

**Implementing Communicative Language
Teaching Method in Saudi Arabia:
Challenges Faced by Formative Year
Teachers in State Schools**

By

Majed Othman Abahussain

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Abstract

The demand for using the English language as a means of communication has increased substantially around the world because of its status as the language of globalisation, international communication, trade, media, and research (Flowerdew and Peacock 2001). The Saudi Ministry of Education (MoE) has considered this demand and taken significant steps to reform the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). For example, the aims of and documentation for the TEFL curriculum have been modified to focus on the four basic language skills and to promote students' communicative competence. However, despite all these efforts, there has been little progress in the area of TEFL in KSA. Classroom teaching practices are still devoted to secondary purposes, such as teaching grammar, translating literary texts, memorisation, rote learning, and preparing for summative exams. This reality may indicate an incompatibility between the government's efforts to develop TEFL and the practices used by English language teachers in their classes. This incompatibility, however, may also suggest that English language teachers have their own reasons for not teaching English for communicative purposes and are incapable of implementing innovative teaching methods, such as the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT).

This study therefore explores the challenges faced by Saudi English teachers (SETs) in their teaching practice that might prevent them from teaching for communicative purposes and implementing CLT in their classes. In order to meet this objective, data obtained from interviews, questionnaires and documents were analysed and classified into various categories. The key findings revealed that the current methodological

practices of SETs are traditional teaching methods that stress the dominant role of teachers, marginalise students' interactions, focus on discrete skills, and encourage competitive rather than cooperative learning. Furthermore, by using CHAT theory as a framework, the study explored a range of challenges that SETs face when the implementing CLT. These challenges stem from the individual and contextual levels of SETs' teaching practice. At the individual level, it emerged that SETs had some misconceptions about some of the main features of CLT, and were not sufficiently confident to run communicative classes and adopt CLT in their teaching practice. The data, moreover, suggested that these shortcomings were a result of the SETs' pedagogical and linguistic preparation in their pre-service programmes. At the contextual level, the study data suggested that there were two main types of constraint that challenge SETs in terms of teaching for communicative purposes and applying CLT in their teaching practice. Firstly, there were institutional and situational factors (for example the quality of the in-service training programme, examination purposes and classroom structure), and, secondly, socio-cultural factors (such as the traditional view of education, and the status of the English language in the Saudi context) that seemed to be incompatible with teaching English for communicative purposes.

The study concludes with recommendations that aim to help improve the current situation of TEFL in KSA. For example, ending the isolation between the key parties involved in EFL teaching and learning in the Saudi context is very important, and changes to pre-service and in-service programmes, as well as at the contextual levels, are also essential.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of contents.....	iv
List of tables.....	ix
List of figures.....	x
List of acronyms	xi
Chapter 1.....	1
<i>The study</i>	1
1. 1. Introduction.....	1
1. 2. Aims of the study.....	5
1. 3. Research Questions.....	6
1. 4. Significance of the study.....	9
1. 5. Outline of the thesis.....	9
Chapter 2	11
The Context of the study.....	11
2. 1. The Educational System in Saudi Arabia.....	11
2. 1. 1. Historical background.....	11
2. 1. 2. Characteristics of Saudi education.....	15
2. 1. 2. 1. Islamic identity.....	16
2. 1. 2. 2. Centralised educational system.....	17
2. 1. 2. 3. Single-gender education.....	19
2. 1. 2. 4. Governmental financial support.....	20
2. 2. Teachers’ status in Saudi context.....	22
2. 3. Introduction of English in Saudi Arabia.....	23
2. 3. 1. Teaching English in elementary schools in Saudi Arabia.....	24
2. 4. The nature of the examination system.....	26
2. 5. Pathways of teacher training for English teachers in KSA.....	27
2. 5. 1. English Language and Literature Departments in the Faculties of Arts..	28
2. 5. 2. English Language and & Translation Faculties.....	31
2. 5. 3. Teachers Colleges or Education Colleges.....	34
2. 6. In-service teacher training provision in Saudi Arabia.....	37
2. 7. Novice teachers’ experiences and challenges.....	39
2. 8. My place in the study context.....	41
Chapter 3.....	42
Literature Review.....	42
3.1. Introduction.....	42
3.2. Historical developments in EFL teaching and learning in Saudi context.....	43
3. 2. 1. The introductory phase.....	43
3. 2. 2. The reformative phase.....	44
3. 2. 3. The communicative phase.....	46
3.3. What is meant by Communicative Language Teaching Approach.....	49
3. 3. 1. Communicative Competence.....	49
3. 3. 2. CLT versions.....	51
3. 3. 3. CLT principles.....	54
3. 3. 4. Teachers’ and learners' roles.....	56
3. 3. 4. 1. Teachers' roles.....	56

3. 3. 4. 2. Learners' roles.....	57
3. 3. 5. Classroom activities in CLT.....	57
3. 4. Appropriate pedagogy.....	60
3.5. Implementation of CLT.....	63
3. 5. 1. Challenges for implementation of CLT in EFL contexts.....	63
3. 5. 1. 1. Conceptual constraints.....	65
3. 5. 1. 2. Teachers' preparation and training.....	66
3. 5. 1. 3. Classroom-level constraints.....	68
3. 5. 1. 4. Societal-institutional level constraints.....	70
3. 5. 2. Challenges for the implementation of CLT in modern foreign languages (MFL) contexts.....	71
3. 5. 3. Challenges in CLT implementation in Saudi context.....	72
3. 5. 4. Comment on the previous studies.....	73
3. 5. 5. The gap.....	74
3.6. Conclusion.....	76
Chapter 4.....	77
RESEARCH METHODS.....	77
4.1. Introduction.....	77
4.2. Research inquiry.....	78
4. 2. 1. Research Methodology (the tools of Grounded Theory methods).....	79
4. 2. 1. 2. Grounded Theory and my study.....	80
4. 2. 2. Population.....	81
4. 2. 3. Data gathering.....	82
4. 2. 3. 1. Interview.....	85
4. 2. 3. 1. 1. Types of interviews.....	86
4. 2. 3. 1. 2. The interview sample.....	87
4. 2. 3. 1. 3. Planning and conducting the interviews.....	88
4. 2. 3. 1. 4. Co-construction.....	94
4. 2. 3. 2. Questionnaire.....	97
4. 2. 3. 2. 1. Strengths and limitations of the questionnaire.....	98
4. 2. 3. 2. 2. Operationalising the questionnaire.....	99
4. 2. 3. 2. 3. Type of questionnaire.....	100
4. 2. 3. 2. 4. Type of questionnaire items.....	100
4. 2. 3. 2. 5. Questionnaire sample.....	102
4. 2. 3. 2. 6. Covering letter.....	103
4. 2. 3. 2. 7. Reliability of the questionnaire.....	103
4. 2. 3. 2. 8. Validity and piloting of the questionnaires.....	103
4. 2. 3. 2. Documentary sources.....	104
4. 2. 4. Data Analysis.....	106
4. 2. 4. 1. Qualitative data analysis.....	106
4. 2. 4. 2. Quantitative data analysis.....	110
4. 2. 4. 3. Presenting the findings.....	110
4. 2. 4. 4. Applying CHAT theory in presenting and discussion of the data.....	111
4. 2. 4. 4. 1. Characteristics of CHAT.....	112
a. The concept of activity.....	112
b. Mediation.....	113
c. Contradictions, conflicts and resistance.....	115
4. 2. 4. Study limitations.....	116
4. 2. 4. Ethical considerations and access to data.....	117
4. 2. 4. Role of the researcher.....	118
4.3. Conclusion.....	119

Chapter 5.....	120
<i>The SETs' Current Methodological Practices.....</i>	120
5.1. Findings.....	121
5. 1. 1. SETs' roles.....	121
5. 1. 1. 1. Knowledge transmitter.....	121
5. 1. 1. 2. Lecturer Role.....	122
5. 1. 1. 3. The authoritative role.....	123
5. 1. 1. 4. Facilitator.....	125
5. 1. 2. Current SETs' Teaching Methods.....	125
5.2. Discussion.....	133
5.3. Conclusion.....	139
Chapter 6.....	141
<i>Influential factors at the individual level.....</i>	141
6.1. Introduction.....	141
6.2. Influential factors at the individual level.....	142
6. 2. 1. SETs' knowledge of CLT.....	142
6. 2. 1. 1. SETs' misconceptions of CLT.....	145
6. 2. 1. 1. 1. CLT relies heavily on oral skills.....	145
6. 2. 1. 1. 2. Using CLT involves no grammar teaching.....	148
6. 2. 1. 1. 3. CLT can only be used in pair and group work.....	150
6. 2. 2. SETs' initial preparation.....	151
6. 2. 2. 1. SETs' limited teaching repertoire.....	151
6. 2. 2. 1. 1. Pedagogical preparation during pre-service training.....	153
a .The provision of educational courses.....	154
b. The model of teaching and the practical aspect.....	159
6. 2. 2. 2. SETs' linguistic preparation.....	160
6. 2. 2. 2. 1. Lack of proficiency in the English language.....	161
a). Leniency and increase in student admission.....	163
b). Gaps in the preparatory year.....	166
c). Student language exposure in English departments.....	168
6.3. Discussion.....	172
6. 3. 1. SETs' limited teaching repertoire.....	173
6. 3. 2. SETs limited linguistic repertoire.....	176
6. 3. 3. SETs' misconceptions about CLT.....	179
6. 3. 3. 1. CLT relies heavily on oral skills.....	180
6. 3. 3. 2. Using CLT involves no grammar teaching.....	182
6. 3. 3. 3. CLT can only be used with pair and group works.....	183
6.4. Conclusion.....	184
Chapter 7.....	190
<i>Influential factors (Contextual Level).....</i>	190
7.1. Institutional and situational factors.....	190
7. 1. 1. In-service training in the Saudi context.....	190
7. 1. 1. 1. The planning stage for in-service training courses.....	192
7. 1. 1. 2. The execution stage of in-service training courses.....	193
a. Qualification of the trainers.....	193
b. The nature of the content of the training courses.....	193
c. Method of presentation in the training courses.....	194
7. 1. 1. 2. The follow-up monitoring and transfer of training stage.....	194
7. 1. 2. Examination system.....	197
7. 1. 2. 1. The potential impact of the written examination on SETs' teaching practice.....	199
7. 1. 2. 1. 1. Participants (stake-holders).....	199
7. 1. 2. 1. 2. Process of teaching.....	201

a .Teaching content.....	202
b. Teaching methods.....	203
7. 1. 2. 1. 3. Product.....	204
7. 1. 3. School level constraints.....	205
7. 1. 3. 1. Large classes.....	205
7. 1. 3. 2. Teaching load.....	206
7. 1. 3. 3. The availability and appropriateness of teaching materials.....	207
7.2. The socio-cultural factors.....	208
7. 2. 1. Traditional view of education.....	208
7. 2. 1. 1. Traditional teachers' role.....	210
a .Knowledge transmitter and source of knowledge.....	210
b .Authority role.....	211
7. 2. 1. 2. Teaching style.....	213
7. 2. 1. 3. Culture of learning and students' roles.....	214
7. 2. 2. Status of English in the Saudi community.....	215
7.3. Discussion.....	217
7. 3. 1. Institutional and situational factors.....	217
7. 3. 1. 1. Limited in-service training.....	218
7. 3. 1. 1. 1. The planning stage.....	219
a. Induction programme.....	221
b. Pedagogic training.....	222
c. Initial training.....	223
d. Linguistic training.....	224
7. 3. 1. 1. 2. The execution stage of in-service training courses.....	225
7. 3. 1. 1. 3. Follow up monitoring and transfer of training stage.....	227
a. Decontextualisation and isolation of teachers' training.....	228
b. The lack of follow up monitoring.....	228
c. Discomfort with change.....	229
7. 3. 1. 2. Exam washback.....	229
7. 3. 1. 2. 1. Dimensions of the complexity of washback effect in the Saudi context.....	232
a. Specificity.....	232
b. Intensity.....	233
c. Value.....	233
7. 3. 1. 2. 2. Contradiction between assumed aim and the evaluation tools.....	236
7. 3. 1. 3. School level constraints.....	237
7. 3. 1. 3. 1. Large classes.....	237
7. 3. 1. 3. 2. Teaching load.....	238
7. 3. 1. 3. 3. Limited communicative materials.....	238
7. 3. 1. 3. 4. Contradiction between the nature of the textbook activities and teaching aids.....	239
7. 3. 2. Socio-cultural factors.....	241
7. 3. 2. 1. The effect of the cultural view of education on adopting CLT.....	242
7. 3.2.1.1. The effect of the cultural view on the purpose of EFL teaching in S.A	242
7. 3.2.1.2. The effect on teachers and students' roles.....	245
7. 3.2.1.3 The effect on teaching and learning styles and teaching materials.....	248
7. 3. 2. 2. Social status of English in the Saudi context.....	249
7. 4. The isolated state of EFL institutions in S.A.....	250
7. 5. Conclusion.....	252
Chapter 8.....	254
Conclusion.....	254
8.1. Introduction.....	254
8.2. Summary of the research.....	254

8. 2. 1. Research question 1.....	256
8. 2. 2. Research question 2.....	257
8. 2. 2. 1. The influential factors that are related to SETs (the individual level).....	258
8. 2. 2. 2. The influential factors that are related to the contextual level.....	258
a . The institutional and situational factors.....	258
b. The socio-cultural factors.....	259
8. 2. 2. 3. The interactions between the two levels of SETs' teaching practice.....	259
8.3. Suggestions and recommendations.....	261
8. 3. 1. Bridging the isolation between the key parties involved in EFL teaching and learning in the Saudi context.....	262
8. 3. 2. Adjustment in English language departments (pre-service programmes).....	265
8. 3. 2. 1. Suggestions for boosting the language ability.....	265
8. 3. 2. 2. Suggestions for improving the teaching repertoire.....	266
8. 3. 3. Adjustments in in-service training programmes.....	269
8. 3. 4. Adjustments in the contextual level.....	271
8.4. Contributions of the thesis.....	273
8. 4. 1. Contribution to the Saudi Arabian context.....	273
8. 4. 2. Contribution to the educational research field.....	275
8.5. Limitations and further study.....	275
References.....	278
Appendices.....	299
Appendix 1 BA plan(English department, Arts school, KSU).....	299
Appendix 2 BA plan (English deptment, Languges and transaltion department).....	300
Appendix 3 BA plan(English department, Teacher College, KSU).....	301
Appendix 4 BA plan(English department, Arts school, KAU).....	303
Appendix 5 In-service training plan.....	304
Appendix 6 The Distribution of the English Language Marks for Intermediate and Secondary Stages...	307
Appendix 7 A sample of Final examination paper for English.....	309
Appendix 8 Teachers' interview.....	312
Appendix 9 Samples of data analysis by using MAXqda software.....	316
Appendix 10 MoE's approval letter for conducting the study.....	318
Appendix 11 BA plan for English language and Translation College at KSU.....	319
Appendix 12 Teachers' Questionnaire.....	321
Appendix 13: supervisors' interview.....	327
Appendix 14: University lecturers Interview.....	331
Appendix 15: Samples of questionnaire responses.....	333
Appendix 16: Information letter and Consent form (interviews).....	334
Appendix 17: example of interview data transcription.....	336

List of Tables

Table 2.1	A comparison of numbers of students in higher education in Saudi Arabia from 1983 to 2015.....	15
Table 2.2	Summary of the educational budget in Saudi Arabia.....	21
Table 3.1	Contexts of the previous studies.....	63
Table 4.1	Paradigms.....	79
Table 4.2.	Data collection schedule	84
Table 5.1	Dominant teaching practice.....	126
Table 6.1	What is involved in CLT methodology in SETs' views?.....	144
Table 6.2	Teachers' misconceptions about CLT.....	155
Table 6.3	Foundation programmes for English students: Schools of Arts & Education.....	166
Table 6.4	Foundation programmes for English students: Schools of Languages & Translation.....	167
Table 7.1	Analysis of the test items in a sample of the final exam paper for English in Saudi schools.....	199
Table 7.2	Comparison between CLT principles and the view of education in the Saudi context.....	241

