social structures and are constituted through the discourse within student and learning communities in particular institutions (Mann, 2000; Rockoff, 2004). Thus, students are seen to be involved in a discourse that controls different aspects of their learning by imposing certain practices that are created by particular institutions (Barton and Hamilton, 1999, 1998; Barton et al., 1999).

Negotiating the essentialism of both the psychological and sociological understanding of the student learning experiences, which respectively view learning as individualistic (i.e. driven by the intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, which can sometimes be manipulated through learning strategies) or purely structural issues (i.e. race, gender, social class), this study views learning slightly differently. It views learning as being affected and influenced by a combination of paradigms. Learning is seen as an individual choice that has its roots within the person's mind, gained and influenced by the teaching and learning approaches imposed on the learner. These choices are influenced by the social structures surrounding the learning and the learner. From such a perspective, the explanations of learning experiences would therefore lie in the exploration of both individual and structural factors and the view that learning is a transformative experience rather than a deterministic process (Ashwin, 2009; Mills, 2008; Thornton, 2010). This means the psychological views could hold part of the answer, but a full explanation would include certain structural issues, such as social class and institutional factors. Thus, in order to account for what students bring to the learning situation, and how the learning situation influences students' learning, this study investigates students' learning from three different perspectives:

- i. The university policies,
- ii. Families' backgrounds and
- iii. The teaching approaches in the EFL programme in *QU-HS*.

The university policies affect ways in which such institutional influences impact on student learning through different behaviours enacted by the university. The family background as a construct in this study is seen as a structural issue that shows how the students' individual learning characters are negotiated and informed, and how that influences students' learning experiences in certain academic settings. The teaching approaches adopted by teachers in the EFL programme will highlight how students negotiate their individual learning and how the teaching in the programme affects this learning.

Thus, Section 3.2 of this chapter discusses literature on the influence of institutional policies of an educational institution on teaching and learning. Respectively, sections 3.3 and 3.4 consider how students' family backgrounds as well as teachers' teaching approaches influence students' learning experience of EFL in different contexts.

3.2 Conceptualizing the institutional influence on the student learning experiences

From the earlier periods of the 20th century to the present, social scientists (Collins, 1979; Davies, 1994; Rowan and Miskel, 1999; Scott, 2008; Weber and Parsons, 2012) have acknowledged the importance of education and its institutional configurations. Researchers have tried to capture the complexity, contingency and the contestations of educational institutions and the practices

that give rise to academic attainment and success. These practices take different shapes and forms depending on the context in which they exist.

This section draws on aspects of institutional theory (Brinton and Nee, 1998; DiMaggio, 1998; Meyer and Rowan, 2006; Rowan and Miskel, 1999; Scott, 2008) to understand the deeper and more resilient aspects of educational institutions and their influence on teaching and learning. The process of understanding institutional influence involves scrutinising the processes by which social behaviours (i.e. schemas, rules, norms, and routines) are established as authoritative guidelines within an institution for its different operative processes, including teaching and learning.

The term *institution* is defined differently in institutional theory with no clear agreement on what it actually means. Scott (2001, p. 48) defines institutions as:

...social structures that have attained a high degree of resilience. [These] are composed of cultural-cognitive, normative, and regulative elements that [...] provide stability and meaning to social life. [...] Institutions operate at different levels of jurisdiction, from the world system to localized interpersonal relationships. Institutions by definition connote stability but are subject to change processes, both incremental and discontinuous.

In his definition of the neo-institutional field, Powell (1991, p. 8) provides an operational definition of institutions by saying that:

the new institutionalism in organization theory and sociology comprises a rejection of rational-actor models, an interest in institutions as independent variables, a turn toward cognitive and cultural explanations, and an interest in properties of supra-individual units of analysis that cannot be reduced to aggregations or direct consequences of individuals' attributes or motives.

This definition suggests that institutions are living social structures that have concrete as well as fluid social practices. These social practices can be characterised as regulative, normative, and/or cognitive-cultural (Bjorck, 2004).

There are two traditions to utilizing and understanding the influence of institutional theory. The traditional views tend to perceive institutions as objective structures that are independent of human actions (Selznick, 1984) and thus most of the institutional analysis in such a view focuses on understanding the influence of legal structures. In contrast, the newer tradition of analysing institutions centres on the institutional legal structures as being human-made, which connects these institutions to the wider social structures (Immergut, 1998; Ingram and Clay, 2000; Jones et al., 2005; Meyer and Rowan, 2006; Olssen and Peters, 2005). Such views suggest a strong relationship between institutional practices with the wider social structures within which the institution exists. Therefore, there is a concerted effort to link institutions closely to the local communities and place them in the context of a wider social grouping. This study is located within the newer tradition of institutional theory, whereby an institution is seen as an entity that is regulated by rules made by people in order to establish certain norms within that institution, as well as to define its relationship with wider social structures such as the general education and political systems. The notion of institutional analysis in this study refers to the act of scrutinizing the different policies enacted by *QU-HS* in relation to the English language and their influence on teaching and learning.

In relation to education, and higher education in particular, institutional analysis is used to understand the social behaviours of educational institutions and how they affect student learning (Gibbs and Dunbat-Goddet, 2007; Gibbs, 2005; Jones et al., 2005; Kezar, 2006; Meyer and Rowan, 2006; Porter, 2006; Yorke and Longden, 2008). These behaviours manifest in concrete policies and unwritten practices which influence different aspects of managing/governing

institutions, including teaching and learning. More specifically, the influence can be seen at the input level (e.g. teachers' recruitment and student admission), at the process level (e.g. knowledge production and the structure of the programme) and at the output level (e.g. who graduates). In addition, these policies and practices do not exist in a vacuum; instead they reflect the wider social and political structures in which the institutions exist (McDonough, 1997; Paulsen and St John, 2002; Walpole, 2003). This dialogue between these structures and the institutions involves the development of rules, categories, values, norms and even physical appearances of the institutions (Mills, 2008).

Different studies discuss the influence of policies and practices on the running of higher education institutions, particularly in relation to teaching and learning. Clarke (2007), Marginson (2008) and Usher and Savino (2007) argue that the various policies and practices a university adopts in relation to the types of course it provides and the type of research it generates influence the position of the university on the global stage, and thus influence the types of student it admits and the academics it recruits. Grenfell and James (2004), Marginson (2008) and Naidoo (2004) suggest that the higher an university is on the global ranking scale, the more autonomy it has in modifying or influencing the rules of play in the field of higher education for its own advantage.

The policies and practices enacted by higher education institutions can also influence educational programmes at the process level. They influence the provision of certain educational programmes in some universities (Alkhazim, 2003; Ashwin, 2009; Clarke, 2007; McDonough, 1997). Supporting McDonough (1997), Ashwin (2009) argues that the policies of the university can influence the content and the structure of certain educational programmes it offers. For example, a course like sociology is taught differently by two UK higher education institutions according to the position of the university in the field (Abbas and McLean, 2007). Elite and traditional universities tend to teach such

courses in more abstract and philosophical ways, while modern universities seem to focus more on the applied part of sociology (ibid). Thus, the contents and the way certain courses are organised and taught by academics are likely to vary from one institution to another based on the different policies and practices that influence the positioning of these institutions in the league tables in higher education (James, 2013).

Regarding the use of the English language as a medium of instruction (EMI), Green et al. (2012) argued that universities around the world have adopted English in order to improve student prospects in global graduate employment and mobility prospects due to increased demand for graduates who are proficient in English language skills. For example, Rwanda, which was a Belgian colony, once used mainly French or the indigenous Kinyarwanda dialect as a medium of instruction in its higher education institutions. However, the old and elite universities, such as the Kigali Institute of Science and Technology, have now adopted EMI in order to affirm the country's independence from France, but also to allow it to compete globally. Also, it claimed that use of English allows the graduates of the Kigali Institute better opportunities to engage academically with other institutions of higher education in the East African community, which use EMI. In addition, it improves the students' employment opportunities in the global market.

In the Middle East, English is rapidly becoming the language of choice at new universities (Green et al., 2012). Universities that adopt EMI want to prove their association with the western education system and claim to provide their graduates with up-to-date knowledge in English. These universities view the use of English in higher education not only as a tool that empowers their graduates to compete in the international job market, but also to compete in gaining access to postgraduate education in countries where English is the medium of instruction (Green et al., 2012).

Moreover, in order to attract students from Anglophone countries, many European higher education institutions have adopted a new language policy by introducing English as an additional language of instruction in different postgraduate-level educational programmes. For example, many Dutch universities offer their postgraduate programmes in English (Green et al., 2012). In order to cope with the demands of English medium instructions, these universities require their students to take tests such as the Test Of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) before admission and offer remedial English language courses within degree programmes.

In seeking to understand the immense popularity of English language teaching in KSA, Al-Khairi (2013) and Bersamina (2009) found that many higher education institutions have started to offer English language courses in their degree programmes. This is in response to the government reform of higher education and attempt to raise standards to cope with the opportunities that globalization and new technology bring. In KSA, English is regarded as a tool that helps students to gain access to updated knowledge and skills; it is also seen as a language that is the basis of science and technology (Abu-Rizaizah, 2010; Al-Hazimi et al., 2004; Alkhazim, 2003). Although the policy of making English the medium of instruction is not compulsory, many universities have begun to change their language of instruction from Arabic to English either fully or partially in order to provide increased access to academic and professional opportunities (Al-Khairi, 2013; Al-Seghayer, 2012; Alebaikan and Troudi, 2010).

Despite the advantages of using EMI that were articulated in the studies cited above, there are other studies that suggest otherwise. Most of these studies suggest that the use of EMI causes a variety of problems for learning and teaching (Annamalai, 2004; Littlewood and Liu, 1996; Vavrus, 2002). In Hong

Kong, Littlewood and Liu (1996) stress that students studying in EMI are found to perform worse in their exams in comparison to those who study in their native language. In addition, it was suggested that students in Hong Kong tend to participate less in classroom activities when EMI is used, and that their motivation to learn tends to decline because of the frustration of not being able to understand the language of instruction (Salili and Tsui, 2005). Evans (2009) and Llewellyn et al. (1982) argue that in settings where EMI is used, students tend to rely heavily on memorisation rather than engagement as a learning approach. Vavrus (2000) and Annamalai (2004) suggest that the use of EMI in Tanzania and India limits students' understanding of the subjects taught.

Although it seems that there is an ongoing debate about the advantages and disadvantages of using EMI in many educational settings, it is important to note that the issue of medium of instruction as an institutional choice could have an impact on educational aspects of an institution. Drawing on the work of Bourdieu (2005) and Ashwin (2009), it is argued that institutional policy and practices have a significant influence on teaching and learning processes in that they can influence the structure of the academic programmes as well as the medium of instruction.

Institutional policy and practice also informs the types of student admitted to the university programmes and the teachers who can teach the courses on offer. This happens through the decisions that academics make in relation to the university they choose to work in and who they feel can appreciate their academic qualifications, their teaching experiences and their teaching attitudes (Bleiklie and Byrkjeflot, 2002; Henkel, 2005; Lee and Boud, 2003). Thus, an institution's policies and practices are seen to inform its performance, which in turn influences the types of students and academics it attracts and the kind of teaching-learning environment it provides.

The lens of institutional theory allows an analysis into what might be the origin of institutional policies. Also, it emphasises the importance of institutional influence on learning and teaching in higher education. It explains how different policies and practices adopted by universities influence student admission, academic recruitment and the provision/modification of educational programmes. In the context of this study, institutional theory is utilized in order to address the origin of different policies and practices enacted by *QU-HS* in relation to EFL teaching and learning; and how policies and practices influence the students' learning experiences. These aspects are discussed further in detail in Chapter 5.

3.3 Conceptualizing the influence of families' backgrounds on the student learning experiences

In order to understand the family educational background, this study utilises the notion of cultural capital, which here is conceptualised as 'competence', i.e., students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes, which they acquire from their family background and which can help them to cope with the different demands of studying in *QU-HS* and in the EFL programme in particular. This section explores how the presence or absence of cultural capital affects students' learning experience in the EFL programme in *QU-HS*.

3.3.1 The origin of the concept of cultural capital

Bourdieu and others (i.e. Coleman and Coleman, 1994; Putnam, 2001) discuss capital in other forms than the economic. This highlights their realization of the shortcoming of the notion of *capital* as it is used by economists. Although the

notion of 'capital' usually connotes financial gains, it does not often capture the complexity of the social world. Therefore, it was imperative to introduce a different construct of capital which includes *cultural capital*. The notion of cultural capital among the other forms of capital can encompass sources of social advantage and social class differentiation in that students with access to cultural capital such as art, theatre, sports and museums might have advantages in terms of how they experience learning (Silva and Edwards, 2005).

The notion of cultural capital was used by Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1979) in order to define the shortcoming of economic explanations for the failure or success of children from different social classes in an academic setting. He used the concept of cultural capital to analyse the achievements of children from different social classes. He attempted to relate students' academic success to "the specific profit which children from the different classes and class fractions can obtain in the academic market" with the distribution of cultural capital between social classes (Bourdieu, 2008, p. 47). Unlike the definition of human capital used by some economists, which sees academic failure or success as a result of an individual's natural aptitudes, cultural capital relates success or failure to wider socioeconomic issues. It views ability and talent, which is the core of the relationship between academic ability and academic investment, as an accumulation of certain knowledge and attitudes, which are a manifestation of being part of a particular social class (De Civita et al., 2004; Lee and Bowen, 2006). Cultural capital can be understood in relation to the learning advantages such as study skills, knowledge and attitudes that individuals bring as result of the effect of their family's cultural capital (Crook, 1997; De Graaf et al., 2000; Munk and Krarup, 2011; Sullivan, 2001). In addition, it makes it possible to "relate scholastic investment strategies to the whole set of educational strategies and to the system of reproduction strategies" (Bourdieu, 2008, p. 282).

3.3.2 Conceptualizing cultural capital in a Bourdieu way

Cultural capital is conceptualized as non-materialistic and non-economic parental cultural codes and practices capable of securing a return to their holders (Bourdieu 2002). Thus “Cultural capital embodies the sum total of investments in aesthetic codes, practices and dispositions transmitted to children through the process of family socialisation” (Tzanakis, 2011, p. 77). Through family socialisation, cultural capital is passed to the students. Such socialisation reflects class position or individuals’ location in a variety of contexts and “is geared to the perpetuation of structures of dominance” (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1979, p. 204). Cultural capital is thus reflective of the social class to which a person belongs, which manifests in certain behaviours that can privilege/under-privilege him/her. Because cultural capital is associated with social classes, children of advantaged social class are able to have access to “elite cultural resources [that] can become cultural capital valued in society” as well as in educational settings (Tzanakis, 2011, p. 77). Educational settings and teaching pedagogies mostly tend to reward students who possess such cultural capital and marginalize those who do not (Sayed and Soudien, 2003; Sayed and Ahmed, 2011).

3.3.3 The different forms of cultural capital

Bourdieu (2002) understands cultural capital as having three different forms. These are the embodied, the objectified and institutionalized form (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1979; Bourdieu, 2008). Embodied cultural capital refers to the “long-lasting disposition of the individual’s mind and body [...]” (Bourdieu, 2008, p. 282). In Bourdieu’s words, “the embodied capital, external wealth converted into an integral part of person, into habitus, cannot be transmitted instantaneously (unlike money, property rights, or even titles of nobility) by gift

or bequest, purchase or exchange” (Bourdieu, 2008, p. 283). In other words, he states how this begins to advantage the student having access to cultural capital.

The acquisition of embodied cultural capital necessarily presupposes the investment of time devoted to learning or at least being exposed to other possessors of the cultural capital (i.e. family members). The presence of other possessors (e.g. family members) is always required for embodied cultural capital to be transmitted to the receiver. However, direct interaction of the possessor with the receiver is not a condition for the transmission of embodied cultural capital; the existence of the possessor alone can influence implicitly the practices of the receiver, as education among family members provides role models and support for the children, such as the influence of grandparents (Sacker et al., 2002). Thus, this inherited gift of competence, i.e. tradition, cultured experience and knowledge, is transmitted through the implicit and explicit socialisation that takes place through the family. Socialisation involves learned knowledge and behaviours and is strongly linked to an individual’s habitus in terms of his or her character and method of processing information (Abercrombie, 2000).

The objectified form of cultural capital refers to artefacts possessed by an individual or a group. Lee and Bowen (2006) develop the argument of Bourdieu (2002), suggesting that the artefacts (e.g. books, materials, TV) themselves may function as a form of cultural capital insofar as their ownership, use or consumption presupposes a certain amount of embodied cultural capital. Since these artefacts are already in physical form, they can be used to gain intellectual profit. However, it seems that the embodied cultural capital an individual possesses can be transmitted in the form of artefacts to another individual. For example, owning a computer or a book can be cultural capital in its own right. They are reality that exists ‘out there’, independent of the knowers, as they

contain knowledge and skills. So when a person owns such artefacts, s/he can be described as a possessor of tangible and materialistic cultural capital as opposed to those who do not own such cultural capital. However, having the ability to use such artefacts for learning purposes maximizes the impact of such cultural capital on the students. For example, having books or a computer in a house is cultural capital for the children. Nevertheless, the impact of such artefacts can be maximised when parents or other family members have the knowledge and understanding to help transform a computer into an educational resource for the learning benefit of a child. Musoba and Baez (2009) support this notion, by arguing that objectified items in a physical sense can be accessible to anyone but it is in understanding their qualities and meanings through embodied capital that their value is realised.

The third type of cultural capital is the institutionalized form, which refers to academic credentials and qualifications (Bourdieu, 2008; DiMaggio, 1998). In society today, knowledge, skills and attitudes are institutionalised and manifest in qualifications. They are acquired mostly through academic institutions that provide individuals with academic qualifications to certify that such individuals possess valued knowledge, skills and attitudes. For example, schools certify a student with A-levels in certain subjects to indicate the amount of embodied cultural capital that he or she possesses. These credentials and qualifications offered by authorised institutions are recognized by other institutions for material progression: for example, they may enable admission to higher education or to the job market (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1979; DiMaggio, 1998). In addition, the value of such cultural capital can be seen on a personal level and the way society recognizes it. For example, when a person is recognized as a PhD holder or as 'Dr X', s/he is expected to behave and think in certain ways. The simple existence of such an institutionalized form of cultural capital in student households has an impact on the students' learning

experiences. The obvious way in which it influences the household is manifest in the wealth/poverty of the family. “Institutionalization performs a function for cultural capital analogous to that performed by money in the case of economic capital” (Lareau and Weininger, 2003, p. 2). Institutionalized cultural capital can also influence the academic decisions made in families. For example, educated parents or siblings may project behaviours or attitudes that reflect their cultural capital.

3.3.4 Different ways of conceptualizing cultural capital

Different studies are informed by the notion of cultural capital and conceptualize it in different ways. Although they are specific about distinguishing the different forms of cultural capital, De Graaf (1986) conceptualizes cultural capital as a general term that refers to knowledge of a particular skill (e.g. reading) and participation in the dominant culture, such as attending highly exclusive events (e.g. galleries, the theatre, opera, and visiting historical monuments). Most of these activities discussed are regarded to be high culture (De Graaf, 1986). For example, in the theatre, art galleries or musical opera, people acquire middle class culture. These activities are often related to the particular social class that a person has, and thus position them differently in society. De Graaf et al. (2000) suggest that the more the students participate in such activities, the more cultural capital they gain. The cultural capital that De Graaf et al. (2000) refer to could be the embodied as well as the objectified form. This is because participation in such activities allows the students to develop and broaden their knowledge and skills, which can result in educational success. In addition, it allows the student to possess artefacts such as books, computers or pictures that can be representations of such cultural capital. However, this alone does not totally account for a student's

experiential learning, so we can have students with prestige, who, even though they have such cultural capital, do not succeed. The significance is that family background, which is often class structured, can enable children to succeed, but it has to work alongside other influences and other forms of capital. Children from social deprivation, a lower social class or an inferior culture who gain opportunities such as scholarships might also be highly successful academically.

Sullivan (2001) conceptualized cultural capital as having linguistic competence. In relation to understanding the influence of family on the development of students' linguistic ability, Sullivan (2001) found that parents' level of education is strongly associated with advanced development of their children's linguistic abilities. Also, she found that this form of cultural capital is transmitted through cultural activities such as reading at home, the form of play and monitored TV viewing in which parents engage their children. Such cultural activities are found to have a significant impact on the students' motivation for learning and academic attainment. Educated parents will balance this by providing creative and practical learning that reinforces linguistic competence, such as painting, playing a musical instrument, cooking, gardening and participating in poetry or debates. In KSA, parents would also credit learning and participation in religion, namely Islam, as being an important form of cultural capital.

Stevenson (2002) conceptualised cultural capital as a form of "competence, e.g. knowledge, skill, education and educational credentials; any advantages a person has which give them a higher status in society, including high expectations". People use their cultural capital to gain advantages in certain contexts, as these contexts value their cultural capital, e.g. using a title like 'Dr.', 'Lord', 'Lady' or 'Imam' to get preferential treatment and respect (Lee and Bowen, 2006). Thus, the value of cultural capital is subjective and varies depending on how it is used from one context to another (Lareau and

Weininger, 2003; Sullivan, 2001). The cultural capital that Stevenson (2002) discusses could be seen as a form of institutionalised cultural capital. It privileges people in certain context. For example, in KSA the title 'Sheikh', which refers to a high status of knowledge about Islam, suggests a certain degree of cultural capital. Such a title, when it is used in the context of KSA, is associated with religious knowledge as well as with membership of the middle class or the elite. Sheikhs are always consulted by the government and also relied on in managing the people. Such an institutionalized title privileges individuals in society.

Lee and Bowen (2006) conceptualized cultural capital in terms of parents' educational attainments and their involvement in their children's education. In relation to the level of education among parents, Lee and Bowen (2006) argue that parents with higher educational qualifications are more likely to possess academic knowledge and skills as well as a better economic situation in comparison to those who do not have such qualifications. The knowledge, skills and economic situation that parents acquire from their education enable them to be involved more in their children's education. Such involvement of the family is regarded by Lee and Bowen (2006) as a form of family's transmission of their knowledge and skills to the children. This involves engaging the children with different educational artefacts (e.g., books, computers, academic credentials). This argument from Lee and Bowen (2006) suggests that parents with lower educational qualifications are less able to engage with their children's education in the same way the parents with higher educational qualifications do. In support of this, Heymann and Earle (2000), Hill and Taylor (2004), McNeal (1999) and Lee and Bowen (2006) argue that children's lower academic achievements are associated with less family involvement. Lee and Bowen, (2006, p. 193) argue that:

parents with different demographic characteristics exhibited different types of involvement [i.e. helping with homework, discussing the child's schoolwork and experiences at school, structuring home activities, setting educational expectations and aspirations for the children], and the types of involvement exhibited by parents from dominant groups had the strongest association with [the students] achievement.

The notion of cultural capital emphasises that the academic success gained from educational intervention depends, among other factors, on the investment made by families in individuals' cultural capital (Lee and Bowen, 2006; Sullivan, 2001). Thus cultural habits and dispositions inherited from the family are vital to school success, although at times a lack of such inheritance can motivate students to do better than their elders (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1979).

The above discussion about cultural capital and the different forms it might take indicates the amount of knowledge, skills and attitudes that may advantage individuals in certain context. Cultural capital can also be seen as indicators of social class and how people are positioned in the wider social structure based on such capital (Lareau and Weininger, 2003; Schweisfurth, 2013a). It is also important to note that these different forms of cultural capital intersect in one way or another. Thus, their impacts are observed in different ways and therefore advantage or disadvantage people (Ahmed and Sayed, 2009; Samuel and Sayed, 2003).

Informed by the discussion above about cultural capital, this study views cultural capital as a general term that encompasses knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are acquired by individuals from their families and which can be used as an asset that can help and support the students to cope with the demands of studying in the EFL programme. As cultural capital is one of the perspectives this study uses to investigate student learning experiences, the influence of such capital is analysed in Chapter Six.

3.4 Conceptualizing the influence of teaching approaches on the student learning experience

The approaches that teachers use for their teaching within an institution or programme influence the students' learning experiences (Ahmed, 2012; Entwistle and Smith, 2002; Entwistle et al., 2002; Gorjian et al., 2012; Muller et al., 2012; Papi and Abdollahzadeh, 2012; Prosser, 1999). These approaches are informed by different philosophies and this explains the different views that teachers have in relation to knowledge, teaching, students, and assessment (Choy and Troudi, 2006; Evans, 2000; Pratt, 1998; Troudi, 2005; Troudi et al., 2009). These approaches can be used as a lens to analyse the interaction between teachers and students.

This section discusses the influence of teaching approaches on students' learning experiences. In particular, it will review the effect of these approaches in relation to teachers' roles, views about students, views about teaching, and processes of assessment.

3.4.1 Teaching approaches in higher education

Teaching approaches are influenced by the teachers' views and experience about learning, and they have a significant influence on students' learning experiences (Ahmed, 2012; Osborn, 2006; Prosser, 1999). Various studies have researched teaching approaches in relation to different aspects, such as teachers' beliefs, teachers' roles, as well as teachers' views about teaching, students and assessment. In educational research, teachers' perceptions of their teaching roles, as well as their views about teaching and learning, are considered particularly powerful and have been found to have a strong influence on teaching and learning by students (Entwistle and Smith, 2002; Johnston, 2003). Calderhead (1996) explored the knowledge, views and

attitudes of teachers in schools and concluded that the ways in which teachers interact with their students depend on their own knowledge and views about teaching and learning, including knowledge related to teaching, subject matter and managing learning. The combination of these three aspects plays a vital role in how teachers approach teaching and learning (Choy and Troudi, 2006; Shulman, 1987; Silvern and Isenberg, 1990).

In higher education, different studies review lecturers' perceptions about teaching (e.g. Dall'Alba, 1991; Kember et al., 2008; Prosser, 1999; Rockoff, 2004; Samuelowicz and Bain, 1992). Whilst these studies all use slightly different methodologies, they all draw similar conclusions. Despite the different classifications introduced into each study about what constitutes teaching, they generally view teaching along a spectrum that explains teachers' views about teaching, their roles, and their views about students. This spectrum has teaching as an engagement process at one end and knowledge transmission at the other end. For example, Prosser et al. (1994, pp. 223–225), in their investigation of how tertiary teachers view teaching, identified the following five conceptions of teaching approaches:

1. Teaching as **transmitting the syllabus**: Teachers who hold this belief about teaching follow the syllabus to the letter. They think that their role is simply to convey what is there in the syllabus to the students in its exact form. They do not question the coherence of the information; nor do they enquire into its suitability for the students.
2. Teaching as **transmitting the teachers'** knowledge: Teachers who adopt such a concept in teaching organize knowledge and information in their own way and do not follow the syllabus precisely. However, they view themselves as knowledge transmitters. Similarly to teachers in category 1, they do not question the coherence of the information nor enquire into

its suitability for the students, but they order it and pass it on to their students.

3. Teaching as **helping students** to acquire the concepts of the syllabus: Teachers who view teaching in this way follow the syllabus literally. However, instead of being knowledge transmitters, they view themselves as assistants to the students. They help them to acquire and understand the relationships between the concepts within the curriculum by engaging with the content. Teachers with this belief always question the appropriateness of the materials' suitability for the students' level of learning.
4. Teaching as **helping students** to acquire the teacher's knowledge: Teachers holding this belief organize knowledge and information according to their own understanding of it, and then pass it on to their students. However, they differ from teachers in category 2 in that these teachers do not take the syllabus prescription for granted. Instead, they constantly question the appropriateness of the materials to the students' level. They regard themselves as assistants to the students in acquiring the concepts and understanding the relationships between them.
5. Teaching as **helping students** to develop concepts: Teachers with such a view of teaching focus their teaching around the needs of their students and the conception of the subject matter, not around their own interests as teachers, or even around following the dictates of the syllabus or the materials. Teachers who adopt this belief see their role as facilitating learning by enabling students to develop their ideas in terms of further elaboration and extension.

The various perceptions of teachers in higher education presented above by different studies are similar in many ways. They all support the claim that there

is a finite range of conceptions of teaching approaches adopted by teachers in higher education. Presenting the conceptions of teaching in categories or levels reflects researchers' preferences as to what kind of teaching is desired and should be valued. Although the number of conceptions and their boundaries differ from one author to another, in all the schemes, teaching is seen to involve presentation of and transmission of information. In turn, this form of teaching is classified as the lowest (*knowledge transmission*) whereas teaching conceptualized as a process of bringing about conceptual change in students is classified as the highest (*engagement*). This conclusion about the various perceptions of teaching has been arrived at through different studies that have applied many diverse research methods and thus provide evidence of its validity. In addition, these conceptions have a considerable influence on how differing conceptions affect the choice of teaching practices as well as the views about students, learning outcomes and assessment procedures (Calderhead, 1996; Entwistle and Smith, 2002; Troudi, 2005; Troudi et al., 2009). In return, these choices then influence students' ways of learning and the levels of understanding they reach.

In reference to Prosser et al.'s (1994) various perceptions used by teachers in higher education discussed above, the first concept of teachers appears not to value the students' input when transmitting what is in the curriculum exactly to the students. Thus they seem to believe that the students have nothing to contribute to their learning. These teachers do not question the coherence or suitability of the information for the learners, and assume that all students have similar needs and learn in the same way, and that whoever has designed the curriculum has addressed these needs. In this view, the teachers do not have significant input to the curriculum; nor do they believe that students are able to contribute to the curriculum.

Similarly, in the second perception of Prosser et al. (1994), similar views about learners are held by these teachers, as they do not seem to value the input of the students in learning. They view teaching to be about their inputs and their worldviews. Students' needs do not seem to have any importance, and such teachers do not question whether the knowledge they disseminate is coherent and suitable. As the teaching is mainly about their own input, such teachers organize the lessons without any consideration of how the students may perceive it. In both of these first two concepts about teaching, learning centres on memorizing and retaining the knowledge and information given to the students.

The perceptions of teaching (Prosser et al., 1994) introduced in points 3, 4 and 5 above present different conceptualizations about teaching, views about students and learning outcomes. In point 3, which refers to 'teaching as *helping students* to acquire the concepts of the syllabus', teachers seem to lean towards helping the learners to understand the concepts within the curriculum. They engage critically with the knowledge and information presented in the curriculum in an attempt to make it more accessible for the learners. Although in this view these teachers still follow exactly what is in the curriculum, they still view teaching as an act of helping students to learn. Part of helping the students to learn in this way could be seen in terms of tailoring their teaching to each individual's way of learning; thus, the learning of the concepts of the curriculum is achieved. In this view, teaching begins to be more about the students and not the teacher.

In the fourth perception about teaching presented above, which refers to 'teaching as *helping students* to acquire the teacher's knowledge', teachers may not follow the curriculum literally and they may not present their views strongly about what their students should learn, but they still organize the concepts and the information from the curriculum in a way that is accessible to

the students. The students' need to understand knowledge and interact with it is regarded as the heart of this teaching approach. The fifth perception of teaching, which refers to 'teaching as *helping students* develop conceptions', projects teaching and learning as being more student-focused. Teachers following this path engage students in what constitutes knowledge by involving them in what they need to learn and facilitating how they learn. Thus, such teachers organize the knowledge and the concepts in ways that address the needs of the students, and then help them to participate in the actual learning and enable them to expand on the content of what they are learning.

Prosser et al. (1994) have shown that teaching styles start from a teacher-centred teaching style, which simply transmits the curriculum content in its exact form to the learners. Some teachers might adapt and change and even question the information they are given, but they consider their main duty to be to pass curriculum content on to the students. Better trained and more confident lecturers try to engage their students to the point of giving them the skills to debate and expand on the knowledge-base they provide. Some teachers spend time and effort to make the learning content more accessible, interesting and creative. Others teach straight from a textbook.

The structural perspectives, which account for issues of power relations between the knowledge and the knower as well as ways in which knowledge and skills are transmitted, can be used to analyse the teaching approaches (Schweisfurth, 2013b, 2011). Instead of understanding teaching merely as an act of engagement versus transmission, teaching can also be seen as act of allowing students access to the knowledge and empowering them with skills by which they can acquire wider knowledge. Progressive teaching that emphasises students' engagement and sees students as individuals with diverse needs tends to put less emphasis on the hierarchy of knowledge. This can be seen in two ways. Firstly, such teaching does not assume that students are blank

canvasses who do not know anything, but rather it treats them as individuals who have different prior learning skills. Therefore, it is not necessary for teachers or the curriculum to start all the students at same knowledge level and then teach them up the hierarchy of knowledge. The second point is that such progressive teaching, which emphasises students' engagement and contribution to knowledge production, tends to naturalize the power relation between the teachers and the curriculum versus the students. Students are encouraged to speak and share ideas so that they learn through interaction with others in a less structural way. In addition, such teaching allows the students to develop their learning skills in order to enable them to acquire knowledge.

Structural traditional teaching, on the other hand, tends to allow students access to knowledge through certain hierarchies. It starts them from the basic concepts and walks them up the ladder of knowledge. The assumption behind such an approach to teaching is that students are similar individuals with similar needs; and therefore they have to start learning at the same point, which is at the bottom of the hierarchy of knowledge, and work their way up the ladder of knowledge. In such an approach to teaching, it seems that there is no room for the argument that students might have prior knowledge or different lived experiences. Teaching is seen mostly in the light of habit formation and knowledge acquisition rather than being about enhancing their learning skills. Thus, teachers who adopt such an approach in their teaching tend to act as guardians of knowledge and see it as their responsibility to disseminate knowledge to all students at the same time about what they think the students need to know. This shows the ways in which knowledge is managed through hierarchical structures in such teaching.

The terms 'traditional' versus 'progressive' are widely used in the literature on teaching. 'Traditional' teaching is broadly used to refer to lecture methods, rote learning and deductive teaching methods (Broughton, 1994; Richards 2008).

'Progressive' teaching in general is used to refer to constructivist, discovery or problem-solving teaching (Schwerdt and Wuppermann, 2010). Opponents of traditional teaching take a negative view of most of the practices that are encouraged by such a teaching approach (e.g. bigger class sizes, production-focused teaching, reliance on memorisation). Therefore, practices such as student-centred, process-focused teaching and learning by doing, which are often encouraged by progressive teaching, are perceived positively. However, the usefulness of the traditional teaching approaches cannot be ignored, as they still yield noticeable learning in many contexts (Schwerdt and Wuppermann, 2010). Therefore, the use of the terms 'traditional' and 'progressive' in this study is not meant to be pejorative and does not suggest that one teaching tradition is better than the other (Henson 2008; Wallace 1991). Instead, this study uses the term 'traditional' to show wider trends that encompass teaching traditions that focus on structured ways of teaching and learning, with the teachers being often at the centre of knowledge production. The term 'progressive' is used to describe the range of teaching traditions that broadly encourage student-led activities in less structured learning contexts. This could suggest that traditional teaching means more structured learning and more teacher-led activities; progressive teaching means less structured learning and fewer teacher-led activities. Furthermore, the comparison between 'traditional' and 'progressive' teaching methods aims to show different degrees of teacher and student involvement in the process of knowledge production and acquisition. Since traditional teaching approaches stress the role of the teacher in leading the learning process and providing students with knowledge, attending lessons is widely seen as an important factor in students' learning, through which students could accumulate cultural capital. Therefore, for most students with less cultural capital, attending lessons and interacting with teachers is often seen as a way in which such students can acquire cultural capital, which is valued in institutionalised educational settings. On the other

hand, students with cultural capital do not necessarily require teachers to give them knowledge and skills, as they can often acquire them at home or elsewhere due to their cultural capital. Thus, most students with cultural capital tend to thrive in teaching traditions that assume that learning has already started outside the institutional learning context and that the role of the teachers is to help the students with the process of exploration. Having said that, it is important to note that sometimes students with cultural capital thrive in traditional teaching traditions. This could simply be because the process of accumulation of cultural capital for these students emphasises traditional ways of learning (e.g. rote learning). Therefore, these ideal type characterizations of teaching should be viewed as a continuum along which teachers position themselves. Such positioning might show a teacher to be more inclined to the traditional or the progressive end of the continuum. The different ways of conceptualizing teaching discussed are summarised in these two broad spectrums that represent the student-centred and the teacher-centred approach.

3.4.2 Student-centred versus teacher-centred approach

The student-centred approach, which is driven by a constructive philosophy of learning, emphasises that individuals construct their reality through action and active involvement in making and absorbing knowledge (Darling, 1994; Lall, 2011; Liu and Matthews, 2005; Sriprakash, 2010). Learners construct their knowledge as well as their understanding in a social context and through their subjective experiences, which are based on their perception of the world (Boghossian, 2003; Douglas and Frazier, 2001; Poerksen, 2004). This view of teaching and learning rejects the objectivity of knowledge and assumes that there is not one single reality but that knowledge is developed as a result of how students talk it and experience it (Boghossian, 2003; Palincsar, 1998;

Surgenor, 2010). Different methods of teaching and learning in higher education are informed by the student-centred approach, such as cooperative learning (Roger and Johnson, 2009; Sharan and Sharan, 1990), collaborative learning (Al-Roomy, 2013; Järvelä et al., 2010; O'Donnell et al., 2013), problem-based or inquiry learning (Kuhn, 2005; Laurillard, 1997; Murray et al., 1998), and participant learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Mascolo, 2009; Tsien and Tsui, 2007). They all emphasise that students should be viewed as active agents and co-constructors of learning and knowledge, and not only as passive receivers. Assessment in this approach is seen as an on-going and continuous process that aims to supplement the learning of each individual rather than judging what they do not know through a final examination only (Hmelo-Silver et al., 2011; Liu and Matthews, 2005; Mascolo, 2009).

The teacher-centred approach, which is driven by behaviourist philosophies of teaching and learning, emphasises that individuals should replicate the taught content as well as the accumulated information. Learners in such an approach are expected to engage passively in their learning by retaining perfectly the learned behaviours and knowledge passed onto them by others (Kember, 1997; Mascolo, 2009; Schweisfurth, 2013b). This approach has been criticized for not appreciating diversity or individuality. It assumes that all learners learn in the same way and does not have much room for the individual's subjectivity, uniqueness or need. Learners in this approach are not given the opportunity to voice their interests about how they want to construct their reality; nor are they allowed the opportunity to use the knowledge in the way that fits their needs (Hancock et al., 2002; Schweisfurth, 2013b). In this teaching approach, assessment is viewed as a way of measuring content knowledge and trained behaviours, usually through one-dimensional and timed multiple choice or short-answer formats, which often require yes/no answers (Falchikov, 2013; Troudi et al., 2009; Law and Eckes, 1995). Although such assessments are used

to gather information about students' knowledge, they tend not to accurately measure higher order learning skills, as such assessment demands only low level cognitive ability, such as recalling previously memorized knowledge (Brualdi, 1998; Kulieke et al., 1990). Students may not think about the content of an essay or take risks to develop the subject matter, as they feel more secure in regurgitating taught information into an acceptable format.

Teachers who adopt a student-centred teaching approach view learning as a process in which learners are engaged critically in a dialogue with others to develop their understanding through an application of concepts and ideas. Of course, teachers may not use only one extreme form of teaching and even within the two extreme approaches there is a range of teaching styles. Through the use of different teaching practices (e.g., cooperative, problem-based, inquiry or participant learning), teachers can facilitate the students' learning process and encourage them to question the world around them. Thus, students are viewed as active agents and core constructors of knowledge whose participation is crucial to the development of the knowledge they are expected to learn. For teachers who believe in the construction of knowledge, assessment is seen as an ongoing process that supplements the students' learning and informs them about the progress of each individual learner. Thus, the focus of such assessment is learners and their progress. Examinations are still used, but assessment forms an integral part of a continuous cycle.

Unlike the student-centred approach to teaching, teachers who adopt the teacher-centred approach tend to view learning as an accumulation of knowledge and behaviours through different methods of memorization, drilling and abstract practices which emphasise the formation of 'good habits'. Learners in this approach are viewed in the most extreme case as being passive and unreflective responders who are waiting to be filled with information and concepts that they are then expected to reproduce accurately in different modes

of assessment. The focus of this teaching approach is the curriculum and the exam; students' human development and their interaction with the real world are far from being the focus of this teaching approach. There is a belief that a quiet and well-disciplined class full of students sitting and appearing to listen to the lecturer and taking copious notes is the main mode of learning. The teachers' role is that of mere knowledge transmitters who disseminate knowledge to the learners through standard lecture-based and rote pedagogy. Errors and mistakes are seen differently in the teacher-centred approach compared to the student-centred approach. They are accepted to some extent with the view that they should be corrected through repetitive practice, drills and memorization. Students' knowledge is assessed, usually at the end of the learning period, in order to measure how much of the taught knowledge and behaviours the learners have been able to retain.

Although such an analysis might depict the teacher-centred approach negatively, it is important to acknowledge that student-centred learning does not necessarily cater for the students' background. It does not explain how students from different social classes interact with such teaching approaches. Therefore, it is important not to take for granted the positive depiction of the student-centred approach in the literature. Schweisfurth (2013, 2011) emphasises that one must ask who benefits the most from a certain teaching approach and why. She further suggests that students from privileged backgrounds benefit the most from the student-centred approach, as it does not assume any kind of hierarchy in the way knowledge is structured. Each learner is not only allowed to start from the gap that s/he has but also encouraged to contribute his or her experiences to the learning. Therefore, one might find that students from privileged backgrounds are able to ask questions and function well in group activities, as such teaching practices reflect their cultural capital. On the other hand, students from disadvantaged backgrounds could benefit

better initially from teacher-centred pedagogy, as it does not assume or require prior knowledge. In fact, it assumes a hierarchical structure of knowledge and that all learners have to acquire the minimum knowledge before they move to the next stage. Such a teaching approach helps to equalize the impact of students' background and allow disadvantaged learners to catch up with privileged ones. Thus, it can be argued that it is difficult to choose one way of teaching over another; thus teachers need to be more responsive in their teaching approach rather becoming deterministic (Schweisfurth, 2011; Troudi, 2005).

3.4.3 EFL Teaching approaches in higher education

The research literature about teaching and learning EFL is also informed by the notion of student-centred and teacher-centred approaches; however, these approaches are again broken into different categories of learning and teaching. Language learning that is only theoretical and lacking any exposure to the spoken language in a real context was how languages were traditionally taught. Previously, only wealthy people were able to send their children to be taught in contexts where exposure to the English language is expected and given. Nowadays, these practices of teaching and learning EFL through exposure and engagement are widely used and encouraged (Schweisfurth, 2013b) and do not necessarily require travelling to English-speaking countries. However, the ideological debate continues between the traditional methods, such as learning by rote, and the progressive methods of EFL teaching.

Most of these progressive teaching and learning traditions lean more towards a student-centred approach (e.g., Total Physical Response, Silent Way and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)) and most traditional teaching and

learning approaches are more associated with the teacher-centred or teacher-led approach (e.g., the Audio-Lingual method, the Direct method and the Grammar Translation Method (GTM)). This does not mean that teachers adopting certain teaching traditions are not moving along the teaching continuum, but instead teachers from particular teaching traditions generally borrow and amalgamate into their practice some activities from the other teaching traditions. In comparing and discussing student-centred and teacher-centred approaches to teaching and learning, this study will examine and discuss only CLT and GTM, as they are the most dominant approaches used in the context of *QU-HS*. However, no educators use only one approach exclusively, and there is a trend to move from more traditional teacher-focused teaching to techniques that better consider individual needs and the ways students learn and absorb language knowledge and skills.

Generally, the teacher-focused GTM refers to EFL teaching methods that are informed by behaviourist views of teaching and learning (Brown, 2007; Chang, 2011; Douglas and Frazier, 2001). These approaches emphasise studying recurring patterns in language and posit that students learn from repetition and habit formation, and provide very few, if any, chances for real and freely spoken communication and active usage of the language in everyday contexts (Savignon and Wang, 2003; Troudi, 2005). The students are rewarded for using the language accurately and correctly as taught and receive constant correction when they express different untaught usages of the language or for incorrect application. This system of extrinsic rewards is used in the GTM, where teaching and learning are based on habit formation, which is established by stimulus response and reinforcement or rote-learning. Morris et al. (1996) stressed that these teaching methods are centred on three 'T situations': test-centred, teacher-centred, and textbook-centred. Thus, most of the teaching in these situations is teacher-led and quantity-driven, encouraging the rote

learning of linguistic patterns and grammatical rules provided by teachers and textbooks (Brown and Abeywickrama, 2004; Lall, 2011). These teaching methods are criticized for providing very little room for students' engagement and for meaningful learning (Morris et al., 1996; Osborn, 2006). Lin and Luk (2004) and Mok (2010) argue that teachers who use the GTM in their teaching do not allow much scope for the students to become emotionally involved in their learning and bring their own worldview to the learning context. Instead, they are "populating them [students] with their own preferred social languages and voices" (Lin and Luk, 2004, p. 93). They have very limited dialogue with the students, which does not encourage the students to negotiate learning objectives and needs with the teachers, as learning is seen to be controlled by what teachers and the textbook dictate (Liao, 2004; Mok, 2010). Often this is because the teachers lack confidence and experience (Al-Hazmi, 2005; Rabab'ah, 2005). In addition, Sperling (2004) and Marton et al. (2013) criticized these teaching methods for the restrictions they place on the students' voices and the lack of manoeuvrability, with few, if any, opportunities for student interaction, language development and learning through discussion. Assessment is periodic and aimed at assessing grammar rules, accuracy and vocabulary, and culminates in the formation of 'good habits'.

The CLT approach is a reaction to the GTM in that it shifts the focus of EFL learning from the mere learning of linguistic patterns and grammatical rules to an approach to language learning attached to learners' needs and their development of communication skills (Butler, 2011). CLT is defined as:

...an approach to language teaching methodology that emphasizes authenticity, interaction, student-centred learning, task-based activities, and communication for the real world, meaningful purposes (Brown, 2007, p. 378).

CLT as an approach to EFL teaching and learning is seen to encourage teaching practices that aim to develop students' communicative competence in an authentic context (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Liao, 2004). Littlewood (2007) argued that the development of communicative competence is not only about the theoretical acquisition of linguistic skills, but also about applying sociocultural issues which may require the students to change their learning habits and bring the self into the learning context. Thus, in order for teachers to help the students to improve their communicative competence, they have to engage the students in a range of situations that support them to practice and develop their knowledge of linguistic rules, the appropriate use of language, the connection of oral utterances in a discourse, and strategies to cope with the use of language in its various forms (Douglas and Frazier, 2001; Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Savignon and Wang, 2003). This is done by encouraging the students to *speak*, to ask questions and engage in critical discussion in a context that supports critical thinking and values inquiry (Elders and Paul, 2003; Gorjian et al., 2012; Troudi, 2005). Teachers might find this difficult, as it results in a more 'noisy' classroom and requires shared control of the classroom. Therefore, students are seen as active negotiators who are engaged in constant negotiation with the self, with others, and with the process of learning. They have to use the language in order to understand and make themselves understood in different situations (Butler, 2011; Chang, 2011). This not only helps the students to personalize their learning of the language, but also encourages ownership of language learning, consequently improving their motivation and confidence, as well as enabling them to develop critical thinking skills and attitudes (Brown, 2007; Hall et al., 2004; Mok, 2010; Muller et al., 2012).

The teachers' role in the CLT approach is that of facilitators, co-communicators, analysts, counsellors and group process managers (Murcia Quintero, 2012; Ozsevik, 2010; Rabab'ah, 2005). They still have to transmit information, but in a

more active form of learning. They help to facilitate the communication inside the classroom as well as creating a context that helps to engage the students in different communicative activities such as actual oral dialogue. In addition, teachers are expected to be more confident and skilled educators. They are involved in helping students to organize themselves into pair or group activities, in analysing the students' learning, and in offering their experiences to direct the learning to meet the needs of the curriculum while allowing flexibility about what is learned. This allows the students time and space to form communication skills, reflect, think, analyse, discuss and develop throughout their English language learning (Marton et al., 2013; Murcia Quintero, 2012; Roger and Johnson, 2009). Thus, this approach is seen to have a great scope for improving students' higher reasoning skills (Abu-Rizaizah, 2010; Murcia Quintero, 2012). In addition, it increases students' open-mindedness, intellectual curiosity, persistence and respect for other people's viewpoints (Hooks, 2010; Yuretich, 2003). As the learning proposed by such an approach occurs by immersing students in different learning situations, assessment of such learning is not seen as separate to learning. It is an integral and active part of the curriculum that aims to enhance continual learning rather than being a 'one-off summative event' (Mok, 2010).

A number of studies have used CLT approaches to understand teaching and learning in the field of higher education. For example, in Hong Kong, Mok (2010) used CLT approaches in relation to the role of teachers. She argued that teachers' roles in CLT approaches are to create a learning environment that encourages the students to learn the English language through engagement and critical thinking rather than by focusing on the language itself. She further suggested that this way of learning a language does not downgrade the importance of accuracy and fluency, but rather these skills can be taught through situations where students are encouraged to discover the rules and

develop their learning confidence to find the appropriate responses by themselves.

Ansari (2012), in a study that focused on the challenges faced by EFL teachers in Saudi higher education, highlighted that most of the Saudi students that he had studied struggled to adopt CLT approaches. He found the reason to be cultural and that the struggle arose in the pre-university education system in KSA. Traditionally Saudi students studied through an educational system that did not encourage student participation in learning nor high order reasoning skills. Students often expected the teachers and the textbook to tell them what and how they should learn. Thus, most of the learning experience that these students had was about controlled or traditional learning. When aged eighteen years or thereabouts, students are suddenly taught in a CLT-style of teaching. These students struggled to totally change their learning style to take on board a method that involved them and their views, their input and increased participation and engagement in their own learning.