List of Figures

Figure 1.1:	Teaching practice as a human activity.....	8
Figure 2.1:	Number of students enrolled in general education in KSA.....	21
Figure 4.1:	Open (initial) coding.....	107
Figure 4.2:	Axial coding.....	108
Figure 4.3:	Writing memo.....	109
Figure 4.4:	Vygotsky's triangle.....	113
Figure 4.5:	An activity system.....	114
Figure 5.1:	The emphasised skill in SETs' teaching practice.....	128
Figure 5.2:	The current SETs' teaching practice.....	135
Figure 6.1:	Have SETs tried out CLT in the classes?.....	143
Figure 6.2:	The skill focus of SETs (oral skills).....	147
Figure 6.3:	The skill emphasis of SETs (grammar).....	149
Figure 6.4:	Knowledge base in the English department, School of Arts, KSU	155
Figure 6.5:	Knowledge base in the English department, School of Languages and Translation, Imam University.....	156
Figure 6.6:	Knowledge base in the English department, School of Education, KSU.....	157
Figure 6.7:	Challenges in spoken English.....	162
Figure 6.8:	The individual level of SETs' teaching practice.....	172
Figure 6.9:	The contradiction between SETs' teaching beliefs and the aims of EFL in the Saudi context.....	185
Figure 7.1:	The SETs' skill focus (oral skills).....	202
Figure 7.2:	Number of students in the classrooms.....	205
Figure 7.3:	The contextual level of SETs' teaching practice.....	217
Figure 7.4:	The relation between the three curricular contents.....	231
Figure 7.5:	The relation between the three curricular contents in SETs' teaching practice.....	231
Figure 7.6:	Contradiction between EFL aims and evaluation tools.....	236
Figure 7.7:	Contradiction between teaching aids and textbook activities.....	240
Figure 7.8:	Contradiction in the aim of EFL teaching in S.A.....	244
Figure 7.9:	Contradiction between roles.....	248
Figure 7.10:	Isolation of EFL institutions.....	250

List of Acronyms

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELDP	English Language Development Project (in KSA)
KAU	King Abdulaziz University
KSU	King Saud University
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MFL	Modern Foreign Languages
MHE	The Ministry of Higher Education (in KSA)
MoE	The Ministry of Education (in KSA)
SAMA	Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency
SETs	Saudi English Teachers (in the formative year)
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Chapter 1

The study

This introductory chapter consists of two parts. The first part introduces the research by concentrating on the rationale behind the topic choice, the research aims, the research questions, the research significance, and the outline of the thesis. The second part introduces the study context. It begins by giving a general picture of the context in which the study took place. It addresses the Saudi education system in terms of its characteristics and its cultural and historical background because these issues are important in understanding how Saudi English teachers implement CLT in their teaching practice. The second part also covers the introduction of the English language in the Saudi context and the pathways of English teachers' preparations in Saudi universities.

1. 1. Introduction

The demand for using English language as a means of communication has increased exponentially around the world, particularly in the developing countries. This demand results from the fact that English is the language of globalisation, international communication, trade, media, research and publication (Flowerdew and Peacock 2001). Among the countries which show an increasing interest in the English language is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Teaching and learning English in KSA was adopted as a major policy imperative in 1932, and by 1958 English had

become a separate subject in the curriculum (Alsubahi 2001). Since then the teaching of English has been developing rapidly.

The growing desire to learn English in the Saudi context is reflected in the financial incentives offered by the government. Both Altammamy (2011) and Shabbir (2006) point out that teaching and learning English in KSA receives political, economic and legislative support from the government. In the last national budget in KSA, for instance, the educational sectors were allocated 25% of the budget (which amounts to more than \$49.8 billion) to support their plans, in which the teaching and learning of English receives a high priority (SAMA 2015).

Despite all the support that teaching English receives in KSA, however, learning outcomes are still below the expectations. For example, some educators have ascribed the weakness in English teaching and learning in the Saudi context to various factors, including teachers' performance in the classroom, pupils' motivation, inappropriate educational environments, curricula or syllabi, and inadequate in-service training programmes (Alsubahi's 2001; Alhazimi 2008; Almarshad 2009). Alabdulkarem (2007) and Aljarf (2009), for example, both undertook separate studies to investigate these issues. They each noted that during visits to public schools in KSA, supervisors of the English subject observed that some pupils had difficulty with listening comprehension, and in responding to very simple questions in English. Their written English was also poor, and their results in the school leaving examination were lower in English than in other subjects.

In addition to students' English language performance being considered under par, it has also been noted that English teachers in some public Saudi schools are also considered to be performing below the level expected of those who hold a degree in

teaching a foreign language (Alsubahi 2001; Almarshad 2009; Alseghayer 2011a). Almarshad (2009), for example, finds that English teachers in some Saudi schools were unable to conduct a whole class in English. They had limited control over their classes, and adhered to traditional teaching methods.

The Saudi Ministry of Education (MoE) has considered these challenges and has taken significant steps in order to reform the teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL) in KSA. For example, the TEFL curriculum document, which had been prepared in 1987 by the Department of English of the MoE's Directorate of Curriculum, was modified in 2000 in order to update the textbooks to focus on the four basic skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and to promote Saudi school students' communicative competence. This step was aligned to the general aim and objectives of TEFL in KSA (Alhajailan 2006). According to Article No. 50 of Saudi Arabian education policy, the purpose of teaching foreign language to students in Saudi Arabia is:

Furnishing the students with at least one of the living languages, in addition to their native language, to enable them to acquire the knowledge and sciences of other communities and to participate in the service of Islam and humanity (MoE 2015a)

Alhajailan (2006) also adds that the new textbooks have been based on using the Communicative Language Teaching method (CLT) as a prescribed teaching method. In addition, the MoE has sent hundreds of English language supervisors and teachers abroad, particularly to the UK, to attend short advanced training programmes on the latest development in the field of TEFL (Alhazmi 2003). Moreover, the MoE in KSA has launched on 2007 a programme called the English Language Development Project (ELDP) to raise the level of teaching and learning of English in Saudi schools. ELDP

is a joint initiative between the Ministry of Education and the publishers of major British and American EFL/ESL textbooks and materials, such as the Oxford University Press, Pearson Longman, Macmillan, and McGraw Hill (Alabdulkarem 2007). This project also aims to acquaint Saudi English teachers with current teaching methods through short training programmes (for example, a 3-day English training programme) around the kingdom. The MoE is also currently equipping schools with some technological devices such as smart boards to facilitate teaching and learning English inside classrooms; it has also arranged seminars and conferences to discuss the inadequacy of TEFL in the Saudi context and drawn up some policies to improve it (Mahibur Rahman 2011).

In spite of all these efforts, however, the situation of TEFL in KSA appears to show little progress. According to Liton and Ali (2011) and Mahibur Rahman (2011), one of the fundamental shortcomings in teaching and learning English in Saudi schools which still needs more development lies in the promotion of communicative competence among students.

The aforementioned incentives indicate that the Saudi MoE, in its redesigning of curriculum and syllabi for English language, has moved from a structural syllabus focussing on teaching grammar and translation, to a communicative syllabus focussing on fostering actual communication. These new curriculum and syllabi concentrate on activities that are designed to be delivered by innovative teaching methods such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). However, the reality of English teaching in Saudi schools shows, as the aforementioned studies have displayed, that English language teachers in the Saudi context continue to use traditional teaching methods which do not support the recent efforts for improving TEFL. This reality may indicate an incompatibility between the governmental efforts

to develop TEFL in schools and the English language teachers' practice in their classes. This incompatibility, however, suggests that English language teachers might have their own reasons for not teaching to serve communicative purposes and implementing CLT in their classes. It would therefore be worthwhile to explore these challenges. Though I believe that there are many reasons which contribute to the current situation of TEFL in the Saudi context and need more investigation, I think teachers' teaching practice is a fundamental issue which needs immediate investigation. This is because teachers and their teaching practice in general are the link between all the parts of teaching and learning processes such as students, the curriculum, the syllabus and the teaching environment, and teacher education. Gulanz et al. (2015) argue that the role of the teacher seems to be important in any teaching-learning situation, because it is central to the situation in which the classroom environment develops.

1. 2. Aim of the study

According to Alhajailan (2006), the main aim of teaching and learning the English language in KSA is to use English in meaningful communication, which includes oral communication with people, or reading or writing. Consequently, the recent curriculum and syllabi in KSA are based on communication-based activities which reinforce communicative competence. To achieve this competence, however, the classroom practice should also help students fulfil communication purposes inside and outside classrooms; this might be achieved through using innovative methods such as CLT (Savignon 2002; Farooq 2015). The actual situation indicates that classroom teaching practices are still devoted to secondary purposes such as teaching grammar,

translating literary texts, memorisation, rote learning, and preparing for summative exams (Alsubahi 2001; Almarshad 2009; Alseghayer 2011a). However, there are a number of factors which challenge the classroom teaching practice of English teachers in the Saudi context and contribute to limit their implementation of communicative activities and CLT; these factors are related to the teachers, students, the educational system, the teaching environment, the syllabi, and pre/in-service training (Alseghayer 2011a).

Therefore, in order to contribute to the improvement of the current situation of classroom teaching English in the Saudi context, this study aims to explore the factors that influence English teachers in their teaching practices and hinder their teaching for communicative purposes and their implementation of CLT as teaching method in their classes. In addition, this study also aims to explore the roots of these challenges in order to understand where they have stemmed from; the study will also propose some suggestions that may improve the current situation of TEFL in Saudi schools.

1.3. Research Questions

In order to build a comprehensive picture of this issue whose factors may stem from various situations such as from the place of the work (schools) or places of preparation (such as pre-service and in-service training programmes), the study targets the English language teachers (SETs) in their formative year in state schools for two reasons. Firstly, they are the immediate product of English language teacher pre-service programmes and their teaching experience is entirely dependent on their initial preparation, i.e. their performance and practice are a mirror that may reflect a part of what goes on their preparation programmes; therefore, it could be helpful to

explore any influential factors present in the initial preparation programmes.

Secondly, since these teachers teach in state schools and have access to in-service training programmes, they may be able to describe the situations in both places (schools and in-service training centres).

In order to fulfill the aim of the study, the thesis will address the following research questions:

1- Which methodological practices do Saudi English Language teachers in their formative year in state schools say that they currently use in their classrooms?

2- What factors influence English teachers' choice of teaching Methods in their formative year?

3- How might ELT education in the Saudi context be altered in order to close any identified gap(s) between the methodology informing the syllabus (CLT) and the current teaching methods used by the English teachers in their formative year?

It is worth mentioning here that the study investigates an issue (the challenges faced when implementing CLT) that takes place in a context or a system (classroom) in which events do not occur in a linear way, but rather a context in which plenty of factors interact in complex ways and create changes that are partly predictable and partly unpredictable (Van Lier 1996). Consequently, the interactions within a system (classroom) to a large extent determine its characteristics and influence its dynamics. Hence, in order to examine the teaching practice that takes place within SETs' classrooms, it is necessary to explore it in its context, and to describe the interactions that take place in the teachers' surroundings (Finch 2003).

The idea of studying an issue or activity within its context is, of course, a core concept of Activity Theory or Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Engestrom 2001; Phillips 2006; Lantolf and Thorne, 2006; Edwards 2011). Moreover, another characteristic of CHAT theory is that it treats human actions, such as teaching practice, as activity in a system. This activity is, according to CHAT theory, the outcome of individuals' interactions with their environments. This view maintains that human activity includes two inseparable levels or contexts, namely the cognitive and socio-cultural. This idea thus considers studying or examining one context as isolated from another to be an unproductive task that may not produce achieve an understanding of the holistic picture regarding the issue under investigation (Phillips 2006).

The study thus uses CHAT theory as its theoretical framework because it allows me to investigate a range of factors and provides me with an opportunity to exercise my reflexivity in the process of analysing my findings. CHAT theory aids the examination of the relationship between human beliefs and activities. Rather than seeing the relationship between belief and acting in a linear way, this connection could instead be regarded in a circular way, in which human belief influences the activity and the activity influences human belief (Capper 2004, cited in Phillips 2006).

See Figure 1.1

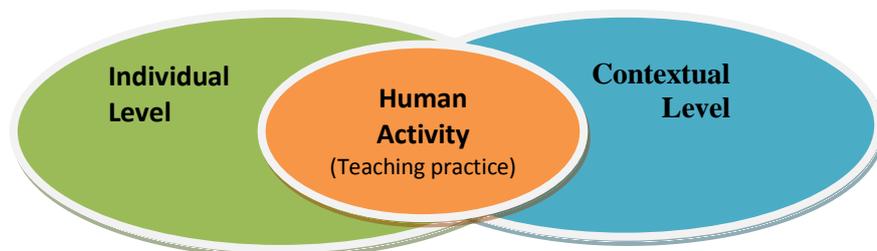


Figure 1.1 Teaching practice as a human activity

1. 4. Significance of the study

This study may help provide a better understanding of the main challenges that the English teachers in the Saudi context face in teaching for communicative purposes and implementing CLT. Besides this, since the study also aims to explore the roots of the probable challenges, it may contribute in providing a better insight into English language teaching (ELT) programmes (pre/in-service programmes) by displaying some of their strengths and weaknesses in preparing English teachers. Such investigations may help in identifying any existing gap between the government policy in syllabus design, the methodological practices of the Saudi English teachers, and teachers' preparation programmes. Furthermore, the study may provide practical suggestions to bridge any identified gaps between the government policy for TEFL and the methodological practice of English teachers in Saudi schools. Consequently, it may help the responsible body, be it the MoE (responsible for planning and designing the EFL curriculum) or the local universities (responsible for initial teacher preparation) or the in-service training centres (responsible for ongoing training for English teachers), to make appropriate decisions to reform its plans. Finally, it may provide an insight into the challenges to implementing CLT in EFL contexts.

1. 5. Outline of the thesis

Chapter 1, as the previous pages have shown, includes two parts; part one comprises the introduction to the research, highlights the rationale behind the choice of the research topic, the research aims, questions and significance forms the first part. While, the introduction to the study context forms the second part of Chapter 1. Chapter 2 reviews literature relating to the implementation of communicative

language teaching (CLT) in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in general and the Saudi context in particular. Chapter 3 introduces the research methodology that has been used in data collection. In Chapter 4, the data that relates to the first research question have been presented, analysed, and discussed, while the data relating to the second research question are addressed in three chapters, i.e. chapters 5, 6, and 7. Chapter 5 sheds light on the influential factors that stem from the SETs at the individual level. Chapter 6 highlights the influential factors at the social level (e.g. institutional, situational, and socio-cultural factors) existing within the Saudi context, with the potential to influence SETs' teaching practice. Chapter 7 discusses the interactions and contradictions between these influential factors, in order to demonstrate the ways in which they influence each other, along with their general influence on SETs' decision to adopt (or not adopt) CLT in their teaching practice. In Chapter 8, the data that relate to the third research question are presented, analysed, and discussed as proposed suggestions and recommendations to improve the current practice of EFL teaching and learning in KSA. Chapter 8 also includes a conclusion section of the thesis, which includes summaries of the findings and presents the main contribution and implications of the study.

Chapter 2

The context of the study

Chapter two gives a general picture of the context in which the study took place.

2. 1. The Educational System in Saudi Arabia

2. 1. 1. Historical background

The roots of formal education in Saudi Arabia can be traced back to the late the eighteenth century when the first State of Saudi Arabia¹ came into being. Education at that time was limited to the teaching and learning of basics such as reading and writing, in addition to the recitation of the religious books. This kind of teaching was provided through traditional schools which were called Kuttabs (Metz 1992). This kind of school was a single classroom school for young children, specialising in teaching Religious subjects. It was run by religious people, who were specialists in teaching the Holy Book [the Quran] (Dasen and Akkari 2008). Kuttabs were attached to mosques and were for male students while female students were taught at home under the supervision of female teachers (Metz 1992; Alsalloum 1995). This kind of schooling was dominant in the Arabian Peninsula till the late nineteenth century (Groiss 2003). The end of the nineteenth century witnessed the beginning of what could be considered as formal modern education in the Arabian Peninsula when the

¹. Historically, Saudi Arabia had passed through three states. The 1st state was from 1744-1818, the 2nd state was from 1824-1891; the 3rd started in 1902 and is ongoing.

Ottoman State introduced the beginnings of formal education in the provinces of Hejaz and al-Ahsa, which were under Ottoman control at that time² (Groiss 2003). At the beginning of the twentieth century there were only four elementary private schools in the whole Arabian Peninsula. Most of these were in Hejaz (western part of KSA), offering boys limited teaching of other subjects besides religion (Metz 1992; Rugh 2002)

Shortly after the unification of most of the Arabian Peninsula as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the first quarter of the 20th century, however, the late king Abdul-Aziz, the founder of this modern state, realised that education was a means of strengthening national unity and educating the Saudi people (Alsalloum 1995; StateUniversity 2012). Therefore, in 1925 the Directorate of Education was established and a centralised educational policy was entrusted to it. The main objectives of that policy were to observe the teaching of Islam, to spread knowledge and to establish schools. As a result, government-sponsored education began and it was accompanied by the establishment of new elementary schools in big cities. In 1938, the Directorate of Education was given control over all educational matters in Saudi Arabia except in the case of military schools (Alsalloum 1995; Rugh 2002; StateUniversity 2012).

Though in 1952 the number of the elementary schools in Saudi Arabia exceeded 300, illiteracy was still too high. Thus, in 1953 the Directorate of Education became the Ministry of Education under the leadership of Prince (later King) Fahad bin Abdul-Aziz. With the establishment of the Ministry of Education, more schools were opened

² Ottoman Empire or Turkish Empire, which lasted from 1299-1923, controlled most of the Islamic world at that time.

and public education started to spread throughout the country. This development in education was so rapid that, in 1971, the Ministry of Education found it necessary to create educational directorates in different parts of the country and to delegate some of the Ministry's responsibilities to them, with some success. For example, the male to female percentage of students in schools witnessed a remarkable change. In 1981 the school enrolments showed that boys formed 81% of the student body while girls formed 43% (Alsalloum 1995; StateUniversity 2012). In 1989 the number of girls enrolled was very close to that of the boys enrolled - of a total of 2.6 million students, there were within 1.2 million girls and 1.4 million boys. Furthermore, the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA) indicates that in 2000 the numbers of boys and girls in public schools were 2.16 million and 1.95 million respectively, out of a total of 4.11 million students. In 2015 the numbers of boys and girls in public schools were 3.48 million and 3.06 million respectively out of a total of 6.309 million students (SAMA 2015).

In addition, formal education was not limited to general education; in 1982 a Directorate General for Educational Technology was founded. This directorate is responsible for providing vocational and technical education to Saudi students. In addition to this, special education programmes were developed for students with special needs; this involved the construction of special educational facilities and establishing a special education degree in teacher training colleges (StateUniversity 2012).

Higher education in Saudi Arabia prospered after the establishment of the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) in 1975. The main responsibilities of this Ministry were:

Proposing the establishment of higher educational institutions and authorizing them to offer special programs in accordance with the

country's needs. Creating and administering universities and colleges in the Kingdom. Raising the level of communication and coordination between institutions of higher learning and coordinating with other governmental ministries and agencies in terms of their interests and needs in higher education. Representing the government abroad in all educational and cultural affairs, through various cultural and educational offices distributed over 32 countries (SACM 2006, p5-6).

There are many examples of developments in higher education in Saudi Arabia resulting from this. For example, the number of the Saudi universities and colleges rose from 7 universities with 90 affiliated colleges in the 1960s and 1970s to 35 universities with 596 affiliated colleges in 2015 (SAMA 2015). The majority of these universities provide religious and secular education for both male and female students. The government funding for higher education has been very generous and has led to the construction of many new university campuses around the kingdom such as those in King Saud University, King Abduaziz University, Umm Alqura University and Imam Mohammed University. This expansion in higher education has led to a gradual increase in the number of students enrolled in higher education. For instance, as shown in Table 2.1, between 1983 and 1989, the number of male students in higher education increased from approximately 58,000 to about 113,000, the number of female students increased from 20,300 to 47,000 (Metz 1992; SAMA 2015). In 2004, the number of students enrolled in universities reached approximately 571,813 (236,996 men and 334,817 women). In 2015 these numbers show a further increase; there are around 1,511,094 students (with 744,927 men and 766,167 women) while the graduates among them are around 110,885 in number (SAMA 2015).

Table 2.1
A comparison of numbers of students in higher education in Saudi Arabia from 1983 to 2015

Year	Male	Female	Graduate male	Graduate female	Total
1983	58,000	20,300	7,000	7,000	92,300
1989	113,000	47,000	15,000	14,300	189,300
2004	200,896	300,817	36,100	34,000	571,813
2010	405,724	543,980	40,047	61,294	1,051,045
2015	669,629	681,570	75,298	84,587	1,511,094

2. 1. 2. Characteristics of Saudi education

The Saudi education system is based on principles formulated by the Higher Committee of Educational Policy. These principles were derived mainly from the sources of the country's constitution, i.e. the Holy Quran and Prophet Mohammed traditions (MoE 2015a). Some of these principles require (MoE 2015a; State University 2012):

- a) strengthening faith in Allah (God) and Islam and in Mohammed as a messenger of Allah;
- b) encouraging a holistic and Islamic concept of the universe;
- c) ensuring the right of the individual to seek education and the duty of the government (within its capacity and resources) to provide education at various stages;
- d) ensuring a good equality of education for boys and girls in accordance with the Islamic instructions;
- e) linking education at all its levels with the general development plan of the state;

- f) integrating Islamic orientation in the sciences and in the knowledge of the curricula and teaching,
- g) stimulating human knowledge through Islam to raise the nation's standard of living;
- h) -using Arabic as the official and teaching language at all educational stages;
- i) teaching the importance of Saudi history and the preservation of the Islamic religion.

A thorough reading of the different principles and aims of the Saudi educational policy indicates that the main characteristics of the Saudi education system are: Islamic identity, centralised educational system, single-gender education, and governmental financial support. The following paragraphs will address each one in turn.

2. 1. 2. 1. Islamic identity

This identity is emphasised in the education system right from the beginning. At the time its foundation, the Saudi state was declared as an Islamic state, and it derives its constitution from Islamic law (Sharia) and from the teachings of Prophet Mohammed (Rugh 2002). Many of the principles of the Saudi educational policy (e.g. the aforementioned ones) emphasise the importance of Islam. Rugh (2002, p 43) states: 'Islam is not only integral to Saudi education but also serves as the very essence of its Curriculum'. Metz (1992, p 2) adds that 'public education, at both the university and secondary-school level, has never been fully separated from its Islamic roots'. Religious education is emphasised at all levels of education in Saudi Arabia with nine hours per week (30% of the total number of hours) at the elementary state and eight hours per week (24% of the total number of hours) at the intermediate and

secondary stages dedicated to it. Religious education includes the teaching of subjects such as the Qur'an, the tradition, jurisprudence and theology of Islam (Rugh 2002; MoE 2015b). In addition, the teaching of religious subjects also continues at the higher levels of education; the percentage of religious education taught varies according to the nature of the degree in each university. For example, in the Colleges of Art or Social studies it may be as high as 40% while it may be as low as 15% in the Colleges of Medicine, Sciences, and Languages (Prokop 2003). However, although the number of religious subjects is high in school timetables, there are also a good number of hours devoted to other subjects such as Math, Science, Art, Social studies, Physical education, and Arabic language (MoE 2015b). Alrasheed (2010) also says that teaching religious subjects should not be considered as a constraint on secular education, and the former should indeed support the latter since Islam encourages the learning and teaching of language as well as other branches of knowledge (e.g. Science, Math, Social studies, etc).

2. 1. 2. 2. Centralised educational system

The education system in Saudi Arabia is administered centrally by three governmental bodies; the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, and the General Organisation for Technical Education and Vocational Training

The Ministry of Education, which was established in 1953, supervises general education through schools for boys and girls which have grades 1 through 12. In addition there are kindergartens, pre-schools, special education and adult education (in public and private schools in Saudi Arabia and in Saudi schools abroad). Before 2002, girls' education was overseen by The General Presidency of Girls Education, which was created in 1960, but it was merged with the Ministry of Education in 2002.

All schools at all levels of general education use the same methods of instruction, textbooks, evaluation techniques, curricula, and educational policy. Thus the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education include policy-making, planning, recruiting teaching staff, providing teaching materials and supplies to elementary, intermediate, and secondary schools, and organising teacher training programmes. The sole exception in general education is the schools affiliated to the military and run by the Ministry of Defense, which follows the same regulations and curricula as the Ministry of Education (Alsalloum 1995; Rugh 2002; StateUniversity 2012; MoE 2015b).

The Ministry of Higher Education, which was established in 1975, supervises the higher education. It supervises thirty five state and private universities around the kingdom. The Ministry of Higher Education's responsibilities include coordinating, supervising, and following-up undergraduate and postgraduate programmes related to national development in a variety of fields. It reviews applications for study abroad and has 27 overseas educational and cultural missions in different countries. The Minister of Higher Education heads the University Council for each university in Saudi Arabia.

It is worth noting here that, in the Saudi context, the key parties that are responsible for general education (the MoE and schools) and higher education (universities and colleges) are isolated from each other as regards their operations. There are no communication channels between these parties regarding the planning and design of the national curriculum or in the planning and design of teacher preparation programmes. The only link between them is that student teachers can undertake work

experience in state schools under the supervision of their university lecturers without any involvement from cooperative school teachers (Abahussain 2006).

The third governmental body is the General Organisation for Technical Education and Vocational Training, established in 1980, which supervises the vocational and technical education in the kingdom. It was founded to meet the country's increasing demand for specialised technical training. There are three levels of vocational training institutions: prevocational training centers, vocational and commercial secondary schools and higher (postsecondary) technical institutes (Alsalloum 1995; Rugh 2002; SACM 2006; MoHE 2012; StateUniversity 2012).

2. 1. 2. 3. Single-gender education.

In accordance with the instruction of Islam, educational policy in Saudi Arabia assures in one of its articles that there is strict separation of the genders at all levels of education with the exception of kindergarten, nursery, some private elementary schools and some medical schools. The segregation of the genders is related to the respected social status of women accorded them by Islam (Alsalloum 1995; StateUniversity 2012). Rugh (2002) states that separation of the sexes has also been a consistent feature of Saudi education. Although there is segregation in the education system, both genders have the same level of support from the government and the same curricula with the exception of physical education being provided only for boys and home economics only for girls (Alsalloum 1995; Alrasheed 2010). The educational policy also recognises 'women's right to obtain suitable education on equal footing with men in light of Islamic laws' (Metz 1992, p.2; Alrasheed 2010).

2. 1. 2. 4. Governmental financial support

The Saudi government has put education at the top of its priorities. Under the universal slogan "Education for all", it has allocated considerable financial resources for education. Thus, education is free for all citizens and residents in Saudi Arabia in all of the state schools and universities. The government provides free tuition and transportation for all students in general education. It also supports university students with monthly stipends in the state universities (Alsalloum 1995; Rugh 2002; StateUniversity 2012). Every year a grand budget is allocated to the educational sectors, which in the last two decades has been equal to a quarter of the national budget. For example, as shown in Table 2.2, the educational budget in 1947-48 was \$3.1 million, but by 1954-55 it became \$21.6 million and by 1966-67 it reached \$92 million. In 1974-75 the government spent approximately \$1 billion on education; by 1983-84 this figure was \$7.31 billion. In the 1990s it allocated more than \$25 billion to education, which was about 18 percent of the national budget. In the last budget (2015) it was more than \$57.6 billion. All of the sources of these budgets come from the government funds since the Saudi citizens pay no tax (SAMA 2015). As a result of this subsidy, Saudi education has grown very rapidly. For example, as shown in Figure 2.1, by the year 2015, the total number of male and female students enrolled in Grade 1 through 12 had reached 6,309,502. The total number of schools for boys and girls had reached 31,421. The number of teachers had reached 519,334 in state schools only. While the number of students enrolled in higher education in 2015 was approximately 1,512,134 (SAMA 2015).

Table 2.2
Summary of the educational budget in Saudi Arabia (source SAMA, 2015)

Financial year	Amount in American dollars
1947-1948	3.1 million
1954-1955	21.6 million
1958-1959	50 million
1962-1963	78 million
1966-1967	92 million
1974-1975	1 billion
1983-1984	7.31 billion
1990s	25 billion
2014-2015	57.6 billion

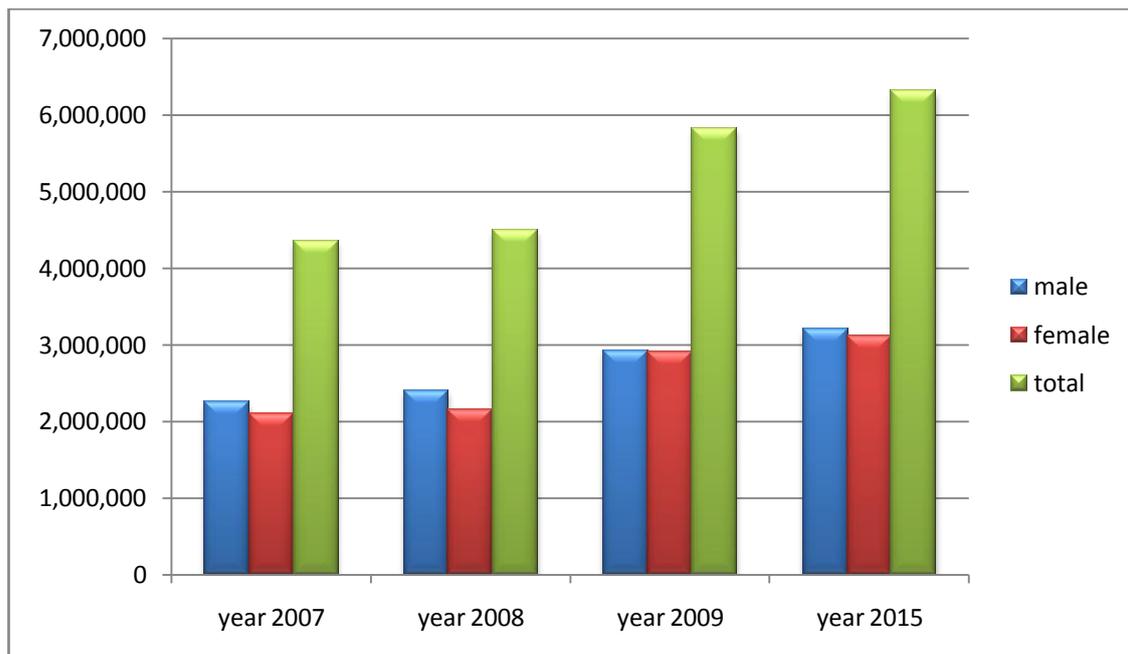


Figure:2.1
Number of students enrolled in general education (source SAMA 2015)

2. 2. *Teachers' status in the Saudi context:*

The term "status" as defined by Chataa (2010, p.1) refers 'to one's position in comparison with other people's positions in a social context and the reference or prestige granted by others within that context'. It is believed that one of the fundamental indicators of the importance of education in every milieu is teacher's status (particularly social status) in that milieu (Fwu and Wang 2002; Alrasheed 2010). Thus, teachers' status nowadays is a heated issue in educational literature. In order to understand teachers' status in the Saudi context, it would be useful to tackle it from two perspectives as suggested by Fwu and Wang (2002): (i) the professional prestige of teaching, which may reflect the outsider's view of the amount of respect that the community give to teaching as a profession, and (ii) the work perceptions of teachers, which may reflect the insider's view (self-view) as to what it is like to be a teacher in a given context. In the 1970 and 1980s, the Arab public viewed teaching as one of the top ranking professions and this led to teaching jobs attracting a large portion of the university graduates. This perception reflected the community's gratitude to teachers for to their great efforts in eradicating illiteracy and educating people. However, in the late 1990s and in 2000s, due to the political and economical change in our materialistic world, the teaching profession began to be ranked at the bottom, below occupations including medicine, dentistry, accounting and the work of police officers (Almaely 2006; Farghaly 2010). These views concur with Hoyle's study (1995), which included comprehensive surveys conducted in 53 developed and developing countries and concluded that the teaching profession is not attractive. Furthermore, looking at the insider's view (teachers' views), some studies reveal that teaching as a profession lost its popularity in the Saudi context and the job dissatisfaction is dominant among Saudi teachers. For example, Aljaghob (2007),

Almaely (2006) and Farghaly (2010) indicate in their studies that teachers struggle from an increase of workload including administrative work, compounded by insufficient income, lack of training and health care insurance, increasing community criticism and a poor public image of teaching. In addition, the teacher attrition, which is so high [8,000 teachers in the last decades according to Aleqtisadiyah (2011)], is another indicator of the job dissatisfaction among Saudi teachers (Almaely 2006).