The role of assessment in CLT is seen to represent a critical difference between this teaching approach and the other approaches that are teacher-centred. Many researchers who support CLT (e.g. Kiomrs et al., 2011; Muñoz and Álvarez, 2010; Musthafa, 2001) acknowledge the difficulty in trying to strike a balance between assessment as a tool for measuring student performance and as a tool that enhances learning. This is because in such a teaching approach, students are encouraged to participate in their assessment, as engaging with assessment is widely regarded as a tool to improve learning. Thus, in general, most of the views on assessment in CLT seem to suggest an approach to using assessment to allow it enhance learning. For example, in Colombia, Muñoz and Álvarez (2010) investigated the influence of CLT approaches in relation to a classroom-based assessment system for EFL students in a private university. They found a discrepancy between the teaching approaches practised by the teachers and the

examinations. They argue that this did not help the students to achieve the communicative competency required by the programme, as the teaching practices adopted by the teachers in the programme did not reflect the examination mode. This means that when the teaching approach used by the teachers in the programme reflects the different modes of assessment used, students are likely to achieve better scores. Thus, most of the teachers were encouraged adapt their use of CLT to match exam requirements. In addition, the study emphasised that understanding teachers' beliefs about assessment helps us to understand the conflict between the teachers' perceptions and assessment requirements. Teacher-training must ensure that educators are skilled and confident to teach using a student-focused, more active and often noisy form of learning. In addition, the study emphasised that understanding teachers' beliefs about assessment helps to clarify the conflict between the teachers' perceptions and assessment.

In exploring the different EFL teaching approaches, the focus is on the student-centred CLT and the teacher-centred GTM used in teaching in higher education. Each of these approaches makes certain assumptions about learning, learners, teaching, teachers' roles and assessment, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparing two teaching and learning approaches often used in teaching EFL in KSA

	Grammar Translation Method	Communicative Language Teaching
Understanding of learning	Learning English language through drills and practice of grammar rules and abstract vocabulary	Learning is about helping students to develop skills by which they are able to practice, construct and obtain language
Teachers' roles & their views about students	<p>Knowledge transmitter</p> <p>Passive and unreflective receivers of knowledge passed to them predominantly by teachers and from textbooks</p>	<p>Facilitator, engager and co-creator of knowledge</p> <p>The social relationship between the teacher, learners and their worldviews is more reflective</p> <p>Students are seen as active agents and core constructors of knowledge with critical thinking skills</p>
Teaching Strategies	Lecture-based pedagogy	Problem-based and inquiry learning with classroom discussions, group and pair work
Assessment	Assessment measures the amount of abstract knowledge and behaviour that students are able to retain through and at the end of the learning period	On-going assessment of the learning skills and the practical application of the process of learning English, often also with a final examination

As illustrated in Table 1 above, both approaches perceive teaching to be primarily about helping students to learn the concepts of a new language. Learning in both approaches is seen as an act of engaging students to learn the curriculum concepts. However, student-focused approaches view learners as unique individuals who can be taught their own way of learning and interacting with teaching; thus the teaching approaches are geared to cater for such diverse needs of different individuals. Learning is an on-going process and thus assessment is seen as an integral part of learning, which supplements the learning rather than only assessing language content.

The table also shows that teacher-centred approaches such as GTM perceive teaching as a process of communicating aspects of the curriculum content and develop most of the teaching activities to communicate only these specific points without attention to the learners' wider needs. The teacher-centred approach places less attention on diversity or individuality among learners and it assumes that they all share similar needs and methods of learning. The educators often use traditional methods that they know and have experienced; their job is simply to impart the curriculum content to the students so that they are able to pass all assessments and examinations.

Learning in teacher-centred approaches such as GTM is perceived as being about helping students to learn exactly what is in the curriculum and does not require room for questioning the logic between the concepts in language learning and how it relates to students' learning needs. Thus, assessment is seen as evaluating and testing the acquisition and retention of exact knowledge from the curriculum.

In exploring the different EFL teaching approaches that are used in teaching in higher education - the traditional ones (exemplified in GTM) and the progressives ones (exemplified in CLT) - the discussion highlights the different

claims that such approaches make in relation to learning, learners, teaching, teachers' roles and assessment, as summarised in Table 1 above. It is important to note here that CLT and GTM are ideal types in categorising EFL teaching in higher education in KSA. In reality, there is a wide variation in terms of how they are used, and one teacher might use a mixture of the two approaches or parts of each in their teaching. Teachers may adopt a certain approach in their teaching but still borrow ideas from another approach within the frame of their main approach. This means that teachers who adopt GTM in their teaching could use aspects of the student-centred approach, although their general teaching approach might still be within the tradition of teacher-centred pedagogy. For example, teachers could encourage their students to practice certain conversation using English but with very controlled language content that teachers provide to the students. The main purpose of such a teaching approach is to provide students with specific controlled learning outcomes. These different teaching approaches used in EFL teaching and learning in higher education in KSA have been seen to have great influence on how students experience their learning in different contexts. Thus, these different dimensions of the teaching approach identified in the table above are used to describe the teaching approaches adopted by the teachers in the EFL programme in *QU-HS* and their influence on students' learning experiences.

3.5 Summary and research questions

This chapter has discussed learning and teaching in relation to wider literature, and more specifically to EFL in *QU-HS*, at three different levels, namely the institution, family backgrounds and the teaching approaches used. Each represents a different level of social structure through which learners negotiate and which influences their learning. This analysis provides an understanding of

hidden or deeper aspects of learning as well as reconstructing learning within systems of relationships rather than studying it in isolation. It locates students' learning within the boundaries of the institution, and then discusses the issue of family background and how it influences the learning experiences of the students. The discussion of teaching approaches highlights ways in which these approaches participate in emphasising or conflicting with what students bring from their family backgrounds.

The review of the literature started by discussing the policies and practices of the institutions where learning takes place using the notion of institutional theory. This began to shed light on ways in which institutional policies influence teaching and learning, and how educational institutions hope to equip students for a wider global market where the English language dominates. This discussion aimed to answer the first research sub-question, which is:

1. How do the policies of the university affect the EFL programme and students' learning experience?

The second part of the literature review looked at what the students bring to the institutional learning setting. This was conceptualized through the notion of cultural capital. The notion of cultural capital enables the study to situate learning as it happens outside the institutional context and to explore the different resources that students acquire from their families' educational backgrounds before they enter the EFL programme. The literature reviewed aimed to help in answering the second research sub-question, which is:

2. How do the students' families' educational backgrounds (referred to as cultural capital) influence student learning in the EFL programme?

The final section reviewed literature focusing on the classroom, where most of the learning and teaching activities in relation to EFL happen. Students'

learning experiences in relation to the teaching philosophies that EFL teachers apply in their teaching was discussed. The literature about EFL teaching and approaches used in KSA focused on CLT and GTM, as these are the two main styles used. They were used to highlight the influence of these teaching approaches and methods on students' learning experiences. This literature review in relation to teaching and learning aimed to answer the third research sub-question which is:

3. How do teaching approaches affect student learning experiences in the EFL programme?

In summary, it is important to note that this study uses different theoretical notions to help answer the overarching research question. The rationale for using different theoretical perspectives is because one approach could not accommodate the variety of data that the study yielded. Ideally, it would be easier to adopt a single theoretical perspective; however, due to context, the data generated, and the interdisciplinary nature of the study, it was not advisable to adhere to a single theoretical perspective. For example, Bourdieu's notion of field, capital and habitus discusses the ways in which capital is formatted in the western context and how such capital is used to advantage/disadvantage students from certain social class in the west. Such strict Bourdieuian analysis of the available data was not very useful on its own to explain the complexity of learning phenomena of Saudi students in relation to social class. There simply was not sufficient demographic data about KSA and Saudi higher education. Thus, it was sensible to adopt aspects of intuitionist theory to focus on the policies of the university and its impact on student learning.

Furthermore, the interdisciplinary nature of the study of TESOL and sociology makes it hard to locate the study within a single discourse. This can be observed

in the way in which the study defines the sociological notion of cultural capital. The definition includes a psychological phrase that can be regarded as provoking readers with strong sociological adherence. Thus, teaching approaches which can be seen as individualistic in nature are seen to be related to sociological issues of power and social class. However, since this study is interdisciplinary in nature, it was important to speak to readers in both discourses. Moreover, in the Saudi context, psychological terms are widely accepted and more appealing to the Saudi discourse. Thus, for this study to have an impact, it was important to marry the sociological discourse with the psychological one.

These different perspectives on conceptualizing student learning experience help to enrich the understanding of students' learning experiences and aid the development of the overarching research question: **How do students experience learning in an EFL programme in QU-HS?**

The following chapter outlines the methodology used to investigate the main and subsidiary research questions in relation to the EFL programme in *QU-HS* in KSA.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology used in this research study. It begins by outlining the epistemological and ontological stance that informs this inquiry in section 4.1. Section 4.2 provides a rationale for the selection of case study as a research approach. This is followed by a discussion of the tools used for data collection in section 4.3. The sample of the study and the sampling techniques are discussed in section 4.4. Methods of data analysis and measures of trustworthiness are discussed in sections 4.5 and 4.6 respectively. Issues of reflexivity and positionality are addressed in section 4.7. Sections 4.8 and 4.9 discuss the ethical considerations and the limitations of the study respectively.

4.1 The researcher's philosophical stance

It can be a daunting task to choose an approach for a research project: "Deciding how to study the social world has always raised a number of key philosophical debates" (Snape and Spencer, 2003, p. 11). The literature on research methods (e.g. Bryman, 2003; Cohen et al., 2011; Morgan, 2007; Stanley and Wise, 2002) suggests a variety of epistemological methods (i.e. theories, assumptions and beliefs about the nature of reality as well as the relationship between the inquirer and the known) and ontological views (i.e. different theories and assumptions about the nature of existence and what is out there) that may frame such debates. It is a review of these debates which informs the different paradigms that are selected and adopted in various studies.

Diverse research studies adopt different paradigms for investigating the nature of knowledge and how it can be approached (e.g. the positivist vs. the interpretive paradigm). The interpretive paradigm is informed by the belief that knowledge is inter-subjectively constructed. This paradigm stresses that "all

human actions are meaningful and have to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices when we discuss how knowledge is gained. In order to make sense of the social world, the researcher needs to understand the meanings that form and arise from interactive social behaviour” (Scott and Robin, 1996, p. 18). Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 113) argue that:

Knowledge consists of those constructions about which there is a relative consensus (or at least some movement towards consensus) among those competent (and in the case of more arcane material, trusted) to interpret the substance of the construction. Multiple ‘knowledges’ can coexist when equally competent (or trusted) interpreters disagree.

Unlike the positivist paradigm, the quality of research in the interpretivist paradigm is measured by the trustworthiness and authenticity that researchers establish through the research design process and the phases of data collection (c.f. Section 4.6). This research adopts an interpretivist paradigm as opposed to the positivist ‘scientific’ paradigm of studying the social world. This is because it emphasises that reality does not always lie outside the individual but that each person subjectively experiences it in his or her own way. It also suggests that reality is understood through how humans make sense of their world. This emphasises the need for a prolonged process of interaction of researcher with respondents in the context of the study in order to construct inter-subjective knowledge.

This interpretivist paradigm reflects the researcher’s views about the nature of knowledge and, subsequently, the way it can be acquired. This paradigm stresses that “the world is constituted in one way or another as people talk it, write it and argue it” (Potter, 1996, p. 98) and that context plays a significant role in shaping the respondents’ viewpoints about reality (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, it was important to gain access to the students and their learning

context in order to construct an understanding of their reality (i.e., learning experience) from the perspective of the social actors in that context. This interpretivist view helped me to explore and contextualise students' learning experiences in relation to teaching, families' educational backgrounds and the role of the university. Also, it helped to capture the reality of the learning experiences through the eyes of those who were experiencing it first-hand. This does not suggest that adopting an interpretivist paradigm limited the nature of construction of reality to only one way of thinking: that only social actors experienced it; it also included construction about their reality in relation to the existing theories and literature in the field of learning in higher education. This reflects the *double hermeneutic* of interpretation outlined by Bryman (2012) where he stated that the first level of interpretation is what the people infer about their reality, and the second level is how the researcher assesses and places the people's reality in relation to existing literature. This helps to bring together the different understandings of the students' learning experiences and positions them in the wider research debates and theories. The interpretivist paradigm helps to view reality in a wider context, and then to understand how the Saudi students experienced learning in an EFL programme in higher education.

As the philosophy of this research acknowledges that human beings attribute meaning to events and the environment in which they live, it was useful to use a qualitative approach to reflect the essence of the interpretivist paradigm (Heshusius and Ballard, 1996; Lincoln et al., 2011). Qualitative research is a "situated activity that locates the observer in the world [in order to] transform the world [and] turn [it] into a series of representations" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). As my aim was to study the way the students experienced learning by accessing their world, talking to them and observing their context, adopting a qualitative approach served well in this context. In addition, adopting a

qualitative research approach helped to explore the Saudi students' learning experiences in an EFL programme in relation to the institutional influences and family background, which have not previously been widely explored. This allows me to explore in great detail how the institution and students' families' backgrounds impact on students learning experience. Strauss and Corbin (1997) stressed that adopting a qualitative research approach can be a better way to understand a phenomenon about which little is known. Thus, adopting such an approach to this study enriches the debate about students' learning, as it places it in its context, which is Saudi higher education (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Stake, 2003).

This study uses a phenomenological case study approach to understand the way students experience learning in the EFL programme in *QU-HS* in KSA. Flyvbjerg (2006) and Stake (2003) argue that through phenomenological case studies of the learning process, researchers are able to develop their understandings of the phenomena from the beginner's perspective until expert status is reached. "If researchers wish to develop their own skills to a high level, then concrete, context-dependent experience is just as central for them as to professionals learning any other specific skills" (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 223). Thus, using a phenomenological case study develops understanding of the students' learning experiences from the perspectives of their family backgrounds and institutional influence.

4.2 Case study as a research design

Yin (2009, p. 1) argued that "case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some

real-life context". He further argued that "[t]he case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (Yin, 2009, p. 1). Wolcott (1990) commented that case studies are thorough investigations of individuals, groups, institutions or other social units. Researchers (e.g. Cohen et al., 2011; Punch, 2005; Stake, 2003) have stated that the significance of case study in educational research arises from its emphasis on the uniqueness of each case. Flyvbjerg (2006, p. 223) argues that it is imperative when doing research that researchers are engaged with the objects and get feedback from them, as the distance from the context can lead to the lack of feedback and subsequently result in "ritual academic blind alleys".

Researchers classify the case study approach into different types. Stake (2003) explained that case studies could be divided into three types: intrinsic, instrumental and collective. An intrinsic case study is one in which an inductive approach is aimed at the better understanding of a particular case; while an instrumental one is a deductive approach that aims to give insight into a large issue or refine an existing theory. Although Stake (2003) identified three types of case study, it can be argued that his definition of collective case studies is simply a group of intrinsic or instrumental cases. Wolcott (1990) attempted to provide a better understanding and theorising of a larger collection of cases. He defined collective case studies as being deductive or inductive depending on the purpose of the study.

Yin (2009) distinguished between three types of case study: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. While exploratory and explanatory case studies aim at defining the questions and the hypotheses of the inquiry respectively as well as establishing causality, a descriptive case study provides a description of the phenomenon within its context (Yin, 2009). Jensen and Rodgers (2001, p. 237) provided a further division of the case study that includes:

- *snapshot case studies*: detailed study of one research entity at one point in time;
- *longitudinal case studies*: quantitative and/or qualitative study of one research entity at multiple points in time;
- *pre-post case studies*: study of one research entity at two points in time separated by a critical event;
- *patchwork case studies*: set of multiple case studies of the same research entity, using snapshot, longitudinal, and/or pre-post designs;
- *comparative case studies*: set of multiple case studies of multiple research entities for the purpose of cross-unit comparison.

Flyvbjerg (2006) provides a different argument about the nature of the individual case study. In his response to the critiques mounted against it, which question the nature of knowledge provided by individual case studies, the ability of such case studies to contribute to scientific development and the generalizability of data obtained, he argues for the role of cases studies that research the development of human learning. He asserts that, particularly in education, context-specific knowledge that is provided through the case study is the form that transfers people from “rule-based beginners to virtuoso experts” (p. 221) and that “Context-dependent knowledge and experience are at the very heart of expert activity. Such knowledge and expertise also lie at the centre of the case study as a research and teaching method or to put it more generally still, as a method of learning” (p. 222). Furthermore, he argues that the most human relationships appears to exist only within a “context-dependent knowledge, which, thus, presently rules out the possibility of epistemic theoretical construction” (p. 221). He further explains that “in a teaching situation, well-chosen case studies can help the student achieve competence, whereas context-independent facts and rules will bring the student just to the beginner’s level” (p. 222). In response to the conventional critique of

the ability of the individual case study to generate reliable information that can contribute to the development of scientific social theory, Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that to date, social sciences have not been able to produce a context-free predictive social theory. All social science theories are concrete and context-dependant; and that is the kind of knowledge generated by case studies. Moreover, he argues that although knowledge produced through case studies cannot be formally used in a more general way, this does not mean that such knowledge

...cannot enter into the collective process of knowledge accumulation in a given field or in a society. A purely descriptive, phenomenological case study without any attempt to generalize can certainly be of value in this process and has often helped cut a path toward scientific innovation. (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 227).

Supporting Eckstein (2000), Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that case study is not a method that can only be used at the preparatory stages of real study in order to come up with hypotheses, but that it can be scrutinized through large systematic surveys to develop a hypothesis. Case studies can be used at all stages of research, including generating and testing hypotheses. The ability of case studies to test hypotheses is related to the issue of generalizability. Since the case studies have the ability to test hypotheses, they can subsequently achieve generalizability. It is argued that the selection of the case study has to be done carefully in order to produce a sample that provides the best insight about the given problem or phenomenon. Thus, it can be argued that information that is based on particular case studies can contribute to the development of general propositions and theories when the cases are well chosen. In addition, it can be argued that qualitative case study is a good methodological choice to study social reality, as it has the ability to provide a trustworthy understanding of phenomena under investigation.

Drawing on the interpretivist paradigm, this study attempts to understand the uniqueness of students' learning experience by adopting a phenomenological case study that views students' learning in an EFL programme in KSA as the unit of analysis (the case study). This will help to clarify the phenomena of Saudi students learning in EFL programmes in greater detail. Also, the case study used for this investigation can be described as a descriptive case study because it does not discuss the relationship between variables; nor does it attempt to establish causality. Instead, it provides detailed and *ad verbatim* descriptions of the students' learning experiences within Saudi higher education. This type of case study allows the collection of data about the students' learning experiences in the EFL programme from different sources, which complements the notion of in-depth understanding of the phenomenon that is outlined in an intrinsic case study. Furthermore, this study can be seen as a snapshot, enabling us to investigate the phenomenon of the students' learning from the perspective of students, teachers and policies at a particular point in time. Thus, the study provides a detailed analysis of the various influences on student learning in a given context.

Although the study could have benefited from data gathered through a longitudinal case study method in terms of following the subjects over a long period of time, this was not done due to limitations of time and funding. It was felt that a detailed snapshot of the phenomenon was sufficient to retain the depth and breadth of the complexity of the learning experiences in Saudi higher education.

4.3 Data collection

The data for the study were collected in two phases in *QU-HS*. The initial phase required bureaucratic negotiations to access the case study field, and lasted from early July to late August 2010. This included discussing the plan and the design of the research with the officials at *QU-HS* and getting signed approval from the chancellor of the university (see appendices 5 and 6). The second phase of the data collection ran from October 2010 to January 2011. During this phase, all the formal interviews and observations were conducted.

During the first phase of the data collection, official literature about the university and the EFL programme was gathered, such as the university newspaper, admission booklet, booklets about the colleges, a report about student admissions and the curriculum. It was essential during this phase to introduce myself to the EFL teachers in the university, discuss the research briefly with them, and attend some of their lessons. I was introduced to the students as a '*researcher*' (c.f. section 4.7 for discussion about positionality and section 4.4 for discussion about sampling), and this established trust with the key players of the study. All the interviews and classroom observations were conducted in the second phase. It also established a good ethical principle of involving research participants at all stages, sharing what was required of them so they did not feel abused or manipulated (c.f. section 4.8 for discussion about ethical considerations).

4.3.1 Document review

The importance of grounding a case study within a theoretical institutional framework is a necessary part of a holistic research methodology and it is done by reviewing documents related to the main research question. A document

review is a systematic analysis of documents, whether in hard or digital forms, in order to highlight certain instructional aims, needs and challenges and describe institutional activities (Bowen, 2009). Atkinson and Coffey (2004) maintained that in the literate social world, many data are presented in document form, and they are able to inform researchers about the reality and context in which the case study is situated. Yin (2009) favours document analysis in any case study, as it helps to support and expand evidence from different sources. In addition, Bryman (2012) commented that reviewing documents is likely to reveal authentic and meaningful data about the phenomena under investigation. Furthermore, McCulloch (2004, p. 129) remarked that “although documentary research is often thought of as one single type of source, it actually offers a number of different perspectives from which to view a given problem or topic”. Atkinson and Coffey (2004) stated that most of the modern types of social formation are entrenched in bureaucracy and are dependent on paperwork; thus, studying such paperwork not only aids understanding of how these organizations function on a day-to-day basis, but also helps in understanding how organizations present, publicize or justify themselves: “Documents are ‘social facts’, in that they are produced, shared and used in socially organized ways” (Atkinson and Coffey, 2004, p. 58). Scott (1990) classified documents into two types, namely personal and official, and they can take different forms, such as portfolios, memos, agendas, meeting notes, reports, prospectuses and newspaper articles.

It was important to seek access to documents that outlined the policies of *QU-HS* to answer the research question (c.f. 3.2 for discussion about institutional theory). The study analysed different official documents about *QU-HS*, including articles in the Saudi press about the university, publications made by the university (e.g. Brief about the university, Mission and Vision Statement, Student Guide), and publications about the university by the specific military

wing. In addition, the study analysed official internal memos and documents about the EFL programme, admission system, and teachers' recruitment. The review of the documents in this study serves two purposes. First, it helps to explain the educational policy and practices of Saudi higher education, particularly those relevant to EFL teaching and learning, such as what is taught and for how long and in what institutional context or within local politics. This helps to position the university in the wider structure of Saudi higher education in order to understand the rationale for the different university policies and practices as well as their implications for students' learning in the EFL programme. Initial findings helped to refine initial interview questions in order to start addressing the research question: How do students experience learning in an EFL programme in *QU-HS*?

4.3.2 Observation

Observation is used as a tool for data collection in the context of this particular study. It is a technique for data collection that helps in observing behaviours, events and physical characteristics in the context of the study environment (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2012). The processes by which this technique is applied can be divided into participant and non-participant observation (Emerson et al., 2001; Lofland et al., 2006). In participant observation, the researcher joins the groups he or she observes, interacts with them, participates in their activities, writes notes and later reflects on his/her observations. In non-participant observation, the researcher observes the activities and writes her/his observations without taking part in them. Taylor-Powell and Steele (1996) further distinguish between two types of observation: overt and covert. Overt observation happens when the participants are aware that they are being observed, and thus sometimes, they may not act naturally. Covert observation

is about observing people without their knowledge or without telling them that they are being observed. This type of observation allows researchers to observe the natural behaviour of participants. The observation used in this study was non-participant and overt, as the participants were aware that they were being observed. The purpose of using observation was to understand the context of this study and to analyse the teaching approaches used by the teachers and the way the students interacted with them. Six lessons were observed, each about fifty minutes in duration (see appendix 9 for observation guide). Notes were taken about the teaching and the student-teacher and student-student interaction during the observation. The different approaches teachers used in their teaching were also noted.

In addition, I conducted one-to-one interviews with the teachers that I observed. When classrooms were visited, the student participants were informed about what was happening and that they were being observed. In particular, they were aware that teaching approaches and the students' interactions with these approaches were being observed. It is important to note here that care was taken not to judge the teachers or the students, as that was not the research aim. Although my presence in the classroom might have influenced the neutrality of the teaching and learning setting, this was addressed by establishing rapport with the respondents over the time I was there. This helped to make the teachers and students feel relaxed and at times forget my presence, so they behaved '*normally*' (c.f. section 4.7 for discussion about my positionality).

Within the university, I did record observations about the students' general behaviour and interaction around the university and the way they used the English language in communication or asking for services e.g., reading advertisements in English, ordering food in the cafeteria, asking for help in the library or using books in the library. This general observation within the

university and about the behaviour of students was more covert, as no effort was made to declare this form of data collection. However, everybody was made aware of the purpose of my study, which was to collect data about students' learning experiences. Observations were recorded in my personal diary (see appendix 16 for an example). Although such observations might be considered unethical (c.f. section 4.8 for discussion about ethical considerations), they were useful for assessing and understanding how the institutional practices influence the students' learning and how students use EFL practically within *QU-HS*.

4.3.3 Interviews

Interviews are the most frequently used tools in qualitative research, as they help to explain reality from the respondents' point of view (Schostak, 2006). They not only give deep insights into how respondents view the world, but the interview also "marks a move away from seeing human subjects as simply being manipulative and data as somehow external to individuals, and towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, often through conversations" (Kvale, 1996, p. 11). Also, they offer "a kind of framework within which the participants try to exchange meanings that are negotiated and that can be understood by both participants" (Antikainen, 1996, p. 25).

The level of structure in research interviews has significant influence on the type of data collected (Fontana and Frey, 1994; Warren, 2010). Interviews are generally divided into three types: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Cohen et al., 2011).

Semi-structured interviews have a clearly developed interview guide with a list of questions and themes that need greater discussion (Bernard, 2011; Kvale,

1996). This approach allows researchers to maintain their focus on key issues, while allowing the respondents to expand and provide more details. In addition, it allows the respondents to comment on issues they see as relevant to the topic that the researcher might not have thought about. Furthermore, it allows other themes to emerge and provides more in-depth understanding about the phenomena. This type of interview is useful for collecting data about how the respondents contextualise their attitudes, values and opinions about the issues under study, and giving participants a greater chance of input into the research. Bryman (2012) and Kvale (2006, 1999, 1996) stressed that the use of semi-structured interviews is suitable when the investigation has a fairly clear focus but there might be an expectation of emergent issues to be addressed.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out in this research in order to allow a participatory approach and to explore social phenomena in this particular context (Bryman, 2012; Warren, 2010). The open-ended nature of the questions facilitated the gathering of substantial information about the students' learning in the EFL programme. The discussions were focused on understanding the phenomenon of students' learning in the EFL programme while remaining open to other issues being raised. Two interview schedules were prepared and administered: one for the students and another for the teachers.

Students' interviews concentrated on providing information about the influence of their families' backgrounds, the institutional influence on their learning and the way in which teaching approaches influence their learning experience in the EFL classroom in *QU-HS* (see appendix 7 for students' interview guide). The main research question was divided into three sub-questions, and the sections in the interview guides were designed to answer each of them: the first sub-question focused on the families' education and the influence of their economic situation on learning. I also discussed students' learning practices before university. The second sub-section enquired about students' motivation for

joining the particular programme and how the association of this university within the *MHA* influences their learning in the EFL programme. The interview guide then asked questions about the different teaching approaches used by the EFL teachers and how the students experience this. There was plenty of opportunity throughout the interviews for students to expand and add any information they wished to share.

During lesson observation with the EFL teachers, I was given the opportunity to introduce myself to the students and invite them to volunteer in my study. I explained my research to the students, and I left them my mobile number and email address so they could contact me if they wanted to participate. I stressed to the students that they only needed to miss-call me, and I would call them back, as it was not fair to make them cover the cost of calling me. Also, during the observation phase around the university campus, I managed to arrange some interview dates with the students and obtain their contact details.

The interviews with the students were mostly conducted in Arabic in order to encourage the students to better express their opinions in their first language and lasted about 45 minutes on average. As it had been agreed with the university that I would not interview students during their lesson times, I left the choice of the time and the place of the interview to the students. I conducted a few interviews with the students on campus during their break times, but most of the interviews were conducted off campus in the evenings. I conducted interviews with the students in coffee shops, gyms, holiday villas, and in my car.

Interviews with teachers aimed at providing information about their teaching approaches and the institutional influences on their teaching (see appendix 8 for teachers' interview guide). The interview template was designed to answer the research question in several sub-sections. Questions were focused on their

teaching philosophies, which included their views about learning, teaching, assessment, and students. It also included questions about the teaching philosophy adopted by the programme. The teachers were also asked about the university policy and how this impacted on or affected their motivation to join the programme as well as their teaching practices.

The interviews with the teachers were conducted in English, as these teachers were either native English speakers or were able to express their opinions clearly enough in English, and lasted about an hour. The place and the time for the interviews were chosen by the respondents. All the interviews with teachers were conducted at the university, either in their offices, in the mosque, in an empty classroom, in the meeting room or in the cafeteria.

Initially, I wanted to conduct the interviews in such a way that I could interview two students and a teacher, then a student, and so on in order to gain teachers' feedback on issues narrated by the students and vice versa. However, I could not adopt such an approach because of the tightness of the schedule of both students and teachers. Thus interviews were conducted as the opportunity arose.

The interviews with teachers and students were tape-recorded after I had obtained the respondents' permission to do so. At the beginning of each interview, I would ask the respondents to sign a consent form (see appendix 11), and then I would switch on the recorder. I started each interview by introducing myself and explaining my research aims and objectives. I also assured the respondents of the confidentiality and anonymity of the data and that their responses would not be used for any purpose apart from this current study. I explained the technique that I would follow in the interview, that the interview would be user-friendly and involve active conversation about themes that were directly relevant to them, and that these themes were not fixed or

linear to allow them to add to the content. I assured them that they did not have to answer any question that they did not feel comfortable answering, and that they could opt out at any point. Thus, the interviewees were encouraged to talk informally about their experiences and give their views about learning and teaching in the language programme and the university in general. During the interviews, I was actively listening to the respondents and taking notes. However, the idea of taking notes was not very useful with most of the students, as it made them feel uncomfortable. Thus, after two interviews with students, I adapted my technique and decided to stop taking notes and instead fully engage in conversation.

Another issue that arose from the interviews with the students was their fear of being recorded. Although all the students consented to the recording, most of them showed unease when the recorder was on the table or directly in front of them. Therefore, we agreed that I would tell them that I was recording, but I would place the tape recorder more discreetly.

4.3.3.1 Piloting of the interviews

Prior to administering the interview guides to both the teachers and the students in *QU-HS*, the interview guides were piloted. Flyvbjerg (2006) argues the importance of piloting the tools for individual case studies and how this can help to improve the quality of the information obtained. The student interview guide was piloted three times with three Saudi students in the UK who were studying on a pre-session course in the Language Centre at the University of Sussex. Although these students did not have the context information about the learning experiences of the students in *QU-HS*, they were able to provide information about the clarity of the concepts and some technical issues.

At the beginning of the piloting phase, I conducted one interview in English and this was useful in many ways. First, it helped me to understand the importance of translating the interview guide into Arabic language (i.e. the mother tongue of the students in *QU-HS*). Secondly, in this first interview, I thought that I would be able to easily and instantly translate the questions into Arabic for the respondents. This interview showed how difficult it was to do this in an interview context, as it was not easy to follow the conversation and at the same time think about accurate translations. Thus, it was necessary to translate the entire student interview guide in advance, and this also helped to ensure that all respondents received exactly the same information.

Further issues arose and were required to be addressed before conducting the interviews with students in *QU-HS*. The piloting highlighted the difficulty of translating some of the ideas across the two languages and some concepts needed to be broken down further. For example, the concept of 'learning' when translated into Arabic could refer to acquiring knowledge about something or to studying or revising. Such concepts had to be addressed carefully during translation. This ensured the best and most accurate understanding of each question by undergraduate students in the context of Saudi Arabia. In addition, these pilot interviews gave me the opportunity to sharpen and clarify the interview questions and think about alternative ways to phrase them in order to be able to prompt the respondents without leading them. Finally, the interview guide was piloted one more time once I was in KSA with a student from *QU-HS*. As a result of this interview, prompt questions concentrating on the family and the economic circumstances could be asked without causing embarrassment, offense or unease. In addition, the pilot interviews prompted me to start engaging with the organization of data and think about how it could be best be analysed.

The teachers' interview guide was also piloted. Two PhD students in the University of Exeter and the University of Sussex who had previously been EFL teachers in Saudi universities were recruited for this purpose. One of them was also an EFL teacher at *QU-HS*. The piloted interviews with teachers were conducted in English and served mainly for checking the clarity of the way the questions were worded and the way the concepts were articulated. Originally, I wrote the interviews in an academic style that was saturated with educational jargon based on my theoretical understanding of learning and the different factors that influence it. However, these piloted interviews highlighted the importance of breaking down the theoretical concepts, the use of simple English and the need to be precise about the questions asked. Thus, alternative prompts for the main questions for the teachers' interview guide were developed in order to make sure there was clarity and understanding about the questions asked.

In summary, the piloting of the interviews was useful for many reasons. It changed my perception about the language that should be used when conducting interviews with the students. It raised questions about the theoretical concepts and how they should be communicated in interviewing people who do not necessarily share an understanding of such concepts. In addition, the transcripts from the pilot interviews helped me to identify emerging themes and patterns. As the pilot and final interviews with the students were conducted in Arabic, I was able to identify early on potential problematic areas when translating concepts from English into Arabic. I sought help from two Arabic-speaking colleagues in the School of Education in the University of Sussex to check my translation of the students' interview guide (see Appendix 10 for Arabic interview guide).

Throughout the data collection, I was actively listening to each of the respondents, and notes were made of the emerging issues as soon as possible

after the interview was concluded. This helped to focus and sharpen the various research questions through the field work. Gordon et al. (2001) argue that this type of active listening exercise helps to improve the quality of the data gathered and provides better management of the interviews. It also helps to begin to structure how data can be analysed, so if necessary, additional questions can be asked whilst the researcher is still in the field.

4.4 Sampling

Sampling is regarded as a unit of analysis that helps to identify the potential sources of information. Careful selection of the sample is imperative for the development and understanding of the case study under investigation (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Shenton, 2004). The type of sampling that should be used is determined by the type of the research (Yin, 2009). Qualitative research tends to study small samples where participants are usually recruited to a study because of their exposure to, participation in or experience of the phenomenon in question (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Prior, 2003). This type of sampling is known as purposive or purposeful non-probability sampling and allows researchers to gain a particular insight into social processes in order to ensure the richness of the data gathered (Fossey et al., 2002; Prior, 2003). Most sampling methods are purposive in nature because researchers usually approach sampling with a specific plan in mind (Dunne et al., 2005; Flyvbjerg, 2006). However, the term ‘purposive sampling’ refers to the type of sampling that is done with a *purpose* in mind, such as having one or more specific predefined groups that act as a representation of reality (Fossey et al., 2002). Unlike the probability sampling in quantitative research, non-probability sampling does not necessarily aim at the generalization of findings or results (Cohen et al., 2011). Yin (2009) added that the focus of qualitative research is not normally about representation (which is concerned with ‘how much’ and ‘how many’), but rather it is concerned with ‘how’ and ‘why’ people

interpret the world in certain ways. Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that it is through the understanding of the uniqueness of the 'how' and 'why' of the particular cases, that the researcher is able to develop his or her understanding about the phenomenon being studied.

As the research question of this study focuses on understanding how EFL learning is experienced by particular students in a given institution in the context of KSA, this study used non-probability purposive sampling. It included male students and teachers in the pre-medical English language programme, as shown below in Tables 2 and 3. The data presented in these tables was gained and developed from the interviews. The teacher population in the EFL programme was twenty male teachers, and the sample included native and non-native English speakers. English native speaker teachers in this study refers to the teachers who speak English as a mother language and the non-native English language teachers are those who speak languages other than English as a mother tongue. The sample included four native English language speakers and five non-native English language speakers. The teachers' sample was chosen to balance and reflect the views of both native and non-native English language teachers.

The student population was 180, and the sample included only male students in their first and final semester in the programme who were going to study different disciplines allied to medical science and medicine. As the recruitment of the respondents was done on a voluntary basis, it was difficult to maintain an equal representation of each group. However, the study managed to recruit students from different stages of their course who agreed to volunteer for this research. Thus, the student sample was made using non-probability purposive sampling with some aspects of randomisation, as students within each stage were recruited on a voluntary basis. Although I intentionally selected students to represent different stages of the programme, I left it to the students within

each stage to volunteer to participate. This means that I did not purposefully select particular students within a particular stage of the programme, and thus the recruiting of the students was random. The student sample included twelve students from the pre-med groups in their first semester and five in their third semester. In addition, it included four pre-AMS students in their first semester and six in their third semester. The total number of respondents interviewed for this study was thirty-six, including twenty-seven students and nine EFL teachers.

Table 2: The student sample

No	Pseudonyms	Length of interview	Semester	Discipline	Family education background	Schooling ¹	Extra EFL tuition ²
1	Aadil	53:50	1	Pre-AMS	Mother is a maths teacher with a bachelor's degree; father is a businessman with a master's degree in Engineering.	Private	Yes
2	Bukur	60:00	1	Pre-AMS	Father holds a PhD in Islamic studies; mother is a teacher with a bachelor's degree.	Private	Yes
3	Aalee	60:20	1	Pre-AMS	Mother is an English language teacher with a bachelor's degree.	Private	Yes
4	Aamir	21:20	1	Pre-AMS	Father illiterate; mother has primary education.	Public	No
5	Aaqil	36:40	1	Pre-med	No information provided.	Public	
6	Yasser	26:60	1	Pre-med	Father is a neurosurgeon; two elder sisters are medical students; paternal uncles are doctors.	Public	Yes
7	Aazim	60:10	1	Pre-med	Three elder sisters and two brothers are university graduates.	Public	No
8	Idrees	42:20	1	Pre-med	Mother is a science teacher with a bachelor's degree; father has post-secondary education.	Private	Yes
9	Abbud	42:50	1	Pre-med	No information provided.	Private	No
10	Abdullah	41:20	1	Pre-med	Father is physician; mother is a teacher with a bachelor's degree; two older brothers are university graduates.	Private	Yes
11	Abid	22:60	1	Pre-med	No information provided.	Private	Yes
12	Adam	44:20	1	Pre-med	Mother is a physician; father is a teacher with a bachelor's degree.	Public	Yes
13	Adan	31:60	1	Pre-med	Father is a physical education teacher with a bachelor's degree; five elder brothers are university graduates.	Public	Yes
14	Afeef	36:10	1	Pre-med	No information provided.	Private	No
15	Affan	40:60	1	Pre-med	Father is a retired soldier with primary education; mother is illiterate; two older siblings are physicians; one older sibling is a senior police officer with a bachelor's degree in EFL.	Public	Yes
16	Ahmad	43:20	1	Pre-med	Father is a senior police officer with a bachelor's degree in science; mother is a housewife with a bachelor's degree in Arabic language.	Private	Yes
17	Akram	45:20	3	Pre-AMS	No information provided.	Public	

18	Ameen	43:50	3	Pre-AMS	Father is an army soldier with primary education; mother is illiterate.	Public	
19	Amjad	40:00	3	Pre-AMS	Both parents have university education.	Public	Yes
20	Anas	60:00	3	Pre-AMS	Father is a retired taxi driver; mother is illiterate; two elder siblings are engineering students.	Public	
21	Anwar	58:30	3	Pre-AMS	Father is a university professor; mother is a teacher.	Public	Yes
22	Shiyth	60:20	3	Pre-AMS	Father is a retired maths teacher with a bachelor's degree; all elder siblings have bachelors' degrees: 1 st brother is an accountant, the 2nd is an anaesthetist, the 3rd is a pharmacist, the 4th is a management information system (MIS) specialist, and one sister graduated in GIS (Geographic Information Systems).	Private	No
23	Wisam	60:10	3	Pre-med	Father has a PhD in dentistry; mother has a bachelor's degree.	Private	Yes
24	Salah	60:20	3	Pre-med	Father is an army soldier with high school qualifications; mother has post-secondary education	Public	No
25	Khidr	30:50	3	Pre-med	No information provided.	Public	Yes
26	Bilal	22:50	3	Pre-med	Father is a physician in the <i>MHA</i> ; two older sisters are studying dentistry.	Public	No
27	Layth	35	3	Pre-med	Father is a science teacher and mother is a maths teacher		

1. Schooling refers to either private (fee-paying) or free public state schools. In KSA, private schools are perceived to be better forms of schooling than the public or state schools
2. Extra EFL tuition means that the students received additional EFL courses to the ones that they studied in their schools. This could be either by attending private English language schools or having a private EFL tutor.

Table 3: The EFL teacher sample

No	Pseudonyms	Length of interview	Gender	Age	Qualification	Nationality	Teaching experience
1	Aidan	58:02	Male	40-45	MA TESOL	USA	8 years
2	Adam	52:39	Male	36-40	BA Sociology + CELTA	USA	14 years
3	Ardan	29:42	Male	40-45	BS Engineering + DELTA	Canada	15 years
4	Braden	47:11	Male	51-55	MA TESOL+ MA Education	Canada	15 years
5	Haroon	55:33	Male	46-50	MA TESOL	Jordan	10 years
6	Saeed	41:01	Male	36-40	MA TESOL	Jordan	14 years
7	Humdi	58:43	Male	40-45	MA TESOL	Jordan	6 years
8	Mustafa	29:30	Male	46-50	MA TESOL	Saudi Arabia	7 years
9	Killian	60:12	Male	31-35	MA TESOL	USA	6 years

4.5 Data analysis

This section explains how the data obtained through the different tools was analysed, and some of the challenges and difficulties faced when analysing data.

4.5.1 Interviews

As the interviews were conducted in two different languages, namely Arabic and English, the analysis of the data went through different procedures, although it had commonality at certain points. The first step was to transcribe the entire interviews and the process began with the teachers' interviews, which numbered nine in total and had been conducted in English. Half of the students' interviews (i.e. thirteen) were transcribed into English by listening to

the audio conversation and translating it directly into English. During this period, all the interview transcripts were analysed in order to identify certain patterns and to categorize and organize the data accordingly into initial themes as suggested by Patton (1990) and Kvale (1996). Although I am a native Arabic speaker, my conceptual understanding about the students' learning was developed in English. Therefore, it was much easier to identify themes relevant to conceptual understanding when they were written in English.

After this initial phase of transcribing and identifying preliminary themes, the remaining students' interviews in Arabic were transcribed. These reinforced the already identified themes as well as identifying further emerging themes. Thus, the initial phase of translation and transcription was a preliminary process of exploring the data. The second phase occurred after the transcription of all the students' and teachers' interviews, and I looked again at the whole sample. This was done to further understand the established themes and develop links between different findings, re-evaluate and further analyse the data.

It is important here to highlight several methodological issues encountered when translating the students' interviews. Culturally and linguistically, English and Arabic are two different languages and thus translating the students' views from Arabic into English was a significant challenge. Birbili (2000), Regmi et al. (2010) and Temple and Edwards (2008) argue that translating qualitative data across languages is a challenge that requires competency in both languages. As a researcher who developed the theoretical framework for this inquiry in English and also as an Arabic speaker, I was able to translate the students' interviews from Arabic into English. However, it must be acknowledged that I had to check with other Arabic speakers about my translation of specific concepts that I had in the students' data to validate their translation accuracy.

In translating the students' interviews, an attempt was made to maintain neutrality and avoid bias in selecting quotes while making them readable in English. This involved staying close to the literal meaning of what the students expressed in Arabic. However, it was impossible to maintain the literal translation (i.e. word by word) of the quotes, as the literal meaning sometimes did not make sense in English and it was necessary instead to translate to a more general meaning. It was here that effort was made to get a second opinion. Thus the translation style of the students' quotes crossed a fine line between literal and free translation. Honig (1997) and Wolcot (1990) argued that such a method of transferring qualitative data across languages helps to maintain a balance between the literal and the free translation styles. As a final measure of good practice and ethical consideration, the rough draft of the findings (in English, since the study focused on the use of English, and also because the final thesis was to be written in English) was shared with participants in order to check that their viewpoints had been represented accurately.

4.5.2 Documents

Data obtained from documents was used throughout the study, from their use in developing the rationale of the study to analysing the documents and the presentation of the findings chapters. From the start of the study, all the different documents that I was able to access about Saudi higher education, QU-HS and teaching and learning English in KSA were analysed. On obtaining data from the interviews and the observations, the analysed data obtained from the documents was then linked to emerging themes and patterns (Huberman and Miles, 1994; Ryan and Bernard, 2000). Thus, the data obtained from the documents was organized into the following themes:

- learning experiences and institutional policy;
- learning experiences and family backgrounds; and
- learning experiences and teaching approaches;

The data obtained from the analysis of documents was then triangulated with the data obtained from the interviews and the observations and directly linked to the three subsections of the main research aim.

4.5.3 Observation

The data obtained from the observations were used to support the data collection whilst visiting *QU-HS*. Observations played a part in the interviews conducted with both teachers and students, forming the basis for the questions asked. Initially it was thought that the observations in this study would be used to inform the teaching approaches used in the programme and assess the respondents' general behaviours with regard to EFL learning and practical application. The observations helped to ground and contextualise the research in a wider context by reaffirming the initial assumptions and the data needed in order to address the research aims. As the data from the observations was organized, it complemented and supported the themes that were emerging from the interview data, as shown on many occasions in the findings chapters.

4.6 Trustworthiness

The validity or rigorousness in qualitative research is measured differently than in quantitative research, in which statistical measures and validation exists

within the research paradigm. Qualitative research is evaluated through measuring its trustworthiness and authenticity (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Lincoln and Guba, 1990; Shenton, 2004). The issue of trustworthiness and authenticity of qualitative research has always been questioned by the advocates of the positivist paradigm, as this kind of research does not adhere to the rules of validity and reliability in the same way that they are addressed in naturalistic work (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Shenton, 2004).

Trustworthiness has to be established through the reflexivity of the researcher, the use of an appropriate methodology, instrument representation, and the approach to data collection (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Fossey et al., 2002; Winter, 2000). Yin (2009) suggests that the rigorousness of qualitative research has to be formulated at the level of data collection, where different tools and resources are used to complement each other in order to safeguard rigour, and through good practice. This is supported by Cohen et al. (2011), who suggest that using more than one tool for data collection helps to explore fully the richness and the complexity of human behaviour by studying it from several standpoints. Guba and Lincoln (1989) provide four measurements for evaluating trustworthiness in qualitative research. These are credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability.

The credibility question asks whether the findings are congruent with reality in order to establish whether the study measures what it actually intends to research. This can be assessed through different activities such as in-depth description of the phenomenon under scrutiny, tactics to help ensure honesty and clear understanding in informants who contribute data, triangulation and peer scrutiny of the research project (Shenton, 2004; Stake, 2003).

Dependability asks whether the research has conducted a thorough enquiry. This can be achieved through the use of 'overlapping methods' such as

observation, interviews and focus groups (Bryman, 2012; Lincoln, 1985). Shenton (2004, p. 71) suggests that, “In order to address the dependability issue more directly, the processes within the study should be reported in detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same results. Thus, the research design may be viewed as a ‘prototype model’”.

Transferability is about asking questions about the extent to which findings can be applied to other contexts. In the traditional views about qualitative research, many would argue that this transferability is impossible. However, researchers such as Denscombe (2010), Flyvbjerg (2006), Shenton (2004) and Stake (2003) argue for the possibility of such transferability, as although each case might be unique, it can measure similar concepts either in the same, similar or different contexts within a broader group. Thus, qualitative researchers should provide richness in their description and analysis of the case studies so readers or practitioners in different contexts are able to relate to similarities (and/or differences) within the study in one way or another (Firestone, 1993; Lincoln and Guba, 1990).

Confirmability checks the quality of the data and whether its source can be verified. This helps to ensure that the results of the study are the real outcome of the experiences and opinions of the participants, rather than arising from the imagination or poor research techniques of the researcher (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). This can be achieved through triangulation, which links patterns and trends through different sources of data collection to help reduce bias and errors by the researcher (Shenton, 2004; Yin, 2009). In addition, confirmability could be achieved through the researchers’ reflexivity, which means that they acknowledge their own predispositions in the study (Huberman and Miles, 1994).

Trustworthiness within this study is applied at different stages as a way of evaluating the validity and rigour of the whole research process from start to finish. First, my prolonged involvement is seen as one of the strategies that establish trustworthiness within the research (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). More than six months were spent in the field (July 2010 to January 2011). This helped me to gain an understanding of the different issues that the respondents had to deal with on a daily basis. It allowed an understanding of the institution and the way it is organized through a longer period of observation and data collection. Prolonged exposure to the research participants allowed a relationship of trust to be established, and also meant that they got used to my presence and thus could act more naturally in front of me.

Furthermore, this study used multiple tools as sources for data collection. Shenton (2004, p. 65) argues that “the use of different methods in concert compensates for their individual limitations and exploits their respective benefits”. The data was collected through documents, observations and interviews. These different tools were used to construct reality from different sources, which could then be triangulated in the analysis stage. Governmental and university documents as well as many publications that represented the viewpoints of different social agents were sought and analysed. In addition, interviews were conducted with thirty-six respondents who represented students at different stages of the EFL programme and EFL teachers from different backgrounds.

Teachers’ teaching approaches and students’ interaction with teachers and with other students were observed. In addition, general observations were conducted within the university to assess the way English language learning is applied around the campus. These different tools for data collection, as well as

the diverse sources of data, helped to provide a valid understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

A third measure for establishing the trustworthiness was through the way in which this study recruited its participants. All the participants who took part in this study were volunteers from various stages of the programme. Although there was a purpose in selecting students to represent different stages of the programme, the sampling within each stage was random. This helped to minimise the bias in this study, as none of the participants were forced to take part. They also had the option of refraining from answering any questions with which they felt uncomfortable. Shenton (2004, p. 66) argues that it is important to use:

tactics to help ensure honesty [and openness] in informants when contributing data. In particular, each person who is approached should be given opportunities to refuse to participate in the project so as to ensure that the data collection sessions involve only those who are genuinely willing to take part and prepared to offer data freely.

Although initially there was some mistrust among participants and reluctance to get involved in the study, the length of time spent among them allowed me to establish a rapport and gain their trust and willingness to participate in the research. Thus, all the participants in this study contributed willingly and provided genuine and honest information.

The fourth way of establishing trustworthiness was by cross-checking the data with feedback from the participants. This was done by inviting them to give their opinions on whether their quotes, the content of the thesis and the translation represented what they had wanted to say. Although not much feedback was obtained from the respondents, those who gave feedback helped me to make changes and confirmed that their viewpoints were represented.