2. 3. Introduction of English in Saudi Arabia

The English language was chosen to be the first, and in most cases the only, foreign language in the Arab world because it is the 'Lingua Franca' of the world and since the world's knowledge is usually preserved in English (Khan 2010), and also due to business transactions between Arab countries and most other nations in the world being conducted in English. Thus, there is a real and growing need for more foreign language speakers to be proficient in both spoken and written English in the Arab world (Alseghayer 2011b). As a result, many Arabic speaking countries, such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, have recognised the importance of creating a context for teaching English language to the local people. Hence, teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia had been adopted as a major policy imperative since 1927 (Al-Abdulkader 1978 cited in Al-Seghayer 2011). It has developed rapidly in schools, colleges and universities. The main aims of teaching the English language, as stated by the Saudi Ministry of Education, are to provide students with proficiency in at least one of the living languages in addition to their mother tongue, to help students gain knowledge about the sciences and of other nations available only in English, to transmit the knowledge and science of Saudi Arabia to other nations, and participate in spreading Islam and serving humanity (MoE 2015b). Altammamy (2011) indicates

that English is taught in public and private schools, colleges, universities and institutes in KSA. Till 2006, English was taught in state schools only to intermediate and secondary sections, but after 2006 English began to be taught from Grade 6 in primary schools (from 2009 English teaching has began to be from Grade Four and this continues to date) to Grade 12 in secondary schools as part of the school curriculum³.

While English is taught from grade 1 to grade 12 in private and international schools, Alshammri (2005) indicates that English is taught for general and specific purposes (English for Specific Purposes or ESP) and academic purposes (English for Academic Purposes or EAP) in Saudi institutions such as the Institute of Health Sciences, Colleges of Technology, the Institute of Banking and Financial Studies, and in most local universities.

2.3.1. Teaching English in elementary schools in Saudi Arabia

In the late 1990s, the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia faced a great deal of criticism from various sections of Saudi Arabia. This criticism mainly focused on poor students' learning outcomes in some subjects such as English in the public schools, in which students usually spend about six years to learn English from grade 7 to grade 12. For example, both Alabdulkarem (1998) and Aljarf (1999) show in their studies that in spite of all the support that teaching English received in Saudi schools, the students learning outcomes were still modest.

³ A detailed discussion about the introduction of English into the primary sector will be included in section 1.2.3.1

In 2002, as a result of criticism and to reform the situation regarding the learning of English language in Saudi Schools, the Ministry of Education made a decision to introduce English in elementary schools in order to help solve part of the problem. However, as Alabdulkarem (2007) argues, this decision did not take into consideration the characteristics of the Saudi context. Consequently, this decision met with great opposition from some Saudi educators and the local media. Their opposition was based on the assumption that the introduction of a foreign language from the early stages may affect the learning of the mother tongue as well as the culture of the country. As a result, the Saudi Cabinet issued a circular to suspend teaching English at the elementary stage for some time and conducted many studies from different parts of the Saudi context. After a while, many studies emerged. A majority of them supported the idea of not teaching and learning English until intermediate (or at least until the upper elementary stage. Aljarf (2004) and Aljamhor (2003) concluded from their studies that learning ability does not decline with age. These studies also indicated that the ability to communicate in a new language may actually be easier and more rapid for the adult than for the child that because adults may use some learning techniques which link their linguistic abilities with their environments. Also Aljarf (2004) ; Aljamhor (2003); and later Almtaoa (2010), claim in their studies that learning a new language is not limited to learning its vocabulary only. Indeed learning a foreign language also accompanied by learning the culture of the region where the language is used. This fact, it was thought, may also leave a negative impact on young learners and cause them to lose their national identity.

As a consequence, in 2005, the Saudi cabinet issued a circular to delay teaching English at the elementary stage till grade 6, and allowed four years as a trial period for

that. In 2009 another decision issued by the Saudi cabinet resulted in state schools starting English teaching for two hours a week from grade 4.

2. 4. The nature of the examination system

The students in the Saudi schools are assessed in each subject annually with 100 marks, which are divided into 50 marks for each term. For example, in English language, the 50 marks each term are divided into 30 marks for the final written examinations, 20 marks for course work [10 for the written mid-term exam and 10 marks for participation], as shown in Appendix 6, p. 307 (Alqassim General Directorate, 2014) .

In addition, students in the final year of the secondary stage also have to sit to the General Aptitude Test (which is known as: Qiyas) as a requirement for the university admission. This test consists of two parts; a verbal section to check the students' linguistic competence, comprising questions such as reading comprehension, and sentence completion and matching questions. The second section, the quantitative one, measures the mathematical competence (National Center for Assessment in Higher Education 2014).

Furthermore, the constructions of the written examination papers, final and mid-term exams for English language in the Saudi schools, as shown in Appendix 6 (p 307), are based on a format or a pattern that has been circulated by the General Directorate of Curricula, English language department at the Ministry of Education. This circular shows the main items that a written exam should cover, as well as the marks distribution for the English subject at the intermediate and secondary stages (Alqassim General Directorate 2014).

2. 5. Pathways of teacher training for English teachers in KSA

Since English was introduced as a subject in the school curriculum, the ministry of education has hired a number of English teachers to teach English in public schools; these teachers include native speakers (in very limited numbers) and non-native speakers (in large numbers, mostly from Arabic-speaking countries). Also, the number of local universities and colleges has increased and foreign language departments have been established to meet the massive demand for foreign (specifically English) language specialists and teachers in Saudi Arabia.

Many educators believe that a language teacher requires both knowledge of the subject matter (i.e. content knowledge), and generic teaching strategies, e.g. classroom management; motivational and organisational skills (i.e. pedagogic knowledge); and specialised knowledge of ways of delivering the subject matter, including language teaching methods in general and skills for teaching and evaluating language skills in particular (i.e. pedagogic content knowledge). In addition, a teacher also requires skills in sociolinguistics and the acquisition of a second language (Day and Conklin 1992; Rubio 2009). Kasule (2003) also argues that the role of teacher as a facilitator of the learning process requires the teacher to acquire some specific foreign language teaching skills, along with a good command of the target language, particularly when the language of instruction is not the native language. Hence, the language teacher's repertoire will be enhanced by the acquisition of knowledge and skills in pedagogy, pedagogic content, and support knowledge, as well as assisting in the delivery of the subject matter in an effective and efficient manner. However, a lack (or deficiency) in such knowledge and skills may limit a language teacher's teaching repertoire, and consequently the effectiveness and efficiency of the teaching and learning process.

However, English language teaching education in Saudi Arabia has been introduced mainly in three different kinds of colleges: Arts Collages, Languages and Translation Colleges and Education Colleges. This leads to the question concerning the extent to which the three pathways of EFL teacher preparation in the Saudi context support their graduates to be effective EFL teachers.

2. 5. 1. English Language and Literature Departments in the Faculties of Arts

(see Appendices 1 and 4, p:299, 303)

A large proportion of student-teachers in Saudi Arabia are graduates from English Language and Literature departments in the Faculties of Arts. This is because English Language and Literature departments can be found in most of the 25 Saudi state universities (MoHE 2015).

a) *Main aim:* These departments mainly serve the specific purpose of providing progressively sequenced instruction in both English language and literature to students enrolled with them. Their programmes are geared to provide virtual, vocational and professional training to students expected to serve later as translators and linguists. They also provide students with a broad theoretical and practical knowledge and a deep understanding of English language, literature, and linguistics. They develop students' language and communication skills by employing a theory and technology enhanced teaching approach to listening, speaking, reading, grammar, and writing. Therefore, these departments offer multiple courses in composition, grammar, linguistics, translation, language, and British/American literature (KSU 2015).

b) *Subsidiary aim:* As a contribution to meet the massive demand for local foreign language teachers, some of these departments offer some educational courses to support students who want to join the teaching profession. For instance, the English Language and Literature Department (Arts Faculty) in Umm Al-Qura University states that one of its goals is to prepare students for teaching English in intermediate and secondary schools or any similar levels in English language centers, after receiving proper educational training (Umm Al-Qura 2015). Furthermore, the English Language and Literature Department (Social Science Faculty) in King Faisal University (KFU) indicates that one of its aims is to qualify students to be teachers of English language and to provide them with the necessary skills that they need in their teaching such as English language skills, a knowledge of modern methods of teaching and classroom technology and the ability to prepare educational materials suitable for the local context (KFU 2015). However, a thorough reading of the Bachelor curricula in some of these departments reveals that most of the knowledge base that offered in these departments consists of:

(i)-*content knowledge:* knowledge of the subject matter (Day 1992). This includes language skills, along with literature and translation. This knowledge, for instance, covers approximately 81.25%, 83.59% of the total BA plans credits that are offered by the English language and literature departments in King Saud University (Appendix 1, p:299), and King Abdulaziz university respectively (Appendix 4, p: 303).

(ii).*Pedagogic knowledge* (i.e. knowledge of generic teaching strategies, beliefs and practice (Day 1992). These include subjects such as the philosophy of education, educational psychology and class management. However, the BA plans of the departments do not state that they include the training of English language teachers.

(iii)-Pedagogic content knowledge: the knowledge of how students come to understand the subject matter (Day 1992). This knowledge includes information about how to teach language skills (teaching method) and test language skills (language evaluation). A thorough reading of the Bachelor curricula in some of these departments reveals that a number of the educational courses offered are very limited. For example, in the English Language and Literature Department in King Saud University (Arts Faculty), only two educational courses are offered with 5 credits out of 128 credits (which are equal to only 3.9 % of the total BA plan, as shown in Appendix 1, p:299). Meanwhile the same department in King Faisal University teaches three courses (8 credits out of 132 credits, equal to 6.06% of the total BA plan). Similar percentages are also seen in other universities as regards the educational courses offered. Regarding the practical experience (i.e. practicum), some English departments, do not offer practicum to student-teachers during their studies, as is clear from the BA plans of English departments of Arts Schools at KFU and KSU (Appendix1, p:299). On the other hand, the English Language and Literature Department of the Arts Faculty in King Abdulaziz University (KAU), although it does not offer any theoretical educational courses, it offers two practical courses (practicum) to student-teachers, as shown in Appendix 4,p:303 (KAU 2015).

(iv)-support knowledge: knowledge that supports us in our ways of teaching and learning languages (Day 1992). This includes linguistics, language acquisition and research methods. This knowledge also covers approximately 14.84 %, 12 % of the total BA plans' credits that are offered by the English language and literature departments in King Saud University (Appendix 1, p:299), and King Abdulaziz university(Appendix 4, p: 303) respectively.

In addition, the model of teaching that is applied in these departments is the rationale model, i.e. the students receive theoretical information and are then expected to apply this information in their practice at a later (Day 1992; Wallace 1991; Banegas 2011; Hong and Pawan 2015). This model of teaching, however, does not support student-teachers in gaining any experience in teaching practice. This assumption is supported by the lack of any practical training courses in these BA plans offered by these departments. Consequently, offering language teacher education in these departments, in my view, is not the proper way of preparing prospective foreign language teachers in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the knowledge bases that need to be developed are the pedagogic knowledge (which is completely absent from these BA plans) and pedagogic content knowledge (which comprises only 3.9% of these BA plans, with only two courses in this area). The amount of content knowledge, which comprises 81% of the BA plan thus needs to be reduced, particularly the literary and the Arabic subject matter in order to increase the pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge.

2. 5. 2. *English Language & Translation Faculties* (see appendices 2 and 11, pp:300, 319)

The second pathway of introducing ELT in Saudi Arabia is through departments or faculties of English Language & Translation. These are found in five Saudi universities (King Saud University [KSU], King Abdul-Aziz University [KAU], King Khalid University [KKU], Imam Mohammed University, Taibah University). There are variations among these departments in their aims. For example, Language and Translation colleges in KSU and KKU aim to prepare graduates who have the ability to use English in certain situations and work as translators. They devote most of their courses to English language (with courses in language skills and language sciences) and translation. In KSU, for example, the courses of the department devoted to

translation constitute 64 hours out of 171 hours (37.4 %) while those devoted to language skills, language sciences and cultural aspects together constitute 70 hours [41.5 %] (KSU 2015). They do not offer any educational or literary courses (see Appendix 11, p: 319). On the other hand, the Languages and Translation Colleges in Imam Muhammad University and Taibah University seem to be multi-purpose departments. Their objectives are to prepare graduates to be competent in the English language to serve various community institutions in education, translation and scientific research fields (Imam Muhammad University 2015). Therefore, they offer different courses with various skill/knowledge branches in their BA plan (180 credits in Imam University) such as language skills and sciences (with 47 credits; 26%), translation (21 credits; 11.6%), literature (29 credits;16.1%), linguistics (8 credits ;4.4%), educational courses (20 credits +12 credits as practicum = 32; 17.7%) and Arabic language and Islamic subjects required by the university (39 credits; 21.6%), as shown in Appendix 2 (p:300).

Thus the languages and translation colleges (second pathway) in the Saudi context serve two different purposes. The first group aims to prepare graduates to be competent in translation, such as at KSU and KKU, while the other group aims to prepare graduates to serve in different positions, i.e. education, translation and scientific research fields, such as at Imam Muhammad University and Taibah University. The analysis of the BA plans for the first group shows that the knowledge base that is offered in these plans is mainly content knowledge with more focus on translation and language skills (80%) and university requirements (15% on Arabic language). The remaining percentages are for the support knowledge, such as applied linguistics and research methods (5.8%). But there are not courses offered for pedagogic knowledge and pedagogic content knowledge. Thus the teaching

preparation of the graduates of this pathway seems to have a variety of shortcomings. They do not study any educational courses and they do not have any exposure to educational experiences.

On the other hand, the analysis of the BA plans for the second group show that the knowledge base that is offered in these plans comprise:

(i)- content knowledge 77% of the total BA plan(180 credits): language skills 14.4%, language sciences 11.6%, literature 16.6%, translation 11.6% and university requirements in Arabic language and Islamic subjects 21.6%. *(ii)- pedagogic knowledge* 7.7% presented in Arabic: issues in generic teaching strategies, beliefs and practice.*(iii)- pedagogic content knowledge* 10% in English: subjects in EFL teaching methods, testing and evaluation in EFL classes, using computer in EFL teaching. *(iv)- support knowledge* 4.4%: linguistics and research methods.

Thus, this pathway seems to cover all of the required knowledge in pre-service language teacher education programmes despite the variations in emphasis. Since their preparations include courses in generic issues in teaching in general and in EFL teaching in particular, it might be presumed that the graduates of this pathway may be more competent in teaching than their counterparts in other routes. They also have chances to practise teaching in real schools during their studies (practicum). However, there are some drawbacks in this pathway, too. These drawbacks are: i- the number of course (78) and credits (180) that students study in this pathway are too large for four –year programme. ii- the compulsory courses in Arabic and Islamic studies(22 courses with 39 credits, university requirements courses) may consider to be a burden to students and may distract their attention from the core subjects. iii- the pedagogic knowledge subjects(10 courses with 14 credits) are presented in Arabic. Teaching

pedagogic knowledge subjects in the mother tongue rather than in the target language may lessen their benefits to students. Teaching pedagogic knowledge subjects in Arabic, in addition to teaching the compulsory subjects and Islamic studies in Arabic, means that the number of teaching hours in the mother tongue may comprise at most one third (29.4 %) of the whole BA plan, which in turn reduces the student exposure time to the target language. Thus, presenting pedagogic knowledge subjects in English could increase students' knowledge of educational topics as well as the time that they are exposed to the target language. iv- the practical courses devoted to teaching practice are few in number and limited to practicum in the final level (level 8), thus it is clear, that the model of teaching in this pathway is the rationalist model which focuses in presenting theoretical issues and postponing practice. Consequently, offering language teacher education through this route, in my view, needs some modifications in order to produce a good model for preparing prospective foreign language teachers in Saudi Arabia. In addition, the knowledge bases that need to be developed are pedagogic knowledge (7% of the BA plan) and pedagogic content knowledge (10%). The amount of the content knowledge, which covers 77% of the BA plan thus needs to be reduced, particularly the literary and the Arabic subject in order to increase the pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge.

2. 5. 3. Teachers Colleges or Education Colleges (see Appendix 3, p: 301)

The third pathway for introducing ELT in Saudi Arabia is through Teachers Colleges or Education Colleges. The English Departments in the teacher colleges are dedicated to preparing EFL teachers to act as educational leaders equipped with the information, skills, and attitudes to work efficiently and grow professionally in different

educational institutions in order to fulfill the needs of Saudi society (KSU 2015).

These aims are achieved through promoting the students' oral and written communication skills, expanding the extent of students' knowledge of English language and literature, providing students with specialised knowledge in the field of EFL learning and teaching, and equipping the students with the skills to conduct morphological and syntactic analyses and to translate from Arabic into English and vice versa (KSU 2015). In the BA plan for the English department in the teacher college at KSU, students do 131 credit hours divided over 8 levels, including compulsory courses in Arabic, Islamic studies, Maths, and computer skills (23 hours). The educational courses (37 hours) are: 21 hours in Arabic Language and 8 hours in English Language with practicum (8 hours), language skills (32 hours), language sciences (24), translation (4 hours) and literature & culture (6 hours) [KSU 2015], as shown in Appendix 3, p 301.

The analysis of the BA plans for the English department in the teachers colleges shows that the knowledge base that is offered in these plans comprises *(i)- content knowledge* 62.5% of the total BA plan(131 credits): 45% of the content knowledge is in English language: language skills (32 hours), language sciences (12 hours), literature (6 hours) and translation (4 hours), while 17.6% of the content knowledge is in Arabic language: compulsory courses in Arabic , Islamic studies, Maths, and computer skills. *(ii)- pedagogic knowledge*, 16% presented in Arabic: such as principles of education, class management, educational psychology. *(iii)- pedagogic content knowledge* and practice 12% in English: subjects in EFL teaching methods, testing and evaluation in EFL classes, using computers in EFL teaching. *(iv)- support knowledge*, 6.1%: linguistics and research methods. Thus, in this pathway the knowledge base seems to cover all of the required knowledge in pre-service language

teacher education programme despite the variations in percentage. The BA plans in this route resemble the BA plan in the languages and translation department in Imam University, so what has been mentioned about the department of languages and translation in Imam University also applies to the English language departments in the teachers colleges. The only differences between them are: the content knowledge in English language in the Imam University pathway is greater than in the teachers colleges, particularly in literary and cultural courses (at 16.1% and 4% respectively). The second variation is that the pedagogic knowledge courses are well chosen in the teachers colleges, i.e. they are courses which all of the teachers are in need of, such as principles of education, class management, and educational psychology. Another difference is that: while students in teachers colleges have 8 credit hours devoted to practicum, their counterparts in Imam University have 12 credit hours for practicum. In addition, in Imam University the prospective students should have a good level of English before they are enrolled in level one or they are required to register for intensive courses in English provided by the English department. In contrast, the enrollment of the prospective students in teachers colleges depends only on their GPA and their meeting general admission conditions stipulated by the university. Consequently, offering language teacher education through this route, in my view, needs some modifications in order to produce a good model for preparing prospective foreign language teachers in Saudi Arabia. For example, the knowledge base that needs to be developed is pedagogic content knowledge (which only comprises 12% of the entire BA plan).

2. 6. *In-service teacher training provision in Saudi Arabia* (see Appendix 5, p:304)

The Saudi MoE has realised the importance of in-service training for teachers. It has placed great emphasis on teacher qualification and training since its establishment, and it has encouraged teachers and employees to take part in the training programmes to enhance their careers. Teacher training in Saudi Arabia has passed through several stages before reaching its current form. In 1954, the MoE began by providing training programmes for teachers through a plan aimed at re-qualifying inexperienced teachers, particularly in the elementary stage, and at the same time improving the performance of other teachers and enriching their knowledge. In 1955, and due to the shortage in qualified teachers, the MoE established two evening institutions, which were aimed at increasing the teaching skills of the assigned teachers at that time. Those institutions only lasted for ten years, having achieved their goals. In 1963, the MoE held 50-day summer training courses on teaching methods, psychological studies and general issues in education for some teachers. Those courses only lasted for two years, and approximately 1025 teachers attended them. From 1965 until now, the MoE, in order to support teachers' training, established the General Administration of Educational Training (GAET), and it has opened teacher training centres all round the country, equipping them with extensive facilities and appointing qualified trainers in order to meet the teachers' training needs (GAET 2002). The main objectives of in-service training in Saudi context, as GAET claims, are to:

- a- improve the individual's performance and develop his or her ability to achieve job satisfaction.
- b- promote some positive attitudes toward work and human relationships.
- c- provide trainees with the latest technical, theoretical and scientific knowledge

that makes them capable of coping with change.

d- recognise trainees needs with effective approaches for dealing with their jobs.

e- help trainees to implement the new ideas, opinions and solutions that emerge from research, to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

f- increase the creative thinking of trainees in order to empower them to readjust to changes in their careers on the one hand, and to overcome emerging problems on the other.

g- to reduce the obstacles to professional development in order to save time and effort.

h- to boost the teachers' self-esteem whilst learning by providing them with access to continuing professional development (GAET 2002).

Nowadays, GAET organises many pedagogical short training courses free of charge for teachers in Training Centres in each educational zone (Almaini 2009). These courses last for 1 -3 days, and they are in generic as well as special educational topics. There are only four training courses which are specially for English teachers and they are on general information in how to teach the language skills. In addition, due to the recent launch of new textbooks for English language, the publishers of these series organised temporary short training courses, under the supervision of MoE, in order to show how these books were constructed and which teaching methods would suit them.

2. 7. Novice teachers' experiences and challenges

There is no distinct definition of the term “novice teacher” or a newly qualified teacher in the literature (Farrell 2012). A novice teacher could be anyone who is new to the teaching profession, who is teaching something for the first time, or who has joined a new cultural context for the first time (Farrell 2012). There is also no consensus on how many years of teaching are necessary before a teacher no longer has newly qualified status. Some authors describe a novice teacher as one with less than five years' teaching experience (for example Kim and Roth 2011). Others use the term to refer to a teacher with no more than two years' teaching experience (for example Haynes 2011). For the purpose of this study, novice teachers are defined as teachers who have less than two years' teaching experience.

It has been argued in the literature that the transition from student-teacher to teacher can be dramatic and traumatic (Veenman 1984; Rogers and Babinski 1999). The transition has also been characterised by some writers as a type of reality shock in which novice teachers realise that the image they formed about teaching in their initial training may not match the classroom reality they encounter during their first years of teaching (Veenman 1984; Senom et al. 2013). Unlike other professions, such as medicine and law, novice teachers are traditionally assigned the same responsibilities as more experienced teachers from their first day of teaching. There is no staging or levels of responsibilities (Little 1990; Karatas and Karaman 2013). Some researchers have also argued that novice teachers struggle to achieve personal and professional acceptance from pupils, colleagues and the school administration, and they tend to develop a “survival kit” and a set of coping strategies (Vonk 1993) in order to deal with the complex tasks inherent in being a teacher with full professional responsibilities.

Most studies emphasise the role of the first years of teaching in a teacher's career and how teachers' experiences shape their identity and future practices. Pitton (2006) argued that the success of newly qualified teachers is strongly related to their experiences and the support they are given during their first years of teaching. Thus, providing support (such as in induction programmes) to novice teachers is essential for three reasons: the need to retain newly qualified teachers, the need for novice teachers to become effective practitioners as soon as possible (Andrews and Quinn 2005) and, as Feiman-Nemser argues, because "providing support to beginning teachers is a humane response to the trials and tribulations associated with the first year of teaching." (1986, p.12). Indeed, a lack of support for new teachers has been linked to widespread weaknesses in the profession in some contexts, including the Saudi one (Almaini 2009). Additionally, other studies have argued that novice teachers, as a consequence of their limited experiences and lack of support in some contexts, experience various challenges as they attempt to develop their teaching in new contexts. Studies concerning the challenges facing novice language teachers (for example Veenman 1984; Senom et al 2013; Karatas and Karaman 2013; Liu 2014; Dickson et al. 2014) have indicated the range of these challenges. These challenges are categorised into three dominant themes in the literature: pedagogy, support, and identity, according to Karatas and Karaman (2013). The most common pedagogical challenges that novice teachers face are classroom management, student motivation, handling differences between students, grading student work, planning lessons, the effective use of different teaching methods, knowledge of the subject matter and linguistic level, dealing with slow learners, dealing with students from different cultures and backgrounds, the effective use of textbooks and curriculum guides, and a heavy teaching workload with little preparation time. The primary challenges related

to support are the lack of induction and mentoring programmes in some contexts, such as the Saudi one, inadequate guidance and support from colleagues, supervisors and administrators, relations with administrators and colleagues, awareness of school policies and rules, inadequate school equipment, the lack of spare time, relations with students' parents, the burden of administrative work, and large class sizes. The challenges that may affect teachers' identities include anxiety, lack of confidence, reality shocks, and shifts in attitudes and behaviours due to the absence of the college environment and limitations to teaching repertoires (Alabadi 2004; Almaini 2009; Karatas and Karaman 2013; Dickson et al. 2014).

2. 8. My place in the study context

As a product of the Saudi education system, I completed all of my general education (from grade 1 through 12) in my home town Almajmaah. I then enrolled in one of the English language departments in a local university, namely Imam Mohammed bin Saudi University in Riyadh. After being granted my bachelor degree, I was appointed as an English teacher in one of the secondary schools in Riyadh (this is a state school). I was then seconded by the Ministry of Education to work in one of the pioneer private schools in Riyadh for five years. After this I was appointed again in the state sector to work as an educational supervisor for the English subject for four years. Then in 2011 I transferred to Almajmaah University to work as a lecturer in the English department after I got a Master degree from the U.K. Therefore, I believe that my experience in TEFL in Saudi context, through which I have benefitted as a student, teacher, supervisor and lecturer, could to a large extent provide me with an insight into TEFL in the Saudi context and help me to tackle the issue of CLT implementation from different angles.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

This chapter reviews literature relating to the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in general and in the Saudi context in particular. It starts with an overview of the historical development in English language teaching methods in Saudi Arabia (the context of this study), and continues into a discussion about the emergence of CLT, the principles of CLT, previous studies associated with the implementation of CLT in various EFL contexts; the discussion then moves on to a significant gap in the field, which my study aims to fill: the implementation of CLT in the Saudi context.

3. 1. Introduction

Teaching and learning EFL in KSA have undergone significant changes over the course of the last 80 years. During this period, the emphasis on the purposes of learning English have changed – from reading literary texts and developing intellectual abilities to improving language skills to using language for meaningful communication (Alhajailan 2006; Alseghayer 2011a). While fulfilling these purposes, the field of English language teaching in KSA has also witnessed radical changes with respect to teaching content (‘what to teach’) and methodologies (‘how to teach’). It could be argued that to some extent, as we will see in the following paragraphs, these changes were in line with the historical development of English language teaching and learning in Europe and worldwide (Howatt 1984). Therefore, to contextualise the

recent changes that have occurred, an overview of the historical developments in the field of EFL teaching in Saudi over the last 80 years would be helpful.

3. 2. Historical developments in EFL teaching and learning in Saudi context

The developments in EFL teaching and learning in the Saudi context passed through three main phases: introductory, reformative, and communicative.

3. 2. 1. The introductory phase

English language was learnt and taught in some parts of Saudi Arabia before it became part of the scholastic curricula around 1944 (Alseghayer 2011a). Alhajailan (2006) indicates that the year 1944 saw the establishment of the first EFL curriculum in Saudi Arabia. This curriculum was taught for 14 years using two textbooks, namely the Red Primer and the Green Primer, and supplemented by Readers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 at secondary school level (at that time there were only two sections of schooling in Saudi, i.e. primary and secondary). English was taught and learnt during this phase for certain purposes – to read and appreciate foreign-language literature and to develop intellectual abilities. To fulfil these purposes, the emphasis of these textbooks was to teach reading, grammar, writing, and translation. The prevalent teaching method at that time was the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), because it focuses mainly on reading and writing skills, with an emphasis on grammar and translation as a means to comprehension. The application of GTM in Saudi schools at that time was also accompanied by the adoption of various techniques such as rote memorisation of vocabulary and using the mother tongue (Alseghayer 2011a; Alhajailan 2006). It could be reasonably contended that the emphasis of learning, teaching methods and

teaching techniques at the introductory phase in Saudi Arabia were in line with the classical period during the historical development of English language teaching and learning in Europe and worldwide in which English was introduced as a modern language for the first time. The commonalities between these two periods was that there was no definitive EFL curriculum at the beginning, and the English language was mainly taught by using a collection of short stories, English was taught for the purposes of reading and appreciating foreign-language literature and developing intellectual abilities, and teaching practice focused on reading, writing, grammar and translation, and using Grammar-Translation method (Alseghayer 2011a; Howatt and Smith 2014).

However, in the second half of the 1950s the EFL curriculum and the prevailing method (GTM) in the Saudi context became highly criticised for concentrating on accuracy and written language rather than on fluency and spoken language, and for their inability to prepare learners to use foreign languages for communicative purposes outside classrooms (Alhajailan 2006; Alseghayer 2011a). As a result, their validity started to be questioned. Consequently, this criticism led the Saudi policy makers to shift the emphasis of EFL teaching and learning towards promoting oral skills at the end of 1950s.

3. 2. 2. The reformative phase

This phase started, as Alhajailan (2006) indicates, in 1958 when the Saudi MoE split the secondary stage into two sections, the intermediate (three years) and the secondary (three years). During this phase EFL in KSA witnessed a shift in focus to teaching oral skills. Moreover, a new plan was also adopted, and new textbooks were used for

teaching the English language, which focused on improving the students' oral skills. For instance, the *'Living English for the Arab World'* textbook, produced by Longman, was used at the intermediate level, while *'Living English Structure'* was used in the secondary section. In addition, a collection of stories such as *'A Traveller's Cheque'*, *'The Pearl'*, and *'Round the World in Eighty Days'* were used at that time. These books were used for 20 years, and the dominant teaching method was the Audio-Lingual Method [ALM] (Alhajailan 2006). Moreover, all of this change during the reformative phase was affected by the result of new developments in EFL/ESL theories in Europe and worldwide during the Second World War, which emphasised oral work and pronunciation, and mechanical learning when teaching a modern language (Richards and Rogers 2001). One of the popular methods that was applied ALM began to take shape at the end of the 1950s (Hall 2011). Hall points out that the popularity of ALM during this period was due to its close relation to behaviourism (a learning theory that was dominant during 1940s and 1950s). Hall also argues that ALM combined the scientific theory of language (structuralism) with the scientific approach to learning (behaviourism). Due to its close relation with behaviourism, ALM made drilling, repetition and habit formation the central elements of instruction. As a result, the English lessons in the Saudi schools at that time were often organised on the basis of grammatical structure and presented through short dialogues, and drilling and repetition were the dominant techniques in English classrooms (Alhajailan 2006).