This builds confidence that accurate views are represented in thesis. Guba and Lincoln (1989) and Shenton (2004) emphasise the importance of checking with participants to make sure that the written words, especially quotes and findings, match what they actually wanted and hoped they had said.

Fifth, as the interviews with the students were conducted in Arabic, I asked two Saudi colleagues who were PhD students in the School of Education, University of Sussex, to check a sample of my translation and provide feedback (appendix 17: sample of students' interview transcriptions). The feedback I received from them was that the translation was accurate. They also checked and helped to translate accurately what the students had said. Brislin (1973, p. 46) stated that:

consultation with other people involves discussions about the use and meaning of words identified as problematic with people who are bilingual or having a number of people sitting around a table jointly making decisions about the best terms to use.

These informal consultations with my Saudi colleagues helped me to address some conceptual issues that resulted from word-by-word or literal translation of the students' spoken words, which have been quoted within this thesis.

Sixth, throughout all the phases of my research, academic supervisors and colleagues have provided feedback on the process and content of the research. In addition, this research has been presented in many seminars and conferences and thus feedback was obtained from wider general and academic audiences. The fresh perspectives that these different audiences were able to bring provided useful points, strengthened findings or challenged assumptions that I had made. Such peer feedback helped to ensure the integrity of the research, as critical feedback was sought throughout the process of the inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1986; Lincoln, 1985).

Finally, throughout this investigation, detailed description, review and analysis have been targeted towards the phenomenon. The rationale for this particular phenomenon of the students' learning experiences with EFL in *QU-HS* in KSA, and why this is a unique case to study, is explained. Chapter Two positions the research and provides a detailed description of the background and context of the study. Chapters Three and Four respectively locate the phenomenon of the students' learning experiences in *QU-HS* in the wider global debate about learning as well as providing an explanation of the methodology used. Such detailed description of the phenomenon under study is one of the means of establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research, as "it helps to convey the actual situations that have been investigated and, to an extent, the contexts that surround them" (Shenton, 2004, p. 69). If necessary, it then allows replication of the research phenomenon or a similar investigation.

4.7 Positionality

In qualitative social research, positionality is considered to be an essential element of the research design and inquiry process. It affects the way research questions are formulated as well as the process of data collection (England, 1994; Ganga and Scott, 2006; Sultana, 2007). Researchers' interpretivist position means that they should regularly ask themselves about the influence of their beliefs and values on the way they collect and interpret the data (Bryman, 2012; Richardson, 2000; Taylor and Settelmaier, 2003).

Generally, positionality has been widely conceptualised in terms of 'insider' and/or 'outsider' positions (Creswell, 2012; Merriam et al., 2001; Mohammad, 2001). The insider-ness or outsider-ness are conceptual positions where researchers may position themselves in relation to other elements in the setting

in which the research is being formulated and carried out, i.e., the language, culture, gender, religion, and careers (Ganga and Scott, 2006; Mohammad, 2001). The relationship the researcher has to these factors therefore positions him or her in a particular place, and thus might have a significant impact on the research process.

In the case of this study, there were different positions, but 'insider' perspective dominated, placing me within this research context: for instance, as a former EFL teacher in *QU-HS*, male, Saudi and Arab. Being a Saudi national enabled a better understanding of the culture and the language of the case study context. There was an advantage in speaking and understanding the language, particularly as the students used Arabic as a medium for the interviews. I was thus advantaged with regard to the cultural connotations and clues that imbue language with meaning. The students were happier to participate when told that the interviews were to be conducted in Arabic. Also, an understanding of the culture and country shaped the way students were approached. As most of the students were too busy to meet during the academic day, knowing the culture allowed me to suggest alternative places where some of them spent their evenings. Meeting students in *Shisha* places where they were smoking their *Mo'assel* or *Jourak*¹, having tea and playing cards was an acceptable alternative, but one where a female might not have access. Others were met in their *Isterahes* (holiday villas) where they get together to relax, have tea, play video games and do sports; or in coffee shops, such as Starbucks, Dr. Cafe, Krispy Kreme and JavaCafe. Culturally, in KSA, teachers and students do not usually meet in such places; however, knowing the culture of the Saudi students, I was able to downplay my power in this teacher-student relation. So although I had been an EFL teacher, I was now regarded as being more student-

¹ *Mo'assel* and *Jourak* are different types of *shisha*, which is an oriental tobacco pipe with a long flexible tube connected to a container where the smoke is cooled by passing through water.

like and thus such meetings were accepted. Small things such as changing the way I dressed and the choice of more colloquial words allowed me to reach out to students outside the university in places where I knew they were going to relax and be comfortable to talk about the learning experience in a more informal way. Thus, they were more at ease to allow information to be constructed about their realities.

Although the fact that I was viewed as a teacher caused some students to be reluctant to be interviewed during the first phase of the research, the opportunity I was given to introduce myself in some EFL lessons helped me begin to build a relationship and thus gain their trust. In addition, knowing the culture, I was able to present myself to the students in a way that downgraded the typical image that they held about teachers. I put them at ease by sharing my story. I told them about my own educational experience, including my struggles with learning EFL, and some of the failures I had had on EFL courses until I had a teacher in the intermediate school who helped me to see my potential and improve my EFL learning. I shared with them that presently I was just like them – a student. That I was doing research to help students improve their learning of EFL and to assess the most effective teaching approach. Having an understanding and knowledge of the culture of the Saudi students allowed me to use the idea of being a PhD student to appeal to students' good nature. Thus, many of them responded by participating in the research.

Also, the fact that I was a former EFL teacher in *QU-HS* helped in increasing the range of data collected from EFL teachers in other ways. It allowed me access to the teachers' office space and I was able to observe some the teacher-student interactions outside the classroom. Secondly, some of my former colleagues, with whom I had worked within the EFL programme, allowed me to attend their lessons to observe the teaching approaches and the student interactions. Moreover, these colleagues helped me to build rapport with other EFL teachers

whom I did not know. This relationship of trust was helpful, as some of the teachers started to invite me for coffee/tea to talk about my research and consult with me about some teaching-learning issues that they faced with the students. These interactions provided rich background data for the research, as conversations with teachers provided some significant insights into teacher attitudes, approaches to teaching and the challenges teachers face.

Also, being an insider, I was able to talk informally with the management of the university about their view of the university and the EFL programme in particular. Furthermore, because of this relationship, I was trusted, which meant that I was allowed to access some of the institutional procedures, such as the student admission policies and the recruitment criteria for the selection and assessment of EFL teachers, which an 'outsider' might have struggled to access.

There were some significant disadvantages to being an insider, especially when it came to the interviews with some EFL teachers, who were reluctant to answer certain questions in an honest way. Instead, they were more inclined to answer according to what they thought was expected from them. The questions were rephrased and asked in a manner that made them feel that they were sharing information about their daily teaching practices and not giving opinions about the university. When interviewing teachers with whom I was friends or had worked with in the past, they assumed that I knew how things worked and therefore it was up to me to fill in the gaps. They tended to use phrases like '*You know what I mean*', or, '*You have been teaching here and you know how things are*'. Thus, frequently they had to be asked to expand on their answers and for further clarification with regards to what they meant, and they found this strange.

There was a grave restriction which made me very much an outsider, and this was in terms of gender. This had a great impact on the conduct as well as the

limitations of this study. Although I was allowed formal access from the management of the university to interview and observe everywhere, permission was not granted to interview female participants. Although the university is a mixed gender institution, being male in the Saudi context hindered my access to the female participants, as interactions between males and females are culturally not allowed, and this is still a sensitive topic. The university would not allow a male researcher access to female participants, as it did not want to become involved in a difficult situation with the female students' male guardians. As a Saudi man, this limitation and sensitivity of the situation was clearly understood. This meant that this research failed to represent the voice of 50% of people, who are already marginalised in the educational discourse of the country. This is a major limitation in this study (cf. 4.9).

4.8 Ethical considerations

The notion of ethics in qualitative research is strongly emphasised. It is regarded as one of the elements that establish the trustworthiness of qualitative research. Any discussion of ethics in qualitative research must include discussing the role of values within the process of research. This includes questions about voluntary participation, imposed limitations, informed consent, risk of harm, confidentiality and anonymity. Ethics in qualitative research is about how people are treated and how to manage the data gathered from participants (Bryman, 2012; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Cohen et al. (2011) supported the notion that ethical considerations are not only about awareness of the subject matter but also about being careful that the study will not cause harm to anyone. Christians in Denzin and Lincoln (2011) introduced a "code of ethics" which constituted three general guidelines which emphasize the moral

principles of the social sciences. First, the researcher should obtain the informant's consent, and all the respondents should participate voluntarily in the research. Secondly, the anonymity and confidentiality of the data and the participants should be guarded. Neither the identity nor any data on the participants should be revealed or used for purposes other than the research. Finally, researchers need to be accurate and careful in analysing and reporting their findings. This code is concerned with the respectful handling of data. This study followed this general code of ethics, and was also guided by the University of Sussex research code of ethics, which were in place at the time when the fieldwork for this study was conducted.

Consent was obtained at three different levels. Consent was obtained from QU-HS management so that the institution was aware of the research and the activities that were involved as well as the people who would be consulted (see appendices 5 and 6 for the consent form for the university). However, the consent form did not clearly request that the name of the university be used in this final report: therefore, a pseudonym was used to conceal its identity. This also includes concealing its identity in all the documents and the literature obtained about the university. This particular measure was taken in order not to cause harm to the institution nor to the individuals who participated in the study.

In addition, the consent obtained from the university to conduct this research contained one major condition, which was that I was not allowed, as a male researcher, to gather data about and from the female students or teachers. This was due to the cultural sensitivity of mixing among males and females in the context of KSA; as it could place the university in a difficult situation with male guardians of the females. This imposition had to be respected and accepted to prevent harm to the context of the study - particularly the university - and also to my credibility as a researcher who understands these cultural norms.

Another consent form was directed towards the individual. Everyone interviewed had to sign this form, after a verbal explanation of the research aims. This consent form protects and maintains data protection rights within this particular research (see appendix 11 for consent form). The last form of consent involved a verbal agreement with students in the classrooms that were being observed. This worked in the following way. First, an agreement was made with the teacher whose lesson was to be observed after he checked with the students to see if they were willing to be observed. On arrival to the lesson, a brief explanation of the research was given and the students were again asked if they were happy for me to stay and observe. An initial observation was that students were pleased to be observed. In addition, throughout the entire fieldwork, it was emphasised to the participants that they were volunteers who were helping to assess learning and teaching of EFL, but that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time.

A further ethical consideration that the study had to address related to the general observations made in a diary about the students' behaviour concerning the practical application of their learned English language around the university (c.f. 4.3.2). Although the general type of observation applied here was overt observation, this type of the observation can be argued to be covert, as the respondent were not directly told or made aware that they were being observed, and it could be claimed as being unethical. However, since this observation was active and participative, as it occurred when walking around the university or sitting in an office, it made it a less problematic ethical issue. The university officials, the teachers and the students were aware that general behaviours, events, and physical interactions around the university would be observed. It was practically impossible to tell every respondent about every observation in the field. At times, interactions within the context of *QU-HS* were conducted simply to understand the reality and the perspective of the

research participants. However, effort was made to ensure that observation did not harm anybody in the field or cause harm to the university.

In relation to anonymity and confidentiality, the study established good practices to ensure that these assurances were not breached and privacy was not harmed or affected. When conducting the interviews and tape recordings, participants were named through a code and were never named directly in the discussion. Instead, they were referred to in the third person or as the pronoun 'you'. Even when labelling the interviews, a simple code was used, e.g. Student (1) or Teacher (1).

In addition, anonymity of the participants was maintained in the analysis of the data and the presentation of the findings. When quotes expressed the opinions of the participants, the identity of the participants was concealed by using Arabic names that are commonly used among students in KSA. The native and non-native English speaking teachers were given western and Arabic names respectively. The only identifiable aspects used in the coding were the general measures such as gender, age, stage of study (i.e. pre-med student or pre-AMS student), and whether the teachers were NES or NNES.

Among the ethical considerations that this study dealt with is the accurate and careful analysis of the data. The data was analysed carefully to identify trends and patterns, and sensitively to avoid bias that could arise from my values as a researcher. This was limited by presenting the initial data to colleagues in the department of education and to my academic supervisor. This maintained accuracy, as it involved explanation and accountability of how the data is analysed. Moreover, the presentation of initial and emerging results to different audiences at different seminars and conferences, and the feedback given, helped to continually refine and structure the results and what conclusions can be drawn.

An important element and ethical obligation that had to be upheld was to give something back to the respondents who provided help and support during the fieldwork period. When teachers asked me to reflect on my own teaching of EFL, I willingly gave an account. Teachers were helped to reflect on their teaching, without forcing them to the answer by leading them in a particular direction. Thus, most of the discussions were postponed until the end of the interviews or frequently occurred during teachers' break time. Students also asked questions about the EFL learning journey, and they were very interested in how to learn from the challenges that I had faced in my EFL learning in the intermediate school and how these had been turned into success. It was useful to share such learning experiences with them and give them tips to help them through similar journeys. Part of good ethical research tradition is about exchanging and sharing ideas to help people improve, develop and reflect on their own practice.

4.9 Limitations

The first limitation of the study exists in the paradigm adopted and the way it addresses the nature of knowing and reality. Opponents of the interpretivist paradigm will argue that this paradigm is subjective, as it gives too much scope to the researcher's own interpretations. This is absolutely true and is inherent in the nature of this paradigm, as it believes in the construction and the multiplicity of reality. Such a view of knowledge and the way is approached provides rich data about the phenomena under investigation. The richness of the data comes from the detailed information that such a paradigm seeks to collect from different sources of information (which includes the researcher) that could provide different interpretations to the reality and how different people experience it. Also, it is true that this paradigm does not separate

subjects and their knowledge, which the opponents of this paradigm believe can affect the integrity of the research. In response to this limitation, the work of Flyvbjerg (2006) and Shenton (2004) draws on the importance of subjectivity in understanding human behaviour. Here it is the relationship between the researcher, the respondents and the context in this particular study that informs the research and that can help to improve our understanding of the human experiences in a given context. Therefore, as the intention of this study is to assess contextual understanding of the learning experiences of students in a particular EFL programme, the separation between the subject and object does not help to address the way people experience reality. Guba and Lincoln's (1989) argument suggests that the integrity of interpretivist inquiry is measured differently to that in the positivist paradigm. Inquiries in the interpretivist paradigm are measured through the concept of trustworthiness, which evaluates different aspect of the research. Through the use of the notion of trustworthiness and the integrity of this research were established, and subjectivity is one of the limitations of this study.

The second limitation stems from the misunderstanding about how the case study is utilised and the generalizability of the findings. It has long been claimed that because case study research is about scrutinizing a certain phenomenon in a particular context, generalizing the findings of such case studies is almost impossible (Merriam, 1998). Flyvbjerg (2006), Shenton (2004) and Stake (2003) argue that despite the uniqueness of each individual case study, each one of them is an example and so can form a component of a wider consensus. Therefore, the idea of generalizability based on statistical analysis can be ruled out as being essential (Stake, 1995). If the case studies are succinctly explained, practitioners and researcher in similar situations can relate aspects of each case study to their own context and situation (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Shenton, 2004). The case study under investigation in this research relates to a

particular context of learning in KSA. The data generated will help to understand the student learning experiences of EFL and situate it in the way learning is approached by Saudi students in higher education. As a thorough level of description is given at each stage and from the systematic analysis of the results, it is hoped that practitioners and researcher in other similar contexts will find it useful in terms of reference, comparison and development within their own learning context. Also, as Flyvbjerg (2006) and Yin (2009) found, findings from small pieces of qualitative research can come together and expand or generalise into wider theories. Therefore, this study contributes to the general theories of learning in higher education.

Thirdly, the purposive sampling, which has a non-probability basis, can be said to be a limitation. It does not represent the entire population of students in the EFL programme, but focuses on a small sample formulated from those people who agreed to participate in the research. Therefore, it might be difficult to draw broad conclusions about the wider population based on this type of small sample, as May (2011) argued. This is true, but the main issue here is about providing a thorough description from an in-depth analysis of the experiences of a small number of students and teachers who are the focus of this case study. Through recruiting those who voluntarily agreed to participate, the study was able to access the richness of the students' learning experience. Shenton (2004) states that it is those participants who join the study willingly who can then provide open and genuine opinions.

Fourthly, the data was collected from the respondents at particular points in time. This means that this study is a cross-sectional and not a longitudinal one. Data obtained from such a type of study gives an account of the social reality at the specific time(s) when the snapshot or *cross-section* was taken. It does not tell the reader much about how the learning experiences were developed and progressed with each student over the two-year duration of the EFL

programme. Due to the limitation of time, the study focused on understanding learning in a particular moment of time within the fieldwork period of six months or so. However, through the detailed analysis of the experiences of students positioned at different stages in the EFL course, and through linking this to analysis of the institutional factors, this study overcame some elements of this limitation.

In the initial proposal, the experiences of all students in the EFL programme, male and female, were to be investigated; however, the final research report only outlines the experiences of the male students. The gender limitation arose from a cultural demand imposed by the university, which discourages the mixing of genders in conducting research. As my agreement of access and consent with the university stated clearly that I must not interview female students or teachers, I was not able to get their viewpoints. Thus, the whole phenomenon that was due to be investigated was actually represented by the views of male participants, which could or could not share some similarities with the female ones.

4.10 Summary

This chapter has discussed the methodology that was employed for this study. It outlined the philosophical position as taking an interpretivist approach to the acquisition of knowledge and how it can be used to assess learning and teaching styles in a wider context. This position underpins the adoption of a qualitative paradigm. The design for this inquiry used a case study approach to carry out an in-depth cross-sectional study of a small sample of students and teachers in KSA in an EFL programme.

By adopting interpretivism, the paradigm influenced the tools used for data collection. It allowed and combined the use of a variety of tools, such as interviewing and the use of observation and document analysis, as shown in table 4 below. This helped to position the study within the interpretivist understanding of reality. It allowed an interpretation of reality about people that existed in various literatures and helped to develop the context and locate the research.

Table 4: Data sets used for addressing research sub-questions

Research sub-questions	Data sets used when addressing the sub research question (s)
1. How do the policies of the university affect the EFL programme and student learning experiences?	Interviews
	Documents review
	Observations
2. How do the students' families' educational backgrounds influence student learning in the EFL programme?	Interviews
3. How do teaching approaches affect student learning experiences in the EFL programme?	Interviews
	Documents review
	Observations

All the tools used for data collection fit well with purpose of constructing knowledge in order to carry out a particular research. In addition, there was discussion about issues of positionality and measures for establishing the integrity of the research. The chapter concludes by highlighting the limitations

and the ethical consideration of this research, and how they will impact, if at all, on the final results and conclusions.

The next chapter turns to the data analysis and discusses the influence of the policy enacted by *QU-H* on students' learning experiences.

Chapter 5: The institutional influence of *QU-HS* on the student learning experience

This chapter presents findings about the effect of the institutional policies on the student learning experience in *QU-HS*. As outlined in the literature review (section 3.2), analysing an educational institution helps us to understand the issues that influence teaching and learning from a policy lens. Using data from interviews, document reviews and observations, this chapter aims to answer the first sub-research question, which is '*How do the policies of the university affect the EFL programme and the student learning experience?*'

The chapter starts by discussing how policies related to the EFL programme were established in the university in section 5.1. These policies are:

- (1) the establishment of the university as a single discipline university that offers courses in health sciences; and how this is particularly important to the use and delivery of the EFL programme; and,
- (2) what the association of the university with the *MHA* implies for the medium of instruction used as well as the importance of English language in the university.

The implications of these two policies are discussed in sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4. Section 5.2 in particular discusses the implications of these two policies in regard to the use of English as a medium of instruction. Section 5.3 analyses how these policies impact on the provision of the EFL programme in the university. Section 5.4 discusses the implications of these two policies for the recruitment of instructors in the EFL programme.

5.1 How institutional policies related to EFL were established

QUHS was established as a specialist health science university by a royal decree in March 2005. The reason why the university was made an exclusive medical university is because it initially ran academic medical courses offered by medical professionals in *MHA's* medical city in Riyadh (*QUHS*, 2012a). The President's Welcome (see Appendix 12), as well as the mission statement of the university (*QUHS*, 2012b), clearly emphasise the uni-disciplinary nature of the university. The mission of the university states that the university aims to:

Prepare the students in the art and science of medicine in an academic setting that fosters excellence in education research and compassionate patient care....

Similar assertions are also observed from the strategy document of the university (see appendix 13), which explains that it is not part of the university's future plan to expand to become a multidisciplinary university in the traditional sciences. This is because this service can be provided by other universities. The present multidisciplinary philosophies that are explained in the strategy document refer to the idea of having different branches of health sciences, such as pharmacology, dentistry and nursing. The university's expansion plans are focused on the idea of this being one of the leading universities in the field of health sciences. Such attention to providing leading health science education has significant implications for the university. This study focuses on how these goals are relevant to the EFL programmes.

The *MHA* is a pioneer medical institute focusing on providing medical care and providing an appropriate academic education and training to all medical and non-medical staff. This is demonstrated by the creation and operation of *QU-HS* under the umbrella of the *MHA*, focusing on health education. The university is

contributing to Saudi society by producing graduates specializing in medicine and AMS.

Being a single discipline institution which wants to compete with the world's best universities, *QU-HS*'s relationship with the Saudi higher education system and *MHA* in terms of the language of instruction and communication used in the university was observed and assessed in this research. Since health sciences disciplines and degrees are taught in English in Saudi universities, the state of English is strongly emphasised in these schools or departments. In the case of *QU-HS*, the use of the English language is given great importance throughout the university, since the university is entirely focused on health science. Consequently, this influences the way the university's EFL programme is managed and designed.

Policies and practices of the university are significantly influenced, or even controlled, by the association with *MHA*. This can be observed in the university's various publications (e.g. the Graduate Student Handbook and the Guide for the College of Applied Medical Sciences) as well as the mission statement of the university, which clearly states this association:

...The mission will be carried out jointly with the existing Military Health Facilities.

By reviewing the documents and observations in the field, it became evident that the university and *MHA* are managed by personnel who play a role in each institution. For example, the president of the university (a position equal to the role of vice chancellor in UK universities) is also the Chief Executive Officer of *MHA*. In addition, many of the administrative and academic staff have similar dual roles in both the university and the medical city. These overlapping roles in governing the university and *MHA* emphasise the relationship and the mutual influence of the two organizations. This relationship is further

emphasised and cemented in the university strategy document (appendix 13), particularly in strategic goal 5, which states the university's intention to:

increase opportunities for research and creative economic development in health and education by expanding involvement in corporate, government and international partnerships. Assure the appearance of the *QU-HS* brand identity in printed and electronic media as the sole academic sponsor of all scientific activities in the *MHA*.

This strategy document and the mission statement of the university illustrate the close links through which the university associates all its activities with *MHA*, and vice versa. An example is the willingness of *MHA* to allow the university to be the sole sponsor of all its academic activities and knowledge production. Clearly, the university is considered to be the academic face of the excellent medical advancements that are achieved by *MHA*. Such policies and practices that tie *QU-HS* with *MHA* have implications for the running of the university. Among the different implications, this association of the university with *MHA* allows the university to exist within the *MHA* campus. This means that the university exists on the same site as the hospital and the other medical facilities. The existence of the university within the *MHA* campus reinforces the university's association with *MHA* and most importantly influences the EFL programme in the university. This is because the *MHA* uses English as the main medium of communication in its campus

Being a single discipline university as well as having a close association with the *MHA* has three particular implications for the EFL programme. The implications are (1) the use of English as the medium of instruction and communication, (2) the modification of the EFL programme to make sure students have the best access to good quality EFL learning for the maximum time, and (3) the recruitment of EFL instructors who can deliver the language as required and bring students to the level of proficiency needed for them to

compete in the world of medicine-related education, trade and markets. Each of these points will be discussed in turn below.

5.2 The use of EMI for instruction and communication.

Despite the established debate about using EMI in the current global higher education, many universities around the world continue to choose EMI for teaching medicine. These universities believe that by using EMI in teaching medicine, their graduates will be better able to communicate with the international medical community, share their experiences and gain access to up-to-date knowledge (Nunan, 2003). In fact, 98% of German physicists, 83% of chemists and 81% of biologists now claim English as their working language for this very reason (Ammon, 2001; Block and Cameron, 2002). Similarly, in Saudi universities, medicine and medical sciences are taught in English and used in communication in the colleges of medicine and AMS. However, as these Saudi universities are multidisciplinary, providing other courses as well as health sciences, they use mostly Arabic – not English – as a medium of communication and instruction except on their health sciences degrees. *QU-HS* is different in the sense that it uses English as a medium of instruction and communication, since it is a specialist health sciences university. The message of the Chairman of PMP in *QU-HS*, posted on the university's website, clearly confirmed this when communicating the importance of English as the medium of study in the university:

English language tends to be the common language in culturally diverse settings, and it is unmistakably the *lingua franca* in the world of modern medicine: there are more professional journals published and conferences held in English than in any other language. This is why the College is an English-medium institution... Competency and

confidence in English language skills are essential... All of our lectures, seminars, discussion sessions and presentations are conducted in English... Laying down the basic foundation is an essential and integral part of preparing the students for their future education in the University.

Chairman of PMP (*QU-HS*, 2011, No page number)

This quote stresses ways in which the university and its managers emphasise the importance of learning English as a key to accessing knowledge and that the university encourages the use of EMI. In other words, the university realises the importance of preparing the students in English to pursue their studies in health sciences. In addition, the existence of the university within *MHA* and the partnership that has been established between them allows the university to adopt the language of communication used by *MHA*. This because the university started with medical courses provided in English in the medical city. In addition, English is adopted and widely used as a medium of communication by the medical city because many of the workers in *MHA* are non-Arabic speakers. In fact, English, rather than Arabic, is regarded as the official language of the university. Although the use of EMI in teaching health sciences is a policy choice related to teaching health sciences, the use of English for communication purposes in the university is a practice that is informed by the existence of the university within *MHA* campuses. Thus, *QU-HS* adopts many things from *MHA*, including the language of communication, and thus uses English widely in its communications.

This prominent position of English is clearly pronounced in the activities of the university and communicated to the students from the day they start their academic life. For example, on the student orientation day, when students meet the staff, managers and policy-makers of the university, such as the vice chancellor, the deans of the colleges and some faculty members, and are briefed

about the university and the different courses, they are succinctly told about the importance of English. In fact, they are spoken to in English from the first day. English is used in introducing the different programmes on the orientation day, and so the importance of EMI and communication is demonstrated from the beginning. The presentations that explain how the programme works and what is expected from the students are written and presented in English. Also, the EFL instructors who teach in the PMP are the only faculty members to be introduced on the day, showing their prominence and the importance of the English language, and the role such staff play in the university. Such wide usage of English in *QU-HS* has an influence on the development of EFL in the university. It highlights the importance of having a robust EFL programme that is able to help students from high schools to make the transition from Arabic-medium to English-medium education.

Using EMI and communication demonstrates to the students the importance of having advanced English language competencies or having the aptitude to develop such competencies. This is reflected in the following quotes from students:

Presentations on the [orientation] day were in English; this tells you something about the high status of the university and how professional their programme is. Only a few universities use the English language extensively in that way... I was very impressed, and I thought that the English language programme at least is going to be the challenge that I am expecting from such a medical university.

Wisam (pre-med student), Interviews, Thursday 14th October 2010

I felt terrified by orientation day: I didn't understand much of what was said, I wasn't very sure about the people who were introduced, but I

figured that they were the English teachers. One of them spoke with a very strong American accent.... I wasn't able to understand most of what he said... I told myself, 'Allah may help us'... Although I was very scared and confused, I was very happy that I was admitted to this university; I believe the use of the English language here makes you feel that you are in one of the American universities... Honestly, I liked the image the university projects... and this gives me a great motivation to improve my English language skills.

Bukur (pre-AMS student), Interview, Tuesday 9th November 2010

Although students in the EFL programme in the university expressed mixed feelings about the use of English as the medium of instruction on the orientation day, many of them concluded that they had received a simple, clear and unified message that 'if we have to survive here, we have to improve our English language skills'. Although the adverse impact of using EMI is highlighted in Bukur's quotes above, as it made it difficult for him to fully understand the information given on the orientation day, its use on that particular day seemed to have had a positive impact on students like Bukur. Such quotes show ways in which many students buy into the assumption that knowledge is best acquired through EMI. It is clear that students like Bukur seemed to be convinced that the more intensively EMI is used in the university, the better they are prepared academically. Thus, most of them tend to shift the blame from the policy that imposes EMI on them onto themselves by acknowledging that the problem lies within them and that they have to improve their English language competencies in order to cope with the demands of the EFL programme in the university. Despite the potentially adverse effect of using EMI in QUHS on such students, it seems to have the effect of motivating them to improve their English language competencies to meet what they consider to be the language requirement of the university.

The use of English as the medium of instruction and communication was reported by the interviewees to have a significant impact on the student learning experience. In comparing his experience of studying English between public school and *QU-HS*, Shiyth narrates that the wide usage of English in the university encourages many students to start to speak the language, particularly with EFL teachers who do not speak Arabic. This was illustrated clearly in the quote below:

...the difference is that everybody is speaking in English here (at university) and we have been forced to speak in English too... those of us who didn't used to speak in English, teachers push them to communicate in English; for example [a Canadian teacher] used to encourage students to speak English, since he doesn't speak Arabic; he used to force those of us who are not confident in English to use it for communication in the classroom; even those who didn't know the English alphabet and always used to resist speaking in English: the teacher used to push them and force them to speak in English.

Shiyth (pre-AMS student), Interview, Thursday 6th November 2010

During fieldwork, it was noticed that English was used widely among many students in the pre-medicine track of the EFL programme. These students were more confident in their command of English and used it most of the time. Generally, students who were being prepared to study disciplines other than medicine (i.e. pre-AMS) tended to use Arabic in their communication outside the classroom. This was particularly true for those students who were in their first semester in the programme. Pre-AMS students who were in the later stages of the programme used English more often in their communication outside the classroom. This suggests that wide and extensive use of English in the

university has an impact on improving students' practical use and competency of the English language.

5.3 The provision of the EFL programme

The university is a health science specialist university that is associated with the *MHA*, which communicates in English. Since English is proclaimed as the language for communication and instruction in the university, it has had to adopt a different EFL programme in its preparatory programme. The university has to ensure that the English language proficiency it offers in its EFL programme meets a high standard to enable students to communicate in English, and that it responds to the students' academic needs and provides the desired competency.

Like all providers of higher education, *QU-HS* was initially bound to the rules and regulations of the Saudi higher education authority, which suggests the use of Arabic in communication but offers EFL training in its educational programmes when needed (Al-Issa, 2011; Ansari, 2012; Denman and Hilal, 2011). Without much attention to the phrase 'when needed', all Saudi universities offer EFL programmes as part of their preparatory year. However, the length and the intensity of the EFL courses differ from one university to another. A few universities have started to move away from the Saudi higher education authority's guidelines for various reasons, and have adopted English as the only medium of instruction, such as King Fahad University for Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM) (Omar and Yushau, 2006), which is associated with Saudi Aramco, the biggest oil company in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Aramco is believed to function almost as an independent government within the Saudi system and has its own governing policies that often do not reflect the Saudi

culture. In fact, most these policies reflect Western values and culture. One such policy that Aramco adopts is the use of English as the medium of communication in the company and other bodies that are associated with it, such as KFUPM. Thus, in order for KFUPM to bring its students up to a higher standard of English proficiency, it offers twenty hours per week of EFL training over a one-year period, i.e., two semesters. The provision of EFL courses in a university such as KFUPM has two purposes. The first is to facilitate students' transition from Arabic-medium schooling to an English-medium university education. The second purpose is to help guide the students into their prospective courses of studies, as the different engineering and administration courses that KFUPM offers require different levels of English language competency. Other universities, like Imam Mohammed bin Saud Islamic University (IMBSIU) (IMBSIU, 2011), which has a strong focus on developing Arabic and Islamic culture, use both Arabic and English as media of instruction. However, the university, like many Saudi universities that are not associated with a particular body that encourages the use of English as a medium, offers most of its courses in Arabic, except for health sciences courses. IMBSIU offers students in the College of Medicine a one-year EFL programme where English is taught for fourteen hours per week to develop their English competency and proficiency. However, the programme is not as intensive as it is in KFUPM, as the IMBSIU does not have an inclination in its policies towards using English as a medium of communication and instruction.

Although *QU-HS* abides by the regulations of the MoHE in many aspects, such as admission and the duration of degree programmes, the policy and practices the university adopts allow it to modify the regulations of higher education in relation to EFL teaching and learning. This modification seems to emphasise the importance of English in the university. For instance, at *QU-HS*, the EFL programme in the preparatory programme lasts longer, exposing the students

to more teaching hours. The EFL programme in *QU-HS* runs for a year and a half (i.e., three academic semesters) with an average of seventeen hours per week. While other universities are teaching a maximum of sixteen hours of EFL per week over two semesters, *QU-HS* teaches seventeen hours per week over a period of three semesters. This means that students in *QU-HS* are exposed to a much longer and more intense EFL training programme, which allows them to feel more confident and better prepared for their specialised course:

Since I am going to study medicine, which is going to be in English, I feel that I should be very confident in my English language ability... The university English language programme is the longest and the most intensive programme offered in Saudi, as far as I know. I am in my third semester, and I feel that the programme helps me to improve my English language, and I feel confident to start my medical training... I can speak, read and ask questions confidently... Initially I was not sure how I was going to study such a difficult discipline [medicine] in English, but after studying this intensive programme [the EFL programme], I feel that I have been better prepared to start my medical courses.

Wisam (pre-med student), Interview, Thursday 14th October 2010

I feel that the programme here gives me the extra English language tuition that I wanted... Because the programme is long and intensive, I felt that I was able to have enough time to practise my English and improve my skills... The time scale that the university allows for teaching English made studying medical sciences here more attractive for me as opposed to other universities... Everybody talks about the importance of English when studying medicine and it is unwise not to come to study in this university...

Shiyth (pre-AMS student), Interview, Thursday 6th November 2010

These reflections from the students show their awareness of the importance that the university places on EFL teaching and learning. They also show that *QU-HS* is trying to raise the students' English language competency to a level that enables them to function competently in their academic programme (i.e. medicine/AMS). In addition, they highlight ways in which the emphasis on English motivates the students to improve their language competency so that they are able to pursue their degrees in health sciences.

Furthermore, the greater provision of the EFL programme, which stems from the university's unique policies, allows the university to attract the best students to seek admission, since they know how it will help them to advance their future studies and careers, as reflected in the quote below.

Although *QU-HS* is a new university, I applied to it to study medicine for many reasons, one of which is that their language programme is very intensive and different to the other universities that teach medicine, as it is part of the *MHA* ... although it is my first semester in the programme, I feel that I am getting the level of challenge that I expected, which I think is good...

Aazim (pre-med student), Interviews, Tuesday 10th October 2010

5.4 The recruitment of EFL instructors

In order to deal with such a demanding level of English language competency for the students, the university has to ensure that it recruits EFL teachers who are able to help the students develop their English language skills to the highest calibre. Although there were no specific documents that cited the criteria needed for hiring EFL teachers, the strategy document (appendix 13) in goal 1 relates to the creation of a learning environment and emphasises that the university's aim is to recruit excellent teachers. The fact that *QU-HS* is a medical

university that uses English as medium of instruction and communication necessitates hiring experienced and qualified EFL instructors who are able to prepare the students to deal with the English language demands of the medical programme and to ease their transition from Arabic-medium schooling to English-medium university education.

The recruitment of experienced EFL instructors is reflected in the demands that particular English language units require. Most Saudi universities attract EFL teachers through outsourcing, which does not always demand a high level of qualifications or experience from the candidates, especially when they are white and native English speakers (Ali, 2009; TotalESL, 2007). Many universities in the Gulf countries still perceive native English-speaking instructors as perfect teachers. The understanding of native English-speaking teachers in many of these gulf universities is racially driven. Although there nothing in the policies of these universities to suggest what native English speakers are, the practices of many of the Gulf countries suggest that native English-speaking instructors are white people with blue eyes (Ali, 2009). Through such misunderstanding of how proficiency in the English language is not just race-related, but also of the experiences of teaching language, these universities miss out on hiring EFL experts who could help to improve their EFL programmes (Ali, 2009; Clark and Paran, 2007; Moussu and Llurda, 2008).

However, the practices of the EFL unit in *QU-HS* do not seem to follow the assumption that native English-speaking instructors are always the best EFL teachers. It seems that the university recognises that EFL instructors who grow up in generally English-speaking nations (e.g. the UK, the US, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa) may have longer exposure to the English language, but that this does not exempt them from having the required qualifications for teaching in *QU-HS*. The university applies tougher criteria when recruiting EFL teachers irrespective of where they come from. Unlike many Saudi universities,

in relation to the recruitment of EFL instructors from English-speaking nations, *QU-HS* requires an EFL instructor to have (1) a master's degree in ELT or linguistics, and (2) a minimum of three years' EFL teaching experience in countries that do not use English as a first language. In relation to hiring EFL instructors from non-English-speaking nations, the university requires the instructor to have (1) have a master's degree in ELT, and (2) five years' experience in ELT teaching (see Appendix 14: job advert in *QU-HS*). This is seen as a way in which *QU-HS* is attempting to ensure that the EFL instructors it hires are competent and capable of creating a good quality teaching and learning environment that helps to improve the students' linguistic ability and to facilitate their transition from Arabic-medium schooling to English-medium university education.

Moreover, the association of the university with a well-established government organization such as *MHA* allows it to provide the EFL instructors with great benefits, which can be a pull factor for good quality EFL instructors. In addition to a competitive salary, EFL instructors and their families are offered health coverage in the *MHA*, which is seen as very exclusive military health care. Also, the internationally recruited EFL instructors are provided with additional benefits which are not normally offered in other universities, such as an educational allowance for their children (appendix 14: Job advertisement in *QU-HS*). Most importantly, unlike most Saudi universities, *QU-HS* recruits EFL instructors directly as civil servants and not through subcontractors (Appendix 15: job contract). This is regarded as a great advantage by most of the instructors, as it gives them a sense of job stability and security; when employed by companies, they frequently have to move from one institution to another:

Honestly, I decided to join this university because I perceived a greater personal benefit by working here as opposed to any other university. The salary is much better, and also, when I knew that this was a

government job that would allow me to work in this university and not to have to move from one institute to another, as most outsourcing companies do. In addition, working here means that I receive medical benefits for myself and my family in the *MHA*, which is best in Saudi and hard to access... These benefits made my decision to join *QU-HS* much easier, as I am planning to stay here for a long time.

Aidan (NES teacher), Interview, Tuesday 12th October 2011

Most EFL instructors view the association of the university with the *MHA* as a factor that provides them with a sense of job stability, as they are dealing with a prestigious Saudi government body. This was particularly important for the non-Saudi EFL instructors, who perceived working for an institution associated with the *MHA* to be empowering, as their situation would be very different had they been working for different Saudi higher education institutions. Generally, most expatriates who work in KSA find it difficult to deal with the Saudi system (e.g., dealing with the police, renewing their immigration status or issuing a driving license) on their own, as they may experience some degree of annoyance (Sardar, 2005). However, those who work for prestigious government bodies, such as the *MHA*, are less likely to experience such difficulties. Haroon, a non-Saudi EFL instructor, explained that the status of *QU-HS* and its link to the *MHA* were among the key factors that influenced his choice to join the university:

I had many job offers from universities in Saudi, but I decided to take the offer of this university (*QU-HS*) not only because of the financial package, but also because of the prestige of the *MHA*. I knew that being part of a university associated with the *MHA* means fewer problems when dealing with bureaucracy and the system in Saudi, which can sometimes be very difficult, even to get a re-entry visa or issue a driving licence. The university liaises with different offices in medical

cities to get most of our paperwork done without us needing to visit the different government departments.

Haroon (NNES teacher), interview, Wednesday 1st December 2010

Thus, the reason why many EFL instructors seek employment at *QU-HS* could be seen to be a result of the university being a medical academic institution that is associated with *MHA*. This allows the university to set higher recruitment criteria in comparison to what is generally required from the EFL instructors in the field of Saudi higher education. The association with *MHA* in particular not only encourages many EFL instructors to seek employment in the university but also allows it to offer different forms of benefits that are much appreciated by most EFL instructors. Thus, the recruitment practices enacted by the university emphasise the academic capabilities as well as the attitudes that the EFL instructors bring to the teaching-learning environment. Such practices of teacher recruitment seem to have influence on the programme in the university, as it acts as a proxy for guaranteeing the capability of the EFL teacher to help the students to develop their competencies.

5.5 Summary

Drawing on aspects of institutional theory (i.e. policy analysis), this chapter has summarised findings in relation to the institutional influence of *QU-HS* on the EFL programme in the university. Analysing the university's policy in relation to its status as a single discipline university associated with *MHA* allows a better understanding of the way in which the university influences the EFL programme. This analysis explains how and why the university was able to establish the use of English as medium of instruction and communication. Secondly, the university was able to provide an eighteen-month EFL

programme to its students, which is much longer in duration in comparison to the programmes offered by other Saudi universities. Finally, the policies of *QU-HS* allow the university to attract highly qualified and experienced EFL instructors. Thus, this particular institution is proven to have significant influence on the quality of teaching and on student motivation in the EFL programme in *QU-HS*. It was found that as students received more English teaching by experienced teachers, they became better English speakers as they progressed through the course.

Having looked at the institutional policies and how they impact on the EFL programme in the university and consequently on the student learning experience, the next chapter looks at what students bring to the learning in the institutions.

Chapter 6: The influence of students' family backgrounds on the student learning experience

This chapter presents findings about the effect of the students' cultural capital on their learning experiences in the EFL programme in *QU-HS*. As discussed in section 3.3 of the literature review chapter, the concept of cultural capital is seen as knowledge, skills and attitudes: that is, the competence which students actively or passively acquire from their families. This chapter sheds light on how cultural capital is communicated to or acquired by the students; and how such accumulation of cultural capital, or lack of it, affects students' learning experiences in the EFL programme in *QU-HS*.

Using data from interviews, this chapter aims to answer the second research sub-question, which is *'How do the students' families' educational backgrounds influence student learning in the EFL programme?'* In section 6.1, the chapter begins by highlighting ways in which family direct involvement aids the development of students' cultural capital. In section 6.2, the impact of discussion among students' families in developing students' cultural capital is considered. Section 6.3 explains the ways in which students' families indirectly communicate their cultural capital. This is followed in section 6.4 by a discussion about how attending private education or English language tuition contributes to the development of students' cultural capital. The final section (6.5) discusses the ways in which insufficient cultural capital disadvantages students in the EFL programme in *QU-HS*.

6.1 Families' direct involvement in developing students' cultural capital

Direct family involvement is a key influence on which activities help in the transmission of cultural capital to the students and how. This particular type of transmission of cultural capital has two presuppositions. The first is that the family actually possesses cultural capital; and the second is that the family actively or passively engages in helping their children to acquire and build on the cultural capital. One measure to indicate the possession or dispossession of cultural capital in the family is the level of education among student family members, which reflects an institutionalized form of cultural capital. Having obtained educational qualifications was seen to influence the nature of activities a family and their children are exposed to, and students mentioned this impact when interviewed (cf. pages 155 and 156). Often, having a university degree indicates that the student's family members possess high levels of academic competence, which could then be of use by the students when it is transmitted to them (Lee and Bowen, 2006; Stevenson, 2002). This means that having family members who possess competence in higher education in terms of qualifications is likely to influence the experiences of the students who are exposed to such possessors.

In the case of this study, the participants who had been exposed to an institutionalized form of cultural capital belonged to educated families. As shown in Table 2, information that was generated from interview data (section 4.4) revealed that most of the students' family members were educated and had university degrees. This means that their family members were more likely to possess competence related to learning and studying in higher education as well as understanding how to deal with the demands of pursuing a degree at university, and these were then shared within the family.

From the interviews, it is evident that there is a direct influence where family members engage in discussing and transmitting their knowledge and experiences gained as a result of attending university to the students. This is demonstrated by the following quote from Aazim:

My elder sisters and brothers are university graduates and they always offer me their help whenever I ask them... they also helped me in understanding different ways of studying. ...This really helped me to cope with the demands of studying in *QU-HS* ... they also show me different ways of studying English, which is core in the preparatory programme.

Aazim (pre-med student), Interview, Tuesday 10th October 2010

This quote suggests that a form of cultural capital accumulates from the educational background of the family and how it impacts upon student learning. This form of cultural capital is reflected through the educational attainment of family members, such as university degrees amongst parents or siblings. Having institutionalised cultural capital in terms of family educational qualifications suggests the existence of cultural capital within the family. This indicates the potential amount of knowledge and experience that parents or siblings can pass on and so demonstrates the level experience in relation to learning and studying in higher education. However, it is when such institutionalized cultural capital is embodied in the possessors (i.e. family members) and passed on that its maximum benefit is realized. This suggests that students who come from families where parents or siblings have university degrees benefit more during their own studies. The data shows that having no education among family members can still motivate students to succeed academically or at least to do well enough at secondary school to study at *QU-HS*, but this may not privilege them as much in the EFL programme in the university (c.f. 6.5).

Having knowledge and experience within the family and transmitting this particular cultural capital to their children can help the students to become ambitious and keen to progress in higher education (although some might rebel or take a different path). Family members offering help to their siblings with academic activities such as their homework can be seen as a way of transmitting cultural capital. In the case of Aazim, the transmission of cultural capital helped him to handle the demands of university life in general and EFL learning in particular. The quote from Aazim also suggests that family members can invest time and make deliberate efforts to transmit their own knowledge and skills to the students. In addition, the quote shows that students can actively seek help, showing their willingness to acquire such cultural capital..

The active involvement of the family members in transmitting their cultural capital seemed here to have positive influence on the students. For example, Aalee's mother, an English language teacher in Saudi public education, regularly supported and helped her own children in their learning:

My mother is an English language teacher. She has always helped me with my study in general and with English language in particular... She also helps me in practising the English language... I feel really privileged because of the support that I get from my mother

Aalee (pre-AMS student), Interview, Saturday 16th October 2010

In order to be an English language teacher in KSA, Aalee's mother must have at least a university degree in English language, which is a form of institutionalised cultural capital. Moreover, she has embodied cultural capital, which is reflected in her knowledge and experience of learning of higher education. Aalee's mother can be argued to possess additional cultural capital, in the form of her knowledge and skills in English language, which, when transmitted to her son, has been used to advantage him in the context of EFL

learning in *QU-HS*. Thus, Aalee's mother is actively involved in his education and helps him with his studies. It appears that his mother has invested not only through the transmission of information, but also in providing time and effort (which are presuppositions for the transmission of embodied cultural capital) in order to support Aalee in gaining better academic skills. This supports Aalee in learning language skills, which are useful in helping him to deal with different learning aspects of the EFL programme.

Likewise, Idrees (see quote below) talked about his mother, who was also a teacher, and who thus possessed institutionalized cultural capital that manifested in the embodied knowledge and skills she had gained from university education. Idrees's mother was able to pass knowledge and skills onto her children, and he felt that these were of value to his own learning. Being a teacher, his mother understands the importance of developing, strengthening and facilitating her son's study skills so that he can continue to learn independently in his study at the university. Thus, she was actively involved in transmitting learning skills to her son before he joined the university, but she also showed him how to continue to apply the skills needed for learning in his higher educational studies, as is suggested in the following quote:

The one thing that really influences my learning in the university is my mother. She helped me to be an independent learner; she used to sit with me and my cousin, with whom I went to school, to study. She mainly used to help my cousin with his studies and consulted me when they were not clear about anything; the way my mother used to pretend that she didn't know and asked me to explain to my cousin developed my confidence and my self-esteem, and meant that I could initiate my learning and learn many things by myself on this English language course [in *QU-HS*]...

Idrees (pre-med student), Interview, Tuesday 27th October 2010

This quote from Idrees reflects the influence of this particular cultural capital, transmitted to him in his childhood, which continues to influence his learning experiences in the EFL programme in *QU-HS*. This highlights the collective nature of these different forms of cultural capital. Clearly, there is institutionalised cultural capital, which can be seen from his mother's qualifications, as well as embodied cultural capital (i.e. learning skills) that resulted from his mother having higher education qualifications. The collective cultural capital that was transmitted to the student through his mother's investment of time and effort has clearly made Idrees into a confident, active and independent learner who is in charge of his own learning in the university's EFL programme.

The family's direct involvement in developing students' cultural capital is seen through the use and creation of different educational resources for the students. When these educational resources are used effectively to support children's learning, they can have a positive influence on the student learning experience (De Graaf et al., 2000; Lee and Bowen, 2006; Sullivan, 2001). An example is through the use of television programmes: some parents allow their children to watch all kinds of programmes, whilst other parents sit through well-chosen programmes that are high in educational content. Parents are able to direct these resources to become useful education material for their children. Another example, in the context of KSA, is that there are a number of radio stations and TV channels that broadcast programmes in Arabic or English which are accessible to everyone. Parents who possess cultural capital and understand the use of these resources for language learning are more likely to select specific media using the English language to enhance and supplement the educational resources available to their children. These parents are able to tease out the appropriate knowledge and skills for language learning that their children could use in order to develop their English language competency. This notion

of family directed/modified educational resources is reflected in the quote below from Aalee:

My mother advised me to listen to different radio programmes in English – which I do, by the way – and sometimes I watch English drama series on TV without looking at the translation... This practice was really helpful in this language programme.

Aalee (pre-AMS student), Interview, Saturday 16th October 2010

Aalee's mother was able to advise him about ways in which he can transform this general media into an educational advantage. She advised him to watch these programmes without reading the Arabic subtitles, so that he could improve his English listening and comprehension skills. In addition, this quote shows the complexity of the way cultural capital is transmitted. In this case, there are many different forms of cultural capital at play: i.e. institutionalized cultural capital, embodied cultural capital as well as objectified cultural capital. Aalee was able to benefit from his mother's institutionalized cultural capital, which enabled her to transform the objectified cultural capital - i.e. the media (television and radio) - into academic learning resources. The media has a vast amount of unorganized knowledge and skills which could be seen as potential resources for the acquisition of cultural capital. However, the maximum realization of the usefulness of these resources happens through the knowledge and experiences that a family possesses, and this can be strengthened by their educational background. This suggests the acquisition of cultural capital from the use of appropriate media coupled with the passion of the family. Parental and family knowledge about using these resources effectively would be an advantage to their children during the English language programme. Aalee

talked about how he converted this collective cultural capital into learning practices that benefited him in the EFL programme:

Listening is a skill that doesn't have any physical material that can be memorised and it depends on practising listening in English. My mother's advice about utilizing the English media is really helpful in dealing with modules like 'Communication Skills'.

Aalee (pre-AMS student), Interview, Saturday 16th October 2010

Saudi students who had less appropriate English learning in school often struggle with listening and speaking activities during EFL learning, as they are not experienced in the practical application of spoken English (Al-Jarf, 2006, 2006; Al-Roomy, 2013; Alamri, 2008; Rajab, 2013). Also, there is less focus on speaking and listening in their pre-university education in Saudi public schools (Al-Sughaer, 2009; Alsaif and Milton, 2012; Rabab'ah, 2005). Students like Aalee, who have a family member who possesses different forms of cultural capital and can help them to make effective use of the artefacts (additional resources) available in the household, find themselves more at ease when it comes listening and speaking in the EFL programme in *QU-HS*. This illustrates ways in which different forms of cultural capital advantage students in the learning context of this Saudi university.

6.2 The influence of discussion among family members in developing students' cultural capital

The direct involvement by family in the transmission of cultural capital sets the scene for the importance of discussion among family members in the argument about cultural capital. There may be intellectual talk and effective

communication between the family members and the student (Desforages et al., 2003; Sacker et al., 2002; Sui-Chu and Willms, 1996). The presupposition in such intellectual talk is that the possessors of cultural capital are trying to transmit it to the students or that the students are trying to acquire it. Here the cultural capital concentrates on the style and skills required for effective communication, and that also help in socialisation. In such family discussions, different forms of cultural capital intersect. There is a possible presence of institutionalised cultural capital as well as embodied cultural capital. Objectified cultural capital can also be present when artefacts are used to steer such discussion. Examples include a parent or sibling sitting and helping a child learn to read, asking questions and talking about the content of a book rather than passively being read to. Another example is discussions that happen during family mealtimes, which reflect the different forms of family cultural capital. The teaching of how to talk politely, to speak and listen, to debate, and to share information is acquired by transmission and discipline. Through these kinds of family discussion and inter-communication, different knowledge and skills are transmitted to the children, who then use these acquired skills as students (Abercrombie, 2000; Sullivan, 2001). The data analysis suggests the importance of such academic discussions between students and their family members as a way of constructing and transmitting cultural capital. During the interviews, most of the students talked about such communication and emphasised its influence on their learning experiences in pre-university education as well as in the EFL programme in the university. While Bukur talked about the influence of the discussion with his parents in reassuring him during his studies, Aadil talked about how discussions with his parents helped him in learning strategic study skills and relaxation techniques, i.e. addressing and learning about controlling exam anxiety in order to perform better in exams:

In discussions related to my worries about exams and study in general with my parents, I always get a feeling of support. They always give me tips about how to organize my study and how to deal with exam questions... Whenever I share my concerns about not being able to cope with my studies (EFL programme), they assure me that they are always going to be there for me and help me to get through. My father always says that I should try my best... and that Allah surely rewards those who work hard...

Bukur (pre-AMS student), Interview, Tuesday 9th November 2010

Since my schooldays, they [parents] have sat with me and helped me with my study... Sometimes it was through discussion about what I did or studied in the school and other times by working with me on assignments or helping me with tasks to do with my education... Both my father and mother have had a significant influence on me and the way I study in the university. For example, my father taught me how to control exam anxiety by not starting the exam immediately, and that I should spend some time relaxing before answering the questions; and that has worked for me since I was little. My mother taught me how to control exam anxiety spiritually, and that I should say prayers before and after exams ... These prayers help me to relax...

Aadil (pre-AMS student), Interview, Wednesday 13th October 2010

In addition, these quotes highlight an interesting issue that students in the context of KSA felt was important (Doumato, 2003; Nevo, 1998; Starrett, 1998; Yamani, 2009). This was the spiritual and religious [Islam] aspect of cultural capital. Throughout the discussion about his parents, Aadil made references to religious practices as a way of comfort and boosting confidence. The quotes show that the students' parents refer them to 'what they believe' as an ultimate

source of power and knowledge for them, namely their God, Allah. The reference illustrates a belief that helps students with their studies and eases their exam worries. The role of Islamic religious beliefs as part of the family educational influence on Saudi students was seen throughout the analysis of all the data. Thus, part of the cultural capital that families transmit to the students through family discussions is the recognition of what Islam says about the nature of knowledge and the knower. The families seem to recognize the two big divisions of knowledge (i.e. the metaphysical and physical) and encourage their children to seek balance through acquiring knowledge. Thus, there was emphasis on learning the 'physical' techniques of the exams as well as the spiritual ones.

While Bukur and Aadil referred to the positive impact of discussion with their family members on their motivation and exam anxiety, Aalee talked particularly about how such discussion with his father influenced his own English language speaking skills:

My father is a bright man; he works in a company where he uses the English language in his daily work... sometimes he speaks to me in English and encourages me to respond in English as well. This gives me opportunity to practise speaking skills as well as confidence to initiate a discussion in English...

Aalee (pre-AMS student), Interview, Saturday 16th October 2010

Here again there is a developed form of cultural capital transmission. The father possesses embodied cultural capital, i.e. knowledge of the English language, and he devotes time and effort to communicate it to his son. In addition, the quote suggests that the student has a personal and effective resource close to him, as well as an excellent role model who encourages him to practice spoken English.

6.3 The family's unconscious involvement in developing students' cultural capital

Unlike the direct transmission of cultural capital that has been discussed so far, this section discusses the unconscious transmission of cultural capital from the possessors' sides. In this process, the possessors (i.e. family members) have the cultural capital, which they do not transmit directly. Instead, they project practices that reflect their possession of institutionalized, embodied and objectified forms of cultural capital without being consciously involved in the transmission process. A good example is filling a home with books about different languages and reflecting the cultures of the world, inviting highly educated friends or bringing different food into the home (Lareau and Weininger, 2003; Munk and Krarup, 2011). Through such exposure to different cultural capital, students are able to absorb the knowledge and skills contained in the materials around them. It is the active ability of the students to profit from these transmissions of cultural capital that are unconsciously exercised by family members. Shiyth, for example, talked about how he developed study skills and strategic learning for the preparatory programme in *QU-HS* by simply watching and being influenced by his sibling's learning habits:

He [his brother] used to study all the time. He used to revise all his daily lessons as soon as he came back from university, and then he prepared for his next day's lessons... I learnt this way of studying by observing him... Now for me, the class lessons look more like revision, as I have already prepared for them... It also allows me to supplement the knowledge gap that I had. The result of this method was amazing...

Shiyth (pre-AMS student), Interview, Thursday 6th November 2010

This quote illustrates that although Shiyth's brother was not conscious of the active process of transmission of his knowledge and skills to his younger

brother, Shiyth is aware of how he received the transmission of a way of studying and working, from which he now benefits. These learning norms and practices that Shiyth picked up from his family affected his learning experiences in the EFL programme. The quote suggests that Shiyth uses this cultural capital in strategizing his learning style, such as adopting better time management and revising for his lessons, which helps to support his own learning. This has enabled him to better deal with the demands and intensity of the EFL programme in a manner that worked for him.

The unconscious effect of the family cultural capital can also be seen in terms of the role models that are projected to the students from within the family, such as Aalee's father and Shiyth's brother. Academic achievement among family members, which reflects an institutionalised form of cultural capital, was mentioned as a source of pride, but also in terms of how it supports students' learning and their motivation to succeed in higher education (Heymann and Earle, 2000; Hill and Taylor, 2004). There is obviously a link between possession of university qualifications and achievements upon qualification among family members that is influential in student learning experiences. The students stated that they are inspired to attain the level of expectation set by families and to go further. This type of cultural capital can be summarised as being related to educational attainment, success, competition, role models, employability and ambition. The educational competence that family members possess is projected in their practices and the way they talk or analyse different things, and this in turn impacts on the children. For example, Wisam believed that his father's achievement as a dentist had provided him with many lessons on success, wanting to learn, determination and hard work.

My father has a PhD in dentistry; this has not only influenced my decision to seek admission to *QU-HS* but also affects the way I study...
I was with him when he was doing his PhD in the US and I learned a

lot from the way he used to study, the way he analyses things... most importantly I learned determination from his behaviours... I learned from him that the first step to become a doctor is to master the command of the language [English] used in medicine...

Wisam (pre-med student), Interview, Thursday 14th October 2010

Following his father's footsteps, Wisam had worked hard to gain better grades in high school, which allowed him to enrol in *QU-HS* to study medicine as well as to improve his English language skills. The institutional and the embodied cultural capital that Wisam's father accumulated made him into a great role model for Wisam. Likewise, Yasser illustrated that the existence of the institutionalised form of cultural capital and its embodiment in his family members had influenced his decision to choose medicine as an undergraduate course:

I always wanted to be doctor because of my father, who is a neurosurgeon. Also, two of my elder sisters are studying medicine. In fact, all my paternal uncles are doctors except for one, who is an engineer... being a member of such a family motivated me not only to go to university, but also to study medicine.

Yasser (pre-med student), Interview, Saturday 19th November 2011

In the same way, Shiyth highlighted that institutionalised cultural capital, which can be seen in the level of education among his siblings, motivated him to study hard. It also helped him in setting the benchmark for the family's expectations.

My brother [1st brother] is an accountant, [2nd brother] is an anaesthesia specialist, [3rd brother] is a pharmacist, my sister graduated in GIS (Geographic Information System) and [4th brother] is an MIS specialist. I am the youngest. I used to see them studying all the

time... Being part of my family left me with no choice but to study hard and finish university...

Shiyth (pre-AMS student), Interview, Thursday 6th November 2010

What is significant about the above quotes from Wisam, Yasser and Shiyth is that having institutionalised cultural capital, which is reflected in higher education qualifications among family members, inspires students to want to succeed in higher education and to improve their learning and study skills (of which learning English is seen as a key part) to realize their full potential. It is a stimulus that encourages these students to want to succeed academically. Students find different ways and gather inspiration to become hardworking, resourceful and keen to maintain the academic achievement of the family. Part of the process of becoming resourceful is the attempt to learn from the role models within the family.

Of course there is an exception to every rule. There are students on the course in *QU-HS* who have no financial or educational advantage from their families, but have still managed to gain the grades needed to study at *QU-HS*, such as Aamir and Ameen (cf. 6.5). However, whilst some of these students often feel disadvantaged, others do extremely well without the investment of any cultural capital, as their families simply do not have any to transmit to them. What could explain such cases is that the underprivileged socioeconomic conditions of such families may have resulted in students' determination to succeed or the self-discipline to break out of poverty and improve their social class (c.f. 6.5). Also, the family could have transmitted cultural capital gained from non-academic qualifications, as hard-working parents can still motivate and influence their children to gain educational qualifications that they did not have the opportunity to obtain.

Unconscious family involvement can also be observed in term of objectified cultural capital. This can be seen in terms of materials and resources that the family possesses, and how these are used or influence learning. Educated parents in KSA tend to own collections of books and buy periodic journals in English. In such cases, there is an intersection of the three forms of cultural capital: the objectified, the embodied and the institutionalised forms. Educated family members, based on their institutionalised cultural capital of being a 'Dr.' or an 'engineer', exhibit behaviours that reflect this particular cultural capital. Part of that is the ownership of certain periodicals or books. Thus, it can be argued that objectified cultural capital can be a reflection of institutionalised cultural capital. These two forms together may indicate the existence of embodied cultural capital in the person who has institutionalised and objectified cultural capital. Having such accumulated cultural capital in the family privileges students, as they can access the different artefacts and observe their parents' habits of using these artefacts. The availability of such resources at home may trigger the students' inquisitiveness to read: children often learn by imitation, usually from their family members, and even young babies will pick up books and attempt to read by copying others whom they see reading.

Such forms of reading materials support students particularly with gaining information, skills and knowledge in English, and as such, a form of cultural capital. Yasser shared the influence of this form of cultural capital on his own learning:

My parents always buy lots of English novels, stories... My mother likes to read National Geographic... We [he and his family] have the habit of reading a lot at home... I find it interesting that we [he and his classmates] can talk about different English books that we have at home and exchange them among ourselves... This [habit of reading]

makes me feel at ease when I am asked by the teacher to perform any reading tasks that require analytical or critical [skills].

Yasser (pre-med student), Interview, Saturday 19th November 2011

The availability of resources such as English books and journals not only help students to improve their reading skills generally, but also develop their critical thinking skills in/through the medium of English, thus enhancing their English language competency. Barton and Hamilton (1998), Koda (2013), Naqvi et al. (2012) and Plakans (2010) believe that reading also helps to develop people's learning ability in terms of, for example, imagination, creativity, joined-up thinking, critical thinking and associating the written word with literal meaning. In EFL learning in the KSA context, reading is regarded as an important skill that helps students to learn EFL, as it involves many other micro exercises that encourage critical thinking (Abu-Rizaizah, 2010; Al-Nujaidi, 2003; Alsamadani, 2009; Salebi, 2007). The simple fact that these resources and materials are available at home allows the students the opportunity to utilize them as a source of culture capital. However, this relies on the parents actively transmitting to the child the importance of readings or the child deciding to take up and enjoy reading and chose to make it part of his/her learning. Thus, books are a form of cultural capital and their maximum benefits can be realised through reading them. When students are taught in the family how to read, use books and critically analyse their content, the maximum benefit of such cultural capital can be achieved.

What is interesting in this discussion about the unconscious transmission of the family cultural capital is that the level of education among the family members plays a role in creating the opportunity for the students to be exposed to these different forms of cultural capital. Furthermore, but particularly in the case of the use of artefacts, it can be argued that the family members transmit the

cultural capital to the students through the mediation or medium of the materials and resources.

6.4 The influence of private education/private English language tuition in developing students' cultural capital

The provision of private education or tutoring can be seen as a way through which cultural capital is transmitted. The transmission of such cultural capital goes through several processes in the context of to the provision of private education or tuition. It starts from the family believing in the importance of giving their children the best form of education or strengthening state education through tuition. Wealth also plays a key part, although even marginalised and poorer families might invest all their financial capital into their children's education. The combination of economic capital and cultural capital (educational qualifications) influences the family's decision about transmitting their cultural capital to their children. One way is to send their children to the private schooling system, which requires fees (all state-provided forms of education are free in KSA), or to supplement state education with private tuition.

The institutionalized cultural capital which is presented through the level of educational qualifications that the family possesses can be seen as the main driver for the decision about the educational options for their child, and for the promotion of this cultural capital. In a way, it is the conversion of external wealth into "an integral part of the person", as money is being used to pay for their studies and thus for the acquisition of knowledge, learning skills and attitudes (Bourdieu, 2008, p. 283). There is a direct link between the family's level of education and economic resources. Institutionalised cultural capital

could also refer to a particular income in the job market. For example, having a PhD, being a doctor or an Engineer suggests a particular level of wealth, as such institutionalised qualifications carry financial weight in the job market (Lareau and Weininger, 2003; Musoba and Baez, 2009). Such wealth generated from the institutionalised form of cultural capital can be converted into cultural capital. It is the embodied cultural capital that is gained through the institutionalised qualifications that enables parents or carers to make the decision about converting the family wealth into cultural capital (i.e. paying for private education or private EFL tuitions) that can benefit the students. Thus, students from such backgrounds have a clear advantage, and this has a positive influence on their educational success (Jæger, 2009; Sullivan, 2001) or in developing individual habits and norms (Jæger, 2011), since money can be used to buy the best education for a child. Again, this has to be what the students want: they must want to succeed academically and be keen to absorb the cultural capital transmission to help them progress and acquire the skills for academic brilliance.

The data gathered for his research highlights family provision of private education and private English language tuition as a contributory factor in developing students' cultural capital. The ability to afford private education rather than state schooling places learners at an advantage, as they benefit from the English-medium environment. They have better access to a large number of classes in English, and greater exposure to the skills and knowledge of the English language (Al-Hazmi, 2005; Al-Soheem, 2009; Almokhtsar, 2012). Privately schooled students were able to acquire competences that gave them an edge over other students, particularly in EFL learning. The following quote from Aalee, for example, explains the significance of private schooling in developing his learning experiences:

I am glad that my family were able to afford my private education; the teachers in my school worked hard with sincerity to make us understand and achieve the best grades... They tried to make us understand how to deal with the questions in exams and how to think; that kind of education made me who I am today;... it is hard to accept anything less than A+ even if that means killing myself...

Aalee (pre-AMS student), Interview, Saturday 16th October 2010

In KSA, private schools are perceived to be better than state schools (Al-Hazmi, 2005, 2003; Al-Mesnid, 2009; Al-Soheem, 2009; Al-Sughaer, 2009; Alsaif, 2011; Sheshsha, 1982; Zaid, 1993). In a private school, students study for longer hours, are taught a range of academic skills, have access to extra-curricular activities and get excellent results. They also report that they have a better overall learning experience than students in the state schools. This is because of many factors. Teachers in these schools are expected to work extra hard in helping students to realise their potential through a quality education. The skills, knowledge and results (grades) are the kind of accumulative cultural capital that most Saudi universities value. Thus, many families insist on only private education for their children, which helps them to increase their cultural capital and be at an advantage when compared to those with state education. In relation to improving English language competence, the outcome of private education can be demonstrated in the following comment by Bukur:

I was in private education... The school day finished at 4:00 pm. There was an after-school English language club which aimed for the students to socialize and do their homework individually or in groups. The club was supervised by the best teachers in the school. They were not there to do the homework for us, but they were there to explain things to us as many times as we needed...; if you made mistakes, they wouldn't

correct you, but they would explain to you again and again until you got it right by yourself.

Bukur (pre-AMS student), Interview, Tuesday 9th November 2010

This example of private education allowed Bukur the opportunity to be an independent learner. Teachers helped him to learn how to solve problems by himself. He was also encouraged to develop the confidence to discuss ideas with others in English. This quote also shows how private education provided him with the opportunity to improve his English language competency through the support he received in the after-school English language club. This example shows why wealthy and educated families send their children to such private schools. They want to make the best decision about how to develop their children's cultural capital.

In addition, attending private school teaches students to use effective ways of studying and revising for their lessons and examinations. *Aazim* refers to the influence of his embodied cultural capital, gained from his private education, on his learning experiences in the EFL programme. This competence has familiarized him with the skills and knowledge that were valued by the teachers in the EFL programme:

When we were in secondary school, a [English language] teacher told us the 'Before & After' rule ... He said, 'Try to read the lesson before you come into class. It doesn't matter if you don't understand everything in the lesson. Then attend the class for that lesson. After the class, re-read the lesson again: see how much you have understood from it'. This approach is good because it made me aware of how much of the knowledge I have understood. I found it very useful even for studying 'Communication' [one of the EFL modules]...

Aazim (pre-med student), Interview, Tuesday 10th October 2010

Another way to enhance EFL learning was through the use of tuition. The family's provision of private English language tuition extends the development of students' embodied cultural capital. This is seen as a way in which a family converts its fiscal wealth into cultural capital. The data collected shows that the provision of private tuition helps students in the EFL programme. This extra English language support was provided to the students either in the evenings (after school) or during school holidays. Aazim and Bilal narrated their experiences in local private English language institutes in the following quotes.

I studied English in XXX Institute, and I thought it was far better than the high school ...The teachers were native English speakers and spoke English during the lessons, not Arabic. Sometimes, they would drop Arabic words here and there to activate the classroom, but they made us speak in English all the time... When I came here [QU-HS], I saw similarities in the way English is [taught] here with the way it was taught in XXX institute.

Aazim (pre-med student), Interview, Tuesday 10th October 2010

Last summer, I went to a private English language institute in the evenings for two hours. Honestly speaking, I benefited from the institute and improved my listening skills; I feel that I am much more able to understand conversations in English than many of my classmates.

Bilal (pre-AMS student), Interview, Thursday 16th October 2010

Both these students benefitted from having private tuition where they were provided with opportunities to improve their English language skills. This then prepared them to deal with the demands of the EFL programme. Moreover, it

gave them an advantage over their classmates who did not have sufficient practical spoken skills in using English for communicative purposes.

Similarly, Yasser reported his experiences of attending an international English language institute to which his father sent him. He described his experience in an English-speaking country as a positive one in terms of developing his English language proficiency and also in influencing his personal development. He believed that it had helped him to improve his English language proficiency and made him an independent and confident learner.

My father sent me to Cambridge to study English, and that was a good experience for me... I was excellent at English, though, and the reason I was sent abroad was that my father wanted to see how I could handle the responsibilities on my own... and to develop the ability to communicate with people from different cultures.

Yasser (pre-med student), Interview, Saturday 19th November 2011

Aadil, who belonged to a wealthy educated family, was able to afford a private English language tutor at home. The tutor's role was to help him improve his English language knowledge and skills. During these lessons, the tutor used additional EFL learning materials to the ones used in the school. These extra lessons were tailored to Aadil's personal needs and provided him with an opportunity to practice different English language skills with his tutor on a one-to-one basis. He received this high-quality and personalised tuition three times a week for twelve years. Thus, his English language skills improved dramatically because he could focus on improving every weak point and improve his confidence in English.

My father hired a private tutor to come to my home and teach me English three times a week for more than twelve years. Sometimes, the teacher used to cover what I had studied at school, but most of the time

he used to teach me an additional curriculum that my father discussed with him.

Aadil (pre-AMS student), Interview, Wednesday 13th October 2010

The support that Aadil received from the private tutor seems to have helped him to increase his competence and given him an advantage over his peers in the EFL programme. This was shown in Aadil's positive attitude towards some of the teaching practices (i.e., pair and group work) in the EFL programme, as demonstrated in the quote below:

I personally like to participate in group work or with others. I like to discuss and listen to the others' ideas. I have been learning English in this way most of my life with my private tutor... and I have found that I become creative when I try to find the answers with others. ... I like to be with other people and interact with them to learn about different ways of doing things.

Aadil (pre-AMS student), Interview, Wednesday 13th October 2010

Aadil was at ease with the teaching practices in the university's EFL programme, as they complemented the teaching styles that he had experienced through private tuition. Thus, he participated in these activities fully and with confidence. The way his private tutor allowed him the opportunity to discuss and debate different topics helped him to confidently address each different teaching style in the EFL programme. This example shows the ways in which progressive teaching pedagogies privilege advantaged students (c.f. Chapter 7 for more discussion about teaching approaches). Through participative teaching and learning activities that are encouraged by such progressive teaching pedagogies, the learning practices of privileged students are supported. This means marginalising students who are less able to participate in such active pedagogies (Crossouard, 2011; Pryor and Crossouard, 2008).

To sum up, one could conclude that there are several different ways in which families attempted to transmit their cultural capital to their children, the students. They not only provided support for the students' development in the EFL programme, but also helped them to cope with the demands of studying at university. What was found to be an important and overarching factor in developing students' cultural capital was the intersection between the different forms of cultural capital, as well as the willingness of the students to proactively participate in processes that enabled them to expand their cultural capital. The transmission of cultural capital is a complex process and involves time, effort, attitude, and at times wealth. The same factors also help to develop students' competence, which would benefit them in learning and studying in the EFL programme.

6.5 The influence of insufficient presence of cultural capital on students' learning experiences

Culture capital is defined as a competence related to learning in higher education that students learn or gain from the different forms of capital that their families might have. Such cultural capital can give students an academic advantage when learning in the EFL programme. It has been shown that there are certain presuppositions for the transmission of cultural capital from family members to the students. These are the existence of the cultural capital, the possessor and the receiver. When the family members do not have sufficient cultural capital that is related to learning in higher education, they may not be able to help the students with their academic demands in the university. Having a university degree or possessing certain materials and resources which accompany wealth can be seen as an indicator for the level of cultural capital in the family. However, in this case study, it was found that some students'

parents are classed as being illiterate, and yet their children are attending a prestigious university. So the lack of cultural capital may still encourage and enable students to access higher education. Sometimes, dire socioeconomic conditions may act a motivating factor, pushing students to seek ways to improve their families' socioeconomic conditions; one such way is by accessing higher education. However, the question is: to what extent does such cultural capital influence students' learning in university education? What was found in this research was that students who did not have cultural capital in its various forms, e.g. having educated family members, owning artefacts, attending private schools and/or receiving tuition, were often disadvantaged when compared to students who had the various forms of accumulative cultural capital. There are also examples in the world of students having every advantage totally failing academically and of famous entrepreneurs who have succeeded in gaining massive wealth without any formal education.

The discussion in this section starts by considering what dispossession of cultural capital means and how it might influence students' learning experiences in the EFL programme in *QU-HS*. The data collected shows that some of the participants in this study lacking cultural capital felt negatively affected in the EFL programme. This lack of cultural capital was associated with the level of formal education in the family and the family economic situation. There was a clear link between the family's lack of knowledge, skill and attitude gained from studying in higher education or learning English language on one hand and the kind of learning support the family could offer on the other hand. Such cultural capital could not be transmitted as it did not exist. However, other competences did exist, such as determination, skills and prowess gained in state schools, from non-academic family, from religious instruction and from being resourceful, since these students still managed to get the grades needed to attend university. The main drawback was in university, as the lack of such

embodied cultural capital (i.e. competence in relation to studying in higher education and the EFL programme) disadvantaged these students in terms of their learning and study skills within the EFL programme, as suggested by the data in the case of Aamir and Ameen (discussed below).

The lack of institutionalised cultural capital (i.e. higher education attainment), which can be indicative of possessing a particular level of competence among family members and a lack of access to objectified cultural capital (i.e. educational resources in the family) contributed to placing students at a disadvantage in the context of the EFL programme in the higher education. For example, Aamir and Ameen, who came from families with lower educational attainment, such as primary school level, struggled to cope with the linguistic and study demands of the EFL programme:

I am from a family that is very new to education; most of my family members - even in the extended sense - are not educated... My father doesn't know how to read or write and my mother has only primary education... I am the eldest among my siblings and the first one to attend university... I don't have parents who are doctors or who have been to university to advise me about how to study...

Aamir (pre-AMS student), Interview, Saturday 16th October 2010

Aamir was the first and the only child in his entire extended family who had managed to finish high school (equivalent to the UK A-level) and go to university. This suggests the lack of valued institutionalized cultural capital in terms of certain educational attainment in his family. He also lacked support from family to help him develop his learning at university level. He had to find another place to obtain such support. Since family background plays an important part in students' accumulation of cultural capital, such a disadvantage would be noticeable. His family level of education had little to

offer in relation to knowledge and experiences of studying in higher education or EFL learning.

Some families can make up for this lack of cultural capital by 'buying' it, such as through tuition, sending their children to private school or hiring private EFL tutors. However, this was not possible for Aamir because of his family's financial constraints, and also because of the lack of education in the family which could show them the benefit for their son of attending such activities:

I did all my education in government schools; I wasn't able financially to afford private education. In addition, my parents are not educated enough to advise me on schooling options... and our financial circumstances did not allow to me attend private English language tuition.

Aamir (pre-AMS student), Interview, Saturday 16th October 2010

Having educational role models in the family is an aspect of cultural capital, as the educational achievements of people they respect and love influence children's aspirations (Heymann and Earle, 2000; Hill and Taylor, 2004). In the absence of such high educational achievers, children tend to be inspired by other role models in the family. This is particularly true in the case of Ameen, who came from a family that only had elementary education (equal to GCSE level in the UK). His father finished elementary school and joined the army as a low-ranking soldier, while his mother had never been formally educated. The educational achievement of his father, which influenced his career and ranking in the army, appears to be the only aspiration that was available for Ameen. He saw his father's attainment as a great achievement:

My father is a soldier [with elementary education]; during most of my education, I wanted to join the army and be a soldier just like him, and that is why I wasn't too keen on learning English or developing my

study skills... I must say that it is difficult for me to cope with the level of the English language programme.

Ameen (pre-AMS student), Interview, Thursday 14th October 2011

Ameen's father was the perfect role model who influenced the way Ameen thought about his education and the development of his skills. He obviously wanted to follow his father's footsteps in wanting to be a soldier. In the context of KSA, being a soldier of low rank does not require a high level of education or English language competency. Thus, this early aspiration associated with his role model had influenced Ameen's academic ability, as it did not prepare him for pursuing a health science university degree where English is regarded as very important. Ameen's family did not encourage him to study in a private school or put extra effort into learning English, as it simply was not needed to be a soldier. Thus, when joining *QU-HS*, Ameen found it difficult to cope with the demands of the EFL programme, as he was not prepared for it. He was not used to having put in the hard work in terms of studying, and he had never before had the encouragement from his family to do so, as it had not been necessary:

Unlike many of my classmates, I was not used to studying unless there was an exam or I was asked by teachers specifically to do so... As I said before, my family never pushed me to study and revise. They never followed up on my progress... In (public) school, I used not to study on a daily basis, and that's why it was too difficult for me when I joined this university, and I still face problems in the (English) language programme.

Ameen (pre-AMS student), Interview, Thursday 14th October 2011

This lack of competence in relation to the study requirements in the university, and the EFL programme in particular, placed Ameen at a huge disadvantage.

When comparing himself with his classmates, Ameen appeared to realize the difference between the way they were prepared for learning in the university requirements. He understandably acknowledged these shortcomings, arising both from his family's lack of formal education and from the limitations associated with public schools in KSA as contributing factors that influence his current learning experience.

The lack of competence which could have stemmed from the family's lack of cultural capital in relation to higher education attainment significantly influences these students' practices in the EFL classes. Ameen mentioned the problems he faced in the EFL programme in the university, and he specifically highlights the lack of knowledge and skills and how it affects his participation in class:

I sit in the far corner of the classroom and usually avoid teachers when they ask questions. If the teacher ask a question to someone sitting beside me, I start praying that he won't ask me.

Ameen (pre-AMS student), Interview, Thursday 14th October 2011

This suggests that the lack of knowledge and skills causes students to lose confidence and prevents them from participating in classroom activities, minimizing their interaction in the classroom. They become very dependent on teachers and they do not even believe that they can learn from their peers:

I didn't like group work. I wanted the teacher to explain everything; I don't know how to study English by myself; and I didn't trust that my classmates in the group were able to give me the right answers.

Aamir (pre-AMS student), Interview, Saturday 16th October 2010

The lack of cultural capital among students' families in relation to studying and learning English in higher education influences students' learning experiences, and also affects their self-esteem and confidence. As the data suggests, such a lack of knowledge, skills and attitudes appear to disadvantage these students in the EFL programme in *QU-HS*. It also negatively influences their behaviour in the classroom and the way they interact with their peers and teachers. More importantly, the insufficient presence of cultural capital reiterates the impact of teaching approaches on students' learning. In relation to EFL teaching and learning, the disadvantaged students appear to appeal against the progressive teaching approaches used in the EFL programme, as these approaches increase the marginalisation and the disadvantage they feel, as they cannot confidently participate in such pedagogies (c.f. Chapter 7).

6.6 Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the importance of cultural capital gained from the family in understanding students' learning experiences in the EFL programme. It has highlighted the origin of cultural capital as well as the different ways in which this cultural capital is transmitted. Specifically, direct and unconscious transmissions of cultural capital were discussed, as well as the presuppositions of the process of the transmission.

It was found that families are a key element to understanding how students learn and develop study skills and competence. The family's educational attainment, their wealth and the resources and materials they provide for their children influence the accumulation and the transmission of cultural capital. Cultural capital can be bought or enhanced in the form of private education and English language tuition. Other ways of developing cultural capital are through

the use of media, books, religion, attitudes and behaviour and appropriate role models. The possession of cultural capital positively influences the students' learning experiences in terms of utilizing different learning skills and resources.

The chapter concluded by highlighting the disadvantage of a lack of cultural capital in relation to student learning in higher education. It demonstrated how a lack of cultural capital negatively impacts on students' learning experiences by limiting their participation, confidence and their interactions with their peers and teachers in the class, influencing the ways they learn (i.e. dependency on teachers) and causing a loss of confidence and self-esteem. These students would have to be supported by the university to address these weaknesses and shortfalls. Cultural capital is not as straightforward as it appears and many different and varied forms of capital affect and influence the cultural capital that students gain from their family alone.

Having looked at what the students bring into the institution from their families' background (cultural capital), the next chapter discusses how this translates into classroom practices. Specifically, it focuses on findings from the analysis of the interaction between students and teachers, and the various teaching approaches used in the EFL programme in *QU-HS*.

Chapter 7: Teaching approaches and their influence on the student learning experience in the EFL programme

This chapter presents findings about the impact of teaching approaches used by teachers in the EFL programme on the student learning experience in the context of *QU-HS*. Using data gathered from interviews and documents, complemented with observations, this chapter aims to answer the third research sub-question, which is '*How do teaching approaches affect the student learning experience in the EFL programme?*' In order to understand the influence of teaching approaches on students' learning experiences in the EFL programme in *QU-HS*, the chapter starts by outlining the teaching approaches suggested and used by teachers in the programme (Section 7.1). The classification of these teaching approaches is based on the discussion in section 3.1 of the literature review, where I classified these teaching approaches into CLT and GTM. Section 7.2 discusses the teachers' roles and their views about students. It also captures the student response to the teachers' roles and how they are viewed by students. Section 7.3 discusses the different teaching practices used by EFL teachers in the programme and the students' reactions to them. Assessment in the programme, the way it impacts on students' learning experiences and students' responses to it are discussed in section 7.4. The chapter concludes by outlining how the different teaching approaches used in the EFL programme influence the students' learning experiences in the context of *QU-HS*.

7.1 The teaching approaches used in the EFL programme in *QU-HS*

In general, the teaching approaches used by the teachers in the EFL programme in KSA can be categorized into two wider traditions (Al-Hazmi, 2005; Al-Jarf, 2008a; Elyas and Picard, 2010; Rajab, 2013). These are Communicative Language

Teaching (CLT) and the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), as discussed in Chapter 3, sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.3. CLT approaches are informed by constructivist views of teaching and learning, while GTM approaches are driven by behavioural views of teaching and learning. Teachers either use one approach in its pure form or introduce aspects of other teaching approaches into how they teach. The adoption of either CLT or GTM is explained by the differing views that teachers hold regarding their own roles and their students, experiences from their own training and the teaching practice methods employed, and what forms of assessment they consider to be the most appropriate.

The teaching approaches used in the EFL programme in *QU-HS* have a significant influence on the student learning experience. Although the analysis of these programme documents suggest that teaching focusing on a communicative nature is generally advocated (appendices 2, 3 and 4), data from the interviews and classroom observations suggests otherwise. Data showed that there are two clear teaching approaches used by the teachers in *QU-HS*. The two approaches are summarized in this quote from Aidan:

There is a noticeable divide among teaching philosophies in terms of the English language department; one fashion believes in the philosophy of teaching that emphasizes teaching and memorizing everything... There is another fashion, which believes that teaching content and abstract grammatical rules isn't as important as teaching learning skills.

Aidan (NES teacher), *Interview, Tuesday 12th October 2011*

7.2 Teachers' roles and views about their teaching

The teaching approaches that EFL teachers adopt and use in their everyday teaching influence their views about their roles and the way they regard their students (Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi, 2012; Al-Jarf, 2008b; Alkhazim, 2003; Ansari, 2012; Prosser, 1999; Prosser et al., 1994; Rabab'ah, 2005). The data collected suggests that the teachers who employ the CLT approach to EFL teaching view their role as being that of facilitators who want to help the students to learn actively by using different communication techniques, rather than disseminators of information on the English language. Student-teacher and student-student interactions are encouraged by creating an atmosphere that fosters active and participative learning, as illustrated in the quote below.

My teaching depends on the interaction between everybody in the classroom and that includes me. I always encourage the students to explain to each other and ask each other for clarifications before they come to ask me. Even when they ask me, I try to explain to them the logic of the answers and let them figure out the answers by themselves... I have always viewed such classroom discussions as the essence of learning, rather than me standing in the middle of the classroom disseminating information.

Saeed (NNES teacher), interview, Monday 25th October 2010

This teacher uses an engagement technique with the students as part of the learning process where students can learn by themselves, from each other and from the teacher. Teachers who use CLT in their teaching tend to view the students as independent and active learners who should learn through their interaction with each other. Such a view about students is communicated in the quote below:

I encourage them to learn from each other; I want him [the student] to be an active and independent learner who is able to learn by himself or by asking his colleagues, and to create his own learning that addresses his linguistic needs. Not all the students are the same; their needs are different, and therefore, I assume each one of them knows their knowledge gap and what particular linguistic skills they need to work on.

Saeed (NNES teacher), *interview, Monday 25th October 2010*

A facilitator teacher views his or her students as those who have knowledge and skill and are able to contribute to the lesson content in order to construct new knowledge rather than being passive participants within the learning process. This teacher was aware of the individual students' needs and that they all have different learning demands. The use of various teaching techniques, such as student-centred discussions and encouraging mutual learning, will help to address these differing needs. In this teaching methodology, the teacher negotiates with the students how knowledge is produced and learned. The teacher will still make use of traditional styles and use textbooks, but the main learning mode is driven by the students.

Teachers who adopt GTM in their teaching, on the other hand, see their roles as knowledge transmitters who control most of the learning aspects in the classroom. They dictate what and how students learn through tightly structured content and a rigid syllabus and by using textbooks:

I help the students by the quality of knowledge that I transmit to them, transmission... Not teach them; I just pass the message to them... The quality of knowledge, the quality of what I teach them, and the method, the way I do it, are the things that make teaching extremely different and interesting so that I can draw on their potential by... engaging

them cognitively and by picking the most fascinating and interesting topics for them from the textbook..."

Adam (NES teacher), Interview, Sunday 17th October 2010

The activities described above are predominantly teacher-led and the student's voice is not seen to be emphasised. This teacher focuses more on providing the stimuli for the students in terms of "*picking the most fascinating and interesting topics*" rather than negotiating with the students about what they think is most interesting to them. Such teachers perceive themselves, their own skills and their learning materials as the best source of knowledge in the classroom. Thus, their feeling is that they have to explain and provide everything (i.e., good quality knowledge and learning materials) to the students. This teaching approach, though, has elements of CLT in terms of engaging the students cognitively and selecting content that will fascinate and interest the students. However, the teacher is the "*expert*."

In this teaching approach, the students are perceived as being more like 'passive empty vessels' that are waiting to be told what are the most interesting topics for them:

What annoys me sometimes here is that some students try to show you that they know more than you and keep questioning you all the time. Thus, most of the time, I show them that no matter how much they pretend to know, they know nothing, and I am the one who is in charge in the classroom. They just need to follow me and trust that I know what is good for them... as long as they follow what I say in the lesson and revise from the textbook, they should be able to pass the exams...

Ardan (NES teacher), interview, Saturday 6th November 2010

This teacher liked to maintain control and did not want or like to encourage the students to engage through questioning in his teaching. The students were not encouraged or expected to engage in two-way dialogue with the teacher or challenge the content of textbooks. This teacher expressed annoyance that some students were trying to initiate dialogue and discussion in order to make their voices heard. The views that these teachers have about their roles in relation to the students are coloured by the idea of knowledge transmission, which views learning as a structured process that should be followed rigorously. Teachers felt that the students' questions and attempts to engage might disturb the structured process used for disseminating knowledge:

My philosophy is that I believe that textbooks or the curriculum should be dictated by the programme, and everybody should follow them; this is going to make it much easier to achieve the target of making the students learn the language. It is easier to give the students a textbook that they know how to study or refer to; I am not giving them anything that is not in their books. As long as they follow what I give them, they should be able to pass the exam and start their medical programmes...

Adam (NES teacher), Interview, Sunday 17th October 2010

The teachers interviewed were found to adopt GTM as the main style in their teaching, but also to use some elements of CLT. They focused their teaching around their own expertise, which is supported by the textbook, and limited the student voice in the teaching and learning process.

7.3 Teaching practices

The teaching practices that teachers project vary from one teacher to another. This depends on the general approach that a teacher adopts or that is

encouraged by the particular language programme. As discussed in Chapter Three, particularly in point 3.4.3, teachers' teaching practices are a reflection of the general teaching tradition(s) that they adopt. Teachers who believe in structured learning, which is widely promoted in GTM, tend to put much more emphasis on acquiring content knowledge and appreciate accuracy in knowledge production (Brown, 2007; Chang, 2011; Douglas and Frazier, 2001). On the other hand, teachers who associate themselves with the less structured way of learning that is often encouraged in CLT tend to focus more on the acquisition of the skills by which learning can be developed (Douglas and Frazier, 2001; Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Savignon and Wang, 2003). Such a teaching approach puts much emphasis on the development of linguistic skills through involving students in real communicative tasks where they attempt the language, make mistakes and learn from them (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Liao, 2004; Littlewood, 2007). In the EFL programme under scrutiny, the practical teaching model used differed from one teacher to another. These differences were related to the types of teaching approach that the teachers adopted in their teaching. The data from the interviews as well as the observations show that the teachers who adopted CLT integrated extensive communicative practices into their teaching. These included group and pair work as well as classroom discussion and debates:

In my teaching, I depend a lot on groups and group work so that the students can help each other and feel free to make mistakes and learn from each other's mistakes... I encourage the students to disagree with me and debate the concept before they accept or reject any information... Working in groups is particularly important to encourage students to learn how to debate and agree or disagree with each other...

Saeed (NNES teacher), *Interview, Monday 25th October 2010*

This teacher employs teaching practices that encourage students to gain control over their own learning and does not regard teachers as the only sources of information. Such teaching methods help to create a lively environment in the classroom where students are given the opportunity to use English for practical and authentic tasks such as debate and discussion:

I believe that my teaching is about facilitating students' learning; a student should learn by himself and with himself, and my job is to create a learning environment where students are encouraged to use English in discussions without the fear of making mistakes or being judged... Sometimes, I tend to make mistakes myself so they know that it is ok to make a mistake... This encourages the students to relax and feel at ease as well as encouraging them to relate the language points we are using to their own personal experiences and when talking about different situations... During the discussion, you see the students bring similar situations that they have gone through or read about; this makes me feel that the students are using the language for authentic tasks beyond the ones that are prescribed by the textbook.

Humdi (NNES teacher), *interview, Wednesday 1st December 2010*

In this form of teaching practice, the time teachers spent on talking was reduced to allow the students more time to practice spoken English with each other. A positive classroom environment permits students to feel more confident to interact and support each other without the fear of being chastised or judged. The teacher emphasises and values the students' contributions and encourages them to engage in classroom discussion, make mistakes and explore their EFL learning with each other:

I help them when they encounter any difficulty... I stimulate more interaction among the students by encouraging them to ask each other ... This helps to encourage further learning discussion in the class, and

also helps to establish a good relationship between the students by which they feel they can trust each other... In my view, language learning is not only about the knowledge that we help the students to gain, but equally important is the manner by which the learning is happening.

Humdi (NNES teacher), *interview, Wednesday 1st December 2010*

Most of the teachers who adopted CLT in their teaching viewed the process of learning knowledge and discovering information to be as important as acquiring the language. It incorporates useful life skills into the teaching and learning process, such as teaching students how to argue and discuss a concept. In order to achieve this goal in their teaching, teachers who adopted CLT emphasised the importance of creating a relaxing and participative atmosphere that facilitates student-to-student interaction. Creating such an environment involves getting the students to know each other and building a relationship of trust amongst them. The establishment of such an environment helps the students to develop better linguistic and learning skills:

Saudi people anyway tend to be some of the most dignified people I have ever met, and there are certain things they would not do because it's *a'ibe* [shame]; you wouldn't besmirch your honour by behaving in a certain way or saying a certain thing. But then this [classroom] is a different situation. Within these walls, we have to achieve a certain goal and be more formal outside ... Sometimes it's difficult to make these high school students relax; in order to create such a relaxing environment where learning can take place. The first thing I did was to tell them something embarrassing about myself. And when that happens, and people start to laugh, you've got a bunch of 18-year olds laughing at you. So if I can take it, it's ok for you to do it too. Some of them are still reluctant because our circumstances are different... I do want them to like me, but I want them to relax and be comfortable

enough so we get down to learning the language; making mistakes and learning from them without feeling embarrassed or fearing that someone or other is going to laugh at you... Ultimately, they all get to that point where they start using English, making mistakes here and there; and learn from them. Some get there quicker than others, but I try to set up the classroom so that no one is going to be embarrassed; whether because of the mistakes or status or unconventional ideas.

Aidan (NES teacher), *Interview, Tuesday 12th October 2011*

Aidan stressed the importance of creating a friendly learning environment, and also shed light on the different techniques that a teacher who acts as a facilitator may use in order to create an interactive learning environment. He explained the benefits of an interactive and friendly environment, which helps students to develop English language and study skills. He was able to prove that once the students establish a relationship of trust among themselves as well as with the teachers, these students are encouraged to use language without fear of punishment for making mistakes.

In addition, based on observations, one can infer that by creating a more open and participative learning environment, teachers enable the students to reflect on how their own culture and how what is seen as *a'ibe* (shame), which is a barrier to their learning, can be overcome when done in a safe place. As the focus of the CLT approach is not only about developing the language, but also about engaging with students by understanding the way they learn, it is part of CLT to identify the barriers that may hinder their learning. Teachers who use CLT usually better understand the culture of the students and how their learning can be developed, and how to incorporate it into their teaching (Chang, 2011; Littlewood, 2007; Murcia Quintero, 2012). By understanding the culture of the students, the teachers can reach out and include them in the learning process. This allows students to take part in negotiating their learning

and challenging the position of the teacher in the hierarchy of knowledge production (Ford et al., 2007; Lall, 2011; Sriprakash, 2010). Teachers who implement the CLT approach view their teaching as a way of helping students to learn a language by changing learners' learning practices and attitudes toward learning. A participative approach to teaching allows the students to feel that they share in the process of learning and in knowledge construction (Hayes, 2006; Ouyang, 2003). This supports the argument that CLT allows more scope for the emergence of student voice by encouraging dynamic communication in the classroom and stimulating collective learning (Hayes, 2006; Littlewood, 2007). The point about the usefulness of changing how students study and their behaviour in relation to EFL learning recurred frequently in the analysis of data. This finding was linked to teachers who used CLT in the EFL programme to encourage students to change their learning practices to one where they are the focus and in control of their own learning. It provided an opportunity to change the students' learning attitudes, moving from being over-dependent on teachers to a more interactive style by which students are encourage to interact with learning elements (e.g. peers, teachers, books) in order to construct knowledge. Such teachers try to empower students and to use English as a medium for communication more naturally and confidently:

It was argued that many students don't have much background in using English for communicative purposes, and so they need a teacher who can translate and explain to them [the students] in their own mother tongue so they will understand. Actually, I think that is an incorrect approach because we continue to give them a crutch that they always had at school instead of the skill... We should have a dictionary class and help them to learn how to use a dictionary, for example. We have to give them lexical classes. We have to give them more skills rather than abstract knowledge... We should help them to achieve the

university's aim of helping the students to use the language for their study rather than accommodating their old learning habits.

Braden (NES teacher), *Interview, Tuesday 30th November 2010*

Those teachers who use the GTM approach in their teaching help students to master the knowledge and practices in English by transmitting traditional language knowledge exactly from the curriculum and through the use of textbooks. This kind of teaching is underlined by the assumption that students have similar needs. Thus, the focus of such teaching is generally on transmitting information, as observed in the following quote.

It is important in my teaching that students understand exactly what I am trying to teach them; I prepare well for the lesson, and I try to explain the new vocabulary and the grammar usage. This helps the students to use them in different sentences in order to understand how, exactly, these vocabulary and grammar rules are used. Also, I allow them time to practise them in the lesson and give them feedback at the end of the lesson.

Ardan (NES teacher), *Interview, Saturday 6th November 2010*

The GTM approach focuses on the creation of a controlled learning process that aims to pass exact and prescribed knowledge that students need to acquire in order to learn the language in a traditional way. However, teachers who adopt a GTM approach will use elements of CLT in the way they encourage students to use and practice the newly learned vocabulary and grammatical rules. However, most of these learning activities are teacher-driven. Students play a minor role in the initial stage of constructing the knowledge and thus they are regarded as passive subjects. Teaching follows a more rigid and structured process through which the teachers lead the students to achieve the final outcomes, e.g. when learning grammar, as suggested in the quote below.

I start by presenting the grammatical rules of the lesson and how they are used in the English language; then I ask the students if they have any questions about the rules. If there is something that was not clear, I explain that particular point again and then ask the students to practise the rules in the different exercises outlined in the textbook. Once that is done, I check their work and provide feedback... I usually end the lesson by asking the students to use the grammatical points of the day in sentences of their own... Most of the time I give them homework to practise the rules at home.

Haroon (NNES teacher), *Interview, Wednesday 1st December 2010*

This teacher applies a deductive approach in teaching grammar. This approach encourages teachers to present and explain the rules to the students rather than putting the students in situations where they can discover the rules and their usages (Nassaji, 2011; Richards and Renandya, 2002). Although in the deductive approach to teaching grammar, teachers allow students to ask questions and show willingness to respond, the teaching process mainly centres around what the teacher wants. Students are only able to ask questions if the information was not transmitted properly in the first place. This deductive form of GTM teaching is criticised for teaching grammar in an abstract way, paying little attention to meaning and encouraging the mechanical practice of the grammatical rules (Adamson, 2003; Vogel et al., 2011). In such methods of EFL teaching, most aspects of knowledge are predetermined, and students do not have much say in the construction of knowledge. It is teachers who determine what and when the students learn. These teachers like to first explain grammatical rules in abstract terms without checking students' prior knowledge; then they ask all students to practise what they have been taught in their books without taking into account students' individual differences. Furthermore, these teachers check the accuracy of the exercise, and then check understanding of the rules by asking abstract questions about the usages of the

newly learned grammatical rules. In this way, such teachers seem to determine the learning moments as well as the manner of learning for the students.