Although the ALM lasted for more than 20 years in the Saudi EFL field, its validity was questioned in the 1970s by groups of Saudi teachers who wrote reports on the shortcomings of this method. For example, Dr. Alhajailan, who as was one of those teachers, states (Alhajailan 2006) that the main shortcomings of ALM in Saudi Arabia

were that drilling did not help teachers to achieve the intended aim of teaching English in Saudi schools, which was to prepare learners to use a foreign language fluently. Furthermore, the critics of ALM believed that learners who were taught using ALM still remembered the dialogues but could not speak the foreign language outside their classroom. This criticism seems to be in line with the criticism that ALM faced worldwide. For example, its theoretical basis (language learning as a set of habits) was questioned by linguists such as Chomsky, who believed that children could not possibly learn a language through imitation alone because the language spoken around them was highly irregular (Karunakaran and Babu 2013).

3. 2. 3. *The communicative phase*

In response to the criticism of the previous curriculum in the Saudi context, the year 1981 witnessed the birth of another curriculum, in which the aims and procedures of English language teaching and learning started to change once more (Alseghayer 2011b). The main aspect of this change was the shift of the focus of teaching and the learning processes of foreign languages from teaching linguistic forms or structures to teaching people how to use these structures and other aspects of language appropriately for different purposes of real-life communication (Alhajailan 2006; Alseghayer 2011a). In order to achieve these purposes, the Saudi MoE, in collaboration with Macmillan Press, introduced a new textbook entitled '*Saudi Arabian Schools English*'. The new curriculum adopted CLT (the approach that was developed in the 1970s from a concept that perceived language as a system for communication, and its aim was to develop learners' communicative competence (Hymes 1971; Halliday 1973; Richards and Rodgers 2001) as a prescribed teaching method and lasted for 15 years. In 1995 the collaboration between the Saudi MoE and

Macmillan Press was terminated due to some administrative and technical problems that Macmillan faced such as the delay making the textbooks available to the students within a specified time (Alhajailan 2006). Thus, in 1995, the curriculum department of MoE, in collaboration with EFL specialists from King Fahad University of Petroleum, launched a new national project, which was owned by the Saudi MoE, to revise the English curriculum. This curriculum adopted a new series of textbooks called '*English for Saudi Arabia*', which were written by local writers and employed the principles of CLT which aim to provide learners with chance to practice their English for communicative purposes (Howatt 1984).

In these textbooks, the language content was organised around a theme, function or notion instead of presenting a certain linguistic point. These textbooks included a broad variety of meaningful activities such as pair work, group work, and discussion activities which were designed to provide students with situations in which they could practice meaningful communication (Alseghayer 2011b). In 2004, the EFL curriculum was revised again, and a new textbook entitled '*Say It in English*' was applied in the Saudi schools. In this textbook some interactive activities were introduced such as role playing and debate. Moreover, the same year saw the introduction of the English language as a subject in the elementary section.

Furthermore, in 2008 the Saudi MoE launched a programme called the English Language Development Project (ELDP) to raise the level of English teaching and learning in Saudi schools necessitated by the deficiency of the national curriculum in promoting students' communicative competence (Alseghayer 2011b). ELDP is a joint initiative between the Ministry of Education and major British and American

EFL/ESL textbook publishers such as Oxford University Press, Pearson Longman, Macmillan, and McGraw Hill (Alrasheed 2010). As a result, a new curriculum was introduced in 2008, which was based on communicative principles, i.e. a language is a system for communication, integrate communicative activities through all units, and the nature of these activities are determined by the content, function and meaning (Howatt 1984; Berns 1990; Brown 2007; Hadley 2001). Consequently, various new textbooks produced by the aforementioned publishers were adopted in Saudi schools. Examples of these textbooks are: *Flying High*, *Super Goal*, *Full Blast*, *Traveller* and *Life Off*. These textbooks, which are still being used, were designed to develop students' communicative competence (the ability to use language rules for communication [Hymes 1972]) by integrating the four language skills and presenting their communicative activities in a carefully graded progression that enhanced students' confidence and helped them use English to express themselves meaningfully outside the classroom (Tatweer 2015).

However, since the core aim of this study is to investigate the sources of challenges that Saudi English teachers face in their implementation of CLT, it is important to understand what CLT means, in terms of its principles, form, activities and teachers' and students' roles. This is because this understanding will be part of the theoretical background that I will use in the discussion of the findings of my study later in this thesis. Therefore, the following pages will be devoted to the perspectives about CLT in the reviewed literature.

3. 3. What is meant by Communicative Language Teaching Approach

The CLT approach was developed in the 1970s from a concept that perceived language as a system for communication, and its aim was to develop learners' communicative competence (Hymes 1971; Halliday 1973; Richards and Rodgers 2001). Harmer (2001) stated that there are two aspects of CLT: what to teach and how to teach. The 'what to teach' aspects of this approach place more importance on language functions than on structures. The second aspect, 'how to teach', states that the classroom interactions should involve meaningful activities which create opportunities for practising real communication in order to develop a student's knowledge and skills. However, Littlewood (1981) argued that in order to achieve the communicative purpose of teaching and learning a language, CLT should pay systematic attention to both functional and structural aspects of language.

3. 3. 1. Communicative Competence

Chomsky's linguistic theory differentiates two aspects of language, 'competence' and 'performance'. According to him, competence consists of the principal knowledge of the grammatical system of a language, and such knowledge makes it possible for a user of a language to generate and comprehend an unlimited set of sentences out of a limited set of rules, while performance, according to Chomsky, refers to the use of the underlying knowledge to communicate (Newby 2011). This idea, however, was criticised by Hymes (1972) for ignoring the social elements of language. Hymes points out that Chomsky's linguistics theory does not account for socio-cultural factors or differential competence in a heterogeneous speech community, and therefore Chomsky's view of performance is an incomplete reflection of competence. Hymes' own theory states that a linguistic theory must be able to deal with a

heterogeneous speech community, differential competence, and the role of socio-cultural features. Hymes (ibid.) argues that, in order to communicate, a language user needs a rule system for language use in addition to linguistic competence. Kumar et al. (2013, p. 25) argue that:

Knowledge of the rules of grammar alone is not sufficient. The ability to use these rules appropriately to communicate meaningfully is equally, if not more, important.

The ability to use language rules for communication refers to the term that was proposed by Hymes (1972) 'communicative competence'. Brown (2000, p.246) defines 'communicative competence' as:

that aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts.

As previously mentioned, the idea of communicative competence is considered to be the fundamental notion of CLT. Communicative competence includes knowing what to say and how to say it appropriately based on the situation, the participants, and their roles and intentions (Ozsevik 2010). The model of communicative competence suggested by Canale and Swain (1980) and developed by Canale (1983) is considered the most accepted definition of communicative competence for language teaching (Savignon 2002). Communicative competence, based on Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983), involves four components:

a) *Grammatical competence* or what Savignon (1983) called linguistic competence: the knowledge of the sentence structure of a language. This knowledge includes the knowledge of vocabulary, rules of pronunciation and spelling, word formation, and sentence structures.

b) *Socio linguistic competence* or socio-cultural competence: This is the ability to comprehend the social context in which the language is used for particular communicative functions, such as describing, negotiating, and persuading, taking into consideration the roles of the participants, the settings, and the purposes of the interaction.

c) *Discourse competence* or textual competence: This is the ability to distinguish diverse models of speech and to connect sentences or utterances to an overall theme or topic and to infer the meaning of large units of spoken or written texts. A person of high-discourse competence is able to use consistent devices such as transitional verbs and conjunctions and is skilled in considering and expressing the meanings of and relationship among different ideas in a text.

d) *Strategic competence*: This is the ability to use verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to bridge the potential gaps in communication which arise from either 'limiting conditions in actual communication or insufficient competence in one or more of the other areas of communicative competence, and to enhance the effectiveness of communication' (Canale and Swain 1980, p. 10). Strategic competence also includes coping strategies to initiate, terminate, maintain, repair, and redirect communication.

3. 3. 2. *CLT versions*

It could be argued that CLT has been derived from various disciplines, which include sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, applied linguistics, second-language acquisition and educational and philosophical research (Hu 2002; Ahmad and Rao 2012a). This theoretical eclecticism has led to the emergence of various interpretations of what

CLT is and how it can be implemented. Some of these interpretations or discussions have raised some issues about whether or not to include the teaching of language structures and vocabulary, using the mother tongue in CLT practice, the nature of teachers' and learners' roles in classrooms, the nature of communicative activities, authenticity of materials, and providing feedback to students (Hu 2002; Ahmad and Rao 2012a). In general, however, the main interpretations of CLT in the scholarly literature boil down to two different versions: weak and strong.

According to Howatt (1984), the weak version of CLT stems from the assumption that the components of communicative competence can be identified and systematically taught. It stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and characteristically attempts to integrate communicative activities into a wider programme of language teaching. In this version, one learns to use English by focusing on form and meaning (Howatt 1984).

Conversely, the strong version of communicative language teaching claims that 'Language is acquired through communication' (Howatt 1984, p. 279). That is, learners do not first acquire language as a structural system and then learn how to use this system in communication but rather actually discover the system itself in the process of learning how to communicate. The strong version of communicative language teaching therefore involves providing learners with opportunities to experience how language is used in communication. Within the strong version, a learner uses English to learn it. The strong version of CLT thus focuses mainly on meaning (Howatt 1984). Accordingly, focusing on meaning, some researchers (Thornbury 2006; Kumaravadivelu 2006; Carless 2007) consider the strong version of

CLT as the foundation of the Task-Based Learning (TBL) approach. Carless (2007) argues that learning activities that are used in TBL mainly emphasise communication of meaning over the study of grammatical forms. Prabhu (1987) identifies some kinds of activities that can be used in TBL, such as activities dealing with information gap, reasoning gap, and opinion gap.

In sum, the weak version of CLT suggests that students learn a second/foreign language, and then use it in meaningful communication. This idea involves using structured and meaningful communicative activities in a controlled manner in the classroom so that students can gradually apply these in more natural settings. On the other hand, the strong version of CLT implies that a language is learned by using it in a process, where students work together on a communicative task to help one another solve a language problem, without the interference of their teacher who mainly serves as a facilitator of the learning process.

Spada (2006), however, argues that the lack of ability to distinguish between the two versions of CLT has led to some misconceptions about the implementations of CLT in language classrooms such as:

- a) applying CLT in classrooms means that the teaching and learning process focuses entirely on meaning.
- b) applying CLT in classrooms means that there is no explicit feedback on error.
- c) applying CLT means that classroom activities mainly focus on listening and speaking practice.
- d) CLT means avoidance of the learner's L1.

3. 3. 3. CLT principles

Despite the existence of different versions of CLT, they all generally share common principles and practice. Both of the CLT versions give primacy to meaning and insist that teaching should focus on communicative function rather than on mastering linguistic structures (Brown 2001; Widdowson 1990). In both versions of CLT, there is a tendency toward extensive exposure to the target language by providing comprehensible input and letting language learners practise it in interactive ways, in order to increase the opportunities for negotiation of meaning among the learners (Hu 2002). Moreover, both of the CLT versions also try to establish a link between classroom activities and real life situations.

Berns (1990); Brown (2007); and Hadley (2001), furthermore, have provided the following summaries of the general principles of CLT:

- a)** The theory of language teaching and learning that CLT is based on is the conception that a language is a system for communication; this perceives language as a social means that learners use to convey meaning about something to someone for some purpose, either in oral or written language.

- b)** The efforts to communicate using the second/foreign language are supported in all stages of learning, especially at the outset of teaching, since the target language system could be learned best by endeavouring to communicate one's own meaning and by negotiation of meaning through interactions with others.

- c)** No single method or approach is prescribed. Activities and strategies for learning vary according to learners' preference and needs with the purposeful involvement of learners in pragmatic, authentic, and functional use of language.

d) Variety is recognised and welcomed as part of language progress; therefore, more than one variety of a language is recognised as an applicable model, and reasonable use of native language is acceptable. Translation may be used if necessary and is beneficial to students' learning and teachers' teaching.

e) The sequence of materials is determined by the content, function, and/or meaning that help sustain students' interest. Both target and home cultures are identified as playing an influential role in shaping learners' communicative competence, which is the goal of teaching in applying CLT.

f) Fluency and accuracy are considered in relative, not absolute, terms of correctness. Sometimes, fluency may be more important than accuracy in order to sustain learners' meaningful engagement in language use; however, sometimes accuracy may be emphasised. Thus, part of teachers' responsibility is to offer appropriate corrective feedback on learners' errors.

However, these principles have been considered in the KSA EFL policy document as well as in the construction of the course books. Thus, as Alseghayer (2011a) and Alhajailan (2006) clarify, the EFL documents and textbooks in the Saudi context have adopted the main concept of CLT, namely to teach language as a means of communication. As a result, and to achieve this aim, the EFL textbooks in Saudi schools are designed to adopt various activities (traditional and communicative), which are based on the daily use of English and the interconnection of all four skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) and the language components (vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) [a sample of an EFL textbook used in Saudi schools is shown in Appendix 13, pp: 327]. The objectives, content and activities in these textbooks focus on using authentic materials that can provide practice in the target

language as it is used by native speakers in its actual contexts. The available materials can develop the learners' communicative skills and prepare EFL learners for the future use of the target language in real life. Furthermore, these textbooks also offer an online training package for students and online teaching resources for teachers. In addition, the application of CLT in the KSA EFL document and textbooks means that learning is based around students, with teachers working as facilitators (Tatwer 2015).

3. 3. 4. Teachers' and learners' roles

The focus of teaching in CLT, which emphasises teaching for communication rather than mastery of language structures, implies roles for language teachers and learners that are different from those found in traditional language classrooms (Richards and Rodgers 2001).

3. 3. 4. 1. Teachers' roles

Teaching in both forms of CLT entails teachers considering the different roles that CLT has ascribed to them. According to Breen and Candlin (1980), teachers' roles in communicative classes are as follows :

- a) a facilitator and guide rather than a transmitter of knowledge, who facilitates the communication process between all participants and various activities and texts
- b) an independent participant within the learning-teaching group
- c) an organiser of resources and a resource him/herself
- d) a researcher and learner.

Thus, instead of the authoritative role of the teacher, CLT entails the teacher working as a co-communicator, a needs analyst, an organiser of resources, a facilitator of activities and a learner (Larsen-Freeman 2001).

3. 3. 4. 2. *Learners' roles*

In CLT classes there are also various roles assigned to language learners. Hu (2002, pp.95-96) proposes that the roles of students in CLT classroom are to be 'those of negotiators for meaning, communicators, discoverers, and contributors of knowledge and information'. The learners in CLT classes are regarded as active participants who are often engaged in "learner-centred, cooperative, collaborative learning" processes (Brown 2007, p. 47).

3. 3. 5. *Classroom activities in CLT*

Language learners can build up their communicative competences by using the second/foreign language in a meaningful way. Interaction is one of the means through which a language can be used meaningfully. Indeed, Larsen-Freeman (2001) considers communicative interaction as the prerequisite to language learning.

In a communicative language classroom, learners are offered chances to practise the language through communicative activities. There are various categorisations of activities that are normally found in a communicative class. According to Littlewood (1981), activities used in CLT are categorised into two essential groups with subgroups under each:

a) *Pre-communicative activities*: These activities emphasise practising isolated elements of second/foreign language knowledge and skills in order to endow students

with a fluent command of the linguistic system and the ability to produce acceptable language rather than merely communicating meanings efficiently. Most of these activities are associated with ‘drills’ activities, which concentrate mainly on the replication of structural patterns. Activities, classified by Littlewood as ‘quasi-communicative’, are used to generate links between language structures and their potential functional meanings with the consideration of communicative and structural facts about the target language. Most activities are question-and-answer activities based on classroom situations or social contexts, with the emphasis on practising linguistic structures.

b) *Communicative activities*: These require learners to use and integrate their pre-communicative knowledge and skills for real communication of meaning. Littlewood further divided these activities into two subcategories: functional communication activities, such as problem-solving and information-gap activities; and social interaction activities, such as simulation and role-playing, requiring learners’ imagination in a situation or adopting a specific role to act out accordingly.