Similarly, in reading skills lessons, teachers who use GTM adopt a teaching approach that focuses on transmitting abstract knowledge where students are expected to translate and define the new vocabulary, read the passage, and then answer the comprehension questions, as shown in the quote below:

When teaching reading, it is important for me that the students understand the passage or the reading text. Therefore, before we start reading, I ask them to read the text silently in order to find new words; I write these words on the board, and then define them in English, and encourage the students to take note of them. After that, I invite volunteers to read the text out loud and correct their pronunciation while they read so everybody knows how to read. During the reading, I may stop to explain the usage of certain vocabulary or grammatical points that can help clarify the meaning. After that, I check with the students to see if they have understood the new vocabulary. Once everyone understands the new vocabulary, I invite them to answer the comprehension questions and the word derivations that are in the book. This helps to make sure that these students understand their reading and are able to answer well in the exams when they see these vocabulary or grammatical points that we have spent time and effort explaining to them.

Mustafa (NNES teacher), *Interview, Sunday 19th December 2010*

This approach is generally influenced by the teachers' wants, and there is less scope for the students' needs. Even when teaching skills needed for reading, the teaching activities centre on teaching vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. The actual reading task described in the quote above, which involved developing reading skills, happened as a side issue. The teacher did not try to

engage the students in developing reading skills such as decoding (which refers to the ability to recognize a word at a glance), scanning (which refers to looking quickly for certain information) or questioning (which refers to having an internal dialogue with the writer) (Birch, 2006; Mikulecky, 2008). This teaching practice provides specific grammar information to feed students' basic learning needs, and there was not much opportunity for the students to develop the skills by which they could find information out for themselves. It can be concluded that this teaching is focused more on the exams and on developing the students' ability to retain and regurgitate stored information. Such teaching practices exemplify a behaviourist teaching approach, which depends on rote memorization and drilling.

Generally, students in the EFL programme responded differently to the teaching approaches presented in the programme. Although the CLT approach is different from the teaching methods that many of the students were used to in their pre-university EFL learning, the students appreciated such a teaching approach, as it encouraged their active engagement in the classroom activities and allowed for their voices to be heard:

What I like about the teachers here [in the EFL programme] is that you have a chance to discuss with them anything to do with their subjects; they allow you the opportunity to speak your mind, dispute their ideas, discuss with other students and make your voice heard in the class...When I am doing the homework, I don't really look at the explanation in the textbook; I mainly rely on what I understood from the classroom discussion, and that helps me to improve my comprehension, and also helps the information to stay longer in my head...

Yasser (pre-med student), *Interview, Saturday 19th November 2011*

This student found that teaching that is based on facilitating learning enabled him to actively engage with his learning and allowed him to personalise and possess the knowledge. Thus, when revising at home, such students found it much easier to rely on the classroom discussion than solely on textbooks. In addition, most students found that this kind of teaching is stimulating and addresses their individual linguistic needs as well as helping them to develop new EFL knowledge and learning skills. Aalee reported, when commenting on the teaching approach of one of his teachers:

Teacher XXX is really good; he discusses with us the main point of the books and then encourages us to use the language and think about different situations where such language can be used... He plays different video clips for us to listen to and watch and encourages us to discuss and challenge him; he doesn't rely only on the textbook alone; the textbook doesn't have the personal experience that the teacher gives to us; I feel he helps us, explains things... With him, I feel I don't need to study the textbook any more.

Aalee (pre-AMS student), *Interview, Saturday 16th October 2010*

The teachers who adopted the CLT approach made the students realize that learning EFL for the sake of self-improvement is much more fun than learning a language simply for the sake of exams or doing homework. Enabling students to enjoy learning and the feeling of self-achievement is considered to be one of the many positive rewards associated with using CLT in EFL teaching and learning (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Littlewood, 2007). Therefore, the time and effort invested in studying and searching for information pays off in the long term, as suggested in the quote below.

Learning English here [the university] is a lot of fun...I like the fact that some teachers ask us about what we would like to learn; also I like the idea of learning from my classmates and discussing things with them...

[thus] I invest time to study and search for information by myself, and work very hard to acquire the information, and that makes me feel satisfied, and also ingrains the information in me and makes it hard to forget."

Aadil (pre-AMS student), *Interview, Wednesday 13th October 2010*

Aadil in this quote suggests that learning through interaction and by doing is a much better way to learn and practice English. Such a way of learning pays off in the way that it provides students with authentic learning moments where the language can be used and learnt. Thus, teachers who adopted CLT not only encouraged the students to personalise and possess knowledge but emphasised the use of English with the students all the time; they used English with the students inside and outside the classroom. Such a constant use of English encouraged the students to improve their linguistic skills, such as listening and speaking, which they had not previously had the opportunity to develop, but which would be imperative to their success in future studies and employment:

The fact that many teachers in the programme spoke English all the time, and their encouragement to us to respond and debate with them, has really helped me to improve my speaking and boost my confidence...

Salah (pre-med student), *Interview, Thursday 14th October 2010*

The teachers' conventional use of English and their encouragement to the students to use the language communicatively created an atmosphere where language was used naturally. This then encouraged students to rely more on the contextual speech clues to deduce meaning, instead of needing to translate and write everything. This helped them to improve their study skills:

I don't understand 100% of what the teachers say, but I don't give up; most of the time, I understand what the teachers are saying from the context. I try to write the new words that they use: sometimes, I understand their meaning from the context and check the spelling later; other times, I don't understand certain words, but I still understand what the teachers are saying in general... I check the meanings of the new words later, but I can still participate in the discussion... This is a new learning skill that I have started to develop in this English programme.

Abbud (pre-med student), *Interview, Tuesday 12th October 2010*

In addition, most of the students expressed satisfaction with the dynamic and interactive nature of the lessons created by teachers adopting a CLT approach:

Mostly, teachers would ask us to work in groups; the funny thing is that the teacher joins these groups... I find that beneficial for me because it allows me to depend more on myself and also allows me to compare my understanding and my answers with my colleagues and learn from each other's mistakes... I would explain a vocabulary to the group and someone would explain something I didn't know... and this way I build my knowledge... Mostly in English courses, we aren't allowed to use Arabic, and therefore, most of our discussion would be in English, and that is another advantage...

Yasser (pre-med student), *Interview, Saturday 19th November 2011*

These students acknowledged the usefulness of the interactive, informal and friendly learning environment created by teachers as facilitators, which made them rely on each other for support in learning. Due to the teachers' use of pair and group work, students have started to rely less on the teachers and much more on themselves.

Most of the students expressed satisfaction with the CLT approach and emphasised that it had helped them to take EFL learning beyond the scope of the textbooks and the boundaries of classroom:

Most of us... come from a high school where we were restricted to one course book and limited use of English ... Here [in the university], we are encouraged to learn English in order to use the language in our daily lives in the university and not only be limited to the books and classroom activities...Teachers are trying to help us develop our learning skills in order to become independent learners."

Aalee (pre-AMS student), *Interview, Saturday 16th October 2010*

However, not all of the students interviewed expressed positive attitudes towards the CLT approach used by the majority of the teachers in the programme. In his comments on how different groups responded to such a teaching approach, Saeed (a teacher) emphasised that some students struggled with the notion of participating in knowledge construction and being independent learners (i.e., learning from each other). He stated:

There are some students who are generally weak in their English language proficiency and they found it [the CLT approach] annoying; and found it difficult to understand its usefulness. Firstly, this is because they don't understand the importance of the group work in supporting their learning. Their perception about group work is 'to cheat and waste time'. You try to encourage discussion and working together as pairs or groups, but mostly, they take the opportunity to copy from each other. It is sad; they question the usefulness of group work. Group work is not about copying from each other or about me being lazy and not wanting to do 'my job': it is about giving the students the opportunity to discuss their ideas and reject and accept each other's.... I am trying to help them to work with each other but the resistance is strong due to the educational background and the poor

English language teaching in most of the schools... and it is my job to work hard with such students in order to change their perception about learning.

Saeed (NNES teacher), *interview, Monday 25th October 2010*

The sources of the difficulties that some students had with CLT as a way of teaching arose from their previous school experience. As suggested by Saeed, one of the reasons why these students found the CLT approach to be difficult was because of their past English-learning backgrounds. Students who had undergone traditional rote-type EFL teaching in their pre-university EFL learning, where the emphasis was on controlled learning processes, struggled with the CLT approach. Students having weaker proficiency in the English language were obviously less confident about speaking and sharing mistakes, and found the concept of becoming independent learners proposed by CLT to be challenging. Therefore, teaching practices were not only trying to help the students to develop their English language competencies, but also to challenge and change the students' learning attitudes and behaviours. Students had to change their views about their role, from being passive learners to becoming active learners. They had to learn to start to construct their knowledge and become active participants in learning. Thus, sometimes, when students (who were regarded as weak in terms of their English language proficiency) were confronted with immediate and strong CLT practices, they tended to be negative, calling it a '*method open to cheating*', or appeared shocked and did not respond well to it. Where a student-centred approach such as CLT was not a common teaching approach in the students' pre-university EFL learning in KSA, students initially resisted it (Al-Jarf, 2008b; Batawi, 2006; Rabab'ah, 2005).

In general, EFL teachers in Saudi schools, particularly the government schools, tend to lean more toward using GTM in EFL teaching. The use of innovative

ways of learning where students are required to participate in group or pair activities is rare. In addition, in most cases, students in Saudi schools are not expected to learn in interactive ways where their voices are heard (Batawi, 2006; Elyas and Picard, 2010). Thus, it is not surprising that these students would be disconcerted when introduced to a CLT learning approach. This is not only the case for English: most Saudi education places a strong emphasis on behaviourist ways of teaching and learning where teachers and the textbook are the key source for knowledge acquisition (Al-Hazmi, 2003; Rabab'ah, 2005). This begins to explain some students' negative reactions to the CLT approach. Another explanation is that the teachers do not invest enough effort and time to help the students to make a gradual transition to CLT traditions (Holliday, 1994; Rabab'ah, 2005). This has led to some students expressing less enthusiasm for learning in pairs or groups:

I don't like group work. I want the teacher to explain everything; I don't know how to study English by myself and I don't trust that my group-mates are able to give me the right answers... Most of the students in my class are very much 'beginners', with weak English language competencies, except for one or two... I do the task when the teacher helps me... I can't do it by myself or with the others in the group... Honestly, when the teacher is not around our group, we stop working and start to talk in Arabic about different topics.

Aamir (pre-AMS student), *Interview, Saturday 16th October 2010*

The negative attitudes that such students showed towards a more participative teaching approach can have an adverse effect on their learning. Although the use of CLT aims to include students in the process of teaching and learning, using CLT with such learners seems to demotivate them. In addition, it can be inferred from such students' voices that they are aware of their shortcomings and are perhaps asking for help. Through such acknowledgement of their

weaknesses, it appears that these students are seeking support not only in terms of English language competencies but also in terms of adopting new learning habits. This is a brave statement for them to make. Teachers need to be made aware, if they do not already know, that they need to offer support to students to help them adapt to new ways of thinking and behaving and to new learning skills, as Saeed (a teacher) tries to do. The real issue here is not just about improving the students' English language competencies, but about changing their worldview of themselves and their learning in relation to gaining knowledge. The first step is to change entrenched views, such as the one that appears in the quote below.

I wouldn't study at home or prepare for a lesson unless the teacher specifically asked me to do so. I read exactly what the teacher asks... nothing more; sometimes, I will spend time memorizing the list of the vocabulary that some teachers give... The teachers know what is best for us and they know more than us about how we should study and what we should learn... This worked for me at school and I passed exams, so why wouldn't it work here?

Ameen (pre-AMS student), *Interview, Thursday 14th October 2011*

These students were struggling with a new teaching approach that required them to move outside the sphere of their past experience and comfort, begin to participate in their own learning process and think critically in order to engage with their learning. It was easier for them to rebel, get angry and misbehave (Batawi, 2006; Ouyang, 2003, 2003; Ozsevik, 2010; Savignon and Wang, 2003). As a safeguard, these students were trying to stick to their old habits of literal translation and rote memorization, and felt that the GTM approach was better for them as a way of teaching. They were happier to stay with what they considered to work best for them:

Mr [NNES teacher] is an excellent teacher; he is the only one who helps us; he reads to us and tells us what is important; he doesn't waste time on group work and things like that. He just explains everything very well... He gives hand-outs with lists of important questions and the vocabulary that we need for the exams... He is the only one who encourages the students to improve their knowledge. He even talked to Mr XXX [NES teacher] and convinced him that he should give us similar hand-outs before the lessons and allow us time to go through them before he teaches the lesson.

Bilal (pre-AMS student), *Interview, Thursday 16th October 2010*

These students prefer a teacher who explains everything. This is easier than being asked to understand new material on their own and to explain it to each other. The students who liked this method felt confident when teachers explained the lessons to them and asked them to highlight the important items, such as vocabulary, sentences or certain grammatical rules. They liked to be told what and how to learn. In contrast, students who had already experienced CLT and other forms of interactive and participative approaches to EFL teaching found traditional methods disconcerting, and even boring:

This teacher follows the book step-by-step... It is really boring... What I do is I just try to follow what he reads and stop him when there is information that I am not clear about. Mostly the answers we get from him are not that clear, but he gets annoyed if you show him that you didn't understand it.

Aazim (pre-med student), *Interview, Tuesday 10th October 2010*

The worst teaching is that there is this teacher who reads the passage slowly and translates every word; that is really tedious. This teacher

makes me feel that he is the only one who understands everything; he sees himself sometimes superior to the students.

Aalee (pre-AMS student), *Interview, Saturday 16th October 2010*

Here students were critical about the teacher and the learning traditions he uses. These students expressed negative attitudes because this approach did not allow them room for interaction and creativity and thus they described this type of learning as '*annoying and boring*'. They felt excluded from participating in the process of knowledge construction. These students felt patronised by the teachers who adopted GTM. The emphasis on reading aloud and translation does not help in improving students' actual reading skills, as these teachers mistakenly believe that reading is only about words and sentences. Also, a teacher who reads everything from the textbooks and explains it himself does not allow students to develop practical, oral and hands-on skills or more independent control of their learning. This could suggest that the GTM method in its purest form is simply impractical in EFL in *QU-HS*, as it does not help to develop the skills students need. Instead of allowing students the opportunity to question and discover the answers by themselves, it involves spoon-feeding them with the 'right' answers. Most of the students commented on how such a teaching method reflects teaching practices that many of them were exposed to at high school, which were not very helpful in improving their English language communicative competencies, as Salah noted:

I don't want a teacher to tell me, 'Delete this', 'Keep that', 'Focus on that...' I don't like it when the grammar teacher [in the university] spends most of the lesson explaining a self-taught book and then asks us to do drilling in the book until my hands go numb... We had enough of that at school, and it did not help us... We are not given [in the school] the opportunity to use the language to communicate... We expect more of a challenge here [in the university], not a repetition of

the old habits...; I want hands-on things; I'd like to have a go at using the language, and make mistakes, learn and try again and again until I get it by myself.

Salah (pre-med student), *Interview, Thursday 14th October 2010*

Obviously, when faced with a teaching and learning style that had not worked well previously, students will be critical when faced with the same method at university. They were concerned that such a teaching approach does not really address their needs or the purpose of EFL teaching in the university. Most of these students believed that they were ready for new challenges, as they were now older and at university. They were aware that they needed to be enabled to use the language more widely and for actual communication purposes and not simply to be told what the teachers and the textbooks required of them.

Although the discussion so far on CLT as a teaching approach has highlighted its positive attributes, it is important to recognise, as discussed in Chapter Three (Section 3.4), that CLT as a progressive teaching pedagogy tends to favour those students with cultural capital: that is, those learners who are able to engage actively in class and are independent and self-confident, all of which they acquire because of the advantages they gain from their environment and background. When teaching practices assume that learners are independent, active and self-confident, they tend to exclude those who do not share these characteristics.

Students with insufficient cultural capital may not fully benefit from the progressive teaching pedagogies such as CLT, which is extensively used in the EFL programme. GTM, which is perceived as a traditional approach to teaching by many teachers and students, may, in some conditions, be more appropriate for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, since they have acquired less cultural capital prior to entering the university.

7.4 Assessment

In most institutional educational settings, assessment is seen to play an important role. 'Assessment is a central feature of teaching and the curriculum. It powerfully frames how students learn and what students achieve' (Boud, 2010, p. 1). In some settings, it is perceived as a tool for measuring students' learning in general, while in other settings it is viewed as a mechanism by which learning can be encouraged. These different views of assessment are not separated from the context in which it takes place. Indeed, it is seen to reflect institutional values (Brown and Knight, 1994; Knight, 2002; Race, 2007). Through assessment, many educational programmes or courses articulate what they value, whether that is content knowledge or transferable skills (Knight, 1995). Thus, it is through understanding assessment practices in an educational programme that a researcher is able to shed light on the extent to which such assessment influences students' learning experiences. Assessment in the EFL programme in *QU-HS* is based on written exams that are mainly focused on multiple choice questions with very limited opportunities for extended essay writing. These exams are administered at different points in the semester (i.e., midterms and final) and test all learning except for speaking or oral skills. Speaking skills are tested through one oral exam at the end of the semester. Although the data shows that multiple choice written exams are the most common mode of assessment in all the modules in the EFL programme in *QU-HS*, the teachers' views about assessment were informed by the teaching approaches they adopted. The teachers who adopted the CLT approach viewed assessment as a tool that can enhance learning and encourage students to participate in classroom discussions rather than simply as a tool for evaluating the students' content knowledge. Such realization about assessment can be observed in the quote below:

I normally tend to assess informally the students' learning all the way through my teaching, as my teaching is about changing the students' learning habits, which, in turn, helps the students to improve their English language skills. I use assessment all the time jointly with the students to supplement the process of developing the target skills, and encourage each student to highlight the learning points that they feel we should work on. Assessment for me is more about the students' development rather than judging students' ability to retain abstract content knowledge at the end of the semesters.

Aidan (NES teacher), Interview, Tuesday 12th October 2010

This teacher was concerned with the development of learning skills and what learning means to the students. Thus, to him, assessment was not about the end product, but more importantly about the process by which the knowledge had been constructed and the language learned. He believed in on-going assessment that takes place in the classroom through communicative activities as well as examining the process of gaining knowledge. The main focus for teachers using the CLT approach was not just on passing the final formal exams used in the programme but on developing learning and linguistic skills for on-going learning. The following quote from Killian (a teacher) expresses his dissatisfaction with the way reading skills were being assessed in the programme:

Most of the exams items are about rote memorization of vocabulary and different usages of grammar; exams do not allow the students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the reading skills. Only a small part of the exam is geared towards that, if I may say; the only part that one could say aims at assessing the reading skills is the comprehension part, but even then, there is not much focus on examining the critical

reading skills; there is not much focus on asking the students to give their opinions or engage critically with the reading...

Killian (NES teacher), Interview, Wednesday NES teacher day 10th November 2010

Thus, most exams (i.e., final and midterm) in the programme were criticized for emphasising rote learning and promoting an end product learning culture. They did not have the scope to assess the process by which students were able to reach the final results, which many of the teachers who had adopted the CLT approach considered as important. These teachers argued that the exams and the way they were designed had a negative impact on teaching, and consequently, on students' learning. This frustrated some teachers, as they felt that exams promote rote learning instead of focusing on the processes that help to develop targeted skills. These teachers believed that most of the exam questions were about memorizing the meaning of the words and knowing the correct grammatical rules. This suggests that the exams focus on the regurgitation of accumulated knowledge and do not have much scope for allowing the students to express their opinions and reflect on the process by which they arrived at the answers, as stated by Aidan:

When you have a midterm exam that has 50 multiple choice questions, that's inappropriate. You know, no matter what the subject is, you don't need that many questions that emphasise the content knowledge rather than the skills; you should be able to test the skill so that many teachers are encouraged to reflect that in their teaching.

Aidan (NES teacher), Interview, Tuesday 12th October 2010

In comparison, teachers who believed in teaching as a process of knowledge transmission tended to teach mostly toward helping the students to master abstract content knowledge, which they felt was important for the exams. Thus,

assessment was viewed as a reward mechanism for the students' ability to memorize and retain information in order to pass final examinations, as illustrated in the following quote:

I agree that a huge part of the assessment in the programme encourages the students to learn vocabulary and grammar, as they are the building blocks of the English language... Regardless of the skill that the exam wants to test, most of the sections in the exams examine the students' vocabulary and grammar understanding, which I think are the most important elements of learning English. Even in writing, we tend to check for how the students use the different words in order to construct a correct meaningful sentence... It is important that we check whether the students have sufficient knowledge about them or not.

Ardan (NES teacher), Interview, Saturday 6th November 2010

Thus, in this view, assessment is seen as a way to judge the students' ability to reproduce accurately taught knowledge and behaviours. Students are expected to focus their learning on acquiring content knowledge and less on developing learning and linguistic skills that can help them to arrive at the information. This means that the students do not need to worry so much about how they would understand the meaning of a word from the context or how they would use certain phrases in a particular context, as this requires mastering the skill by which such knowledge can be discovered. As exams do not include such ways of evaluating students' learning and linguistic skills, many students are torn between wanting to learn to succeed in the exam and addressing the development of their skills.

Students expressed dissatisfaction about the way assessment was conducted in the EFL programme, as it did not reflect the common teaching practices advocated by teachers; nor did it reflect the aims of EFL learning in the university:

The exam is not very good, but I am doing fine. Although most of the exams don't test the skills that we were taught, they have lots of items that need to be memorised; the reading or communication exams, for example, have lots of items about words' definitions and word matching. I am not sure how much of that is meant to assess my reading skill or my ability to listen or speak... Isn't it funny that a communication exam tests word definitions and grammar? Don't get me wrong, I am coping perfectly with exams, though they are rather long and very tedious ...

Salah (pre-med student), Interview, Thursday 14th October 2010

Exams do test the progress that the students have made as a result of studying in the programme, but focus on easily testable notions like word definition. The exams do not assess the students' ability to use the actual English language skills taught in the programme. Instead, they mostly measure the students' ability to retain and reproduce vocabulary and grammatical rules. Although most of the students expressed dissatisfaction with the way assessments were used within the programme, a few commented that the way assessment was done was the perfect way to pass the courses. Anas, in the quote below, expressed his contentment about a reading exam, as it reflected the teaching and learning practices that he preferred:

The exam contains forty fill-the-blank questions; I know it is a lot, but I have been passing reading exams mainly because I have been focusing on rote memorization of the synonyms and the antonyms of the words and their derivations. I do the memorization part of the reading exam, which is the biggest part, and that helps me to get the pass marks.

Anas (pre-AMS student), Interview, Thursday 16th October 2010

This not only illustrates the huge emphasis that exams place on rote memorization, but also shows ways in which rote memorization enables some

students to pass EFL exams in the programme. Thus, it could be said that although the common teaching approach adopted by the teachers in the programme viewed assessment as a way of enhancing learning as well as a way of evaluating students' English, the actual use of assessment and examination within the programme was decided over and above what individual teachers preferred. It was set to be more traditional and formative, and to examine accumulated knowledge and behaviours, which, in essence, falls outside the general objectives of the EFL programme in *QU-HS*. Thus, this discussion of assessment and the values of certain teaching approaches presents a tension among different stakeholders. The EFL teachers appear to have different values that contradict the ones embodied in the assessment in the programme. This assessment does not seem to reflect the communicative nature of teaching and learning that was articulated in the programme's aims. The assessment is not participative, as it does not assess ongoing learning and usage of the language useful to the students in dealing with everyday untaught situations. Instead, such exams help the students to develop the ability to reproduce taught rote-type content knowledge rather than skills (Boud, 2010).

7.5 Summary

This chapter has highlighted the two teaching approaches adopted by the teachers in the EFL programme in *QU-HS* and their effect on students' learning. Teachers favouring CLT adopted student-focused, interactive and participative approaches in their teaching, where the skills taught helped students to become independent learners who took control of what they learned and how. Teachers using GTM used a teacher-centred approach where the curriculum contents were delivered by the lecturer didactically, using the textbook. Teachers also

often based their teaching mainly on one approach, but also introduced elements of the other approach.

Analysis was divided to determine the influence of these approaches in relation to the EFL teachers' perceptions about the following main issues:

- Their views about their teaching role and how they view students,
- Their views about teaching, and
- Their views about assessment.

Teachers who adopted the CLT approach viewed their roles as facilitators of learning, encouraging students to become actively involved in the construction of knowledge and create an environment of education where their voice is heard. They viewed their teaching approach as a way of helping the students to develop and enhance their learning skills as well as their proficiency in the English language. They viewed assessment as an integral and continual part of the learning journey and not just as a tool to judge the accumulation of content knowledge to pass an exam. On the other hand, teachers who adopted the GTM approach saw themselves as knowledge transmitters who convey language-based information in an exact form to their students. In this teaching approach, the students are not expected to become actively involved in their learning but to wait passively for the information and knowledge to be disseminated by the teachers and to be supported by textbooks. These teachers see assessment as a tool that measures the students' ability to retain and recall memorized information in order to pass examinations, which are seen as a measure of success that is needed to progress through the EFL course.

Although the general teaching approaches adopted by the teachers in the programme encourage students to develop their learning skills and students'

participation in knowledge construction, the formal assessment in the programme sends contradictory messages about teaching and learning. It requires a regurgitation of learned English language content and so emphasises learning by rote memorization and reproduction of information. This form of learning emphasises the notion of rewards, which in this case are passing and achieving high grades in exams. While it is necessary to pass exams and attain high grades, the idea of making exams the only focus of learning is problematic for the respondents. Ultimately, the best tools given to learners are to skill them in the English language such that they can then use it independently in their further education, in their future employment and in any environment where the English language prevails.

CLT is student-centred pedagogy. Students interviewed felt satisfied with this CLT approach if they had experienced it in their pre-university education or had been introduced to this new way of learning gently, or if they understood its value as allowing them the opportunity to be independent learners who can take charge of their learning. In addition, CLT encourages the students to engage actively in the teaching and learning process. In this way, students were able to personalize their learning and develop the skills from their pre-university EFL learning. Students who were comfortable with CLT learning traditions, therefore, did not enjoy GTM and expressed negative views when they were exposed to this approach, which reinforces more traditional learning by rote and through textbook teaching practices.

Some students showed negative attitudes towards CLT and were not sure about its usefulness when the CLT teachers in the programme tried to move them beyond the comfort zone of what they thought EFL learning should be. This was because in the past, these students had only been exposed to more traditional forms of education, and so they had limited experience of other forms of learning. Thus, they expressed less enthusiasm about changing their

learning habits. They also questioned and criticised the teacher role. They queried why they needed to be co-participants in knowledge construction, and how this helped them to pass the final exams. They were not sure about how to handle this new responsibility to take control of their learning, which was encouraged by the CLT approach. Thus, they viewed the GTM teaching method more positively, as it was what they felt comfortable with.

It is important to recognize issues of equity as discussed in this chapter in relation to the teaching approaches used in this EFL programme and students' family backgrounds. The most widely used teaching approach in this programme is CLT, which is also favoured by most of the students. This could be because most of the students appear to possess cultural capital, which encourages them to be independent and self-reliant learners. Students with insufficient cultural capital express discomfort with CLT as a teaching approach, as it does not seem to address their learning habits. Thus, GTM is an approach favoured by students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

To sum up, there are two main teaching approaches that are used to skill students in the EFL programme in *QU-HS* in KSA. Analysis of data highlighted how the adoption of each approach by teachers in the programme influenced the students' learning experiences. Factors which influenced how and what students learned depended on what students brought to the learning context (e.g. university or EFL lessons) as well as the teachers' preferred way of teaching. Although the students expressed different feelings about teaching approaches used in the programme, it was clear that these approaches provided the students with the opportunity to question, reflect upon and sometimes change their roles in relation to teaching and learning.

The following chapter summarises the main findings of this enquiry and discusses their implications for EFL teachers, *QU-HS* and policymakers, and for future research.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The importance of English language learning and teaching in the context of Saudi higher education, particularly in Medicine and related subjects, is vital. English has gained a prominent position in Saudi higher education, as it is seen as the language that can help Saudi students to gain access to different sources of knowledge, build cultural bridges with non-Arabic speaking nations and compete confidently in the global job market, particularly in the field of Medicine. Despite the internal struggle within Saudi higher education between efforts to preserve the Arabic language and encouraging English as a tool for globalization, the MoHE has adopted policies and practices to encourage the learning of English in higher education institutions.

This move towards the use of English is seen as a positive and necessary step toward improving the quality of university degrees obtained and allowing the graduates access to wider and greater knowledge. However, there is a dearth of qualitative research examining student learning experiences in EFL programmes in higher education in KSA. This research has attempted to address this gap. Thus, the overarching research question for this study sought to understand how students experience learning in an EFL programme in a Saudi university. This question was addressed using a qualitative research methodology adopting a case study approach. The study reports the experiences and perspectives of the students, coupled with the EFL teachers' views and an analysis of relevant documents and policies.

The key research question outlined in section 1.3 was answered through the following sub-questions:

Sub-question 1 is *'How do the policies of the university affect the EFL programme and the student learning experience?'* Using data from interviews, document reviews

and observations, this sub-question was answered in Chapter 5 by examining the influence of institutional policies on teaching and learning in the EFL programme in *QU-HS*.

Sub-question 2 is *'How do the students' family educational backgrounds influence student learning in the EFL programme?'* This question was answered in Chapter 6 by examining the influence of students' family backgrounds and how they advantage/disadvantage them using data obtained from semi-structured interviews.

Sub-question 3 is *'How do teaching approaches affect student learning experiences in the EFL programme?'* Through examining the influence of the teaching approaches adopted by teachers in the EFL program, this sub-question is addressed in Chapter 7, drawing on data obtained from interviews, observations and document analysis.

This chapter starts by summarizing the main findings of this study in section 8.1. These findings are then synthesized analytically in section 8.2. Section 8.3 outlines the implications of these findings for different stakeholders (i.e., policy makers, teachers and researchers) and future researchers. Section 8.4 discusses my personal reflection on the research journey and how this study has informed, developed and changed my practice and will continue to do so.

8.1 Summary of the findings

This section discusses the key findings of this study in relation to the three research sub-questions outlined above. It addresses each research sub-question in turn.

8.1.1 The influence of *QU-HS* policies in teaching and learning in the EFL programme

Documents obtained from *QU-HS* and from external literature such as the media [newspapers] was triangulated with data from the interviews to analyse what parts of the institutional policies influenced the student learning experience, especially in relation to the EFL programme in the university. This was linked to analysis of educational institutions in KSA to ground the research in a particular context, and also to gain a deeper understanding of how institutional policies influence students' learning experience. The aspects of educational institutions, how these institutions are run and what policies are formulated, for example, and influence the delivery of academic programmes were investigated.

This study used aspects of institutional theory in order to scrutinise the processes by which policies are established in *QU-HS* and also to understand ways in which such policies influence the EFL programme and wider social behaviours. As these policies exist in relation to the wider societal and political structures in which *QU-HS* exists, the analysis attempts to highlight the significance of the university background and history in adopting these policies. Being the only specialized health sciences university in Saudi higher education and being closely linked to *MHA*, the university has been allowed to adopt a different policy in relation to the language that it uses for instruction. This has its influence on students' EFL learning experience in the university. In addition, as the university teaches health sciences as a single discipline, English is used as a medium of instruction to allow it to compete with the best universities in the world.

The other significant element of the university background that influences the university's behaviour in relation to English is its association with *MHA*. As the

university was established as part of *MHA* and also exists within the Medical City in Riyadh, it has a unique structure and positioning as a context for the case study. The language policy and practice of the university are influenced by the existing practices of *MHA*. The main medium of communication in *MHA* is English and it is widely used in the medical city. Examples of how English is promoted within the university include the hiring of expatriate teachers who only speak English and the fact that all the communication from information on notice boards to the language used in patient notes, etc. is in English. Thus, students have to build their knowledge of English in both theoretical and practical forms to learn and work effectively.

The research study discussed three main policies that the university adopts in relation to the EFL programme. These are:

- The use of English as the medium of instruction and in all communication,
- The modification of the EFL programme to deliver and compete with the global availability of information related to health sciences, and
- The recruitment of experienced and well trained EFL instructors who can deliver English language teaching effectively.

The use of English as medium of instruction stems from the fact that the university, as a single discipline institution, aims to enable its graduates to access knowledge from the wider global medical communities. University management has to ensure that the importance of the use of English is effectively communicated to students. In his message, the head of the Pre-Medical Programme (PMP) did exactly this as he explained the need and usefulness of the English Language for *QU-HS*. This was supported by activities within the university: for example, on the orientation day, the university communicated to the students about the importance of having advanced

English language competencies and having the aptitude to develop such competencies. In addition, it conveyed to them that there is a strong relationship between improving their language skills and learning health sciences.

The research has been able to clarify how and why the university modifies the provision of the EFL programme. The background of the university and particularly its association with *MHA* allows the university to negotiate MoHE rules in relation to EFL teaching and learning. The university was able to extend the EFL programme and intensify the delivery of English teaching in terms of teaching hours. The EFL programme in *QU-HS* runs for three academic semesters with an average of seventeen hours per week: this equates to 68% more exposure to English teaching than other Saudi universities. While other universities are teaching a maximum of sixteen hours of EFL per week over two semesters, *QU-HS* teaches seventeen hours per week over three semesters. This modification to provide extra hours of EFL in the programme provides students with greater exposure to language learning. Thus, the students felt that the programme better prepares them and makes them more confident in English prior to beginning the specialised health science courses. Health sciences require a specialised technical language that centres around the English language, though the origins of words are Latin. In order to be prepared to learn a specialised technical language, the EFL part of the PMP programme has to make sure the students are prepared to the highest level. Students were aware that *QU-HS* offered this and so the university policies helped to attract the best students.

In order for the EFL programme in the university to deliver to the highest standards of English language training, the university has to have policies that centre on recruitment of good quality EFL instructors. The recruitment of academic staff was found to have a significant influence on teaching and

learning in academic institutions. The fact that *QU-HS* is an English medium health science institution associated with *MHA* has influenced the recruitment process of EFL instructors in the university, in that it is able to attract highly educated professionals with an excellent grasp of English. It allows the university to modify the recruitment criteria for their EFL teachers by applying tougher measures to test English language competency, such as having advanced qualifications in TESOL as well as in teaching in general. In order to recruit the best professionals, the university is also able to offer better salaries and greater incentives because of its association with *MHA*. Thus, the base qualification for teachers to be recruited is at least a master's degree in English language as well as a minimum of three years' EFL teaching experience. In return, the university offers great incentives for the teachers, such as making them government civil servants with attractive salaries, medical coverage in the *MHA* and an educational allowance for their children. Such recruitment policies reflect the university's desire to attract experienced and high calibre EFL instructors who are able to ease the students' transition from Arabic-medium schooling to English-medium higher education as well as helping them to deal with the language demands of the medical programme.

Generally, the findings with regard to the ways in which the university policies influence the EFL programme in *QU-HS* reveal that there is more investment in terms of time and the quality of teachers recruited to give students a superior EFL learning experience that grounds them for future learning and employment in health sciences in KSA and around the world, especially in English-speaking environments.

8.1.2 The influence of students' family backgrounds in terms of cultural capital on their learning experiences

The students' family backgrounds and their influence on the students' learning experiences in the EFL programme in *QU-HS* are conceptualized using the notion of cultural capital, which in this study refers to competence in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes that students acquire from their family backgrounds. The possession/presence of cultural capital was found to help students to cope with the various demands of studying in higher education in general and on the EFL programme in particular.

Different forms of cultural capital were transmitted to the students by their families in several ways. The conscious transmission of cultural capital happened when family members who possessed the competence and understood its importance transferred such cultural capital directly. These family members knew how to help students to acquire such cultural capital because they had had education which enabled them to accumulate institutionalized cultural capital. Moreover, family members were able to assist students because they possessed embodied cultural capital, which they gained from higher education. This allowed them to understand the vital role they as family members could and should play in supporting their children's learning. They assisted the students in their academic activities by passing on appropriate skills, such as practicing and speaking English, as well as helping with homework or revision.

The findings suggest three ways in which family members consciously transmit their cultural capital. The first is accrued when members of families invest time and deliberate efforts to transmit knowledge and skills to the students. The second happens when family members help the students by providing educational resources. This includes utilizing different kind of media such as

TV, internet and radio. Family may need to show the students ways in which such educational resources can be used in learning. The third way family members transmit their cultural capital to the students is through intellectual talk and discussions. In addition to actual academic knowledge being transmitted, strategic learning skills such as reading notes before and after classes, ways of controlling exam anxiety, revision techniques and advice about time management are transmitted.

Cultural capital, particularly in its institutionalised and embodied forms, was also found to be unconsciously transmitted to the students. Such transmission might occur unconsciously, and the possessors might not be aware that they are involved in a process of transmitting cultural capital. This means that they do not engage in conscious direct activities with the students. Instead, the family members project behaviours that are a reflection of the competence they possess. For example, they project their competence by attending conferences, reading articles or being friends with people from certain socioeconomic backgrounds. The students, however, could choose to actively absorb various knowledge and skills they observe from the behaviours of family members in relation to study and learning. They do this as they see such techniques to be useful, e.g. *"I saw my brother work hard, he read his notes and summarised them, revised again and again using summarised notes, and he passed with flying colours. So I know I have to work hard and I did this by copying his technique."* They then turn such behaviours into competence and use it for academic success. The data showed ways in which the transmission of cultural capital enables the students to develop certain learning norms and practices which are useful in the EFL programme.

This study has found that family role models are very effective in the unconscious transmission of cultural capital. Students can, of course, decide not to be like certain family members [negative role models]. However, having

family members with higher education qualifications or who own different educational artefacts inspires the students to improve their learning and study skills. Education among family members contributes to the construction of individuals' cultural capital in a way that inspires students to realise family expectations. However, it is important to acknowledge that students must be open to receiving transmission of the cultural capital. The cultural capital and how it influences the way children behave and learn can set them up for life.

Families use materials and resources as an objectified cultural capital which was unconsciously transmitted to the students. The artefacts that family members possess at home, such as books, magazines, games and paintings, are particularly useful when they are in English. However, the maximum benefits of such artefacts is realised through their active use. Artefacts are effective because they support learning at university, so books and periodic journals in English provide the students with an opportunity to practice and develop their reading skills, while games teach communication and social skills.

The significance and usefulness of having wealth and being able to convert it into cultural capital is manifest through the family's ability to procure private education and private English language tuition for the students. It was suggested that the combination of education and wealth allows families to make decision on ways in which such wealth be transmitted into a form of cultural capital that could advantage their children. Parents with no education would work hard to pay for affordable tuition, as even they knew that it supported, developed and strengthened learning and this would help their children succeed at school, especially in addressing any weakness and skill or knowledge gaps.

It can be argued that the transmission of such cultural capital to the student consciously, unconsciously or in the form of wealth conversion has significant

positive influence on the learning experiences for students in the EFL programme in *QU-HS*. Similarly, students whose family had little or no cultural capital in relation to higher education achievements were disadvantaged. There are exceptions to the rule, where students who came from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds still managed to enrol into a university.

The research found that family influences student learning in the context of EFL learning in *QU-HS* in the following ways:

- Facilitates the student to have useful knowledge and experience of pursuing a university degree as well as the skills required to learn the English language;
- Helps the students to develop English language skills such as listening, speaking and reading;
- Supports the students to be confident and active learners who are able to take charge of their own learning in the EFL programme without having to rely exclusively on others;
- Motivates and encourages students to study hard and improve their skills (English language skills and study skills) in order to achieve the educational standards set in the family;
- Through the provision of private schooling which enables students to have academic advantages.

The lack of cultural capital from students' families can have a negative influence on the students' learning experiences. As one of the presuppositions for the transmission of the cultural capital is the existence of a possessor who has such competence in relation to higher education, the lack of such cultural

capital suggests certain disadvantages for some students. The opportunities these students have are limited and they have to struggle or find other sources of support to improve their learning and study skills in the programme. Whilst these students succeeded in gaining admission to university, their learning is adversely affected in terms of having lower confidence, lower motivation, and negative views about themselves. Thus, they struggle with participative learning activities in the EFL lessons.

Findings showed that, for these students, learning interaction opportunities with their peers in the learning activities in the classroom were reduced. They 'chose' to be passive learners who were very dependent on teachers. However, the lack of cultural capital does not suggest that students will not progress in the EFL programme, as they can be aided to find other support from peers, books and teachers in order to succeed. So the findings conclude and acknowledge that students who do not have sufficient cultural capital can find other forms of competence and motivation, which may not necessarily be related to studying at university or on the EFL programme, which still allow them to progress in their studies in higher education. A perfect example is a parent who works in a manual or low-level job, but who still values education for his or her children [Student, Affan].

This research has found that family's cultural capital plays a significant part and helps in understanding students' learning experiences in the EFL programme. It has discussed the influence from the presence or lack of cultural capital, and how students make use of it or whether and how they find an alternative source of support for their learning experiences.

8.1.3 The influence of the teaching approaches on the student learning experience in the EFL programme

The final strand of this study analysed how teaching approaches affected the student learning experience. The data was analysed and findings were assessed through questions asked of teachers and students, and by observations made. It was found that teaching approaches are informed by diverse philosophies which hold particular views about knowledge, teaching, students and assessment, as discussed in Chapter Seven. The teaching approaches teachers apply within an institution or certain programmes and their influence on students' learning experiences were analysed. The focus outlines CLT and GTM as the two main teaching approaches that teachers adopted in *QU-HS*. The ways in which these two widely differing teaching techniques consequently influence learning experiences of students in the programme were discussed in depth.

Findings suggested that teachers who had adopted CLT saw themselves as learning facilitators whose task was to help students to discover knowledge and learn by themselves. They stated that students should learn by themselves and from each other. They viewed the students as independent and active learners who learn through their interaction with a wider learning environment. They helped the students to become experts by first teaching them how to question and unpick the rules and regulations within the learning of the English language. For example, they encouraged students to make mistakes and learn from them. Students then learned and began to know what they wanted from the learning context in terms of their own needs. Therefore, the teaching practices that these teachers adopt while teaching reflect the essence of CLT where the process of getting knowledge and discovering information is equally important as that of retaining information and knowledge. These teachers introduced lots of communicative use of English during their teaching, which

included group and pair work, as well as classroom discussion and debates. They encouraged the students to take control of their own learning and not to regard the teachers or the books as the only sources of information. They viewed EFL teaching not only as a way of helping the students to learn a language but also as a way of changing learning practices.

Findings indicated that, generally, students respond well to CLT traditions even if they differ from the teaching that they have been used to in their pre-university or school EFL learning. Students can be made to understand and appreciate engagement in classroom activities. This approach also enables students to personalise and possess the knowledge in their own way. The students who were advocates of this technique were those who had experienced it either in their schooling or through additional EFL tuition. These students found such an approach to EFL learning at the university level to be stimulating and thought that it was useful in addressing their individual linguistic needs.

The teachers who had faith in their CLT techniques viewed assessment as a tool to support and enhance learning. They used assessment to encourage students to participate in the classroom communicative activities rather than it being simply a tool for measuring content knowledge. Thus, it was found that assessment was not only about the end product; and most importantly, it was about the process by which the knowledge is constructed.

It can be argued that the EFL teachers in the programme criticized the assessment for its failure to assess the process of gaining and constructing the language. Exams tested the students' ability to retain and regurgitate information rather allowing them scope to express the learnt linguistic skills and show the way they could use these skills to arrive at an answer. Thus, as the findings suggest, most of the teachers believed that such assessment did not

necessarily complement their teaching approach (i.e. CLT) and therefore there was a conflict between the institutional policies encouraging a participative approach to teaching and the assessment practices. The findings suggest that most of the ways in which students were assessed did not reflect the participative approach encouraged by the university (cf. section 8.3 for the implications on the EFL programme).

The findings suggested that the teachers who leaned towards GTM viewed their role as that of knowledge transmitters who controlled most learning aspects in the classroom. They controlled and dictated how and what the students learn. These teachers perceived students as empty vessels waiting to be filled with '*good quality knowledge*' that they were able to supply. They viewed students as dependant individuals who had limited information to contribute to their learning and that of others. Such teachers believed that all the students had the same needs, and therefore, it was found that they did not cater to the diverse individual needs of their students. Therefore, teaching was seen as simply being a way of helping students to master the knowledge through practices prescribed by teachers and textbooks. The students were taught to memorize and repeat controlled exercises. The teachers argued that such methods of teaching helped the students to accumulate accurate knowledge and that they did not need to have any say in the way it was accumulated. The construction of knowledge and how it was absorbed by students, these teachers argued, was their expertise. They did not believe in assessment as a way of enhancing learning but viewed it as a way of measuring the students' ability to reproduce the exact taught knowledge. In fact, they perceived assessment as a reward mechanism for those students who were best able to memorize, retain and reproduce the learned information, as they obtained the highest marks in the exams and therefore could progress into the

health science degree. These teachers were adamant that students were able to pass their exams if they concentrated on such rote-type learning.

It was found that the students who preferred or had prior experience of CLT approaches found the GTM approach very tedious and impractical for EFL learning. This is because the student voice was marginalized in such teaching methods and there was little room for interactive, participative and independent inquiry and learning. This suggests that GTM was not effective for such students as instead of giving the students the opportunity to question and discover the answers by themselves, it spoon-fed them with the '*right*' answers. Students who were used to GTM preferred teachers to be the experts who taught them exactly what the curriculum required in a way that they were comfortable with and through the use of textbooks.

In addition, the findings suggested an alternative way of viewing the progressive teaching approaches (i.e. CLT) versus the traditional teaching approach (i.e. GTM). In relation to establishing social justice and equity among students from different socioeconomic backgrounds, the use of such progressive pedagogies, exemplified in this work by CLT, appears to privilege students with cultural capital and marginalise weak students from underprivileged backgrounds. Although the intention in such an approach is to give students voice and allow them to lead their learning, this approach tends to forget that students from disadvantaged backgrounds may not be able to do this. This is not to say that teachers and academic programmes should not use progressive teaching pedagogies; rather, it implies raising awareness about such issues amongst teachers and programme designers.

As such, it can be concluded that the different teaching approaches adopted by teachers in the EFL programme have a significant influence on the student learning experience in *QU-HS*, and teachers, institutions and policy-writers

must be aware of what these are and make sure that they address ways to support all students as equally as possible in their higher education learning.

8.2 Synthesized summary of the main findings

This discussion attempts to bring the different data analysis chapters together in order to establish links across the different chapters of this study.

The findings start by confirming the influence of institutional policies and practices on student learning experiences, as outlined in Chapter 5 and in section 8.1.1. The university as a social structure exhibits behaviours that influence the way things are done within the university at many levels. It influences the location of the university, the programme it offers, and therefore the students and the academic staff it attracts and recruits. This research is important, as it begins to shed light on how such institutional behaviours influence the student learning experience.

In addition, the findings address the roles that families play in what the students bring to the institutional learning context, as discussed in Chapter 6 and in section 8.1.2. The family influenced the students' experiences of learning in the EFL programme in terms of how family members support students' learning, and the materials and resources that can be provided to enhance the educational learning experience. The learning experience was related to family issues such as the education of the family; activities that the students were involved in at home and outside; the family social class and financial capability. In addition, the perspective of the family that this study addresses is how the experience of student learning was constructed through the different forms of family involvement. The influence of the family was evident in the interviews with students. When they talked about their families, the types of advantage they had offered to them were stated. This was in the form of competency,

which was conceptualized as cultural capital that arises from many things, such as family wealth, education, artefacts, connections with others, attendance at private school and the use of tuition. Even when there was no competency in terms of higher education in the family, there were students who succeeded in entering university. This could be because of their desire to overcome their families' low socioeconomic status.

From the discussion of families' influence on institutional learning, the study went further to address issues at micro level, in the classroom. The discussion about the classroom was focused on teaching approaches and ways in which the students were viewed. In addition, the discussion engaged with the reactions to these teaching approaches from students with different backgrounds. This debate focused on two techniques, CLT and GTM, examining how students interacted with each approach and how this benefitted and influenced their learning. GTM appeared to speak more to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, as they were more familiar with the practices that it applied. Most of the pre-university learning of these students was influenced by established traditions of GTM. These students had probably never been exposed to teaching practices that encouraged their engagement and treated them as independent learners. The issue here is not that these students do not like these progressive teaching pedagogies but is mostly about the disjuncture between their cultural capital and the teaching approach. Thus, students from 'middle class' backgrounds found it easier to engage with many aspects of CLT, as it resonates with their prior learning experiences.

The interaction between family influences, institutional policies and representatives of the institution - i.e. teachers - and how they each influenced students' learning was investigated by triangulation of the methods of analysis. Through the different interactions between the students, institutional policies and teaching approaches, one could infer ways in which the students' cultural

capital comes into contact with institutional activities that are mostly presented and teacher-led, and how learning is tested by assessment. For example, through such an interaction between teachers as representatives of the institution, the students' cultural capital (attending private education/EFL tuitions) can be revealed, as most students with cultural capital tend to have comparatively advanced English language competencies and are more willing to engage and function in participative peer or group work. Thus, these students are not only advantaged because of their cultural capital but also because the university as an educational institution values such cultural capital in its teaching approaches. Such an analysis clearly helps to relate the discussion to the overarching research question of this study, which asks *'How do students experience teaching and learning in the ELF programme in QU-HS?'*

The findings of this study answer the overarching research question by looking at the students' learning experiences from three perspectives. At the heart of this discussion of each of the three influences is students' active nature in negotiating their agency with the different structures, which in this case could be the family, the university and the teaching-learning activities in the classroom; and how each structure affects their learning experience of EFL. These influences were found to overlap, and could conflict with or support each other: for example, the university demands that English be spoken at all times, but whilst an educated family member might agree with this, people with insufficient cultural capital may not share a similar philosophy.