Another useful classification for activities that can be used in communicative classrooms was the one proposed by Richards and Sandy (1998), which categorised communicative activities into three different types of practice: mechanical, meaningful, and communicative.

a) *Mechanical practice* refers to a controlled practice activity which students can successfully perform without necessarily understanding the language they are using. Examples of this kind of activity would be repetition drills and substitution drills made to practice use of exact grammatical or other items.

b) Meaningful practice refers to an activity in which language control is still provided but students are required to make meaningful choices during practice. For example, in order to practise the use of prepositions to describe the locations of places, students may be given a street map with various buildings identified in different areas. They are also given a list of prepositions such as ‘across from’, ‘on the corner of’, ‘near’, ‘on’, and ‘next to’. They then have to answer questions such as “Where is the book shop? Where is the café?”...etc. The practice is now meaningful because they have to respond according to the location of places on the map.

c) Communicative practice refers to activities where practice in using language within a real communicative context is the focus, where real information is exchanged, and where the language used is not totally predictable. For example, students may have to draw a map of their neighbourhood and answer questions about the location of different places, such as the nearest bus stop (Richards and Sandy 1998).

Based on these activities, it could be argued that the diversity of the classroom activities in CLT reflect the eclectic nature of CLT as a teaching approach. A wide range of activities, procedures, and materials that aim to provide situations for practising meaningful communication in classrooms are used. These kinds of activities also take into account the real needs of the language learners, as they range from simple partly communicative activities such as describing a location, - in which the focus is on language structures as well as meaning - -to advanced fully communicative activities such as simulation and role playing - in which the focus is entirely on meaning.

3. 4. Appropriate pedagogy

In the previous sections, the most significant teaching methods in ESL and EFL were examined. However, the question of which one is appropriate to the EFL context should now be asked. The following section will examine what is an appropriate pedagogy.

In the second/foreign language teaching field, various teaching methods (such as the Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, Audio-Lingual method and Total Physical Response) and approaches (such as Communicative Language Teaching and Task-based Language Teaching) have been introduced to develop the language teaching and learning process. However, the application of these methods and approaches in real-life situations and other contexts faces various challenges. They have become less effective in some places at meeting the intended goals and the needs of their target learners (Selinker, 1972; Danesi, 2003; Mahmoodzadeh, 2011). It has been argued that the main reason for such failure is the notion that acquiring a language is essentially an activity of the mind, mostly unaffected by socio-cultural factors (Phillipson, 1992; Long, 1997), or that these methods and approaches are too dogmatic, requiring teachers to fully commit to their educational philosophies and methodologies (Mahmoodzadeh, 2011) regardless of the specific nature of the target contexts. Such commitment might limit the flexibility of these methods and make it difficult to apply them in different teaching and learning environments. These points thus raise the question of whether a particular pedagogy is appropriate for a certain context.

It would appear from the argument described above that the main point of controversy in the criticism of language teaching methods or approaches is the ignorance of the

local and linguistic contexts in which they operate, namely failing to respond to the complexity of the language situation in different contexts, such as developing countries (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook 1994; Phillipson, 1992). Regarding contextual sensitivity and appropriate pedagogy, Canagarajah (2002) argues that learning approaches and methods that are found to be effective for one community of learners may or may not be effective for another. Canagarajah (1999) also emphasises that “socio-cultural conditions always influence our cognitive activity, mediating how we perceive and interpret the world around us” (p. 14). Thus, ignoring the characteristics of the local context may lead to the unsuccessful implementation of any change to the language teaching and learning process, such as applying new teaching methods, for example CLT. Holliday (1994) argues that teaching methods need to be appropriate to micro- and macro-level contexts and cultures. The first step for an approach or method to be appropriate (culture-sensitive), as Holliday (1984, p.161) argues, “depends on learning what happens between people in the classroom.” Such learning about the classroom or the learning context may help people to recognise the main characteristics of that context before making a decision about what to teach and how to teach it in the classroom. This will include an understanding of students’ learning needs, styles, strategies, as well as the textbooks used, local conditions, and the culture of the classroom, school and country (Bax 2003), as well as what Kumaravadivelu (2001) refers to as a parameter of particularity.

Identifying the main aspects of the learning context (or the awareness of local conditions and needs) may help teachers to develop and investigate their own teaching practice through reflective teaching and action, namely the parameter of practicality (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). Such awareness may help teachers in their attempts to develop an appropriate pedagogy based on their knowledge and understanding of the

learning context (Kumaravadivelu, 2003), as well as considering the experiences and identities that learners bring with them into the classroom, namely the parameter of possibility (Kumaravadivelu, 2001).

Thus, from the author's perspective, in order to develop an appropriate form of pedagogy for the KSA secondary classroom context, teacher educators and teachers should first analyse their learning contexts to identify the actual needs of students, and the classroom culture and facilities, as well as teachers' abilities. Depending on the outcomes of such an appraisal, teachers could decide what language emphasis should be introduced first, for example oral skills, grammar, vocabulary, reading or writing. Teachers also should be flexible about what type of approach they choose. For example, they should apply the approach that best suits their teaching and learning goals. The linguistic reality or needs of students may allow teachers to start teaching their students by applying traditional methods, such as GTM or ALM, at the beginning in order to help students to construct their linguistic foundations. Teachers could then take a further step with their students by allowing them to apply what they have learnt in controlled practice using CLT as a means to facilitate communication amongst students (the target). In other words, teachers should be pragmatic when choosing their teaching methods; they should use an elective approach to develop communication among students.

3. 5. Implementation of CLT

3. 5. 1. Challenges for implementation of CLT in EFL contexts

Some researchers have argued that implementing in one part of the world a teaching method which has evolved in another part may create some problems and challenges (Pennycook 1989; Holliday 1994; Kramsch and Sullivan 1996). According to those researchers, education is inextricably linked to a certain cultural environment, and effective teaching practices are constructed socially in that environment. CLT, which evolved in the Western context in the 1970s, has been widely adopted in ESL and EFL around the world. However, implementing CLT in most non-Western EFL contexts poses several problems and challenges. Throughout the last three decades, a number of studies have thus been conducted to investigate the effectiveness of CLT implementation in non-Western contexts (Li 1998 in Korea; Gorsuch 2000 in Japan. Alkhawaiter 2001 in Qatar; Chang 2011 in Taiwan; Adhikari 2007 in Nepal; Ansarey 2012 and Chowdhury 2012 in Bangladesh; Alnough 2008 in Kuwait; Alkhayyat 2009 in Jordan; Ozsevik 2010 and Coskun 2011 in Turkey; Almohanna 2010 and Alzaidi 2011 in Saudi Arabia; Shihiba 2011 in Libya; Vongxay 2013 in Laos, and Kalanzadeh et al. 2013 in Iran). Table 3.1 highlights the contexts of these studies, showing the nature of the participants, the form and aspect of CLT, and the methodologies that have been applied in them.

Table 3.1: Contexts of the previous studies)

study	context	Teachers (participants)	Methodology
Li (1998)	-Korea, - State secondary school, -large classes, -Centralised curriculum	-Non-native in-service EFL teachers	case study: (interview)
Gorsuch (2000)	-Japan, - State secondary school, -large classes, -Centralised curriculum	-Non-native senior in-service EFL teachers	Questionnaire
Alkhawaiter (2001)	-Qatar, - State middle school, -large classes, -Centralised curriculum	-Non-native in-service male EFL teachers - head teachers, -students	questionnaire, observation, interview
Aldhikari (2007)	-Nepal, - State secondary school, -large classes, -Centralised curriculum	-Non-native in-service EFL teachers	questionnaire, observation, interview
Alnough (2008)	-Kuwait, - State primary school, -large classes, -Centralised curriculum	-Non-native in-service female EFL teachers	questionnaire, observation, interview
Alkhayyat (2009)	-Jordon, - State secondary school, -large classes, -Centralised curriculum	Non-native in-service EFL teachers	questionnaire, observation
Ozsevik (2010)	-Turkey, - State secondary school, -large classes, -Centralised curriculum	Non-native in-service EFL teachers	questionnaire, interview
Almohanna (2010)	-Saudi Arabia, - State secondary school, -large classes, -Centralised curriculum	-Non-native in-service male EFL teachers	questionnaire, interview
Chang (2011)	-Taiwan, - State college, -large classes, -centralised curriculum	-Non-native EFL college Teachers	Interview
Alzaidi (2011)	-Saudi Arabia, - State middle and secondary school, -large classes, -Centralised curriculum	-Non-native in-service female EFL teachers	questionnaire, observation, interview
Shihiba (2011)	-Libya, - State secondary school, -large classes, -Centralised curriculum	-Non-native in-service EFL teachers, -supervisors	questionnaire, interview
Coskun (2011)	-Turkey, - State middle school, -large classes, -Centralised curriculum	-Non-native in-service EFL teachers	questionnaire, observation
Chowdhury (2012)	Bangladesh, - State secondary school, -large classes, -Centralised curriculum	-Non-native in-service EFL teachers	questionnaire, interview
Ansarey (2012)	Bangladesh, - State primary and secondary school, -large classes, -Centralised curriculum	-Non-native in-service EFL teachers	questionnaire, interview
Vongxay (2013)	-Laos, - State college,-large classes, -centralised curriculum	-Non-native EFL college Teachers	case study (interview)
Kalanzadeh, <i>et al</i> (2013)	-Iran, - State secondary school, -large classes, -Centralised curriculum	-Non-native in-service EFL teachers	questionnaire, interview

The contexts of these studies, as Table 3.1 displays, show many similarities with and differences from my study context (Saudi context). The similarities are: having large classrooms run by non-native-English speaking teachers who teach English as a foreign rather than a second language in state schools, adopting a centralised communicative curriculum and importing Western teaching approaches. On the other hand, the differences are: the teachers in my study context were in-service teachers in their formative year, the sample of the participants extended in my study to involve not only teachers but also supervisors (English language subject and training supervisors) and lecturers

However, most of the aforementioned studies indicated that applications of CLT in the classroom were unsuccessful and that teachers failed to transform theory into practice. Although most of the teachers seemed to have a good knowledge of CLT, these studies showed that EFL teachers were dependent on traditional teaching practices in their teaching.

The main problems that the aforementioned studies highlighted within non-Western EFL contexts will be discussed below. These problems are presented under Butler's (2011) classification of conceptual, classroom-level and societal-institutional-level constraints; there is an additional classification, namely, teachers' preparation and training constraints. Under each main constraint, I also list some sub-constraints.

3. 5. 1. 1. Conceptual constraints

Based on the aforementioned studies, conceptual constraints that face the implementation of CLT may result from various factors:

a) One factor is the discrepancy between CLT principles and the traditional view of learning and teaching in the EFL context. For example, Al-Khawaiter (2001, in Qatar)

explored the beliefs and practices of head teachers, teachers and students towards CLT in Qatar. The study's findings indicated that teachers' attitudes and beliefs were not reflected in actual practice due to cultural issues that conflicted with the core principles of CLT, such as the issue of the teacher's authority exercised in the classroom. Alnoh's (2008, in Kuwait) study also revealed that teachers in the Kuwaiti context could not apply CLT in their teaching practice because their view of teaching (imparting of knowledge) contradicted with that of the CLT. The latter perspective regarded the language teaching and learning process as a way of constructing and applying knowledge in real life to use a foreign language for communication.

b) Teachers' misconceptions about CLT and how it might be implemented are another source of the conceptual constraint disclosed by the aforementioned studies. The findings of several studies, such as those of Ansarey (2012, in Bangladesh); Chang (2011, in Taiwan); Shihiba (2011, in Libya) and Vongxay (2013, in Laos) revealed some CLT misconceptions on the part of English language teachers in EFL contexts, such as the one that there is no opportunity for teaching grammar in CLT, or that using CLT in teaching means focusing on spoken language only, or that applying only pair or group activities works with CLT. These misconceptions worked as powerful barriers to the adoption of CLT in EFL contexts.

c) Difficulties concerning the lack of clear procedures for student assessment in CLT is another source of conceptual constraints in the aforementioned studies. The studies of Li (1998, in Korea); Almohanna (2010, in Saudi); Ozsevik (2010, in Turkey) and Chang (2011, in Taiwan); Ansarey (2012, in Bangladesh) and Kalanzadeh et al. (2013, in Iran) pointed to that teachers, in these contexts, desired clear procedures to

evaluate their students' outcomes; they wanted summative assessments for their students. They believed that the formative assessment procedures that are suitable for CLT classes could not help them to have clear standards to examine their students.

3. 5. 1. 2. Teachers' preparation and training

From the cited studies' findings, it could be argued that the insufficient preparations of EFL teachers in both their pre-service and in-service training are among the main constraints that have limited the implementation of CLT in EFL contexts. Examples of these constraints are:

a) Low proficiency in the English language: Several studies, such as those of Li (1998, in Korea); Adhikari (2007, in Nepal); Ozsevik (2010, in Turkey); Sihiba (2011, in Libya) and; Ansarey (2012, in Bangladesh) ; Kalanzadeh, et al (2013, in Iran); Vongxay (2013, in Laos), suggested that English teachers experienced difficulty in leading their classes in English because of their low language proficiency, particularly in spoken English, .

b) Insufficient preparation in CLT: The findings of some of the above-mentioned studies indicated EFL teachers' shortcomings in their pedagogical preparation for CLT. For example, Almohanna (2010, in Saudi) and Shihiba (2011, in Libya) revealed that the EFL teachers in the Saudi and Libyan contexts, respectively, lacked theoretical knowledge of CLT, which might be considered a fundamental reason for EFL teachers' reluctance to adopt CLT in their teaching practice. Furthermore, the studies of Alkhawaiter (2001, in Qatar); Alnoh (2008, in Kuwait) and Alzaidi (2011, in Saudi) indicated the limited practical opportunities for student teachers to apply CLT in actual teaching; some pre-service programmes had no places for

microteaching and observation, and some of them even lacked practicum courses. Moreover, other studies, such as those of Li (1998, in Korea); Alkhawaiter (2001, in Qatar); Ozsevik (2010, in Bangladesh); Shihiba (2011, in Libya); Alzaidi (2011, in Saudi); Chang (2011, in Tiwan) and Vongxay (2013, in Laos), disclosed that EFL teachers were rarely, if ever, offered in-service training programmes during their teaching careers that helped them conduct lessons using CLT.