There is further evidence in the data of other issues that impact upon learning. Issues such as motivation, past experience of learning approach, strategic learning, acquired language skills and confidence are associated with class and belong to the individualistic characteristics of a student. Such issues are related to structures such as social class, regimes of teaching and institutional influences. Students belong to a certain social class, often linked to education or

wealth, and they seem to have different exposure to diverse ways of learning and constructing knowledge depending on their social class. In addition, students belonging to a certain class may or may not develop the ability to negotiate with the structures around them. Thus, this discussion touches upon structural and agency issues in understanding the learning experiences of Saudi students in the context of *QU-HS*. It acknowledges the active agency of the students as being a key factor that influences their learning, which is then highlighted by the power that is inherent in their surrounding structures. Students who come from families that possess institutionalised cultural capital (i.e. higher education qualifications), which is embodied in members of the family, are able to access a greater level of cultural capital. However, the availability of such cultural capital does not necessarily mean an immediate advantage for the students. It is the students' active agency, in addition to the structural influence, that helps the students to take advantage of the structures around them. Thus, in the case of students whose family structure does not provide stimulus, other factors play a role to compensate for this lack of family cultural capital, such as family pride or a hunger for education.

In addition, active student agency, with skill at conversing and networking with others, can allow students with insufficient cultural capital to obtain such capital, which they could not gain from their families' backgrounds. In other words, students who have little wealth can obtain cultural capital at the university level through different activities such as visiting theatres and museums, volunteering with doctors and attending a range of student events and lectures in order to expand their knowledge and skills, complementing their academic learning. Although the data for this study did not come across such cases, examples were encountered in the literature review.

This study conceptualizes learning as a personal choice that has its roots within the minds of the students, and these choices were found to be influenced by the

social structure that surrounds them and with which the students interact. The findings of this study reflect an interactive relationship between student agency and the structure in which they learn. Moreover, they reflect the various factors that influence this interactive relationship.

Such an analysis of the different perspectives (i.e. the institutional influence, the families' educational backgrounds and the teaching approaches) from which to look at the students' learning experiences has implications for the teachers and policy makers as well as for this research, in that it informs the basis of how students learn and what affects this process, as discussed in the next section.

8.3 Implications of the research

At the end of what some could describe as a provocative study, it is important to outline some implications of this research. These implications are organized into two categories. The first set of implications is for the policy makers and practitioners, and the second suggests areas for further research.

8.3.1 Implications for policy makers and practitioners

This section discusses the implications of the main findings of this study. These implications are discussed in reference to the issues that emerge from the research coupled with comments on the potential response of the institution to some of the more critical recommendations that this study provides. The main issues emerging from the findings are:

1. The influence of the families' educational backgrounds;
2. The conflicting teaching approaches;
3. Assessment and the way it is done;
4. The institutional influence of the university;

The first issue that policy makers in Saudi higher education in general and *QU-HS* in particular need to be aware of is the influence on the students' learning of their families' educational backgrounds. The presence or lack of competence in relation to studying in higher education in general and EFL in particular among family members influences students' experiences in the EFL programme. Policy makers need to provide foundation structures for students, such as qualified teachers who are aware that students who lack this competency need to be supported. They must ensure that students who are disadvantaged are taught and provided with any skills that they lack gradually without discrimination. The influence of such competence, e.g. through role models or engaging family in the work of the university, should be acknowledged and celebrated, as in the Saudi context, family is key to student success. Engaging families to participate in the university activities would be beneficial in bridging the gap between the university and society. Although such efforts might face some cultural challenges (e.g. gender segregation), the university could engage students' families through its newspaper and provide educational literature (e.g. leaflets, booklets) that could help enhance the families' cultural capital. Also, the university could create additional support and advisory structures, such as extra-curricular English classes that reach out to the students who do not have such family support, but need it for efficiently engage with the EFL programme. Thus, the recommendation of providing extra

English language tuition could be easily achieved, since most of the EFL teachers are available on site for most of the day.

Additionally, the university could offer and run optional pre-university summer courses for students to whom it has offered places. The aim of these courses would be to introduce CLT-type activities to help develop students who lack such study skills which are needed to pursue a university degree. This recommendation is achievable, but it might require some financial commitment from the university. Despite this challenge, such a recommendation is worth considering. Furthermore, EFL teachers could provide students with guidance about how and where to find resources to support EFL learning. All well-trained educators should do this anyway, and it can also be useful when provided as a reading list for students before they start university.

In addition, the policy makers (e.g. the university management and senior staff in the PMP and the EFL programme) should encourage the students to create and organize extra-curricular activities such as reading or debate clubs in English. Again, this is a normal requirement for student life at university, and to some extent *QU-HS* has encouraged this by making the entire university focus on creating an environment where the English language dominates.

Additionally, the policy makers in the university (i.e. the university management and the management of the PMP and EFL programme) should provide a well-resourced laboratory for EFL learning with audio, video and paper-based resources to provide different forms of learning, and enable students to take more responsibility for their own learning. Students can choose to work independently and self-teach or share with their peers to learn from each other outside the classroom. However, in order to allow such interventions to succeed, students from disadvantaged backgrounds first need to be educated about how to function in a progressive learning environment. Such a

recommendation is desirable, yet it may require some additional funding and assigning some teachers to be available in the laboratory to help the students.

EFL teachers play a vital role in helping students to improve their competence. Teachers can build on the EFL gained at schools, and supplement any support gained from family members. Account has to be taken of the diversity of the students in the classroom and how to address their varying needs without marginalising any particular student. Part of the process of helping students is to provide a range of learning and teaching activities and be responsive to each student's actual needs. In addition, teachers should provide advice and skills to the students on ways to develop learning techniques to help them to become independent learners.

Furthermore, teachers should also encourage the students to use educational materials outside the classroom and give them specific guidance on how exactly to use these materials (e.g. books, journals, games, TV, radio, internet). An example of that is listening in English without the use of subtitles. It should be emphasised that the use of such learning resources is only for developing the student competence rather than for formal assessment purposes. Moreover, through their teaching, teachers should adopt a more critical approach when using a progressive style of teaching so that it suits all learners. It is important for the voice of the students to be heard, but it is also equally important to build students' capacity so that they are able to express themselves clearly. The teaching of new ways of learning should be introduced gradually, as some students will need support to adjust to teaching/learning approaches with which they are not comfortable. Initially, time will be needed, as students may not understand the relevance of a different learning approach, particularly if they are unfamiliar with participative and interactive modes. When using such teaching styles that challenge the norms that the students were used to, they

should be introduced gradually and gently, and the process and its usefulness needs to be explained thoroughly.

Moreover, EFL teachers need to encourage academic discussion in the classroom and help the students with their learning skills rather than only providing them with information. Structured, hierarchical knowledge acquisition is useful for learners, but it needs to push the boundaries of the structures around them so that it challenges the students. Teachers need to help the students to realize the importance of EFL learning in their studies and how it can provide the language and approach to learning that is used for sciences and technology in today's education. Thus, students are able to appreciate the boundary-pushing approaches suited to their teaching and learning.

Finally, lack of such data about students' socioeconomic backgrounds will always limit institutions' ability to better understand their students' needs. In order for *QU-HS* in particular and the higher education system in general to be able to develop a robust and efficient support system that caters for the needs of students from different socioeconomic backgrounds, it is important to capture and obtain such data. Such information not only helps to provide support for students who are in need, but also helps us to understand who participates in higher education and who is left behind. Such measures will allow the university and higher education in general to fully engage with the issue of equity and social justice.

The second issue that clearly emerges from the findings is that two conflicting teaching approaches were used by teachers in the EFL programme: CLT and GTM. The issue is not about adopting one approach over the other, but it is about the EFL programme being consistent in the approach it advocates. There is no clear policy in this regard, and in all likelihood none is needed, as teachers need to be free to teach in the approach that they consider works for their

students as well as exploring their subjectivity for the benefit of the students. Although when reading through documents about the EFL programme, one could infer that the general teaching approach that the programme advocates is CLT, the assessment focuses more on a GTM style of learning and teaching. Thus, for the sake of consistency among teachers as well as for sound assessment, it is important to make some recommendations for the policy makers regarding teaching approaches. The programme needs to be clearer about how the general aims of EFL teaching in the university are approached. There is merit in conducting a general review of the elements of the EFL programme and producing a specific curriculum document that outlines clearly the teaching approach(es) in the EFL programme. This teaching approach(es) needs to be effectively communicated to the EFL teachers as well as the students. Successful implementation of this recommendation requires hard work and commitment from the people responsible for the EFL programme in the university, but if the practices of the programme evaluation were established, it would be easier to identify areas where further attention is needed (e.g. in assessment, educational resources and teaching approaches).

Once the programme is clear about the teaching approach(es) needed, it can then be communicated clearly when recruiting new EFL teachers. The quality and types of teachers that are recruited should fit in with the teaching vision held by the university. However, for existing staff, continuous professional training in the form of workshops should be held in order to update and share knowledge of what works best as well as get staff to make recommendations in terms of the teaching approach that best fits the programme. What is more important in this regard is that the policy makers in the university need to utilize the outcome of such teacher training and ensure that the voice of the staff is heard and integrated into the internal developments of the EFL programme. It is equally important for the EFL teachers as well as the

curriculum designers to recognize the potential damage that adopting progressive teaching might cause to students who are not used to this style of learning. They must be aware that uncritical adoption of such pedagogies could result in undesired issues of social injustice, as it is very easy for many EFL teachers to be taken by the glamour and modernity of such progressive pedagogies without always thinking about what is best for all their students.

The third issue that comes out clearly in the data is the issue of assessment and the way it is carried out. From the outset, I must acknowledge that assessment seems to determine most aspects of the EFL programme in the university and thus greatly influences students' learning experience. When I started the study, I underestimated the impact that assessment has on the whole programme. Initially, I thought it only impacted on students' achievement. However, throughout the course of the study, it has become evident that assessment occupies a prominent position in students' learning experiences. It not only influences the way students learn but also impacts on the way teachers teach in the EFL programme. It is the tail that wags the dog. Given this central position of assessment in students' learning, it should be conducted in a manner that reflects the general objectives of the programme as well as the teaching approaches used. It should reflect and balance the skills and knowledge taught in the programme. Presently, analysis of the data shows that assessment drives the students' learning and teaching approach, in that the most important factor is that English is learned primarily to pass examinations and gain high grades. Learning English holistically so that the acquired skills help to construct the language in different contexts that will help in learning any new subject is not tested. Attention should be devoted to the way assessment and examinations are designed and administered. Thus, management of the PMP and the EFL programme should take serious measures to revise the assessment and the way it is conducted. In addition, EFL teachers should be aware about the way

assessment is carried out in the programme and modify their teaching in a way that can help the students to learn the required skills and knowledge as well as to pass whatever type of assessment is administered by the programme.

The recommendations made above regarding the development of the EFL programme should not be understood as compulsory measures for the university; rather, they are suggestions of how the programme could be improved in order to improve teaching and learning. There are some recommendations that can be easily implemented and some that may face challenges. However, these are my considered recommendations as an outsider. It is, however, the prerogative of the management of the EFL programme to reflect on my recommendations and see which ones they would wish to pursue further.

Finally, the commitment that *QU-HS* has shown to developing the ability of the students to use English through its different policies is exemplary and can be shared with other institutions. The rigorous and demanding recruitment criteria and the attractive incentives that *QU-HS* offers allow the university to attract experienced EFL teachers from different nations. This has been significant in bringing different teaching styles, experiences and native English-speakers into the programme. In addition, the extended EFL programme that the university has adopted allows it to provide the students with longer exposure to EFL teaching and learning. Such policies, as many students stated, are helpful in preparing them for their university degrees and assist them to be ready to compete in the wider world. Therefore, policy makers in *QU-HS* should share such good practices with other Saudi universities as well as with policy makers in MoHE so that similar steps can be considered when developing EFL programmes.

8.3.2 Implications for further research

This study is a snapshot qualitative case study that reports the way students in a particular context and country, and within a certain period of time, experience learning in an EFL programme. Thus, the findings reflect the depth and breadth of issues which influenced the learning experience of EFL students. As the research progressed and data was analysed and results evaluated, it became obvious that the research could have gathered more and diverse data such as interviews with management, interviews or the use of questionnaires to gather data for longitudinal or comparative case studies, such as comparing similar results from a different university either inside or outside KSA. This would help to produce further rich data that could contribute to the enhancement of our understanding of the students' learning experiences by following them for longer periods or comparing policies in different institutions or contexts.

Also, due to cultural constraints, this study reports only the learning experiences of male students in the context of *QU-HS*. It would be interesting to see research carried out to analyse the experiences of female students in such a programme and compare it with the current case study of male students in the same programme. In addition, data about students' learning experiences in Saudi higher education using views that emphasis dialogue between the students and their structure are very scarce, and further research could utilize the structure as well as the findings of this study in order to inform further investigation.

Furthermore, although this study is somewhat unique in the way that it investigates the students' learning experiences in Saudi higher education, it is still only a case study using a small sample, so the data could be expanded or further interest added if other similar studies were carried out using different

techniques. Other researchers are invited to undertake investigations to continue to look at the complexity of learning issues in Saudi higher education.

8.4 Reflection on the research journey

At the beginning of my research journey to understand the students' learning experiences, I faced many difficulties. These included not only identifying what learning is and how it can be researched, but also the research design, such as what method should be used, and most importantly, understanding myself as a researcher.

In terms of my conceptual understanding of teaching and learning, this work is evidence of how my understanding of such issues has changed over my research journey. Having been exposed to the Saudi education system, where it is widely believed that learning is a psychological process that can be understood only from an individualistic perspective, I started by adopting most of these ideologies that see learning as a psychological issue. That was reflected in the initial proposal that I submitted when applying for this PhD. However, the initial phases of my research as well as the Master of Social Research (MSc) course in research methods that I studied, and the discussions that I had with my supervisor and many academics in the field, made me question my perceptions about teaching and learning. I started to rethink the individualistic perspectives about teaching and learning and started to believe that teaching and learning might be individual issues, but that they also have a relationship with the wider social frames within which they take place. Teaching and learning, for me, has been transformed from being an individualistic matter into a social phenomenon that involves looking at different social issues that contribute to learning. Thus, the understanding of teaching and learning as

demonstrated through this work is about negotiating the space between the individual views of teaching and learning as well as acknowledging the wider structural issues. This perspective that I adopted in my research has influenced the way I conducted my research as well as the findings that it has yielded.

In terms of conducting the research, my understanding of the research has changed drastically from the point where I started. I have become more aware of the research process and the many assumptions that I had about knowledge, particularly the knowledge that is relevant to the context of this study. When I started, I was not aware of the complexity of researching teaching and learning as phenomena, and I thought that I knew most of the issues that would emerge from this research. Reflecting back on those days, I found that I was not aware of many issues, such as my positionality in terms of the research paradigm as well as my personal situation, which includes my gender, language, race and nationality and how these impact on the research. Also, I took for granted the issues of access, as I was going to conduct the research in a context with which I was familiar. Translation issues as well as trustworthiness were among the many issues that I had to deal with when writing this final report. Dealing and negotiating with such issues made me realise the complexity of doing research in a familiar context, and that it was not as straightforward a process as I had originally assumed.

In the Holy Qur'an (Ali and Pickthall, 1997), verse 85 in Chapter 15 states that "of knowledge ye have been vouchsafed but little". This indicates that no matter how much knowledge we accumulate as human beings, it is still very little, and that we should continue to seek knowledge. This is particularly true in my case, first as a teacher and now as a researcher. Although throughout my research journey, I have learnt about different concepts and notions in relation to education, particularly teaching and learning using English as a medium, I still feel that I fall short of matching the same level of understanding in the

Arabic language. This is because most of my undergraduate as well as my postgraduate education was in an English medium. As an Arab researcher, I still feel that I need to research the Arabic knowledge more in relation to teaching and learning in order to match or bridge the translation gap between my knowledge in Arabic and in English. Thus, part of my future research will be geared towards enhancing my understanding of the knowledge production in the Arabic language in order to marry such knowledge with my conceptual understanding of the many educational issues that I have acquired through my Western education.

Bibliography

Abbas, A., McLean, M., 2007. Qualitative research as a method for making just comparisons of pedagogic quality in higher education: a pilot study. *British Journal of sociology of Education* 28, 723–737.

Abercrombie, N., 2000. *Contemporary British society*, Polity Press, Malden, MA.

Abu-Rizaizah, S., 2010. Evaluation of an English language programme for engineers in a Saudi Arabian university: a case study. (PhD). Newcastle University, UK.

Adamson, B., 2003. Inductive & deductive learning [WWW Document]. Best of Bilash: Improving second language education. URL <http://www.educ.ualberta.ca/staff/olenka.Bilash/best%20of%20bilash/inductivedeductive.html> (accessed 7.13.13).

Ahmed, I., 2012. Investigating students' experiences of learning English as a second language at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan. (PhD). University of Sussex.

Ahmed, R., Sayed, Y., 2009. Promoting access and enhancing education opportunities? The case of “no-fees schools” in South Africa. *Compare* 39, 203–218.

Alamri, A.A.M., 2008. An evaluation of the sixth grade English language textbook for Saudi boys' schools. (Master of Art). King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Alebaikan, R., Troudi, S., 2010. Blended learning in Saudi universities: challenges and perspectives. *ALT-J* 18, 49–59.

Al-Hamdan, S., 2011. Salaries and promotions of Saudi women in private sector. (Master of Art). The American University in Cairo.

Al-Hazimi A., Al-Hyiani A., Roff, S., 2004. Perceptions of the educational environment of the medical school in King Abdul Aziz University, Saudi Arabia. *Medical Teacher* 26, 570–573.

Al-Hazmi, S., 2003. Teachers of English to speakers of other languages. *TESOL Quarterly* 37, 341–344.

Al-Hazmi, S., 2005. English and Arabization: friends or foes? The Saudi experience, in: *Proceedings of the Language in the Age of Globalization Conference*. Presented at the Language in the Age of Globalization Conference, King Khalid University Press, King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia, pp. 493–506.

Al-Hazza'a, M., 2012. The private schools and new regulations. المدارس الأهلية والتنظيم. الجديد.. يا فرحة ما تمت *Alriyadh Newspaper*.

Ali, A.Y., Pickthall, M.M., 1997. The meaning of the Holy Qur'an. Amana Publications.

Ali, S., 2009. Teaching English as an International Language (EIL) in the Gulf Corporation Council (GCC) Countries: The Brown Man's Burden, in: Sharifian, F. [edt.] *English as an international language: Perspectives and pedagogical Issues*. Multilingual Matters, Bristol, UK.

Al-Issa, A., 2002. An ideological and discursive analysis of English language teaching in the Sultanate of Oman. (PhD). University of Queensland, Australia.

Al-Issa, A., 2011. Advancing English language teaching research in Gulf Cooperation Council states universities. *Modern Journal of Applied Linguistics* 3, 06-77.

Al-Issa, A.S., Al-Bulushi, A.H., 2012. English language teaching reform in Sultanate of Oman: The case of theory and practice disparity. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice* 11, 141-176.

Al-Jarf, R., 2006. Large student Enrollments in EFL programs: Challenges and consequences. *Asian EFL Journal* 8, 8-34.

Al-Jarf, R., 2008a. The impact of EIL upon Arabic in Saudi Arabia. *Asian EFL Journal* 10, 193-210.

Al-Jarf, R., 2008b. A call for new benchmarks at Saudi language and translation schools. *Asian EFL Journal* 10, 60-72.

Aljazeera, 2013. The secret of the seven sisters [WWW Document]. Al Jazeera documentary. URL

<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/specialseries/2013/04/201344105231487582.html> (accessed 8.25.13).

Al-Khairiy, M.A., 2013. Saudi English-major undergraduates' academic writing problems: A Taif university perspective. *English Language Teaching* 6, 1-12.

Alkhazim, M.A., 2003. Higher education in Saudi Arabia: Challenges, solutions, and opportunities missed. *Higher Education Policy* 16, 479-486.

Al-Mesnid, A., 2009. The increasing of the instalments of private education. [WWW Document]. Knol. URL <http://knol.google.com> (accessed 8.13.10).

Almokhtsar, 2012. Job contracts for teachers' in private education. عَقْدُ معلمي المدارس [WWW Document]. Almokhtsar. URL <http://www.almokhtsar.com/node/48856> (accessed 7.1.13).

Al-Muhandis, A., 2012. أضخم ميزانية لقطاع التعليم The biggest budget for education sector. Alriyadh Newspaper.

Al-Nujaidi, A., 2003. The relationship between vocabulary size, reading strategies, and reading comprehension of EFL learners in Saudi Arabia (PhD). Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma, USA.

Al-Qifari, A., 2001. The private education in Saudi: does it increase the gap among the society? !التعليم الأهلي في السعودية.. هل يحدث شرجاً اجتماعي؟ [WWW Document]. Bab. URL <http://www.bab.com/node/2163> (accessed 7.10.13).

Al-Qudaihi, A., 2009. Saudi Arabia's Shia press for rights [WWW Document]. BBC. URL <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/7959531.stm> (accessed 5.28.13).

Al-Reshaid, M., 2007. Not out of fear on the Arabic language, but for fear of loss of identity and cultural schizophrenia. ليس خوفاً على اللغة العربية ولكن خوفاً من فقدان الهوية. والفصام الثقافي. Al-Riyadh News Daily.

Al-Roomy, M., 2013. An action research study of collaborative strategic reading in English with Saudi medical students (PhD). University of Sussex, UK.

Al-Sadan, I.A., 2000. Educational assessment in Saudi Arabian schools. Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice 7, 143–155.

Alsaif, A., 2011. Investigating vocabulary input and explaining vocabulary uptake among EFL learners in Saudi Arabia (PhD). Swansea University, UK.

Alsaif, A., Milton, J., 2012. Vocabulary input from school textbooks as a potential contributor to the small vocabulary uptake gained by English as a foreign language learners in Saudi Arabia. *The Language Learning Journal* 40, 21-33.

Alsamadani, H., 2009. The relationship between Saudi EFL college-level students' use of reading strategies and their EFL reading comprehension (PhD). Ohio University, Ohio, USA.

Al-Seghayer, K., 2012. Status and functions of English in Saudi Arabia [WWW Document]. Saudi Gazette. URL <http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentid=20121211145659> (accessed 7.10.13).

Al-Soheem, K., 2009. The Private education in the kingdom: Innovation or repetition. *التعليم الأهلي في المملكة: مأزق التكرار وسباق الابتكار*. Al-Marefh Journal 56.

Al-Sughaer, K., 2009. The relationship of Saudi students with English after leaving schools. *علاقة الطالب السعودي باللغة الإنجليزية تنتهي عند مغادرة المدرسة*. Al-Marefh Journal 132.

Altowjry, A.M., 2005. Reforming higher education in Saudi Arabia: the use of telecommunications technology. (Master of Science). Rochester Institute of Technology, USA.

Ammon, U., 2001. The dominance of English as a language of science: Effects on other languages and language communities. Mouton De Gruyter: New York.

Annamalai, E., 2004. Medium of power: The question of English in education in India, in: Tollefson, J. and Tsui, A. [edt.] *Which agenda? Whose agenda?* Lawrence Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ.

Ansari, A.A., 2012. Teaching of English to Arab students: Problems and remedies. *Educational Research* (ISSN: 2141-5161) 3, 519-524.

Antikainen, A., 1996. *Living in a learning society: life-histories, identities, and education*. Falmer Press, London.

Asharq Al-Awasat, 2011. Saudi Arabia approves the biggest budget for education sector Ever. السعودية تضخ أضخم ميزانية لقطاع التعليم في تاريخ البلاد. Asharq Al-Awasat.

Ashwin, P., 2009. *Analysing teaching-learning interactions in higher education: Accounting for structure and agency*. Continuum International Publishing Group, London.

Atkinson, P., Coffey, A., 2004. *Analysing documentary realities*. *Qualitative Research* 56-75.

Azar, B.S., 2011. *Fundamentals of English grammar*. Pearson Education, New York.

Baeten, M., Kyndt, E., Struyven, K., Dochy, F., 2010. Using student-centred learning environments to stimulate deep approaches to learning: Factors encouraging or discouraging their effectiveness. *Educational Research Review* 5, 243-260.

Bakhtiari, A.S., 2004. World oil production capacity model suggests output peak by 2006-07. *Oil and Gas Journal* 102, 18-19.

Barton, D., Hamilton, M., 1998. *Local literacies: reading and writing in one community*. Psychology Press, Hove, UK.

Barton, D., Hamilton, M., 1999. Literacy practices, in: Ivanič, R. Barton, D., and Hamilton, M. [edt.]. *Situated literacies: reading and writing in context*. Routledge: London.

Barton, D., Hamilton, M., Ivanic, R., 1999. *Situated literacies: Theorising reading and writing in context*. Routledge, London.

Batawi, G., 2006. *Exploring the use of CLT in Saudi Arabia* (Master of Art). American University of Sharjah, Sharjah, UAE.

Becher, T., 1994. The significance of disciplinary differences. *Studies in Higher Education* 19, 151–161.

Becher, T., Parry, S., 2005. The endurance of disciplines, in: In Ivar Bleiklie and Mary Henkel [edt]. *Governing knowledge: A study of community and change in higher education*. Springer, New York.

Becher, T., Trowler, P.R., 2001. *Academic tribes and territories*. The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press, Buckingham.

BECM, 2013. The Basic Law of Governance. [WWW Document]. Bureau of Experts at the Council of Ministers. URL <http://www.boe.gov.sa/ViewStaticPage.aspx?lang=en&PageID=25> (accessed 28-05.13)

Bernard, H.R., 2011. *Research methods in anthropology*. Rowman Altamira. Maryland, USA.

Bersamina, F., 2009. English as Second Language (ESL) learners in Saudi Arabia [WWW Document]. Yahoo! Contributor Network. URL <http://voices.yahoo.com/english-as-second-language-esl-learners-saudi-arabia-2899149.html> (accessed 7.10.13).

Biggs, J., 1993. What do inventories of students' learning processes really measure? A theoretical review and clarification. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 63, 3-19.

Biggs, J., 2001. The reflective institution: Assuring and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. *Higher Education* 41, 221-238.

Birbili, M., 2000. Translating from one language to another [WWW Document]. *Social Research Update* 31: URL <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU31.html> (accessed 7.12.13).

Birch, B.M., 2006. *English L2 reading: Getting to the bottom*. Psychology Press, Hove, UK.

Bjorck, F., 2004. Institutional theory: A new perspective for research into IS/IT security in organisations, in: *System Sciences, 2004. Proceedings of the 37th Annual Hawaii International Conference On*. p. 5-30.

Bleiklie, I., Byrkjeflot, H., 2002. Changing knowledge regimes: Universities in a new research environment. *Higher Education* 44, 519-532.

Block, D., Cameron, D., 2002. *Globalization and language teaching*. Routledge, London.

Boghossian, P., 2003. How Socratic pedagogy Works. *Informal Logic* 23, 17-25.

Boud, D., 2010. *Assessment 2020: Seven propositions for assessment reform in higher education (Education)*. Australian Learning & Teaching Council, Australia.

Bourdieu, P., 2005. *The social structures of the economy*. Polity, Cambridge, UK.

Bourdieu, P., 2008. The forms of capital in, in: In Nicole Woolsey Biggart [edt]. Readings in economic sociology. Blackwell, Oxford.

Bourdieu, P., Passeron, J.-C., 1979. The inheritors: French students and their relation to culture. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Bowen, G.A., 2009. Document analysis as a qualitative research method. Qualitative Research Journal 9, 27–40.

Brinton, M.C., Nee, V., 1998. The new institutionalism in sociology. Russell Sage Foundation, New York.

Brislin, R., 1973. Cross-cultural research methods. John Wiley and Sons, New York.

Broughton, G., Brumfit, C., Pincas, A. and Wilde, R. (1998) Teaching English as a Foreign Language. London: Routledge.

Brualdi, A., 1998. Implementing Performance Assessment in the Classroom. [WWW Document]. ERIC Digest. URL http://www.users.muohio.edu/shermalw/performance_ed423312.html (accessed 11.07.13).

Brown, H.D., 2007. Principles of language learning and teaching. Longman, New York.

Brown, H.D., Abeywickrama, P., 2004. Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices. Longman, New York.

Brown, S., and Knight, P., 1994. Assessing learners in higher education. Kogan Page, London.

Bryman, A., 2003. Quantity and quality in social research. Routledge, London.

Bryman, A., 2012. Social research methods. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Butler, Y.G., 2011. The implementation of communicative and task-based language teaching in the Asia-Pacific region. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 31, 36–57.

Calderhead, J., 1996. Teachers: Beliefs and knowledge, in: Berliner, David C. and Calfee, Robert C. [edt.]. *Handbook of educational psychology*. Simon & Schuster Macmillan, New York.

CBSNews, 2009. 2 million Muslims Gather in Mecca. [WWW Document]. CBSNews. URL <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/01/19/world/main667941.shtml> (accessed 01.07.13)

Chang, M., 2011. EFL teachers' attitudes toward communicative language teaching in Taiwanese college. *Asian EFL Journal* 53, 17–34.

Chapelle, C., 2003. *English language learning and technology: Lectures on applied linguistics in the age of information and communication technology*. John Benjamins, Philadelphia.

Charise, A., 2007. More English, less Islam? An overview of English language Functions in the Arabian/Persian Gulf [WWW Document]. *The English Language(s): Cultural & Linguistic Perspectives*. URL <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~cpercy/courses/eng6365-charise.htm> (accessed 07.01.13).

Choy, S.C., Troudi, S., 2006. An investigation into the changes in perceptions of and attitudes towards learning English in a Malaysian college. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* 18, 120–130.

CIA, 2013. Saudi Arabia. [WWW Document].The World Factbook. Central Intelligence Agency. URL <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sa.html> (accessed 07.01.13).

Clark, E., Paran, A., 2007. The employability of non-native-speaker teachers of EFL: A UK survey. *System* 35, 407–430.

Clarke, M., 2007. The impact of higher education rankings on student access, choice, and opportunity. *Higher Education in Europe* 32, 59–70.

Cohen, D., Crabtree, B., 2006. Qualitative research guidelines project. [WWW Document]. Robert Wood Jonhson Foundation. URL http://www.sswm.info/sites/default/files/reference_attachments/COHEN%202006%20Semistructured%20Interview.pdf (accessed 11.07.13).

Cohen, L., Manion, L., Morrison, K., 2011. *Research methods in education*. Routledge, London.

Coleman, J. S., 1994. *Foundations of social theory*. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, USA.

Collins, R., 1979. *The credential society: An historical sociology of education and stratification*. Academic Press, New York.

Cordesman, A., 2002. Saudi Arabia Enters the 21st century: III. Politics and Internal Stability. [WWW Document]. Center for Strategic and International Studies. URL <http://csis.org/publication/saudi-arabia-enters-21st-century-iii-politics-and-internal-stability> (accessed 01.07.13).

Creswell, J.W., 2012. *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Pearson, Boston.

Crook, C.J., 1997. Cultural practices and socioeconomic attainment: The Australian experience. Greenwood Press, London.

Crossouard, B., 2011. Using formative assessment to support complex learning in conditions of social adversity. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice* 18, 59–72.

Dall’Alba, G., 1991. Foreshadowing conceptions of teaching. *Research and Development in Higher Education* 13, 293–297.

Darling, J., 1994. *Child-centred education: and its critics*. SAGE Publications, London.

Davies, B., 1994. Durkheim and the sociology of education in Britain. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 15, 3–25.

De Civita, M., Pagani, L., Vitaro, F., Tremblay, R.E., 2004. The role of maternal educational aspirations in mediating the risk of income source on academic failure in children from persistently poor families. *Children and Youth Services Review* 26, 749–769.

De Graaf, N.D., De Graaf, P.M., Kraaykamp, G., 2000. Parental cultural capital and educational attainment in the Netherlands: A refinement of the cultural capital perspective. *Sociology of Education* 73, 92–111.

De Graaf, P., 1986. The Impact of financial and cultural resources on educational attainment in the Netherlands. *Sociology of Education* 59, 237–246.

Denman, B.D., Hilal, K.T., 2011. From barriers to bridges: An investigation on Saudi student mobility (2006–2009). *International Review of Education* 57, 299–318.

Denscombe, M., 2010. *The good research guide: for small-scale social research projects*. Open University Press, London.

Denzin, N.K., Lincoln, Y.S., 2011. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. SAGE Publications, London.

Depledge, J., 2008. Striving for no: Saudi Arabia in the climate change regime. *Global Environmental Politics* 8, 9–35.

Desforges, C., Abouchaar, A., Britain, G., 2003. The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment: A literature review. DfES Publications, Nottingham, UK.

DiMaggio, P., 1998. The new institutionalisms: avenues of collaboration. *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics* 154, 696–705.

Donn, G., Al Manthri, Y., 2010. *Globalisation and higher education in the Arab Gulf States*. Symposium Books, Oxford.

Douglas, D., Frazier, S., 2001. Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy. *TESOL Quarterly* 35, 341–342.

Doumato, E.A., 2003. Education in Saudi Arabia: gender, jobs, and the price of religion, in: Doumato, E. and Posusney, M. [edt.]. *Women and Globalization in the Arab Middle East*. Lenne Rienner Publisher, London.

Dunne, M., Pryor, J., Yates, P., 2005. *Becoming a Researcher: A companion to the research process*. McGraw-Hill International, Berkshire, UK.

Eckstein, H., 2000. Case study and theory in political science, in: Gomm, R., Hammersley, M. and Foster, P. [edt.]. *Case Study Method: Key Issues, Key Texts*, SAGE Publications, London.

Elders, L., Paul, R., 2003. Critical thinking: Teaching students how to study and learn. *Journal of Developmental Education* 27, 36–37.

Elyas, T., 2008. The attitude and the impact of the American English as a global language within the Saudi education system. *Novitas-Royal: Research on Youth and Language* 2, 28–38.

Elyas, T., Picard, M., 2010. Saudi Arabian educational history: impacts on English language teaching. *Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues* 3, 136–145.

Emerson, R.M., Fretz, R.I., Shaw, L.L., 2001. Participant observation and fieldnotes, in: Atkinson, P., Delamont, S., Coffey, A., Lofland, J., Lofland, L. [edt.]. *Handbook of ethnography*. SAGE, London.

England, K.V., 1994. Getting personal: Reflexivity, positionality, and feminist research. *The Professional Geographer* 46, 80–89.

Entwistle, N., McCune, V., Hounsell, J., 2002. Approaches to studying and perceptions of university teaching-learning environments: Concepts, measures and preliminary findings. [WWW Document]. Enhancing Teaching and Learning Environments in Undergraduate Courses Occasional Report 1. URL <http://www.etl.tla.ed.ac.uk/docs/etlreport1.pdf> (accessed 01.07.13).

Entwistle, N., Smith, C., 2002. Personal understanding and target understanding: Mapping influences on the outcomes of learning. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 72, 321–342.

Entwistle, N.J., Ramsden, P., 1982. Understanding student learning. ERIC, London.

- Evans, S., 2009. The medium of instruction in Hong Kong revisited: Policy and practice in the reformed Chinese and English streams. *Research Papers in Education* 24, 287–309.
- Evans, W.J., 2000. Construct validity of the attitudes about reality scale. *Psychological Reports* 86, 738–744.
- Falchikov, N., 2013. Improving assessment through student involvement: Practical solutions for aiding learning in higher and further education. Routledge, London.
- Findlow, S., 2006. Higher education and linguistic dualism in the Arab Gulf. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 27, 19–36.
- Finlay, W.M., Lyons, E., 2001. Methodological issues in interviewing and using self-report questionnaires with people with mental retardation. *Psychological Assessment* 13, 319–335.
- Firestone, W.A., 1993. Alternative arguments for generalizing from data as applied to qualitative research. *Educational Researcher* 22, 16–23.
- Flyvbjerg, B., 2006. Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry* 12, 219–245.
- Fontana, A., Frey, J.H., 1994. *Interviewing: The art of science*. SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, Calif.
- Ford, K., Sankey, J., Crisp, J., 2007. Development of children's assent documents using a child-centred approach. *Journal of Child Health Care* 11, 19–28.

Fossey, E., Harvey, C., McDermott, F., Davidson, L., 2002. Understanding and evaluating qualitative research. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 36, 717–732.

Ganga, D., Scott, S., 2006. Cultural “insiders” and the issue of positionality in qualitative migration research: Moving “across” and moving “along” researcher-participant divides. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 7, 1-12.

Gibbs, G., 2005. Improving the quality of student learning. (PhD) University of Glamorgan, UK.

Gibbs, G., Dunbat-Goddet, H., 2007. The effects of programme assessment environments on student learning. *Higher Education Academy* 36, 479–492.

Gordon, T., Holland, J., Lahelma, E., 2001. Friends or foes? Interpreting relations between girls in school, in: Geoffrey Walford and Caroline Hudson [edt.]. *Genders and Sexualities in Educational Ethnography*. Emerald, Bingley.

Gorjian, B., Pazhakh, A., Parang, K., 2012. An investigation on the effect of critical thinking (CT) instructions on Iranian EFL learners’ descriptive writing: A case of gender study. *Advances in Asian Social Science* 1, 114–118.

Green, A., Fangqing, W., Cochrane, P., Dyson, J., Paun, C., 2012. English spreads as teaching language in universities worldwide [WWW Document]. *University World News*. URL <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20120621131543827> (accessed 7.10.13).

Grenfell, M., James, D., 2004. Change in the field – changing the field: Bourdieu and the methodological practice of educational research. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 25, 507–523.

Guba, E.G., Lincoln, Y.S., 1989. *Fourth generation evaluation*. Sage Publications, Newbury Park, Calif.

Guba, E.G., Lincoln, Y.S., 1994. Competing paradigms in qualitative research, in: Denzin, N. and Lincoln, N. [edt.]. *Handbook of qualitative research 2*. SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, Calif.

Habbash, M., 2011. Status change of English and its role in shaping public education language policy and practice in Saudi Arabia: a postmodernist critical perspective (PhD). University of Exeter, UK.

Haggis, T., 2003. Constructing images of ourselves? A critical investigation into “approaches to learning” research in higher education. *British Educational Research Journal* 29, 89–104.

Hall, J.K., Vitanova, G., Marchenkova, L.A., 2004. Dialogue with Bakhtin on second and foreign language learning: New perspectives. Psychology Press, Hove, UK.

Hamdan, A., 2005. Women and education in Saudi Arabia: Challenges and achievements. *International Education Journal* 6, 42–64.

Hancock, D.R., Bray, M., Nason, S.A., 2002. Influencing university students’ achievement and motivation in a technology course. *The Journal of Educational Research* 95, 365–372.

Hartley, J., 2012. *Learning and studying: A research perspective*. Routledge, London.

Hayes, W., 2006. The progressive education movement: is it still a factor in today's schools? Rowman & Littlefield Education, Lanham.

Henkel, M., 2005. Academic identity and autonomy in a changing policy environment. *Higher Education* 49, 155–176.

Henson, K. T. (2008) Teaching methods: history and status. *Teaching methods: Designs for learning* 1, 2-5.

Heshusius, L., Ballard, K., 1996. From positivism to interpretivism and beyond: Tales of transformation in educational and social research. Teachers College Press, New York.

Heymann, S., Earle, A., 2000. Low-income parents: How do working conditions affect their opportunity to help school-age children at risk? *American Educational Research Journal* 37, 833–848.

Hilali, M., 2012. Saudi Arabia joining the WTO: An increase in the country GDP انضمام السعودية إلى منظمة التجارة يرفع الناتج الوطني [WWW Document]. Al-Eqtisadiah. URL http://www.aleqt.com/2012/04/16/article_647462.html (accessed 01.07.13).

Hill, N.E., Taylor, L.C., 2004. Parental school involvement and children's academic achievement: Pragmatics and issues. *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 13, 161–164.

Hinton, P.R., 2007. Learning and studying: a research perspective. Taylor & Francis, London.

Hmelo-Silver, C.E., Jordan, R., Liu, L., Chernobilsky, E., 2011. Representational tools for understanding complex computer-supported collaborative learning environments, in: Sadhana Puntambekar, Gijsbert Erkens, Cindy Hmelo-Silver [edt.]. *Analyzing Interactions in CSCL*. Springer, New York.

Holliday, A., 1994. *Appropriate methodology and social context*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Honig, H.G., 1997. Positions, power and practice: Functionalist approaches and translation quality assessment. *Current Issues in Language & Society* 4, 6–34.

Hooks, B., 2010. *Teaching critical thinking: practical wisdom*. Routledge, New York.

Hourani, A.H., 2013. *A history of the Arab peoples*. Faber, London.

Huberman, A.M., Miles, M.B., 1994. Data management and analysis methods, in: Denzin H. and Lincoln, Y. [edt.]. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, Calif.

IMBSIU, 2011. Preparatory Year [WWW Document]. Imam Mohammed bin Saud Islamic University. URL http://www.imamu.edu.sa/sites/en/colleges_and_institutes/colleges/medicine/Curriculum/preparatoryyear.aspx (accessed 7.13.13).

Immergut, E.M., 1998. The theoretical core of the new institutionalism. *Politics and Society* 26, 5–34.

Ingram, P., Clay, K., 2000. The choice-within-constraints new institutionalism and implications for sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology* 525–546.

Jæger, M.M., 2009. Equal access but unequal outcomes: Cultural capital and educational choice in a meritocratic society. *Social Forces* 87, 1943–1971.

Jæger, M.M., 2011. Does cultural capital really affect academic achievement? New evidence from combined sibling and panel data. *Sociology of Education* 84, 281–298.

James, D., Biesta, G., 2007. Improving learning cultures in further education. Routledge, London.

James, N., 2013. The learning trajectories of “old-timers”: academic identities and communities of practices in higher education, in Hughes, N, Jewson, N. and Unwin, L. [edt.].Communities of practice: Critical perspectives. Routledge, London.

Järvelä, S., Volet, S., Järvenoja, H., 2010. Research on motivation in collaborative learning: Moving beyond the cognitive-situative divide and combining individual and social processes. *Educational Psychologist* 45, 15–27.

Jensen, J.L., Rodgers, R., 2001. Cumulating the intellectual gold of case study research. *Public Administration Review* 61, 235–246.

Johnston, B., 2003. Values in English language teaching. L. Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah.

Jones, K., McLean, M., Amigoni, D., Kinsman, M., 2005. Investigating the Production of university English in mass higher education towards an alternative methodology. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* 4, 247–264.

Karmani, S., 2010. On perceptions of the socialising effects of English-medium education on students at a Gulf Arab university with particular reference to the United Arab Emirates (EdD). University of Exeter, UK.

Kember, D., 1997. A reconceptualisation of the research into university academics’ conceptions of teaching. *Learning and Instruction* 7, 255–275.

Kember, D., Kwan, K.-P., 2000. Lecturers’ approaches to teaching and their relationship to conceptions of good teaching. *Instructional Science* 28, 469–490.

Kember, D., Leung, D.Y., McNaught, C., 2008. A workshop activity to demonstrate that approaches to learning are influenced by the teaching and learning environment. *Active Learning in Higher Education* 9, 43–56.

Kezar, A.J., 2006. The impact of institutional size on student engagement. *NASPA Journal* 43, 87–114.

KFPMU, 2010. History & Philosophy [WWW Document]. King Fahad Petroleum and Mineral University. URL http://www.kfupm.edu.sa/SitePages/en/history_philosophy.aspx (accessed 07.01.13).

Kiomrs, R., Abdolmehdi, R., Naser, R., 2011. On the interaction of test washback and teacher assessment literacy: the case of Iranian EFL secondary school teachers. *English Language Teaching* 4, 156–161.

Knight, P., 1995. *Assessment for learning in higher education*. Psychology Press, Hove, UK.

Knight, P., 2002. Summative assessment in higher education: Practices in disarray. *Studies in Higher Education* 27, 275–286.

Koda, K., 2013. Second language reading, scripts, and orthographies, in: Chapelle, C. [edt.]. *The encyclopaedia of applied linguistics*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Oxford, UK.

Kreber, C., Castleden, H., 2009. Reflection on teaching and epistemological structure: reflective and critically reflective processes in “pure/soft” and “pure/hard” fields. *Higher Education* 57, 509–531.

Krieger, Z., 2007. Saudi Arabia puts its billions behind Western-style higher education. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 54, A1.

Kuhn, D., 2005. Education for thinking [WWW Document]. URL <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10318431> (accessed 7.11.13).

Kulieke, M., Bakker, J., Collins, C., Fennimore, T., Fine, C., Herman, J., Jones, B.F., Raack, L., Tinzmann, M.B., 1990. Why should assessment be based on a vision of learning. [WWW Document]. North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. URL http://www.lerenvandocenten.nl/files/kulieke_et_al_no.pdf (accessed 11.07.13)

Kvale, S., 1996. Interviews: an introduction to qualitative research interviewing. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, Calif.

Kvale, S., 1999. The psychoanalytic interview as qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry* 5, 87–113.

Kvale, S., 2006. Dominance through interviews and dialogues. *Qualitative Inquiry* 12, 480–500.

Lall, M., 2011. Pushing the child centred approach in Myanmar: the role of cross national policy networks and the effects in the classroom. *Critical Studies in Education* 52, 219–233.

Lall, M., 2011. Pushing the child centred approach in Myanmar: the role of cross national policy networks and the effects in the classroom. *Critical Studies in Education* 52, 219–233.

Lareau, A., Weininger, E., 2003. Cultural capital in educational research: A critical assessment. *Theory and Society* 32, 567–606.

Larsen-Freeman, D., 2000. Techniques and principles in language teaching. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Laurillard, D., 1984. Styles and approaches in problem-solving, in: Marton, F., Hounsell, D. and Entwistle, N. [edt.]. *The Experience of Learning*. Academic Press, Edinburgh.

Lave, J., Wenger, E., 1991. *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Lave, J., Wenger, E., 2001. Legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice. *Supporting Lifelong Learning: Perspective on Learning* 1, 111–126.

Law, B., Eckes, M., 1995. *Assessment and ESL: On the yellow brick road to the withered of Oz. A handbook for K-12 teachers*. Peguis Publishers, Manitoba, Canada.

Lea, M.R., Stierer, B., 2000. *Student writing in higher education: new contexts*. Open University Press, London.

Lea, M.R., Street, B.V., 1998. Student writing in higher education: An academic literacies approach. *Studies in Higher Education* 23, 157–172.

Lea, M.R., Street, B.V., 2006. The “academic literacies” model: Theory and applications. *Theory Into Practice* 45, 368–377.

Lee, A., Boud, D., 2003. Writing groups, change and academic identity: Research development as local practice. *Studies in Higher Education* 28, 187–200.

Lee, J.-S., Bowen, N.K., 2006. Parent involvement, cultural capital, and the achievement gap among elementary school children. *American Educational Research Journal* 43, 193–218.

Liao, X., 2004. The need for communicative language teaching in China. *ELT journal* 58, 270–273.

Lin, A., Luk, J., 2004. Local creativity in the face of global domination: Insights of Bakhtin for teaching English for dialogic communication, in: Hall, J., Vitanova, J. and Vitanova, L. [edt.]. *Dialogue with Bakhtin on second and foreign language learning: New perspectives*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, New Jersey.

Lincoln, Y.S., 1985. *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, Calif.

Lincoln, Y.S., Guba, E.G., 1986. But is it rigorous? Trustworthiness and authenticity in naturalistic evaluation. *New Directions for Program Evaluation* 30, 73–84.

Lincoln, Y.S., Guba, E.G., 1990. Judging the quality of case study reports. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 3, 53–59.

Lincoln, Y.S., Lynham, S.A., Guba, E.G., 2011. Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences, revisited, in: Denzin, H. and Lincoln Y. [edt.]. *the SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. SAGE Publications, London.

Lindblom-Ylänne, S., Trigwell, K., Nevgi, A., Ashwin, P., 2006. How approaches to teaching are affected by discipline and teaching context. *Studies in Higher Education* 31, 285–298.

Littlewood, W., 2007. Communicative and task-based language teaching in East Asian classrooms. *Language Teaching* 40, 243–249.

Littlewood, W., Liu, N., 1996. *Hong Kong students and their English*. Macmillan, Hong Kong.

Liu, C.H., Matthews, R., 2005. Vygotsky's philosophy: Constructivism and its criticisms examined. *International Education Journal* 6, 386–399.

Liz, S., 2002a. John. American headway 1 y 2: Student's book. Oxford University Press, New York.

Liz, S., 2002b. John. American headway starter student's book. Oxford University Press, New York.

Llewellyn, J., Hancock, J., Kirst, M., Roeloffs, Y., 1982. A perspective on education in Hong Kong (Government Report No. 1). Government Printer, Hong Kong.

Lofland, J., Snow, D., Anderson, L., Lofland, L.H., 2006. Analyzing social settings: a guide to qualitative observation and analysis. Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, Belmont, CA.

Majid, A., 2008. Saudi Arabia has a hundred billion riyals to support and develop التنمية السعودية تصرف ملايين الريالات لدعم التنمية. [WWW Document]. Daralhayat. URL http://www.daralhayat.com/arab_news/gulf_news/05-2008/Item-20080524-1c5a4962-c0a8-10ed-01e2-5c73502dede9/story.html (accessed 01.07.13).

Majlis Ash-Shura, 2013. Shura in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: A Historical Background. [WWW Document]. Majlis Ash-Shura. URL <http://www.shura.gov.sa/wps/wcm/connect/ShuraEn/internet/Historical+BG/> (accessed 28.05.13).

Mann, S.J., 2000. The students' experience of reading. *Higher Education* 39, 297–317.

Marginson, S., 2007. Global university rankings: Implications in general and for Australia. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 29, 131–142.

Marginson, S., 2008. Global field and global imagining: Bourdieu and worldwide higher education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 29, 303–315.

Marton, F., Booth, S.A., 1997. *Learning and awareness*. Routledge, London.

Marton, F., Tsui, A.B., Chik, P.P., Ko, P.Y., Lo, M.L., 2013. *Classroom discourse and the space of learning*. Routledge, London.

Mascolo, M.F., 2009. Beyond student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogy: Teaching and learning as guided participation. *Pedagogy and the Human Sciences* 1, 3–27.

May, T., 2011. *Social research: Issues, methods and research*. McGraw-Hill International, Berkshire, UK.

McCulloch, G., 2004. *Documentary research: In education, history and the social sciences*. Routledge, London.

McDonough, P.M., 1997. *Choosing colleges: How social class and schools structure opportunity*. Suny Press, New York.

McNeal, R.B., 1999. Parental involvement as social capital: Differential effectiveness on science achievement, truancy, and dropping out. *Social Forces* 78, 117–144.

Merriam, S.B., 1998. *Qualitative research and case study applications in education: Revised and expanded from “case study research in education”*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Merriam, S.B., Johnson-Bailey, J., Lee, M.-Y., Kee, Y., Ntseane, G., Muhamad, M., 2001. Power and positionality: Negotiating insider/outsider status within and across cultures. *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 20, 405–416.

Meyer, H.-D., Rowan, B., 2006. Institutional analysis and the study of education. The new institutionalism in education, in: Heinz-Dieter, H. and Rowan, [edt.]. The new institutionalism in education. State University of New York Press, Albany, USA.

Mikulecky, B., 2008. Pearson education [WWW Document]. Teaching Reading in a Second Language. URL <http://www.longmanhomeusa.com/content/FINAL-LO%20RES-Mikulecky-Reading%20Monograph%20.pdf> (accessed 7.7.13).

Mills, C., 2008. Reproduction and transformation of inequalities in schooling: the transformative potential of the theoretical constructs of Bourdieu. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 29, 79–89.

Mitchell, R.O., Rashid, H., Dawood, F., AlKhalidi, A., 2013. Hajj crowd management and navigation system: People tracking and location based services via integrated mobile and RFID systems, in: Proceedings of Computer Applications Technology (ICCAT), 2013 International Conference. IEEE, Sousse pp. 1–7.

MoEP-Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2003. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Human development report. [WWW Document]. URL <http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&sqi=2&ved=0CDAQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fplanipolis.iiep.unesco.org%2Fupload%2FSaudi%2520Arabia%2FSaudi%2520Arabia%2520HDR%25202003%2520en.pdf&ei=P->

ykUbiBMeKu0QXB04DgCw&usg=AFQjCNELvQc8JVBaLRoIYgLuIGZnfB6o2w
&sig2=7T4uzt2o0Yrf4BaWblySIw (accessed 28.05.13).

Mohammad, R., 2001. Insiders' and/or "outsiders": Positionality, theory and praxis, in: Limb, M. and Dwyer, C., (Edt.). Qualitative methodologies for geographers: Issues and debates. Arnold, London.

Mohammed, I., 2013. Kingdom tops world in education spending. Arab News.

MoHE-Ministry of Higher Education, 1999. System of higher education نظام التعليم العالي السعودي. Ministry of Higher Education, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

MoHE-Ministry of Higher Education, 2009. General department of scholarships [WWW Document]. Ministry of Higher Education. URL <http://www.mohe.gov.sa/en/Ministry/SCHOLARSHIPSAGENCY/Pages/Scholar-Ships-Agency.aspx> (accessed 7.1.13).

MoHE-Ministry of Higher Education, 2010a. King Abdullah scholarships program [WWW Document]. Ministry of Higher Education. URL <http://www.mohe.gov.sa/en/studyaboard/King-Abdullahstages/Pages/default.aspx> (accessed 7.1.13).

MoHE-Ministry of Higher Education, 2010b. Saudi Arabia: Kingdom of humanity [WWW Document]. Ministry of Higher Education. URL <http://www.mohe.gov.sa/en/studyinside/aboutKSA/Pages/default.aspx> (accessed 7.1.13).

MoHE-Ministry of Higher Education, 2010c. 14 Deans discuss situation of preparatory students with unsuccessful admission to med schools [WWW Document]. Ministry of Higher Education. URL <http://www.mohe.gov.sa/en/news/Pages/aan116.aspx> (accessed 7.1.10).

MoHE-Ministry of Higher Education, 2013. Higher education in Saudi Arabia [WWW Document]. Ministry of Higher Education. URL <http://www.mohe.gov.sa/en/aboutus/Pages/default.aspx> (accessed 7.7.13).

Mok, J., 2010. The new role of English language teachers: developing students' critical thinking in Hong Kong secondary school classrooms. *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly* 12, 262–287.

Morgan, D.L., 2007. Paradigms lost and pragmatism regained methodological implications of combining qualitative and quantitative methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 1, 48–76.

Morris, P., Adamson, R., Au, M.L., Chan, K.K., Chan, W.Y., Ko, P.Y., Lai, A.W., Lo, M.L., Morris, E., Ng, F.P., 1996. Target oriented curriculum evaluation project: Interim report. The University of Hong Kong Press, Hong Kong.

Moussu, L., Llurda, E., 2008. Non-native English-speaking English language teachers: History and research. *Language Teaching* 41, 315–348.

Muller, T., Herder, S., Adamson, J., Brown, P.S., 2012. *Innovating EFL Teaching in Asia*. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Munk, M.D., Krarup, T.M., 2011. Cultural Capital Theory Revisited: Perspectives on Explanations of Educational Attainment. [WWW Document]. Department of Political Science, Aalborg University Copenhagen. URL http://vbn.aau.dk/ws/files/66683224/Cultural_Capital_Theory_Revisited_Final.pdf (accessed 01.07.13).

Muñoz, A.P., Álvarez, M.E., 2010. Washback of an oral assessment system in the EFL classroom. *Language Testing* 27, 33–49.

Murcia Quintero, D., 2012. Critical thinking applied in communicative tasks: An innovative pedagogical practice in the EFL classroom through action research. [WWW Document]. Universidad Tecnológica De Pereira, Calle, Colombia. URL <http://repositorio.utp.edu.co/dspace/handle/11059/2602> (accessed 11.07.13).

Murray, H., Olivier, A., Human, P., 1998. Learning through problem solving, in: Proceedings of Project Management Exchange Conference. University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. pp. 1-169.

Musoba, G., Baez, B., 2009. The cultural capital of “cultural capital”, in: Smart, J. [edt.]. Higher education: Handbook of theory and research: Volume XIX. Agathon Press, Bronx.

Musthafa, B., 2001. Communicative language teaching in Indonesia: issues of theoretical assumptions and challenges in classroom practice. Southeast Asian Journal of Education 2, 296-308.

Naidoo, R., 2004. Fields and institutional strategy: Bourdieu on the relationship between higher education, inequality and society. British Journal of Sociology of Education 25, 457-471.

Naqvi, R., McKeough, A., Thorne, K.J., Pfitscher, C., 2012. Dual language books as an emergent-literacy resource: Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning. Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 1-28

Nassaji, H., 2011. Teaching grammar in second language classrooms: integrating form-focused instruction in communicative context, ESL & applied linguistics professional series. Routledge, New York.

Nevo, J., 1998. Religion and national identity in Saudi Arabia. Middle Eastern Studies 34, 34-53.

Nunan, D., 2003. The Impact of English as a Global Language on Educational Policies and Practices in the Asia-Pacific Region. *TESOL Quarterly* 37, 589–613.

O'Donnell, A.M., Hmelo-Silver, C.E., Erkens, G., 2013. Collaborative learning, reasoning, and technology. Routledge, London.

Olssen, M., Peters, M.A., 2005. Neoliberalism, higher education and the knowledge economy: from the free market to knowledge capitalism. *Journal of Education Policy* 20, 313–345.

Omar, M., Yushau, B., 2006. The effects of promotion exams in preparatory year program on students' performance in first calculus course at university, in: *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on The Teaching of Mathematics*. KFUPM, Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia.

Osborn, T.A., 2006. Teaching world languages for social justice: a sourcebook of principles and practices. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah.

Ouyang, H., 2003. Resistance to the communicative method of language instruction within a progressive Chinese university, in: Anderson-Levitt, K. [edt.]. *Local meanings, global schooling: anthropology and world culture theory*. Palgrave, New York.

Ozsevik, Z., 2010. The use of communicative language teaching (CLT): Turkish EFL teachers' perceived difficulties in implementing CLT in Turkey (Master of Art). University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, USA.

Palincsar, A., 1998. Social constructivist perspectives on teaching and learning, in: Daniels, H. [edt.]. *Introduction to Vygotsky*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

- Papi, M., Abdollahzadeh, E., 2012. Teacher motivational practice, student motivation, and possible L2 selves: An examination in the Iranian EFL context. *Language Learning* 62, 571-594.
- Patton, M.Q., 1990. *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. SAGE Publications, London.
- Paulsen, M.B., St John, E.P., 2002. Social class and college costs: Examining the financial nexus between college choice and persistence. *The Journal of Higher Education* 73, 189-236.
- Plakans, L., 2010. Learning to read across languages: Cross-linguistic relationships in first-and second-language literacy development. *The Modern Language Journal* 94, 154-155.
- Poerksen, B., 2004. *The certainty of uncertainty: Dialogues introducing constructivism*. Imprint Academic, Exeter, UK.
- Porter, S.R., 2006. Institutional structures and student engagement. *Research in Higher Education* 47, 521-558.
- Potter, J., 1996. *Representing reality: Discourse, rhetoric and social construction*. SAGE Publications, London.
- Powell, W.W., 1991. *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Pratt, D.D., 1998. *Five perspectives on teaching in adult and higher education*. Krieger Publisher, Malabar, Fla.
- Prior, L., 2003. *Using documents in social research*. SAGE Publications, London.

Prokop, M., 2003. Saudi Arabia: the politics of education. *International Affairs* 79, 77-89.

Prosser, M., 1999. *Understanding learning and teaching: the experience in higher education*. Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press, Buckingham, UK.

Prosser, M., Ramsden, P., Trigwell, K., Martin, E., 2003. Dissonance in experience of teaching and its relation to the quality of student learning. *Studies in Higher Education* 28, 37-48.

Prosser, M., Trigwell, K., Taylor, P., 1994. A phenomenographic study of academics' conceptions of science learning and teaching. *Learning and instruction* 4, 217-231.

Pryor, J., Crossouard, B., 2008. A socio-cultural theorisation of formative assessment. *Oxford Review of Education* 34, 1-20.

Punch, K.F., 2005. *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. SAGE Publications, London..

Putnam, R.D., 2001. *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. Simon and Schuster, London.

QU-HS, 2006. *Student guide*. Quder University for Health Sciences, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

QU-HS, 2011. Message from BS chairman [WWW Document]. College of Medicine. URL http://com.XXXX.edu.sa/eng/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=459&Itemid=398 (accessed 7.13.13).

QU-HS, 2012a. الجامعة في سطور Brief about the university [WWW Document]. Quder University for Health Sciences. URL <http://www.XXXX.edu.sa/Arabic/AboutUs/Pages/About.aspx> (accessed 7.13.13).

QU-HS, 2012b. Mission and vision [WWW Document]. Quder for Health Sciences. URL <http://www.XXXX.edu.sa/English/AboutUs/Pages/MissionandVision.aspx> (accessed 7.13.13).

Rabab'ah, G., 2005. Communication problems facing Arab learners of English. *Journal of Language and Learning* 3, 180-197.

Race, P., 2007. *The lecturer's toolkit: a practical guide to learning, teaching & assessment*. Kogan Page, London.

Rajab, H., 2013. Developing speaking and writing skills of L1 Arabic EFL learners through teaching of IPA phonetic codes. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 3, 653-659.

Rawaf, H.S.A., Simmons, C., 1992. Distance higher education for women in Saudi Arabia: Present and proposed. *Distance Education* 13, 65-80.

Regmi, K., Naidoo, J., Pilkington, P., 2010. Understanding the processes of translation and transliteration in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 9, 16-26.

Richards, J. C., 2008. *Communicative Language Teaching*. [WWW Document]. URL <http://www.phil.muni.cz/elf/mod/resource/view.php?inpopup=true&id=88013http://colleges.ksu.edu.sa/Papers/Papers/What%20is%20missing%20in%20the%20EFL%20reading%20classroom.doc> (accessed 13.07.13).

Richards, J.C., Renandya, W., 2002. *Methodology in language teaching: an anthology of current practice*. Cambridge University Press, New York.

Richards, J.C., Rodgers, T.S., 2001. *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Richardson, L., 2000. Writing: A method of inquiry, in: Denzin N. K. and Lincoln Y. S. [edt.]. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Robbins, D., 1993. The practical importance of Bourdieu's analyses of higher education. *Studies in Higher Education* 18, 151–163.

Rockoff, J.E., 2004. The impact of individual teachers on student achievement: Evidence from panel data. *The American Economic Review* 94, 247–252.

Roger, T., Johnson, D.W., 2009. An overview of cooperative learning, in: Thousand, J., Villa, A. and Nevin, A. [edt.]. *Creativity and collaborative learning*. Brookes Press, Baltimore.

Romani, V., 2009. The Politics of Higher Education in the Middle East: Problems and Prospects. *Middle East Brief* 36, 1 – 8.

Rowan, B., Miskel, C., 1999. Institutional theory and the study of educational organization, in: Murphy, J. and Louis, K. [edt.]. *Handbook of Research on Educational Administration handbook of Research on Educational Administration*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Rugh, W., 1973. Emergence of a new middle class in Saudi Arabia. *The Middle East Journal* 27, 7–20.

Ryan, G.W., Bernard, H.R., 2000. Data management and analysis methods, in: Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. [edt.]. the SAGE handbook of qualitative research. SAGE Publications, London.

Sacker, A., Schoon, I., Bartley, M., 2002. Social inequality in educational achievement and psychosocial adjustment throughout childhood: magnitude and mechanisms. *Social Science & Medicine* 55, 863–880.

Salebi, M., 2007. Some activities are missing in the EFL classroom. [WWW Document]. URL <http://colleges.ksu.edu.sa/Papers/Papers/What%20is%20missing%20in%20the%20EFL%20reading%20classroom.doc> (accessed 13.07.13).

Saleh, M.A., 1986. Development of higher education in Saudi Arabia. *Higher Education* 15, 17–23.

Salili, F., Tsui, A., 2005. The effects of medium of instruction on students' motivation and learning, in: Hoosain, R., Salili, F. [edt.]. *Language in multicultural education*. Information age Publishing, Greenwich, CT.

Samuel, M., Sayed, Y., 2003. Inside and Outside the School Gates. *IDS Bulletin* 34, 90–95.

Samuelowicz, K., Bain, J.D., 1992. Conceptions of teaching held by academic teachers. *Higher Education* 24, 93–111.

Sardar, Z., 2005. *Desperately seeking paradise: journeys of a sceptical Muslim*. Granta Books, London.

Savignon, S.J., Wang, C., 2003. Communicative language teaching in EFL contexts: Learner attitudes and perceptions. *IRAL* 41, 223–250.

Sawahel, W., 2010. Building scientific and technological talent in the broader Middle East and North Africa region (BMENA). Arab capability status and present development and proposed action plan. IDB Science Development Network. National Research Centre, Cairo, Egypt.

Sayed, Y., Ahmed, R., 2011. Education quality in post-apartheid South African policy: balancing equity, diversity, rights and participation. *Comparative Education* 47, 103–118.

Sayed, Y., Soudien, C., 2003. (Re) framing education exclusion and inclusion discourses. *IDS Bulletin* 34, 9–19.

Schostak, J., 2006. Interviewing and representation in qualitative research projects. McGraw-Hill International, Berkshire, UK.

Schweisfurth, M., 2011. Learner-centred education in developing country contexts: From solution to problem? *International Journal of Educational Development* 31, 425–432.

Schweisfurth, M., 2013a. 10 learner-centred education and teacher professionalism at the local–global nexus, in: Seddon, T. and Levin, J. *World yearbook of education 2013: Educators, professionalism and politics: Global transitions, national spaces and professional projects*. Routledge, London.

Schweisfurth, M., 2013b. *Learner-centred Education*. Routledge, London.

Schwerdt, G. and Wuppermann, A. 2010. Is traditional teaching really all that bad? A within-student between-subject approach. Program on Education Policy and Governance Working Papers Series. CESifo Working Paper 2634. University of Munich: CESifo and Ifo Institute for Economic Research. Available online from:

http://www.hks.harvard.edu/pepg/PDF/Papers/PEPG10-15_Schwerdt_Wuppermann.pdf. (Accessed on 16 Jan. 14).

Scott, D., Robin, U., 1996. Understanding educational research. Psychology Press, Hove, UK.

Scott, J., 1990. A matter of record: Documentary sources in social research. Polity Press Cambridge, Cambridge.

Scott, W.R., 2001. Institutions and organizations. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, Calif.

Scott, W.R., 2008. Institutions and organizations: ideas and interests. Sage Publications, Los Angeles.

Selznick, P., 1984. Leadership in administration: A sociological interpretation. University of California Press, California.

Shaabi, I., 2010. ESP community in transition: a study of ICT use in a tertiary context in Saudi Arabia (PhD). University of Wollongong, Australia.

Sharan, Y., Sharan, S., 1990. Group investigation expands cooperative learning. Educational Leadership 47, 17-21.

Shenton, A.K., 2004. Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. Education for Information 22, 63-75.

Sheshsha, J., 1982. The qualifications of a competent teacher of English in Saudi Arabia. Unpublished doctoral dissertation (PhD). Indiana University, USA.

Shulman, L.S., 1987. Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. Harvard Educational Review 57, 1-23.

Silva, E., Edwards, R., 2005. Operationalizing Bourdieu on capitals: A discussion on 'the construction of the object'. [WWW Document]. The University of Manchester. URL www.ccsr.ac.uk/methods/publications/documents/WP7_000.pdf (accessed 10.12.12).

Silvern, S.B., Isenberg, J.P., 1990. Reviews of research: Teachers' thinking and beliefs and classroom practice. *Childhood Education* 66, 322–327.

Snape, D., Spencer, L., 2003. The foundations of qualitative research. *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers* 11.

Soars, L. and Soars, J., 2005. *New headway English course*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Solomon, Y., 2007. Not belonging? What makes a functional learner identity in undergraduate mathematics? *Studies in Higher Education* 32, 79–96.

Sperling, M., 2004. *Is contradiction contrary? Bakhtinian perspectives on language, literacy, and learning*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Sriprakash, A., 2010. Child-centred education and the promise of democratic learning: Pedagogic messages in rural Indian primary schools. *International Journal of Educational Development* 30, 297–304.

Stake, R. E., 1995. *The art of case study research*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.

Stake, R. E., 2003. Case Studies, in: Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S., [edt.]. *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. Sage Publications, London.

- Stanley, L., Wise, S., 2002. *Breaking out again: Feminist ontology and epistemology*. Routledge, London.
- Starrett, G., 1998. *Putting Islam to work: education, politics, and religious transformation in Egypt*. University of California Press, California.
- Stes, A., Gijbels, D., Petegem, P., 2007. Student-focused approaches to teaching in relation to context and teacher characteristics. *Higher Education* 55, 255–267.
- Stevenson, N., 2002. *Understanding media cultures: social theory and mass communication*. Sage Publications, London.
- Strauss, A., Corbin, J.M., 1997. *Grounded theory in practice*. SAGE Publications, London.
- Sui-Chu, E.H., Willms, J.D., 1996. Effects of parental involvement on eighth-grade achievement. *Sociology of Education* 2, 126–141.
- Sullivan, A., 2001. Cultural capital and educational attainment. *Sociology* 35, 893–912.
- Sultana, F., 2007. Reflexivity, positionality and participatory ethics: Negotiating fieldwork dilemmas in international research. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 6, 374–385.
- Surgenor, P., 2010. Teaching toolkit: Gathering feedback [WWW Document]. UCD Teaching and Learning. URL <http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/resources/teachingtoolkit/gatheringfeedback/> (accessed 7.11.13).
- Tashakkori, A., Teddlie, C., 2003. *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioural research*. SAGE Publications, London.

Taylor, P.C., Medina, M.N.D., 2013. Educational research paradigms: From positivism to multiparadigmatic. *Journal of Institute for Meaning-centered Education* 2, no page number.

Taylor, P.C., Settelmaier, E., 2003. Critical autobiographical research for science educators. *Journal of Science Education Japan* 27, 233-244.

Taylor-Powell, E., Steele, S., 1996. Collecting evaluation data: Direct observation. *Program Development and Evaluation*, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Wiscounsins.

Temple, B., Edwards, R., 2008. Interpreters/translators and cross-language research: Reflexivity and border crossings. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 1, 1-12.

Thompson, P., 2013. Learner-centred education and "cultural translation". *International Journal of Educational Development* 33, 48-58.

Thornton, M., 2010. Analysing teaching-learning interactions in higher education: accounting for structure and agency. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 31, 359-365.

TotalESL, 2007. ESL, TEFL and TESOL Jobs: Teaching Positions in Asia, Middle East & Europe [WWW Document]. TotalESL. URL <http://www.totalesl.com/job.php?action=search&start=y> (accessed 7.13.13).

Troudi, S., 2005. Critical content and cultural knowledge for teachers of English to speakers of other languages. *Teacher Development* 9, 115-129.

Troudi, S., Coombe, C., Al-Hamli, M., 2009. EFL teachers' views of English language assessment in higher education in the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. *TESOL Quarterly* 43, 546-555.

Trowler, P., 2009. Beyond Epistemological Essentialism: Academic tribes in the twenty first century, in: Kreber, C. [edt.]. *The university and its disciplines: Teaching and learning within and beyond disciplinary boundaries*. Routledge, London.

Tsien, T.B., Tsui, M., 2007. A participative learning and teaching model: The partnership of students and teachers in practice teaching. *Social Work Education* 26, 348–358.

Tumulty, G., 2001. Professional development of nursing in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* 33, 285–290.

Tzanakis, M., 2011. Bourdieu's social reproduction thesis and the role of cultural capital in educational attainment: A critical review of key empirical studies. *Educate Journal* 11, 76–90.

UNESCO, 2004. *Education for all: the quality imperative*. UNESCO, Paris.

Usher, A., Savino, M., 2007. A global survey of university ranking and league tables. *Higher Education in Europe* 32, 5–15.

Vavrus, F., 2002. Postcoloniality and English: exploring language policy and the politics of development in Tanzania. *TESOL Quarterly* 36, 373–397.

Vogel, S., Herron, C., Cole, S.P., York, H., 2011. Effectiveness of a guided inductive versus a deductive approach on the learning of grammar in the intermediate-level college French classroom. *Foreign Language Annals* 44, 353–380.

Wallace, M. J. (1991) *Training Foreign Language Teachers*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Walpole, M., 2003. Socioeconomic status and college: How SES affects college experiences and outcomes. *The Review of Higher Education* 27, 45–73.

Warren, C.A.B., 2010. *Discovering qualitative methods: field research, interviews, and analysis*. Oxford University Press, New York.

Weber, M., Parsons, T., 2012. *Max Weber the theory of social and economic organization*. Martino Publishing, Mansfield Centre, CT.

Wenger, E., 1998. *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge university press, Cambridge.

Winter, G., 2000. A comparative discussion of the notion of validity in qualitative and quantitative research. *The Qualitative Report* 4, no page numbers.

Wolcott, H., 1990. *Qualitative inquiry in education: The continuing debate*. Teachers College Press, New York.

Wood, P.J., 2007. Globalization and prison privatization: why are most of the world's for-profit adult prisons to be found in the American South? *International Political Sociology* 1, 222–239.

World Ranking Guide, 2012. Top universities in Australia [WWW Document].
World Ranking Guide. URL
<http://worldranking.blogspot.co.uk/2009/07/top-universities-in-australia.html> (accessed 11.25.12).

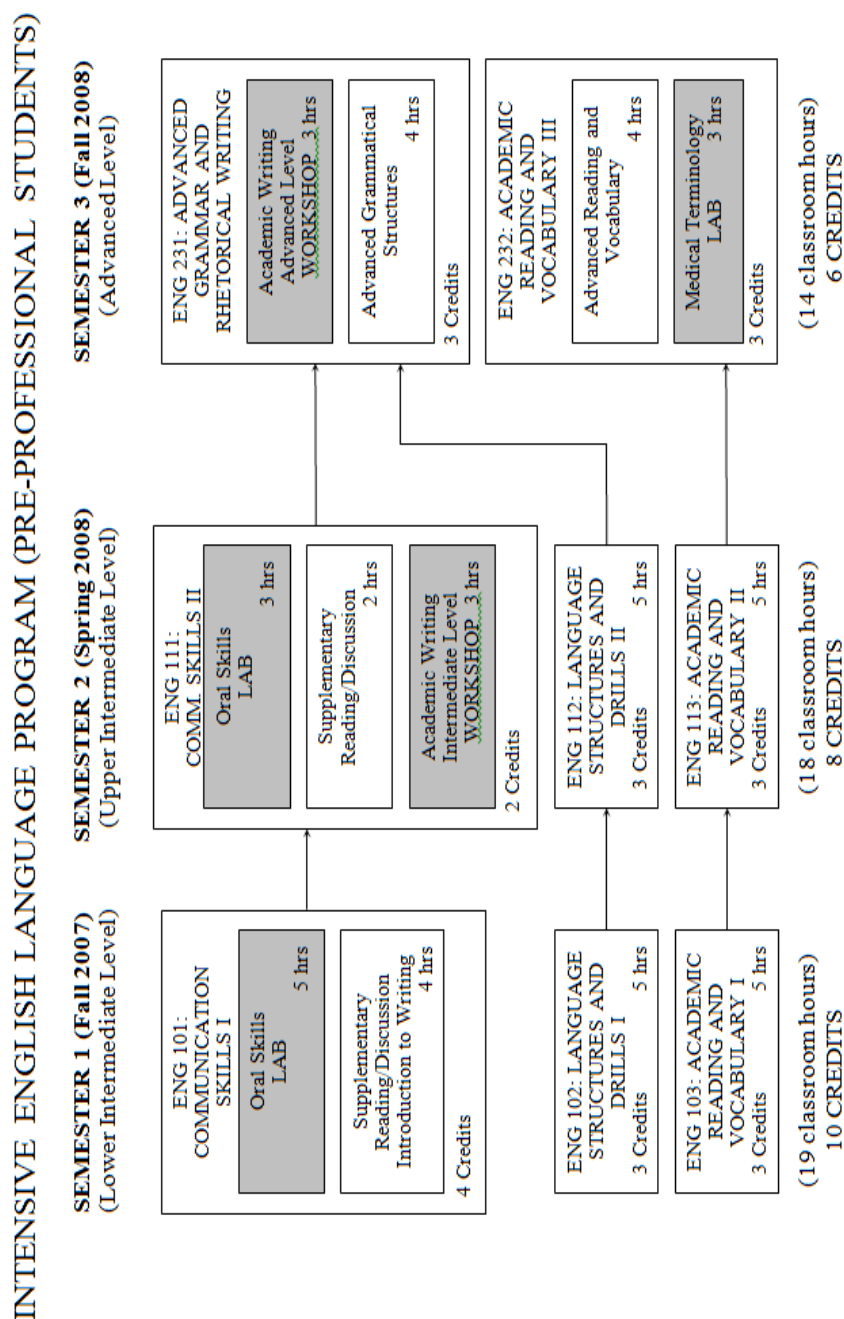
Yamani, M., 2000. *Changed identities: the challenge of the new generation in Saudi Arabia*. Royal Institute of International Affairs, London.

- Yamani, M., 2009. Cradle of Islam the Hijaz and the quest for identity in Saudi Arabia [WWW Document]. URL <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10377908> (accessed 7.1.13).
- Yin, R.K., 2009. Case study research: Design and methods. SAGE Publications, London.
- Yorke, M., Longden, B., 2008. The first-year experience of higher education in the UK (No. Final report). [WWW Document]. The higher education academy. URL <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/resources/publications/FYEFinalReport.pdf> (accessed 10.07.13).
- Yuretich, R.F., 2003. Encouraging critical thinking: Measuring skills in large introductory science classes. *Journal of College Science Teaching* 33, 40–45.
- Yushau, B., Omar, M.H., 2007. Preparatory year program courses as predictors of first calculus course grade. *Mathematics and Computer Education* 41, 92–108.
- Zaid, M., 1993. Comprehensive analysis of the current system of teaching English as a foreign language in the Saudi Arabian intermediate schools. (PhD). University of Colorado, USA.
- Zainol Abidin, M.J., Pour-Mohammadi, M., Alzwari, H., 2012. EFL Students' Attitudes towards Learning English Language: The case of Libyan secondary school students. *Asian Social Science* 8, 1-16.
- Zipin, L., 1999. Simplistic fictions in Australian higher education policy debates: A Bourdieuan analysis of complex power struggles. *Discourse* 20, 21–39.
- Zughoul, M.R., 2003. Globalization and EFL/ESL pedagogy in the Arab world. *Journal of Language and Learning* 1, 106–146.

Zughoul, M.R., Hussein, R.F., 1985. English for higher education in the Arab world: A case study of needs analysis at Yarmouk University. *The ESP Journal* 4, 133-152.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Details of the programme structure



Appendix 2: Details of the English language curriculum

QUDAR UNIVERSITY FOR HEALTH SCIENCE - RIYADH

Pre-Professional Program

English Language Curriculum

Program Description

This is an intensive three-semester English Language Program for intermediate and advanced level students in the Pre-Professional Program at Qudar University for Health Science. The goal of this English Language Program is to provide students with extensive daily practice in academic reading, vocabulary, oral communication, grammatical structures and writing. It also aims to help these students acquire the language skills necessary for pursuing careers in the health sciences and undergoing practical training in an environment where English will be the principal medium of instruction and communication.

Background of the Students

The students in this program are high school graduates who have had limited exposure to English during their secondary studies, and who still require further practice in using the language actively for communicative and academic purposes.

Entry Level Requirements

In order to be accepted into this English Language Program, students must have successfully completed the admission process at Qudar University for Health Science. They should be capable of working at an intermediate level of English, and be enrolled full time in the Pre-Professional Program.

Summary of Goals for the Intermediate English Language Program (Semesters 1 and 2)

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Goal 1.0 | To help students improve their listening comprehension skills. |
| Goal 2.0 | To help students improve their oral communication skills. |
| Goal 3.0 | To provide students with a systematic review of the grammatical structures essential for oral and written communication tasks at a high intermediate level. |
| Goal 4.0 | To help students improve their academic reading and critical thinking skills. |
| Goal 5.0 | To provide students with a developmental, step-by-step approach to paragraph writing in preparation for multi-paragraph report/essay writing at a high intermediate level. |

Program Goals and Performance Objectives

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Goal 1.0 | To help students improve their listening comprehension skills. |
|----------|--|

- 1.1 Students should be able to comprehend an extended conversation between native speakers delivered at a normal speed.
- 1.2 Students should be able to comprehend general and academic lectures geared towards a university level audience.

Goal 2.0 To help students improve their oral communication skills.

- 2.1 Students should be able to express themselves with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social and professional topics.
- 2.2 Students should be able to demonstrate a reasonable degree of accuracy in pronunciation to fulfill communication tasks at a high intermediate level.
- 2.3 Students should be able to deliver a short (10-minute) oral presentation on an academic topic of their choice. This presentation should follow a structured outline and make use of visual aids as appropriate.
- 2.4 Students should be able to participate in discussion groups, demonstrating their ability to communicate on concrete topics related to particular interests and special fields of competence.

Goal 3.0 To provide students with a systematic review of the grammatical structures essential for oral and written communication tasks at a high intermediate level.

- 3.1 Students should be able to demonstrate mastery of the English tense system (i.e., be able to comprehend and use all of the active verb tenses and modal constructions outlined in *Azar's Fundamentals of English Grammar, 3rd Edition*). Although the following four structures are not covered in the textbook, students should at least be able to comprehend them: the *past perfect progressive*, *future progressive*, *future perfect* and *future perfect progressive* verb forms.
- 3.2 Students should be able to comprehend and produce sentences in the passive voice and understand the importance of such structures in scientific English.
- 3.3 Students should be able to recognize the basic clausal patterns of English sentences and be able to expand a basic sentence skeleton by adding optional modifying adjectives and adverbial phrases.
- 3.4 Students should be able to comprehend and construct sentences of two or more clauses.
 - 3.4.1 Students should be able to demonstrate mastery of the compound sentence and use coordinating conjunctions.
 - 3.4.2 Students should be able to demonstrate mastery of the complex sentence and use subordinating conjunctions. They should be able to comprehend and produce sentences containing the following dependent clause structures:
 - 3.4.2.1 Adverbial Clauses
 - 3.4.2.2 Relative Clauses

3.4.2.3 Noun Clauses

3.5 Students should be familiar with the basic conventions of standard written English. They should be able to demonstrate mastery of the following (at the sentence or paragraph level):

- 3.5.1 Parallelism
- 3.5.2 Punctuation
- 3.5.3 Mechanics (i.e., paragraph layout including title, margins, indentation and double spacing)

Goal 4.0 To help students improve their academic reading and critical thinking skills.

By the end of this course students should be able to read and comprehend general and academic texts written for university students at a high intermediate to low advanced level, applying both referencing and inferencing skills. Students should be able to:

- 4.1 Use sub-headings, graphics, bold, underlined or italic text, point form notes and topic sentences to correctly predict what a passage is about.
- 4.2 **Skim** a general or academic text of 400 – 800 words within five minutes for the purpose of finding and recording/reporting the main ideas, i.e., determining the gist of the passage.
- 4.3 **Scan** a general or academic text of 400 – 800 words for the purpose of finding and recording/reporting specific information.
- 4.4 Apply reading and critical thinking strategies to move beyond the literary meaning of a passage to interpret meaning, purpose, style and tone.
- 4.5 Interpret diagrams, charts and illustrations in order to understand information presented in non-prose format.
- 4.6 Take notes and organize information that has been read by completing outlines, tables or flowcharts.
- 4.7 Expand their active and passive vocabulary by applying learning strategies for assimilating new words.

Goal 5.0 To provide students with a developmental, step-by-step approach to paragraph writing in preparation for multi-paragraph report/essay writing at a high intermediate level.

- 5.1 Students should be familiar with the three stages of the writing process: prewriting, drafting and editing. They should be able to:
 - 5.1.1 Understand the difference between revising and editing a text.
 - 5.1.1 Demonstrate the use of the following techniques for generating ideas at the prewriting stage: brainstorming, free writing, WH-questions, clustering and making lists.
- 5.2 Students should be able to write a carefully constructed paragraph (10-15 sentences) in which they:

- 5.2.1 Formulate a topic sentence with a restricted topic and controlling idea.
- 5.2.2 Develop the paragraph with main points and support details.
- 5.2.3 Revise the paragraph to improve the unity and coherence.
- 5.3 Students should be able to discuss and analyze the methods of development and strategies that English language writers use in academic discourse in the following modes: narrative, descriptive and expository.
- 5.4 Students will be given a wide range of articles from general and academic publications, which they will be required to read, discuss and analyze. They should be able to:
 - 5.4.1 Construct an outline of the article and demonstrate the method that the author has used to develop the central thesis.
 - 5.4.2 Write a concise summary of the article in 1 - 2 paragraphs.

Statement of Policies

- 1.0 **Attendance records** will be maintained for each session of each course throughout the program. If a student's attendance falls below **75%** during any course (i.e., by the end of Week 15), the student will then be disqualified from taking the final examination of that course (as per policy of Qudar University for Health Science).
- 2.0 In addition to passing the final examination in each course, a student must also fulfill the following **minimum requirements** throughout the term:
 - 2.1 Participate actively, positively and critically in all class activities
 - 2.2 Complete all homework assignments on time throughout the course
 - 2.3 Take all of the term quizzes and chapter/ unit exams as scheduled
- 3.0 A student must achieve a minimum overall semester grade point average of 3.0 (70% grade C) in the English Language Program in order to enroll in the next semester. If a student fails an individual course during a semester, he will be allowed to continue in the next semester only if his overall term average is 3.0 or higher, but will be required to make up for the failed course.

Appendix 3: ENG 101 (Communication Skills I)

ENG 101 (Communication Skills I) 4 credit hours

Course Description:

This is a four-month course in communication skills designed for students in their first semester of the Pre-Professional Program. It emphasizes the development of general listening and speaking skills essential for daily communication tasks inside and outside of the classroom. It also provides students with regular reading practice from a variety of sources such as graded readers and passages selected from original articles published in a variety of periodicals and newspapers. The approach is multi-skilled; all four language skills are developed systematically and new vocabulary is integrated into thematically arranged units. The course is divided into two components: an Oral Skills LAB and Supplementary Reading and Discussion Sessions.

Prerequisites: None

Course Content:

LAB Sessions

Core Textbook: John and Liz Soars, *American Headway 2*

(Student Book and Workbook) (Units 1-14)

Unit 1 (Getting to Know You)

Unit 2 (The Way We Live)

Unit 3 (It All Went Wrong)

Review Test #1

Unit 4 (Let's Go Shopping)

Unit 5 (What Do You Want To Do?)

Unit 6 (The Best in the World)

Review Test #2

Unit 7 (Fame)

Unit 8 (Dos and Don'ts)

Unit 9 (Going Places)

Review Test #3

Unit 10 (Scared To Death)

Unit 11 (Things That Changed the World)

Unit 12 (Dreams and Reality)

Review Test #4

Unit 13 (Making a Living)

Unit 14 (All You Need Is Love)

Final Exam (Written) (Units 1-14 *Headway 2*)

Supplementary Reading and Discussion Sessions

Supplementary reading materials will be chosen by the tutors themselves in order to accommodate the individual interests and needs of their students. The purpose of the *Reading and Discussion Sessions* is to provide the students with a chance to explore textual material outside of the standard ENG 103 curriculum, and to gain further practice in developing their sight reading and oral communications skills.

Standard reading passages will be selected from original articles published in various periodicals and newspapers, but written at a level accessible to intermediate students. These reading selections will focus on general topics from science, technology, sociology, psychology, recreation, health, medicine and education. They will expose the students to authentic articles, and help them develop the kinds of extensive and intensive reading skills needed in an academic environment. They will also provide ample thematic material around which oral discussions and group activity sessions can be built.

Graded readers will also be incorporated into the syllabus, providing the students with some additional pleasure reading. These short adapted versions of popular stories are designed to help second language learners of various levels gain oral reading and pronunciation practice, and to consolidate previously learned vocabulary and structures within a meaningful context. As with the standard reading passages, they also provide thematic material for oral discussion and group activity sessions.

Suggested Reading Materials:

Standard reading exercises appropriate for students at the High Beginner, Lower Intermediate or Upper Intermediate levels may be taken from developmental reading skills textbooks such as the series *Insights for Today: A High Beginning Reading Skills Text*, *Issues for Today: In Intermediate Reading Skills Text* or *Concepts for Today: A High Intermediate Reading Skills Text* (Lorraine C. Smith and Nancy Nici Mare). Series such as these provide students with thematically arranged units with reading passages taken directly from original articles.

The Oxford Graded Readers (*Bookworm Series: Levels 2 and 3*) may be incorporated into the reading sessions to provide the students with regular oral reading and discussion practice, or may be assigned for out-of-class reading. These adapted versions of popular stories are

especially helpful for weaker students who require remedial work or lack confidence in speaking.

Timed reading passages may be included in the program to help students develop their sight reading skills. Series such as *Timed Readings (Books Seven to Ten)* by Edward Spargo may be used for this purpose.

Course Assessment:

Continuous Assessment

(3) Review Tests: <i>Headway 2</i>	30%
Assignments and Participation	10%
<i>(Reading and Discussion Sessions)</i>	
Midterm Exam (Oral)	20%
<hr/>	
	60%

Final Assessment

Final Exam (Oral)	20%
Final Exam (Written) <i>Headway 2</i>	20%
<hr/>	
	40%

Assessment Tools:

Written and oral examinations will be used throughout the course to assess student progress in the core textbook, John and Liz Soars, *American Headway 2 (Student Book and Workbook)* (Units 1-14) and supplementary reading and discussion material.

Listening and reading comprehension skills – Students will be presented with short reading passages and recordings of extended discourse (short conversations between native speakers and brief lectures on general and academic topics of an intermediate level). General comprehension will be assessed through written quizzes and Unit Tests using the following format:

Fill in the blank questions (simple completion questions consisting of sentences from which vocabulary items, content information and grammatical structures are removed)

Cloze exercises (short texts from which vocabulary or content information has been removed)

Multiple-choice questions

T/F questions

Short answer questions

Matching questions

Production Skills – Speaking and writing skills will be assessed through regular course assignments and discussion sessions, as part of the continuous assessment for the course. In addition, an oral midterm and an oral final exam will be conducted to assess the students' oral communication skills. These two oral exams will be conducted in a formal setting in which a panel of three instructors will be involved. Normally this panel will consist of the instructor for the LAB sessions, the instructor for the Supplementary Reading and Discussion sessions, and one outside instructor who is not working with the students in any other sessions during the semester.

Grading Criteria

The following grading code will be used (in compliance with the system established by Qudar University for Health Science).

English Grade Code	Score Range	Equivalent
A+	95 – 100%	<i>Excellent plus</i>
A	90 – 94%	<i>Excellent</i>
B+	85 – 89%	<i>Very good plus</i>
B	80 – 84%	<i>Very good</i>
C+	75 – 79%	<i>Good plus</i>
C	70 – 74%	<i>Good</i>
D+	65 – 69%	<i>High Pass</i>
D	60 – 64%	<i>Pass</i>
F	< 60%	<i>Fail</i>

English 101 Syllabus

Orientation Week Sept 8-12, 2007	Course Introduction (Outline/Goals and Objectives) <i>Core Textbook : American Headway 2</i> Unit 1 Getting to Know You Supplementary Reading and Discussion
Week 1 Sept 15-19, 2007 <i>Ramadan Schedule</i>	Unit 1 Getting to Know You Supplementary Reading and Discussion
Week 2 Sept 22-26, 2007 <i>Ramadan Schedule</i>	Unit 2 The Way We Live Supplementary Reading and Discussion
Week 3 Sept 29-Oct 3, 2007 <i>Ramadan Schedule</i>	Unit 2 The Way We Live Supplementary Reading and Discussion
Holiday Period Oct 6-17, 2007	EID BREAK
Week 4 Oct 20-24, 2007	Unit 3 It All Went Wrong Supplementary Reading and Discussion Review Test #1
Week 5 Oct 27-31, 2007	Unit 4 Let's Go Shopping! Supplementary Reading and Discussion
Week 6 Nov 3-7, 2007	Unit 5 What Do You Want to Do? Supplementary Reading and Discussion
Week 7 Nov 10-14, 2007	Unit 6 The Best in the World Supplementary Reading and Discussion Review Test # 2
Week 8 Nov 17-21, 2007	Unit 7 Fame Supplementary Reading and Discussion
Week 9 Nov 24-28, 2007	Unit 8 Dos and Don'ts Supplementary Reading and Discussion
Week 10 Dec 1-5, 2007	Unit 9 Going Places Supplementary Reading and Discussion Review Test # 3
Week 11 Dec 8-12, 2007	Unit 10 Scared to Death Supplementary Reading and Discussion
Holiday Period Dec 15-26, 2007	HAJJ BREAK
Week 12 Dec 29-Jan 2, 2008	Unit 11 Things That Changed the World Supplementary Reading and Discussion
Week 13 Jan 5-9, 2008	Unit 12 Dreams and Reality Supplementary Reading and Discussion Review Test # 4
Week 14 Jan 12-16, 2008	Unit 13 Making a Living Supplementary Reading and Discussion
Week 15 Jan 19-23, 2008	Unit 14 All You Need Is Love Supplementary Reading and Discussion
Week 16 Jan 26-30, 2008	REVIEW
Week 17 Feb 2-6, 2008	Comprehensive Final Exam (Chapters 1-14) (To be scheduled during this FINAL EXAM WEEK)

Appendix 4: ENG 102 (Language Structures and Drills I)

ENG 102 (Language Structures and Drills I) 3 credit hours

Course Description:

This course is the first half of the *Intermediate Language Structures and Drills* sequence. It provides students with an overview of the English tense system and modal constructions in the active voice, and introduces them to the basic patterns of sentence structure. It also includes a review of direct question formation and noun phrase construction. Students are given practice in recognizing the basic clausal patterns of English, and in expanding sentence skeletons with modifying adjectives and adverbials. Throughout the course, grammatical structures are presented through an active oral approach and reinforced through extensive drill practice, guided conversation exercises and daily written homework assignments.

Prerequisites: None

Course Content:

Core Textbook: Betty Schramper Azar, *Fundamentals of English Grammar, Third Edition*
(Chapters 1-7)

The English Tense System (Active Voice)

Chapter 1 (Present Time)

Chapter 2 (Past Time)

Chapter 3 (Future Time)

Chapter 4 (The Present Perfect and the Past Perfect)

Formation of Direct Questions (Yes/No, WH- and Tag Questions)

Chapter 5 (Asking Questions)

Additional Grammatical Topics

Supplementary Notes: Parts of Speech, Simple Sentence Structure

Chapter 6 (Nouns and Pronouns)

Chapter 7 (Modal Auxiliaries)

Course Assessment:

Continuous Assessment

Term Test #1	15%
--------------	-----

Term Test #2	15%
--------------	-----

Term Test #3	15%
--------------	-----

Term Test #4	15%
--------------	-----

Final Assessment	60%
------------------	-----

Final Exam (Comprehensive)	40%
----------------------------	-----

Assessment Tools:

Written examinations will be used throughout the course to assess student progress in the core textbook, *Fundamentals of English Grammar, Third Edition* (by Betty Schramper Azar).

Grammatical structures – Discrete grammatical points and overall competency in the principles of English sentence structure will be tested using the following diagnostic tools:

Fill in the blank questions (simple completion questions consisting of sentences from which grammatical items are removed)

Cloze exercises (short texts from which grammatical items or content information has been removed)

Multiple-choice questions (simple completion questions consisting of sentences from which grammatical items are removed)

Sentence construction tasks (reducing sentences to their basic skeletons, expanding skeletons with modifying adjectives and adverbials, constructing *yes/no*, *WH-* and *tag* questions)

Editing Skills – The students' ability to correct errors in grammar, usage and punctuation likely to occur in their own writing will be assessed using the following tools:

Error analysis questions (identifying and correcting errors in isolated sentences; these errors may focus on the target structures covered in the textbook as well as on miscellaneous errors common in student writing at this level)

Paragraph editing (identifying and correcting errors in a short, paragraph-length text; these errors may focus on grammatical structures, word usage or punctuation)

In addition to the Term Tests and Final Exam, the students will be given daily homework assignments which must be completed out of class. These assignments are an essential part of the program and must be completed by all of the students even though grades are not assigned to them.

Grading Criteria

The following grading code will be used (in compliance with the system established by Qudar University for Health Science).

English Grade Code	Score Range	Equivalent
A+	95 – 100%	<i>Excellent plus</i>
A	90 – 94%	<i>Excellent</i>
B+	85 – 89%	<i>Very good plus</i>
B	80 – 84%	<i>Very good</i>
C+	75 – 79%	<i>Good plus</i>
C	70 – 74%	<i>Good</i>
D+	65 – 69%	<i>High Pass</i>
D	60 – 64%	<i>Pass</i>
F	< 60%	<i>Fail</i>

Course Outline:

1. Course Introduction
 - A. Goals and Objectives
 - B. Developing Effective Study Skills for Coursework
2. The English Tense System (Active Voice)
 - A. Present Time (*Chapter 1*)
 - (1) Personal Information (Speaking, Writing, Role Play)
 - (2) Overview Chart of English Tense System
 - (3) Simple Present and Present Progressive
 - (4) Frequency Adverbs
 - (5) Spelling: Verbs Ending in *-s/-es* (Quiz)
 - (6) Stative Verbs
 - (7) Present Verbs: Short Answers to Yes/No Questions
 - (8) Cumulative Review (Test) Chapter 1
 - B. Past Time (*Chapter 2*)
 - (1) Introduction
 - (2) Simple Past
 - (3) Pronunciation of *-ed* Endings
 - (4) Spelling: Verbs Ending in *-ing* and *-ed*
 - (5) Principal Parts of an English Verb
 - (6) Irregular Verbs (Quiz)
 - (7) Simple Past and Past Progressive
 - (8) Review: Present and Past Verbs
 - (9) Past Time Clauses
 - (10) *used to* with Past Habits
 - C. Future Time (*Chapter 3*)
 - (1) Introduction
 - (2) Future with *will* and *be going to*
 - (3) Degrees of Certainty in the Future
 - (4) *be going to* vs. *will*
 - (5) Future Time Clauses and *if*-Clauses
 - (6) Review: Past and Future Time
 - (7) Future Time with Present Progressive and Simple Present
 - (8) *be about to*
 - (9) Parallel Verbs
 - (10) Cumulative Review: Verb Forms (Test) Chapters 1 - 3
 - D. The Present Perfect and the Past Perfect (*Chapter 4*)
 - (1) Introduction
 - (2) The Past Participle
 - (3) Present Perfect
 - (4) Using *since* and *for*
 - (5) Present Perfect Progressive
 - (6) Using *already*, *yet*, *still* and *anymore*
 - (7) Past Perfect
 - (8) Cumulative Review: Verb Forms
3. Additional Grammatical Points
 - A. Question Formation (*Chapter 5*)

- (1) Yes/No and WH- Questions
- (2) Questions with *where, why, when, and what time*
- (3) Questions with *who, who(m), and what*
- (4) Spoken and Written Contractions with WH- Words
- (5) Questions with *what* + a form of *do*
- (6) Questions with *what kind of*
- (7) *which* vs. *what*
- (8) *who* vs. *whose*
- (9) Questions with *how, how often, how far, and how long*
- (10) Using *how about* and *what about*

(11)

Tag Questions

(Test) Chapters 1 - 5

B. Nouns and Pronouns (Chapter 6)

- (1) Introduction: The Parts of Speech
- (2) Pronunciation of Final -s/-es
- (3) Plural Forms of Nouns
- (4) Subjects, Verbs and Objects
- (5) Objects of Prepositions
- (6) Prepositions of Time
- (7) Word Order: Adverbials of Place and Time
- (8) Subject-Verb Agreement
- (9) Using Adjectives to Describe Nouns
- (10) Using Nouns as Adjectives
- (11) Summary Review: Nouns
- (12) Personal Pronouns
- (13) Possessive Nouns
- (14) Summary Review: Nouns + -s/-es
- (15) Possessive Pronouns and Adjectives
- (16) Reflexive Pronouns
- (17) Summary Review: Pronouns
- (18) Forms of *other*

(19)

Cumulative Review

(Test) Chapter 6

(20)

C. Modal Auxiliaries (Chapter 7)

- (1) Introduction and Chart of Modal Auxiliary Forms
- (2) Expressing Ability: *can* and *could*
- (3) Expressing Possibility and Permission: *may, might* and *can*
- (4) Using *could* to Express Possibility
- (5) Polite Questions
- (6) Expressing Advice: *should, ought to* and *had better*
- (7) Expressing Necessity: *have to, have got to* and *must*
- (8) Expressing Lack of Necessity and Prohibition: *do not have to* and *must not*
- (9) Logical Conclusions: *must*
- (10) Imperative Sentences
- (11) Making Suggestions: *let's* and *why don't*
- (12) Stating Preferences: *prefer, like...better, and would rather*
- (13) Cumulative Review

Comprehensive Final Exam

(Chapters 1 - 7)

English 102 Syllabus

Orientation Week Sept 8-12, 2007	Course Introduction (Outline/Goals and Objectives) Core Textbook: <i>Fundamentals of English Grammar, 3rd Ed.</i> Chapter 1 (Sections 1.1/1.2) pp. 1-8
Week 1 Sept 15-19, 2007 <i>Ramadan Schedule</i>	Chapter 1 (Sections 1.3 – 1.7) pp. 9-20 Quiz
Week 2 Sept 22-26, 2007 <i>Ramadan Schedule</i>	Chapter 1 (Review) pp. 21-23 TEST #1 (Chapter 1) Chapter 2 (Sections 2.1 – 2.7) pp. 24-36
Week 3 Sept 29-Oct 3, 2007 <i>Ramadan Schedule</i>	Quiz Chapter 2 (Section 2.7 cont., 2.8, 2.9) pp. 37-47
Holiday Period Oct 6-17, 2007	EID BREAK
Week 4 Oct 20-24, 2007	Chapter 2 (Sections 2.10/2.11) pp. 48-54 Chapter 3 (Sections 3.1 – 3.5) pp. 55-64
Week 5 Oct 27-31, 2007	Chapter 3 (Sections 3.6 – 3.10) pp. 65-82
Week 6 Nov 3-7, 2007	TEST #2 (Chapters 1-3) Chapter 4 (Sections 4.1 – 4.5) pp. 83-97
Week 7 Nov 10-14, 2007	Chapter 4 (Sections 4.6 – 4.8) pp. 98-111
Week 8 Nov 17-21, 2007	Chapter 4 (Section 4.9) pp. 112-119 General Review (Supplementary Exercises from <i>Workbook</i>)
Week 9 Nov 24-28, 2007	Chapter 5 (Sections 5.1 – 5.9) pp. 120-138
Week 10 Dec 1-5, 2007	Chapter 5 (Sections 5.10 – 5.16) pp. 138-155
Week 11 Dec 8-12, 2007	General Review (Supplementary Exercises from <i>Workbook</i>) TEST #3 (Chapters 1-5) Chapter 6 (Sections 6.1 – 6.5) pp. 156-164
Holiday Period Dec 15-26, 2007	HAJJ BREAK
Week 12 Dec 29-Jan 2, 2008	Chapter 6 (Sections 6.6 – 6.13) pp. 164-181
Week 13 Jan 5-9, 2008	Chapter 6 (Sections 6.14 – 6.16) pp. 181-188 TEST #4 (Chapter 6) Chapter 7 (Overview, Section 7.1) pp. 189-191
Week 14 Jan 12-16, 2008	Chapter 7 (Sections 7.2 – 7.8) pp. 191-206
Week 15 Jan 19-23, 2008	Chapter 7 (Sections 7.9 – 7.14) pp. 206-224
Week 16 Jan 26-30, 2008	REVIEW
Week 17 Feb 2-6, 2008	Comprehensive Final Exam (Chapters 1-7) (To be scheduled during this FINAL EXAM WEEK)

Appendix 5: Approval for fieldwork (Arabic)



مكتب وكيل الجامعة للشئون التعليمية

رقم: ٢٠١٠/٩/٢٥
التاريخ: ٢٧ رمضان ١٤٣١ هـ
الموافق: ٦ سبتمبر ٢٠١٠ م

سعادة الأستاذ الدكتور / غازي بن عبد الواحد المكي
الملحق الثقافي في بريطانيا سلمه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته،،،
إشارة إلى خطاب سعادتكم رقم ٤/٩٣٩١ وتاريخ ١٤٣١/٩/٢٣ هـ ومشقوعه الطالب رقم ٢٩٨٢٦٤ وتاريخ ٢٠١٠/٨/٢٠ م المقدم من المبتعث سجاد الله بن يحيى بن إدريس الهوساوي (رقم ملف: KHS155 ، سجل مدني رقم: ١٠٠٨٩٧٥٧٤٨) للموافقة على قيامه برحلة علمية إلى المملكة لمدة ٩٠ يوماً اعتباراً من ١٤٣١/١٠/١٦ هـ الموافق ٢٠١٠/٩/٢٥ م.
وبناءً على خطاب مشرقه الأكاديمي الذي يحثه على القيام بالرحلة ومشقوعه الخطه العلمية للرحلة.
أفيد سعادتكم بأن [REDACTED] للعلوم الصحية ليس لديها مانع من قيام المبتعث المذكور بهذه الرحلة إلى المملكة اعتباراً من ١٤٣١/١٠/١٦ هـ.
وتقبلوا سعادتكم وأفر التحية والتقدير،،،

وكيل الجامعة للشئون التعليمية



- صورة مع لقطة لسعادة الدكتور /
- صورة مع لقطة لسعادة الدكتور /
- صورة مع لقطة لسعادة الدكتور /

Appendix 6: Approval for fieldwork (English)

Subject: A request to start data collection

Date: 5th Oct 2010

Dear Dr. [REDACTED]

I am doing a research to explore the students learning experience in an English language programme in Saudi higher education as a part of PhD in the University of Sussex (UK). The research helps to understand the factors that influence the students learning experiences.

I am writing you to ask for a permission to start collecting data from teachers and students in the English language programme in [REDACTED] for Health Sciences. I will be using interviews (attached copy) as a tool for data collection and I shall conduct them outside the classroom⁽¹⁾ time in order to make sure that my data collection does⁽²⁾ not disturb the teaching schedule of the programme. Prior to conducting the interviews, I would like to do some classroom observation and administer questionnaires (attached copy) to determine the sample of the study. The participation in my research is voluntary,⁽³⁾ respondents have the choice to participate or not and this shall be made clear to them.

Your support is highly appreciated

Regards

Sajjadllah Alhawsawi



Approved
as long as 1-3
are met
and No female students,
No disturbance in
teacher schedules

[REDACTED]
5/10/10

Appendix 7: Students' interview guide

Motivation & Strategies

1. What stage are you in the EFL programme?
2. Give a few reasons why you joined this language programme?
3. How do you think these reasons (...) influence the way you learn? e.g.
 - *(prompt)* What sort of motivation do they give you?
 - *(prompt)* How do they influence your ways of learning?
4. How many classes do you have this semester?
5. How does this **EFL** programme influences your learning practices?
 - *(prompt)* How do you prepare for your language tests, assignment, homework, assessments, lectures
 - *(prompt)* What kind of preparations do you make for lectures?
 - *(prompt)* How do handle an interesting topic in classes, reading...?
 - *(prompt)* How do you feelings about doing extra work? (materials that are recommended by the teachers or just do what have been asked to do)
 - *(prompt)* What do you consider to be more important, short -term memorising or long-term understanding your material? Why? (going over study materials until you know them even without understanding them?)
6. How do teachers teach in your course? E.g.
 - *(prompt)* Do they teach more for the assessment or to understanding of the concept? (encourage discussions, working knowledge, quality of notes) explain
 - *(prompt)* Do they start their teaching from the concept you know and build up or they start from concept that you are not familiar with? explain
 - *(prompt)* Do they give information that that might be available from a good textbook or they try to go beyond that in their explanation? Give an example
7. How do you think such teaching practices (...) in this language programme influence your learning experience? E.g.
 - *(prompt)* Do they encourage you to do more work by yourself and explore other knowledge beyond what has been taught?
 - *(prompt)* Do you they give you feeling of deep personal satisfaction?
 - *(prompt)* Do you feel they make the course very interesting and make you feel you want to do more work?
 - *(prompt)* Do they make you memorise things, going over and over them until you know them even without understand them?
8. Does your learning experience in this language program differ from the other courses you are attending right now?
9. What makes your learning experience in this language program different from other courses?

Institutional influence

10. What do you think about this university?
 - *(prompt)* what is it about this university that makes you want to study here?
11. How do you think the image of *QU-HS* influence your motivation for joining this pre-medical language programme? E.g.
 - *(prompt)* How does the concept of studying this course in *QU-HS* that is affiliated with the *MHA* influence your reasons for joining this program?
12. How does the existence of the university within the *MHA* Health Affairs campus influence your perception of this university?
13. Explain how this image of the university influences your learning? E.g.
 - *(prompt)* To what extend does studying this program in *QU-HS* influence the way you prepare for your language tests, assignment, homework, assessments, lectures

- **(prompt)** Does the fact that you are going to study a major in the medical field related to the *MHA* influence your motivation
 - **(prompt)** What are the advantages/disadvantages of being in a university in the *MHA* ?
 - **(prompt)** Explain how does the fact of you have been a student in this university influences your view about yourself?
 - **(prompt)** Explain how does the constant use of English language on campus influence your learning experiences?
14. How do you think your pre-university learning experience influences your current learning experience?
 15. What sort of learner are you?
 - **(prompt)** How do you think being a proactive or “*inactive*” learner influence your learning?
 - **(prompt)** How do you think always being one of the best or “*one of less known*” in the class influences the way you learn?
 16. Tell me about your **family educational** background? How does it influence your learning in general and EFL in particular?
 17. People talk about the influence of the economic circumstances on the learning. To what extend do agree with that?
 18. What is the situation for you? To what extend does your family **economic** situation influences your learning in general and your EFL learning in particular?

Appendix 8: Teachers' interview guide

Teaching approaches

1. How do you describe your teaching approach?
 - a. How do you deliver your lessons? Give examples.
 - b. Are there specific strategies that you use?
 - c. Do you think your approach leads to long term sustainable learning or short term memorization? How? (memorization and drillings or engagement and discussion)
2. How your teaching approach(es) influences learning in general?
3. How does the way you teach influence the students' preparations for tests, assignment, homework, assessments, lectures etc.?
4. How do you think your teaching approach influence the way students view themselves (active, passive learners, independent, dependant)? How does that influence their learning (preparations for tests, assignment, homework, assessments, and lectures)?
5. Do you think the way a student view himself influence their learning? Why?
6. How do you think the students deal with interesting topics, assignments, additional material or work? (Materials that are recommended by yourself or by the curriculum) If optional do they still follow through?
7. Do you know the philosophy of teaching English language in Qudar University for Health Science? How does it influence your teaching approach?
8. Discuss how does the mode of assessment (tests, assignment, homework, quizzes) influence your teaching?
9. Discuss how does the modes of assessment (tests, assignment, homework, quizzes) influence students' learning?
10. How do you think the family educational background of your students influences the way they learn?
11. What impact does the family economic background have on the way students learn?
12. How do you think teachers' ethnicity (native/non-native English speaker) influence the students learning experiences?

Institutional Culture

13. What do you think about *QU-HS* as a learning institution?
 14. What does the university do to maintain this image?
 15. How does that impact on students' learning?
 16. To what extent does the image of the university impact on your teaching? on you as a teacher?
- (*prompt*) motivation(s) for joining this university as opposed to other similar EFL programmes in different Saudi university.

Appendix 9: Classroom observation

Field work: *QU-HS* 2010

Lesson no:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Duration: 50 min
Taught skill(s): Mainly speaking and listening Topic: food and nutrition											Location: College of Medicine, Classroom 3, 1 st floor Pre-med
Date: Monday, 1 st Nov 10											Teacher: Native
Description of the teaching activities:											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open discussion open food and nutrition; teacher ask students what do they know about the topic. - Teacher wrote questions on the smart board; invite student to discuss it in group - Teacher randomly join the discussion with groups - Play video clip on the smart board about the topic; invite students to comments and think about the questions posted on the board at the beginning of the lesson. - Students were given worksheets with multiple choice questions + general question for discussion. - Played the video again; student answer the questions - Students discuss their answers in their groups - Teacher correct the language points where possible with disrupting the follow of the listen. - Teacher referred the students to the main book to extra work at home (not using the word homework); also referred them to the website where extra video and audio clips about the topic can be found. - 											
How students respond to the teaching: SS were very enthusiastic to join the discussion at the beginning, SS were engaged with discussion in their groups in general although variation in the English competencies can be noticed on few them. Most were accustomed with doing things by themselves and not much reliance on the teacher.											
Comments: Clear middle-class children, tidy, clean, wearing brands their English competencies and sciences knowledge is advanced; shows great level of traveling and exposure											

Appendix 10: Arabic interview guide (students)

دليل المقابلات الشخصية للطلاب

الدوافع وطرق التعلم

١. في اي مرحلة من برنامج اللغة الانجليزية تدرس الان؟
٢. لماذا اخترت الدراسة في هذا البرنامج؟
٣. الى اي مدى اثرت تلك الدوافع في طرق تعلمك للغة الانجليزية في الجامعة؟
٤. كم مادة تدرس في هذا الفصل الاكاديمي؟
٥. كيف اثر برنامج اللغة الإنجليزية على طرق تعلمك؟
٦. صف لنا كيف يدرس المدرسون في برنامج اللغة الانجليزية؟
٧. الى اي مدى اثرت ممارسات معلمي اللغة الانجليزية على خبراتك التعليمية؟
- الى اي مدى تختلف خبرات التعليمية في برنامج اللغة الانجليزية عن المواد الاخرى التي تدرسها في الوقت الحالي؟
٩. ما هو السبب الذي ادى الى اختلاف خبراتك التعليمية في برنامج اللغة الانجليزية مقارنة بالمواد الاخرى التي تدرسها في الوقت الحالي؟

تأثير المنشأة التعليمية

١٠. ما هو رأيك عن هذه الجامعة؟
١١. الى اي مدى اثرت صورة جامعة الملك سعود بن عبدالعزيز على اختيارك للدراسة في برنامج اللغة الإنجليزية هذا؟
١٢. الى اي مدى اثر وجود الجامعة داخل حرم الشؤون الصحية للحرس الوطني على انطباعك عن الجامعة؟
١٣. تحدث عن تأثير هذا الانطباع الذي اخذته عن الجامعة على تعلمك للغة الانجليزية؟
١٤. الى اي مدى اثرت خبراتك التعليمية في مرحلة ما قبل الجامعة على خبراتك التعليمية الحالية؟
١٥. كيف تصنف نفسك كطالب؟ (مجتهد؟ ام متواكل؟) ولماذا؟
١٦. تحدث عن الخلفيات التعليمية لأسرتك؟ والى اي درجة اثرت تلك الخلفية على طرق تعلمك بشكل عام وعلى تعلمك الانجليزية بشكل خاص؟
١٧. تحدث البعض عن تأثير الظروف المادية لأسرهم على تعليمهم. الى اي حد تؤيد هذا الرأي؟
١٨. ما هو الحال بالنسبة لك؟ وكيف اثر المستوى المادي على تعليمك بشكل عام و على تعلمك الانجليزية بشكل خاص؟

Appendix 11: Confirmation and consent

اقرار بالموافقة

I confirm that I have freely agreed to participate in 'the analysis of factors that influence students' learning experiences in a pre-medical English language programme in a Saudi Arabian university'. I have been briefed on what this involves and I agree to the use of the findings as described above. I understand that the material is protected by a code of Standards on Research Ethics of School of Education and Social Work (University of Sussex, UK). I hereby assign the copyright in my contribution to the University Of Sussex.

بهذا اقر اننى قد وافقت بمحض اختياري على المشاركة في هذا البحث المتعلق بموضوع تحليل العوامل التي تؤثر في تجارب التعلم لدى الطلاب في برامج اللغة الانجليزية التحضيرية. ولقد تم اطلاعي باختصار على كل ما يتضمنه هذا البحث وانا اوافق على استخدام نتائج البحث لغرض البحث فقط. واعلم ان هذه المادة العلمية تقع تحت حماية الخصوصية بموجب قانون وانظمة معايير أخلاقيات البحث بكلية التربية والعمل الاجتماعي بجامعة سسكس بالمملكة المتحدة. وعليه افوض حقوق النشر لإسهامي العلمي هذا لجامعة سسكس. وهذا اقرار بالموافقة على الالتزام بهذا العقد.

Participant signature:

Name: _____

Position: _____

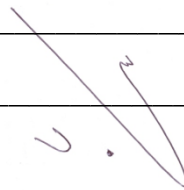
Date: _____

I confirm I agree to keep the undertakings in this contract.

Researcher signature: _____

Name: Sajjadllah Y. Athawsawi

Date: _____



Appendix 12: President welcome

President Welcome



Dr. [REDACTED] HS
President, [REDACTED] HS
Chief Executive Officer, [REDACTED]
Phone number: [REDACTED]
Extension: [REDACTED]

Year after year, our country has witnessed an increase in academic and scientific progress. Recently, under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, this progress has received a tremendous boost. Investment in human resources has always been of the utmost concern to our wise leaders, since the time of King Abdulrahman Al Saud, the founder of the Kingdom.

In recent years, the number of universities and colleges throughout the Kingdom has increased alongside the economic, demographic, social and environmental needs of the country.

A great product of this blessed progress has been [REDACTED] Sciences [REDACTED] HS). This university was established under the umbrella of the [REDACTED] Ministry of Higher Education. It is one of the most modern universities in the region and the Arab world, specializing in health sciences and targeting the needs of the country and its citizens in the crucial field of health care. Since man is the core of progress and development a country cannot be built without the hands of its citizens.

Conditions in the [REDACTED] were ripe for the establishment of a major academic institution specializing in health sciences. The efforts of the management of [REDACTED] Medical City bore fruit with the blossoming of this good seedling planted by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz during his reign as Crown Prince when he announced the establishment of [REDACTED] Health Sciences [REDACTED]. It was decided that the [REDACTED] would include [REDACTED] and Deanships of Postgraduate Studies, Admissions and Registration, Student Affairs, and Libraries and other academic centers. We are pleased that the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques laid down the foundation stone of the KSAU-HS campuses in Riyadh, Jeddah and Al Hasa on May 13th 2008.

Once the university is completed and its academic structures are in place, it will become an educational institution capable of attracting competent and outstanding students from all over the Kingdom. The university will attract the best and most qualified faculty, and will become a scientific and educational beacon locally and regionally. It will be an international authority with its programs, specialties and areas of research. Moreover, it will be a source of pride for the country and its citizens with God's help and the care of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz and his Crown Prince, His Royal Highness, Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz.

Appendix 13: Strategy for QU-HS

The University is very proud of the significant achievements made since its establishment in April 2005. Our vision for the future is outlined in the 2008 Strategic Plan, which provides a roadmap for growth and development, as well as a record by which progress can be measured. It is not meant to change our course, but to sharpen our sights on the future and more closely focus our collective direction. Our collective tactics should enable us to build on our strengths and turn challenges into opportunities.

Strategic Goals:

Strategic Goal 1: To create an outstanding university learning environment that enriches the lives of undergraduate students and helps them to become well-educated individuals, lifelong learners, productive healthcare providers, potential leaders and active citizens.

- Maintain a friendly learning environment that responds to the desires, needs and backgrounds of new students.
- Attract and retain the most promising students who will benefit from the rich University resources.
- Ensure the use of innovative curricula and state-of-the-art teaching/training technologies.
- Place a high priority on excellence in curriculum development, teaching practices and student assessment in the faculty development, recognition and rewards system of the University.
- Develop a Foundation Program that instills knowledge, skills, creativity and a love of learning in newly-admitted students in order to prepare them for the diverse academic programs offered in the different colleges of the University.
- Maintain a core commitment to Evidence-Based teaching and enhance linking research concepts to professional practice.
- Regularly review the curriculum, the study plans, the modes of delivery, and student assessment practices to ensure high quality academic programs in the University.
- Serve as a valued partner in teaching students and trainees safe, appropriate, effective and compassionate patient care conforming to evidence-based standards and high quality outcomes.
- Offer high quality development and support programs to faculty members in order to enhance their academic competence and teaching skills so that they can provide first-rate education.
- Improve academic and student support services and offer an array of social and athletic activities to promote the students' enjoyment and well-being.

Strategic Goal 2: To cultivate excellent postgraduate and professional health science programs, and advance research and scholarly enterprises.

- Foster a rich, vibrant learning/training environment to prepare the next generation of scientists, researchers, academicians and healthcare professionals.
- Develop new graduate and postgraduate health programs in identified areas of need and opportunity.
- Maintain the strength and national prominence of the existing postgraduate residency/fellowship training programs.
- Recruit and retain excellent senior faculty with vast research experience and provide them with research facilities and support.

- Ensure the availability, accessibility and robustness of advanced information and virtual technology that meets the needs of all postgraduate students/trainees and cultivate a reputation of excellence.
- Improve research productivity by increasing student and faculty involvement in funded research.
- Recruit the most academically qualified graduates who will benefit from the strong postgraduate programs.

Strategic Goal 3: To strengthen research in the health sciences so that it can meet internationally competitive standards and augment the work of the King Abdullah International Medical Research Center.

- Identify and foster research where the University can have the greatest impact, and where the quality of research will lead to distinction and global recognition.
- Achieve greater competitiveness for grant funding of research through collaboration across geographic and organizational boundaries within and, where appropriate, outside the Kingdom.
- Encourage University students conducting basic research and epidemiological studies of common national health problems.
- Continue to strengthen and expand clinical research and plan cutting-edge medical services and public healthcare.
- Provide faculty with sufficient protected time, laboratory space, research facilities and support services.
- Assist in grant application and manuscript preparation, and increase awareness of funding research opportunities.
- Encourage faculty, staff and students to participate in creative technological research and invention, and facilitate registration for patency, licensing and commercialization.

Strategic Goal 4: To attain national and international recognition for high quality academic programs.

- Approve selected academic under- and post- graduate programs on the basis of their quality and ability to meet the needs of the workforce.
- Recruit and retain dedicated, talented and creative faculty, administrative staff, artists and other professionals from diverse backgrounds, whose work gives them visibility beyond the classrooms and offices.
- Attract internationally recognized and world-class faculty who have outstanding credentials and research experience, in order to promote the mission and vision of the University.
- Support professional development/enhancement of all University staff.
- Communicate performance expectations and accountability based on established job descriptions, and provide constructive evaluation of faculty and staff.
- Ensure that technology is constantly used and upgraded to enhance teaching and training.
- Develop and implement an integrated strategic communication plan for publicizing the University's initiatives, collaborations and accomplishments.
- Develop state-of-the-art websites for the University, Colleges, Deanships and Centers that provide up-to-date information for visitors, and details of student, faculty and alumni achievements.
- Maximize the use of resources by creating and sustaining a culture of innovation, collaboration, quality, leadership and service in all areas and at all levels.
- Implement a process of systematic program review that both fosters programs of distinction, and enhances pedagogy that contributes to successful student outcomes.

Strategic Goal 5: To create, encourage, and facilitate opportunities for university-wide involvement in diverse community activities, and to collaborate with public- and private-sector partners who address the goals of the university and *MHA* System.

- Create a Public Relations Department for the university, staffed by experienced and exemplary professionals.
- Plan and carefully execute community health promotion campaigns and disease prevention programs.
- Forge strong national and international partnerships with other universities and public and private organizations to foster university involvement and enhance achievements.
- Develop an annual calendar to ensure university-wide involvement in all national and international community events, comprehensive preparation for these occasions and active participation of university faculty and students.
- Increase awareness in the community of the role of the university as an advocate for the health of the people in this country through education, research and community services.
- Increase opportunities for research and creative economic development in health and education by expanding involvement in corporate, government and international partnerships. Assure the appearance of the *QU-HS* brand identity in printed and electronic media as the sole academic sponsor of all scientific activities in the *MHA* .

Strategic Goal 6: To attract high caliber University faculty for the future, and to emphasize their development/enhancement in light of new pedagogical modalities and expectations.

- Intensify efforts to recruit academically qualified faculty, particularly those with strong research records, either through internationally reliable recruitment agencies or through short trips to well recognized universities around the world which hold recruitment potential.
- Develop within the next five years a well-funded scholarship program to address the urgent needs of all colleges for well-qualified faculty.
- Expand and maintain regular, readily available, accessible and comprehensive faculty development/ enhancement programs targeting faculty needs and educational objectives.
- Promote and support multi-, inter-, and trans-disciplinary education and research, while sustaining traditional lines of personal and institutional accountability.
- Regularly review part-time and full-time non-tenured academic appointments to ensure that they adequately reflect the needs and standards of the faculty as well as their commitments and contributions.
- Promote professional growth among faculty members by providing leadership development opportunities.

Strategic Goal 7: To create an organizational structure and promote a workplace culture that facilitates quality performance at all levels of the University.

- Establish and maintain an efficient and effective administrative structure necessary for accomplishing the University's Mission.
- Develop career ladders as a means for recruiting and promoting employees.
- Strengthen the capability of frontline employees [e.g. Public Relations, Recruitment, Support Services, etc.] so that they can provide optimal services.
- Increase professional growth and development opportunities for employees by providing easy access to national and international training programs.
- Ensure operational excellence and administrative efficiency through the use of appropriate technology, improved communications and accurate data.

- Reduce bureaucratic obstacles to efficiency by instituting clear organizational lines of authority, and promoting delegation of authority for decision-making to the lowest possible levels.
- Empower all employees in leading positions to maximize their potential as contributing members to the growth and development of the University.
- Create non-threatening systems for employees to voice their concerns, and develop methods to address these concerns appropriately.
- Establish Awards of Excellence that recognize faculty, staff and alumni who exemplify servant-leadership in their professional endeavors, and whose work adheres to the core values of the University.
- Develop student support services that provide career and business guidance to assist University graduates in making career choices in the health profession.
- Review and revise administrative policies and procedures to ensure their efficiency in facilitating work processes.
- Ensure quality, accuracy, integrity and accessibility of data to enhance planning, management and strategic use of these data.

Strategic Goal 8: To strengthen the financial foundation of the University in order to enhance its capacity to address financial needs and to maintain fiscal stability.

- Enhance the University's financial system and management through new technology and enlightened accountability.
- Attract and retain a highly competent team of professional staff who are experienced in the field of public relations, particularly institutional advancement.
- Develop a multi-faceted approach to foster partnerships with public authorities, private businesses, philanthropic organizations, alumni and others who are supportive of the Mission of the University.
- Develop a comprehensive set of financial strategies to diversify funding streams in order to increase overall levels of funds and investments.
- Provide a systematic framework for planning investment projects, and for assessing the financial performance to ensure diversified income streams.

Strategic Goal 9: To develop an intellectually stimulating University campus for the future that is sustainable, flexible, imaginative and expandable, and to encourage a sense of community among faculty, staff and students.

- Determine the educational programs that we value most, so that teaching facilities and construction priorities are established.
- Ensure reliable, functional and economically efficient University facilities and infrastructure.
- Plan and ensure adequate temporary physical facilities and support services for students and faculty before the start of any new educational program or college.
- Create urgently required student and trainee classrooms, lounges, lecture halls and study areas that are large enough to accommodate under- and post-graduate students on core rotations in the hospitals of KAMCs and PHCCs.
- Design a dynamic master plan for the University campus with a thriving colorful intellectual environment, and high standard physical structures with the latest technologies to contribute positively to the mental, spiritual and physical well being of all students and faculty.
- Enhance the technological infrastructure to assure highly advanced communications, information storage and transfer, research and instruction capability, and university-wide sharing of information.
- Establish a large state-of-the-art Clinical Skills Resource Center in the center of the University campus as the beating heart of the academic campus body.

- Establish a University Museum of Medical Culture and Heritage that reflects the world and national history of medicine.
- Promote student health by creating and maintaining services for stress management, emotional and mental health, and wellness through the establishment of a Student Health Center.
- Improve the physical connection and electronic communication between the academic and healthcare facilities to create an acceptable standard of life for students, and a professional faculty environment. Provide faculty, staff and students with an up-to-date computer and network environment, including anytime/anywhere high speed access to the internet.

Strategic Goal 10: To forge robust collaborative partnerships amongst the components of the *MHA* , and promote a more comprehensive multidisciplinary team practice.

- Build enduring two-way relationships, utilizing and sharing the available human and logistic resources in a very cost-effective way.
- Maintain productive links and engagement in teaching, training, research, healthcare and community health promotion programs, and other related activities and services.

Appendix 14: Job advert in QU-HS

MEDICAL CITY HEALTH AFFAIRS PROGRAMME

Teaching Post for English language Instructors.

The Language Preparatory Programmes (PP)

The English Language Preparatory Year Programmes (PYP) aim to further advance the English proficiency of Saudi students moving into the university system. This is accomplished through the strategic placement of certified English teachers.

Educators will join a multinational staff at of [REDACTED] or Health Sciences, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia where they will aid in the development of curriculum and student mentorship, and otherwise seek to improve the English language skills of Saudi students. Consequently this opportunity lends itself to university and college professors, allowing them to gain some valuable teaching in another country.

English Language Preparatory Programmes Details

Saudi students in a PP programme will receive average of 17 hours of English Language teaching per week for three academic semesters. ESL instructors will provide additional support and guidance to students outside of classroom teaching hours. Since income is tax free and most contracts will include benefits in the form of health insurance in Saudi [REDACTED] roundtrip airfare, and 2 months of paid vacation (as well as national holidays).

English Language Preparatory Programme Benefits

Basic Benefits	English Language Preparatory Year Programmes
Contract	2 years
Duration	
Monthly Salary Range	2,700-3,500 USD tax-free, depending on qualifications
Teaching Hours	20 hours/week
Type of School	University
Vacation	2 months and national holidays
Health Insurance	Comprehensive health insurance provided by [REDACTED]
Accommodation	Provided
Airfare (for non-Saudis)	Roundtrip airfare provided
Children Educational Allowance	[REDACTED]

HEALTH AFFAIRS PROGRAMME

English Language Preparatory Programmes Requirements

Requirements	English Language Preparatory Year Programmes
Qualifications	Master degree in ELT or linguistics
Teaching Experience	Minimum 3 years ESL teaching experience for native English speaker teachers Minimum 5 years ESL teaching experience for non-native English speaker teachers

Appendix 15: Job contract

**MEDICAL CITY
HEALTH AFFAIRS PROGRAMME**

EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT

اتفاقية التوظيف

I- EMPLOYEE'S PERSONAL DATA

1- بيانات الموظف الشخصية

1. FULL NAME: _____ 1. الاسم الكامل: _____
2. DATE OF BIRTH: _____ 2. تاريخ الميلاد: _____
3. NATIONALITY: AMERICAN 3. الجنسية: _____
4. CONTACT ADDRESS: _____ 4. العنوان: _____
5. TELEPHONE #: _____

II- GENERAL TERMS

رقم الهاتف: _____

1. DESIGNATED AIRPORT: _____ 2- شروط عامة
- (NEAREST TO POINT OF HIRE)
2. CONTRACT PERIOD (12/24 MONTHS) _____ 1. المدة المحددة: _____
3. JOB TITLE: English Language Teacher 2. مدة العقد (24/12 شهر): _____
4. POST OF ASSIGNMENT: _____ 3. مسمى الوظيفة: _____
- MEDICAL CITY, - _____ 4. محل العمل: _____
5. EFFECTIVE DATE OF AGREEMENT: Upon Arrival on Site 5. تاريخ سريان الاتفاقية: _____

III- COMPENSATION

3- التعويضات

1. BASE MONTHLY SALARY: SR _____ 1. الراتب الشهري الأساسي: ريال سعودي _____
2. ELIGIBLE FOR OVERTIME PAYMENT: NA 2. يستحق أجر عن العمل الإضافي: نعم/ لا
3. ELIGIBLE FOR ON CALL PAYMENT: NA 3. يستحق أجر عن العمل تحت الطلب: نعم/ لا

IV- STATUS AND DEPENDENTS

4- حالة العقد وأفراد الأسرة

1. CONTRACT STATUS: Married (Accompanied) 1. حالة العقد: عائل / فردي
2. BENEFITS GROUP : PDH GROUP G 2. مجموعة المزايا رقم: _____

EMPLOYEE'S INITIAL

EMPLOYER'S INITIAL

تأثير صاحب العمل

تأثير الموظف

Appendix 16: An example of general observation from my diary

Fri 22 Oct 2010

The Library: 3-4 pm

Stu using Internet

leisure

studyingFacebook, Yahoo
messenger, Reading
newsHow
the
workRead or browse
individually; then
invite others
to look at what
they are reading
in the screen.

- using headset and
- writing on
- printing academic
- getting papers
- annoyed with the noise.

Why one student in their bread
study? Why the others are
not? Who are these students?

Pre-Med
Pre-BMS?

questions for the interview

Appendix 17: Sample of students' interview transcription

Name:	<i>Aadil</i>	Date:	Wednesday 13 th October 2010
Mobile:	Deleted	Time; Duration:	1500-1600 01:11:39
Email:	No email provided	Location:	The Main Cafeteria; School of Medicine
Year:	Pre-AMS1		

Interviewer First of all thank you for agreeing to help me with my research. Let me explain what I am doing before we start the discussion. I am doing my research on students learning and the factors that influence their learning in the in QUHE. I have few questions that I would like to hear your response to them; also feel free to comment or add any question at any point.

Frist of all, I want to ask you what level of programme are you! And why you chose to study at this university?

Student I choose this university firstly because it is affiliated with XXX medical city for the [elite army] which is one of the best medical cities in the middle East. Secondly many significant medical events have taken place there such as the heart transplant surgeries and surgery to separation the conjoined twins. I was accepted to study at King Abdulaziz University, Qaseem University and KFPU but I didn't go, I waited to hear whether I was accepted at this university; if I wasn't accepted at this university, it would have been so devastating for me. ever since I was young, I have always loved helping people and I have been dreaming of being a doctor all along... and I used to pretend to diagnose patients and writing prescriptions when I played as kid... even when I visited the GP, I would always ask lots of questions about my conditions and the treatment... my visit to the GP is about being treated and learning at the same time... so when a similar condition happens to me I don't need to bother the doctor and I can just go through my notebook and search for an explanation of the cause before going to the doctor...

Interviewer Good... but why was this English language programme important for you?

Student Because it is fundamental for me to gain access into the medicine world... it is the language that helps people to communicate in the medical field... For example, if now I am a Saudi doctor and I went to a course or medical conference outside Saudi Arabia, English language would be the only language that would help me to communicate with the other doctors and specialists...

Interviewer Let me go back and ask you why you think the affiliation between this university and King Abdulaziz Medical City is significant to you?

- Student** First of all, this medical city is strongly supported and directed by [I]... the university has prospered a lot in a short time... King Saud University [the 1st university in Saudi Arabia] and KFPM have worked hard for long time to become the best universities in Saudi... Quder is competing with them now and this is because of the direct support that it gets from the King and his son in person... Just few steps and this university will be competing globally and I want to participate in that... I understand that I am studying emergency medicine [part of AMS]; not medicine but I planning to stay here and pursue a degree in medicine and achieve my dream... I couldn't get into medicine directly but this can be an entrance for me to study medicine and I think I have taken the first step in the right direction...
- Interviewer** You said English language is a vehicle for your dream. Could you tell me how do you learn the English language?
- Student** Well that depends on the explanation of the lessons... there is an easy way and a difficult way. Some teachers I totally don't understand what they try to say because they don't diversify their teaching. You feel that the whole teaching is about them and they talk all the time. The easy way is that when a teachers uses different ways of explanation. If I didn't get what he was saying in one way, I would probably get in the other way; and that doesn't only help me but help reach everybody in the class. This is not to say that I accept everything from the teacher; I also have to work hard and participate in the class in order to develop or improve the new knowledge that I learn. For example, I have been taught a grammatical rule, I would try to understand it and use in a difficult sentences of my own in order to check my understanding. When I feel that the rule is still not clear for me, I would discuss it with the teacher. if I was in the class or I would check my hand-out or other external references like the internet in order to help me understand.
- Interviewer** Why do have to check the internet for answers. Wouldn't it be much easier and quicker to ask the teacher?
- Student** I don't have a teacher at home. Also, when I found answer online, I analyse it and evaluate it to check whether it is correct or not. I feel I own that knowledge because I discover it myself; and when the exam comes, I feel I can recall that information easily because it becomes part of me.
- Interviewer** Are you saying that you are studying for exams only all the time?
- Student** No, sometimes I don't really study for the quizzes or midterms. I don't feel I need to do that not only because the explanation of the teacher is clear but I also follow actively everything in the class. In addition, I invest time to study and search for information by myself, and work very hard to possess the information and that makes me feel satisfied, and also makes the information ingrained in me and makes it hard to forget
- Interviewer** You seem to put a lot of emphasis on the teacher's explanation. Could you tell me how your teacher explains things in a lesson?
- Student** There are teachers who simplify the topic for the students and provide different ways of understanding the topic; and also allow the students to discover the answers by themselves. In the grammar, Mr XXX writes the rules on the board; gives us situations in which we may need to apply the rule and asks us to bring different situations where we need to apply the rule. When we make mistakes, he wouldn't tell us the answer but lets us

try to discover the solutions by ourselves. This kind of teaching accommodates for different students' learning styles. Those who need to see something on the board got what they want; those who want to discover thing by themselves got what they want. To me -through this way of teaching- I find myself reinforcing and consolidating my knowledge.

Interviewer What would you do with extra reading?

Student If I was asked to do a task with it, I wouldn't normally wait to read it at home; I read in the class and try to discuss the difficult part with the teacher so I don't have to struggle alone at home. I might read something different at home but I would rather read it in the class, especially when it comes to checking for the correct pronunciation of the word.

Interviewer You said that you use the internet to check for extra material. Do you do that with the interesting reading?

Student No. what I normally do with an interesting reading, I take lots of notes about it and try to utilize it as a person... for example the other day we discussed a passage about 'organizing work group'... I learnt a lot from that and wrote about how to select group members and how to delegate tasks to different group members. But to be honest I don't use the internet to check for extra reading materials. I use it for studying grammar because it is the base for learning a language. In order to read correctly, you need grammar, in order to write correctly and compose a sentence you need grammar. for example, if I meet a person who speaks Arabic, I would be more concerned about how to compose questions and sentences and what word to use rather than about reading and answering comprehension questions. I try to memorise as many words and phrases as I possibly can.

Interviewer How do you memorize the word?

Student I write the word five to six times on a piece of paper, and then I turn the paper to check if I can memorize the spelling of the word. Once I am happy with my spelling, I check for the meaning of the word in Arabic and then use the word in a sentence of my own. After that, I check for the structure of the sentence to make sure that I got the grammar right as well. Once I've done that I wouldn't forget the word easily. I start by memorization and then that would lead to understanding.

Interviewer How do you prepare for exams?

Student I prepare for the exam by not preparing. I don't think about the exam and try to study normally. Whenever I think about the exam; I get too nervous and anxious; and that causes me to lose my ability to focus. Therefore, I don't think too much about it; even in the exam itself, I don't write or start answering immediately. I wait a minute or two until I come down and then start to answer. If I didn't do that I would get into a panic and lose my head. In my preparation for the exam, I try to check my understanding of the things that I have memorised; and base my revision only on checking for my understanding rather than my memorisation. For example in grammar, I normally don't write the exercises on the textbook; I photocopy the pages of the exercises and then write my answers; so when exam time comes, I have my textbook clean and clear. I photocopy the pages that I want again and do the exercises and check them against the rules in the book. I go to the internet and check for similar exercises. I take as fun thing rather than traditional revision for exams.

Interviewer Let us go back a bit... you talked about teacher you like but you didn't finish talking about the teacher you don't like.

- Student** I don't understand anything from him. He always reads from the book and tells you what is in the book; and doesn't get the ideas from the book and paraphrase it in his own way; literary repeats what is in the textbook. I feel that I may as well read the book myself instead of attending the class and waste my time. Or sometimes he asks us to find new vocabulary in the lesson for him to tell us about their meanings. What benefit would I get when I found the new vocabulary and write them in a paper with their meaning and then give it to him. It is just a waste of a lesson time in something that I could do at my own time.
- Interviewer** How do you study for communication?
- Student** I don't study for that because the teacher explains very well in the class. Although Mr XXX is an American, I feel I understand from him better than some of the Arab teachers. I don't know why I understand from him more than the other teachers. I ask the Arab teacher about the meaning of the word and he would explain it in a very difficult way which doesn't help me to understand but shows me that he knows. But I ask Mr XXX about the same word and he would explain it and I would understand it immediately. Mr XXX uses a very simple English to communicate the meaning while my Arab teacher uses very complicated explanation which confuses me rather than helps me to understand.
- Interviewer** Are you saying that the Arab teachers are not as good as the American teachers?
- Student** No. It is only one who I have issues with. the other Arab teachers are fine
- Interviewer** There are students in the Pre-ams group who think that work load is too heavy and therefore cannot cope. What do you think?
- Student** Yes that is true... there are things that I feel teachers shouldn't give lot of homework on. And there are subjects that I feel we should have more homework in. you feel something is too much when you don't see the point of doing it. For example, I don't think reading is as important as the grammar so I don't see the point of wasting time giving lots of homework in it. if I know the grammar, I would know how to read
- Interviewer** What do you think about group work?
- Student** I personally like to participate in group work or with others. I like to discuss and listen to the others' ideas. I have been learning English in this way most of my life practically with my private tutor... and I have found that I become creative when I try to find the answers with others. ... I like to be with other people and interact with them to learn about different ways of doing things.
- I am a person that isn't used to work or study alone. I like to be with other people and interact with them to learn about different way of doing things. I made friends in stages of my education: I study the primary school in Qaseem, the intermediate school in Riyadh, the secondary school in Qaseem and again the university in Riyadh. I have met new friends everywhere I go and learnt new things from them. Even when I travel with my family abroad, I always try to meet new people in everywhere and try to understand their culture and their customs.
- Interviewer** It has been said that this language programme is about memorizing things and this is the only way to pass the exams. What do you think?
- Student** There are things that need to be memorized and other things that rely heavily on

understanding. For example Communication is a course that depends on understanding and once you try to memorize it for the exam you are lost. It focuses on conversations and listening which you cannot memorize. You cannot memorize different types of conversations. Even when you do, the exam doesn't check for what you have memorized but check for what you have understood. Even when the exam is based on memorization, I have always found it too difficult to cope. Memorization has always been one of my weakest skills. When I was young, I was sent to study Qura'an in Halaqa [Islamic evening school for people to learn Qura'an and is run by a charity organizations] in the evening and I memorized by heart the 1st quarter of the Qur'an but I have forgotten it; but I still can recall the lesson that I have been taught about the holy text

Interviewer How does your learning of English language here differ from one in the secondary school?

Student There is a huge difference. Learning English here [the university] is much fun though we have to learn everything because we will need it. in the secondary school, the teacher didn't cover the whole textbook that we were supposed to cover; he gave us 8 lessons out of 16 and told us that we didn't need to study the rest and that they wouldn't come in the exam. He deleted half of the curriculum which included the lesson that was very important. Here you have to study everything and a teacher has no right to delete any part of the curriculum because everybody has to sit unified exams. I was saying that most of what I didn't study in the secondary school was the most important thing; I was checking my secondary school English books and found that most of the rules that I am struggling with today were there in the deleted part of the book. Here in the university, we started from the beginning and we are progressively going through the curriculum.

Interviewer How do teachers view you in the school?

Student They respect us and they think that we are grown individuals. Some of them treat us like fathers and make us feel that they care and want us to learn; they feel the responsibility because they have been students one day and they understand what we are going through. They try to simplify the things, always asking how we are doing and how we did in the exams; I like the fact that some teachers ask us about what we would like to learn; also I like the idea of learning from my classmate and discussing things with them; and there are other who don't care and try to give us whatever they have in the book and go; and they don't even try to consider what we are going through; they don't say hi if they see you outside the class.

Interviewer Why do you think this is important for your learning?

Student Because when you like someone, you like everything they say and do. you don't think that they are going to do anything to hurt you; and you would feel more comfortable asking them questions and discussing things in the class

Interviewer How do your colleagues view you in the class?

Student I don't know; but I know that I actively participate in the class discussion. I normally don't wait too long to answer questions being posed by the teacher.

Interviewer Do you consider yourself as one of the best students?

Student I don't like such way of looking at this issue... we are all in my group academically equal to one another. We help teach other. I don't like my relationship with classmates to be just about learning; although they feel that I was better than them -which is the case- I try to be

humble in order to allow us as students to be at an equal level

Interviewer There are students who claim that they have been picked up on because they are Bedouin or they are from areas outside Riyadh. Have you seen anything similar in your class?

Student Yes I have had this [picked up on] a lot. Few incidents here in the university. People are picking on me because of my accent and they don't even know my name. The problem here, is that there are different accents and based on that people try to avoid you or come closer to you. 'People of this accent are normally from this area; avoid them; and people with this accent are from that area and they are friendly'. But I always advice those who have been picked on to integrate with people and try to learn the accent of the place where they live. I personally, when I go to Qaseem I speak with a Qaseemi accent and when I am in Riyadh I speak with Riyadh accent. No one of classmates believes that I was from Qaseem.

Interviewer But what would those who couldn't integrate do?

Student They should try; and that is always an issue for those who cannot do it; but I would say there are people who accept the other the way they are and there are others who were sharp about their judgment. I have met students who are originally Bedouin and can tell clearly from their accent that they try to speak with Riyadh accent; even when they get picked on, they take it as joke and laugh it out. They don't take it to heart and let it destroy them. I personally take a careless position. I have travelled between Riyadh and Qaseem most of life and learnt how to adapt with whatever place my family live in. it is ok for people to joke sometimes but we need to take easy. My name is Mohamed 'Al-Juma'a' [the Friday] and many people bully me by calling me 'Alkamis' [the Thursday] because both are weekend days. I just laugh at it away and that is it. And then people would understand there is a time for joke and there is time to study and get a bit serious.

Interviewer What type of car do you drive?

Student I drive 2007 model and my father bought that for me. My father is wealthy man and gives us money monthly. I used to save my money with him because whatever money I give dad, he would double it when I need it. He has been doing that with us since we were little. So I was saving money for my car for some time. My old car was 2006 model and I told dad that I want to change my car, he told me go to any showroom and pick the car that I like. He didn't tell me that you have only that saving and you cannot buy this car or that.

Interviewer How does your father wealth influence your learning?

Student I have not studied in the private education, except for the intermediate school when we were in Riyadh. When I was in the 1st year secondary education, my father wanted to send me abroad to study English but we couldn't because he was studying his MSc abroad and I had to stay home to look after the family; I am the eldest in the house. He finished his degree when I was in at the beginning of my 3rd year secondary and again I couldn't go to study abroad in that summer because I had to stay to apply for university. Even then he asked me to consider doing a degree abroad in Canada where he studied and it was my decision to study here and I will try to go abroad in the summer to improve my English language. I must say that although I have never attend language school in my life, but ever since I was in the last year of my primary education my father hired a private tutor to come to my home and teach me English three times a week and that went on for more than 12 years. Sometimes, the teacher used to cover what I had studied in the school, but most of the time he used to teach me an additional curriculum that my father discussed

with him. I can't say that I took full advantage of him; but I have learnt a lot from our discussion; I learnt from him but I regret that I missed a lot.

Interviewer What is the level of your mum education?

Student Mum is BSc holder. She did her degree in mathematics.

Interviewer What influence do they have on your education?

Student Since my schooldays, they [parents] have sat with me and helped me with my study... Sometimes it was through discussion about what I did or studied in the school and other times by working with me on assignments or helping me with tasks to do with my education... Mum used to do the oral part of it; she used to pick up the books and ask me things from the book and I had to respond to her orally in a more of dialogic style. My dad used to leave his work and take two weeks off work to be home with us at the exams time; he didn't use to travel at the exam time. Even when he had to go, he used to make sure that he was home for the weekend and help us with our work and study. That wasn't for my whole education though. They push me to study independently when I was in my 2nd year intermediate.

Interviewer Tell me one thing you learn from your parent?

Student Both my father and mother have had a significant influence on me and the way I study in the university. For example, my father taught me how to control exam anxiety by not starting the exam immediately; and that I should spend some time relaxing before answering the questions; and that has worked for me since I was little. My mother taught me how to control exam anxiety spiritually; and that I should say prayers before and after exams; These prayers help me to relax... My father told me that before - at their time- they didn't have anybody to show them or advise them.

Interviewer Was he the only educated person among his siblings?

Student No. All of my aunts finished university and obtained postgraduate diplomas; but my dad was the only one with a master degree.

Interviewer Let me go back and ask again about teachers. Some students have mentioned that ethnicity of their teacher makes a difference to the way they learn. Would you like to comment on that?

Student The problem here is some of the Arab teachers studied abroad and when they come to teach us here they don't simplify the language for us; they try to apply the same way they were taught; and forget that we don't have the same level of English language. While few Arab teachers -bless them- they work hard for us and you see they invest time in preparing lessons and hand-out. They just want us to learn. As for the non-Arab, I cannot tell. The only person who teaches me is [Afro- American] and he is really excellent.

Interviewer It has been said that students see the Afro-American teacher as an image of loud music and amazing sports. What do you think?

Student It isn't about the colour... the problem here in Saudi that people can't see past the colour... we should be more open-minded and try to understand the others... you see seeing black people isn't always a sign of bad things... why can we ask ourselves how a black man like Obama became the president of the world... we should see more in the black people than the music and sport and not say there is anything wrong with music or

the sport... black people are human being like me and you... Allah made us equal... the difference among people is made by themselves... some of us have utilized their brain to the max and others haven't even used 10% of their capacities... these people who just associated the black people with just music and sport are losers... they do nothing but setting home and follow movies and sport and think that the black people aren't good for anything... this judgment tell us more about us as Saudi rather than about the black people... movies are for entertainment and most they are fictions and black people shouldn't be judge on that... if they think black people are useless, let them answer these two questions: how did Obama manage to be the president of the states? And how did Mandela manage to change South Africa? Their achievement is evidence that nobody around the world wouldn't recognize... of course for us as Saudi... [Afro-American person] as teacher I like him so much... his isn't an image of anything but a hard working teacher that trays to teach us in English in fun way and his classes are real enjoyment...

Interviewer Thank you so much and I am sorry I took a lot of your time

Student No problem you are welcome