3. 5. 1. 3. Classroom-level constraints

These constraints relate to different contextual factors at the classroom level, and include the lack of teaching materials, limited time for teaching and lesson preparation, structural challenges (large class sizes, classroom layout) and problems with students (e.g. disciplinary, and varying levels of competence).

a) Limited time: The findings of Alkhayyat's (2009, in Jordan) and Chang's (2011, in Taiwan) and Coskun's (2011, in Turkey) studies revealed that the implementation of CLT in the Jordanian, Taiwanese, and Turkish contexts, respectively, encountered some obstacles, including the limited time for the preparation of communicative materials. Time pressure also seemed to play a vital role in the limitations of CLT in classrooms, as evident from the findings of Adhikari's (2007, in Nepal) study, as well as from the findings of the studies of Alzaidi (2011, in Saudi) and Almohanna (2010, in Saudi), which showed that EFL teachers suffered from overload during teaching hours. In such a situation, EFL teachers in these studies thought that they would be unable to conduct their classes by applying CLT because they thought that communicative activities were time consuming, and because they did not have enough time for preparation and instruction.

b) Material constraints: The findings of Alkhawaiter (2001, in Qatar); Adhikari (2007, in Nepal); Almohanna (2010, in Saudi) and Vongxay (2013, in Laos) suggested that the EFL teachers were unable to conduct CLT classes because their teaching practices were restricted by several factors, including the lack of teaching aids and English language teaching resources. Moreover, the studies of Alkhawaiter (2001, in Qatar) and Almohanna (2010, in Saudi) revealed high-density textbooks (i.e. too much information crammed into a textbook, and the level being too high to be taught within the time given), which were prescribed in their respective contexts, as another source of material constraints. The EFL teachers in these two studies believed that they had insufficient time to cover everything in the syllabus due to the limited teaching period and high density of their textbooks.

c) Structural challenges: The findings of Li (1998); Alkhawaiter (2001, in Qatar); Adhikari (2007, in Nepal); Almohanna (2010, in Saudi); Ozsevik (2010, in Turkey); Coskun (2011, in Turkey); Chang (2011, in Taiwan); Ansarey (2012, in Bangladesh); Kalanzadeh et al. (2013, in Iran) and Vongxay (2013, in Laos) also noted another source of classroom-level constraints, suggesting that the implementation of CLT in EFL contexts in the classrooms encountered some structural challenges that prevented its adoption. These challenges included large classes and the layout of classrooms (seating in rows). These studies indicated that in large classes, teachers sometimes found it challenging to introduce communicative activities and to ensure that everybody participated; furthermore, organising pair/group works was time consuming and needed increased attention from teachers to maintain students' discipline.

d) Problems with students: The findings of Chang (2011, in Taiwan); Alzaidi (2011, in Saudi); Ansarey (2012, in Bangladesh); Kalanzadeh et al. (2013, in Iran) and Vongxay (2013, in Laos) pointed out students' low English proficiency as a challenge that compelled EFL teachers to avoid applying CLT in their classrooms. Furthermore, the findings of Chang (2011) and Vongxay (2013) suggested students' resistance to class participation as another problem. The findings of Almohanna (2010, in Saudi) and Vongxay (2013) also indicated classroom management as a major issue limiting the implementation of CLT in the English-language classes.

3. 5. 1. 4. Societal-institutional level constraints

The fourth type of constraints identified in the aforementioned studies includes the structural and organisational hindrances beyond the classroom level, that is, at the societal-institutional level. According to the cited studies' findings, some examples are as follows:

a) Nature of the examination system: A number of studies, such as those of Li (1998, in Korea); Alnoh (2008, in Kuwait); Ozsevik (2010, in Turkey); Chang (2011, in Taiwan); Shihiba (2011, in Libya); Liu (2005) and Gorsuch (2000, in Japan), revealed that grammar-translation-oriented examination systems in some EFL contexts had a negative washback on the English teaching and learning process. This powerful washback pressured EFL teachers to teach in an exam-oriented way, by focusing mainly on teaching grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing skills that would be assessed. These studies also found that EFL teachers preferred the traditional way of teaching and opposed the new teaching method of CLT because it did not suit the exams' purposes.

b) Administrative functions – The results of Almohanna's (2010, in Saudi) study showed that imposing additional administrative tasks on EFL teachers in Saudi schools was considered one of the societal-institutional-level constraints that prevented teachers from applying CLT in their classes. Such administrative work kept EFL teachers busy all the time; consequently, they felt that they did not have enough time to prepare for communicative activities.

3. 5. 2. Challenges for the implementation of CLT in modern foreign languages (MFL) contexts

It is also noteworthy that the application of CLT meets with problems even in Western MFL contexts, since some studies reveal that the application of CLT within MFL teaching in Western countries⁴ also suffers from certain problems which to some extent resemble those in non-Western EFL contexts (Mangubhai et al. 1998; Batak and Andersson 2009; Harjanne and Tella 2012). For example, a study conducted by Mangubhai et al. (1998) on primary language other than English (LOTE) teachers' understandings and beliefs about aspects of CLT in Australia reveals that teachers' understanding and beliefs about teaching are not compatible with some key characteristics of CLT. For example some of them believe that whole-class teaching is better than using pair or group work, and they prefer to focus on accuracy over fluency, while teachers' roles seem to be to impart knowledge rather than to facilitate learning. The same results also are echoed in the study of Batak and Andersson (2009) which was conducted on a sample of MFL teachers in France and Sweden. Harjanne and Tella's study (2012) in Finland reveals that MFL teachers have carried

⁴ I mean by the term Western countries, the European countries such as France Sweden, etc., and English speaking countries such as England, Australia,, America etc..

some misconceptions about CLT such as viewing it as unsuitable for teaching grammar, and as a method that is devoted to teaching oral practice.

3. 4. 3. Challenges in CLT implementation in Saudi context

Although considerable attention in the literature has been given to the challenges that limit the implementation of CLT in EFL contexts in many parts of the world, there is little research which addresses the same issue in the Saudi Arabian context. With the exception of a few studies, such as Al-Mohanna (2010) and Alzaidi (2011), not much research has been undertaken into the implementation of CLT in Saudi Arabia.

In the Saudi context, Al-Mohanna (2010) has explored how CLT is comprehended and applied by secondary school teachers. The findings of the study indicated that traditional methods such as GTM and ALM rather than CLT were mainly practised by teachers. The reasons behind this, the study suggests, were teachers' limited understanding of CLT, overcrowded classrooms, lack of efficient assessment, lack of English resources, a high density syllabus, hindrances related to student discipline, and administrative tasks imposed on the EFL teachers outside the classroom. Alzaidi's (2011) study conducted in the Saudi context examined the extent to which CLT has been applied in intermediate and secondary state schools for girls by Saudi EFL teachers. The findings indicated that teachers had good theoretical background knowledge of CLT and its principles, and they seemed to have a mildly favourable attitude towards CLT. However, in actual classroom practice, it was found that teachers were not using CLT. Rather, they were simply using new materials combined with traditional teaching methods. Lack of proper training, curriculum load and students' deficiency in English were found to negatively affect these teachers' implementation of CLT.

3. 5. 4. Comment on the previous studies

Overall, it would appear that though the cited studies did not state clearly what CLT versions (weak or strong) they were dealing with, it could be argued from their aims, investigations and findings that these studies focussed on the weak version. Although most of these studies did not explicitly define what CLT meant to them – according to Harmer (2001), it referred to ‘what to teach’ (teaching content) or ‘how to teach’ (classroom interaction and kinds of activities) – their investigations and results also showed their concern regarding the second aspect of CLT, that is, how to teach. However, considering the centralised education in the contexts of most of the cited developing countries (in this case, the EFL curriculum, textbooks and assessment are provided by the MoE) in which teachers have no right to decide on the teaching content, it seems that my viewpoint that their CLT focuses on ‘how to teach’ is logical. Furthermore, all of the aforementioned studies pertained to in-service teachers with prior teaching experience.

However, it is obvious from the findings of the aforementioned studies in EFL contexts, including the Saudi context, that similar factors have challenged CLT implementation. Moreover, according to the researchers in the aforementioned studies, all EFL teachers with the exception of those teachers participating in Al-Mohanna’s study (2010, in Saudi) and Shihiba’s study (2011, in Libya) had good theoretical background knowledge of CLT, though in practice traditional approaches to teaching were adopted. In other words, it seems that the implementation of CLT has been carried out to a large extent only at the theoretical level and not at the practical level.

The researchers of these studies have provided various reasons for the inability of EFL teachers to implement CLT. These factors stemmed from different spheres:

- i) some of these factors are related to the teachers, such as their deficiencies in spoken English, strategic and sociolinguistic competence, or CLT training;
- ii) There were also difficulties related to students, such as low English proficiency, low motivation for gaining communicative competence;
- iii) There were difficulties related to the educational system, such as large classes and grammar-based examinations;
- iv) There were also difficulties related to CLT itself, such as the difficulty of developing effective and efficient assessment instruments.

3. 5. 5. The gap

Most of the aforementioned studies have concluded their findings at the level of enumerating the various factors that influence the implementation of CLT in an EFL context; they do not explore the reasons that account for such factors. For example, when a study mentions that EFL teachers have a deficiency in spoken English, there is no further investigation into how EFL teachers are prepared linguistically in pre-service programmes. Or, when a study shows that EFL teachers have shortcomings in their pedagogical knowledge, there is no further investigation into the theoretical and practical opportunities that EFL teachers received in their pre-service and in-service training in their countries. Furthermore, when a study shows that there are discrepancies between CLT principles and the perceptions about teaching and learning that exist in the particular teaching context, there is no further investigation into where these discrepancies have stemmed from. In contrast, my study attempts to investigate deeply to explore the reasons responsible for the emergence of such

challenges in implementing CLT in the Saudi context, because I believe that going to the root of the problem is more likely to provide a better understanding of why the desired change has not taken place.

Although the application of CLT in most EFL situations poses a number of problems and challenges, this does not mean that the concerns in question invalidate it as a language teaching approach in a variety of EFL contexts. Indeed, Larsen-Freeman (2000, p. 67) argues that in the debate against imported methods,

‘We may fail to understand the cause of the problem and run the risk of overacting and losing something valuable in the process’.

For this reason, I hope that my study can contribute to understanding the cause of the problems of implementing CLT in Saudi context, and contribute to propose some suggestions that may help to reform the current practice of EFL in KSA. In addition, it is hoped that the outcomes of this study will contribute to the literature about the applicability of CLT in EFL contexts, particularly in the Saudi context about which there is insufficient data in the existing studies.

Moreover, my study deals explicitly with the weak version of CLT since the EFL curriculum, textbooks and most of the teaching practices of English teachers in my study context concern this version (Tatwer 2015). My study also focuses on the second aspect of CLT, ‘how to teach’, rather than simply on ‘what to teach’. This is due to the centralised education in Saudi Arabia, which means that the EFL curriculum and textbooks are also prescribed by the Saudi MoE, and teachers cannot choose what to teach but are required to follow the textbooks’ contents. Moreover, when constructing the tools for this study (interviews and the questionnaire), some emerging themes from the literature were adopted. These themes are the knowledge

of and misconceptions about CLT features, the nature of communicative activities, teachers and students' roles and challenges that face the implementation of CLT in EFL contexts. These challenges may arise from teachers, the educational system or students themselves, such as (i) teachers' deficiencies in spoken English, strategic and sociolinguistic competence and CLT training; (ii) structural aspects and the examination systems used in the educational system and (iii) students' low English proficiency or lack of motivation.

3. 6. Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the literature in relation to CLT implementation. It has started with an overview of the historical development in English language teaching methods in KSA, and has continued into a discussion about the emergence of CLT, the principles of CLT, previous studies associated with the implementation of CLT in various EFL contexts. The chapter has also identified the gap in the literature that this study will deal with. The coming chapter (Chapter 4) will focus on the methodology that the study has adopted to answer its questions and fulfil its aims.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter introduces the research methodology that includes the following sections: the research inquiry, population and sampling, data gathering (interview, questionnaire, and documentary sources: documents and textbooks), data analysis, study limitations, access to data and ethical considerations, and the role of the researcher.

4. 1. Introduction

This study aims to investigate the challenges Saudi English teachers (SETs) face in their formative year in implementing the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in their teaching practices in a selection of Saudi schools. Therefore, in order to build a comprehensive picture of this, the study posed three questions:

a- Which methodological practices do Saudi English Language teachers in their formative year in state schools say that they currently use in their classrooms?

b- What factors influence the formative year Saudi English teachers' choice of teaching methods?

c- How might ELT education in the Saudi context be altered in order to close any identified gap between the methodology informing the syllabus (CLT) and the teaching methods used by the formative year Saudi English teachers?

Thus, this investigation required two stages:

i). description and exploration to highlight *what* the situation is, and

ii). interpretation: to highlight *why* this happens (Punch 2009).

Hence, the study first described the methodological practices currently being used by English language teachers in their formative year in Saudi schools. This is because whenever a change (innovation) of any kind is introduced, it is important to

understand the current practice of those affected by and expected to carry out the change (Bowers et al. 2007). Then, the study explored the factors that influence SETs' choices of teaching methods. After this, the focus was on exploring the main reasons or the roots of these factors. Finally, the study offered in conclusion some suggestions and recommendations that might help in improving the current methodological practices of the English language teachers in KSA.

Below I will introduce the research inquiry that the study was based on, the methods that have been used to gather the necessary data and how the data have been analysed and used to answer the research questions.

4. 2. Research inquiry:

Understanding "reality" in the social world is not an easy task and is sometimes a problematic and controversial issue. The way (paradigm) of looking at this "reality", can be classified into two main types: qualitative/interpretive/constructivist and quantitative/positivist (Hammersley 2007 cited in Arthur et al. 2012). Defining the most appropriate paradigm for a study mainly depends on identifying three assumptions that underlie the paradigm. These assumptions as stated by some writers such as Guba and Lincoln (1994); Birks and Mills (2011) and Arthur et al. (2012) are: What is the nature of reality (ontology)?; What is the relationship between the researcher and the participants (epistemology)?; and How can the knowledge be gained (methodology). These assumptions can be summarised as in Table 4.1: (Sparkes 1992 cited in Avramidis and Smith 2006).

Table 4.1: Paradigms

Assumption	Paradigm	
	<i>Positivist (quantitative)</i>	<i>Interpretive/ constructivist (qualitative)</i>
Ontological	External-Realist	Internal-Idealist, Relativist
Epistemological	Objectivist, Dualist	Subjectivist, Interactive
Methodological	Nomothetic, Experimental	Ideographic, Hermeneutical, Dialectical

My field of study, teacher education, is a social one and in order to find a meaning in such a situation, I should comprehend and interpret the messages that are conveyed by those involve in the situation. Thus, the inquiry in my study having focused on understanding an educational experience which had happened within a social world, so the nature of this inquiry was naturalistic and interpretive. This means that this kind of inquiry will allow the social world to be understood by examining its interpretation through the participants' eyes and how they constitute meaning in natural settings (Bryman 2001; Neuman 2003).

4. 2. 1. Research Methodology (using the tools of Grounded Theory methods)

Within naturalistic and the interpretive inquiry there are diverse methodologies for interpreting meaning, each of which has its own philosophies, principles and methods of interpretation. Using the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the naturalistic and the interpretive paradigm, Glaser and Strauss developed a rigorous and a systematic methodology for collecting and analysing qualitative data. This methodology was termed Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Grounded Theory methods are:

a set of flexible analytic guidelines that enable researchers to focus their data collection and to build inductive middle-range theories through successive levels of data analysis and conceptual development. ...A grounded theory approach encourages researchers to remain close to their studied worlds and to develop an integrated set of theoretical concepts from their empirical materials that not only synthesize and interpret them but also show processual relationships (Denzin and Lincoln 2008, p.204).

Unlike other naturalistic and interpretive research methodologies which aim to describe and explore phenomena being investigated, Grounded Theory explains in-depth what happens in such phenomena. The main feature of Grounded Theory is that it is an ongoing process of interaction between the researcher and the studied area. This process involves collecting and analysing data concurrently, i.e. the researchers can start analysing data as soon as the data collection commences, without having to wait until all information has been gathered (as is the case with other interpretive research methods) to start analysis. This feature helps the researcher to be very close to his/her participants (Goulding 1999; Birks and Mills, 2011).

4. 2. 1. 1. Grounded Theory and my study:

The inquiry in my study focused on understanding an educational experience which happened within a social world. Thus, I aimed to describe, explore and interpret the teaching methods currently used by SETs in Saudi Arabia, as well as the factors that influence their choice of teaching methods. Consequently, I used the tools of Grounded Theory not for theory generation but because they allowed concurrent analysis and iteration. This choice was based on the assumption that the tools of Grounded Theory would provide me with a better understanding and interpretation of the area under investigation, since the tools of Grounded Theory permit the researcher

to go beyond a simple description and exploration of a study to an interpretation of it. It has been important also from the outset of my study to make clear my ontological and epistemological position, i.e. to clarify that my position as regards the study was relativist and subjectivist in order to allow the examined issue to be understood relatively according to the outcome of interaction with the participants of the study. Moreover, whereas the traditional interpretive research methods follow a linear mechanism in conducting and analysing a study (i.e. a researcher starts collecting data then analyses it), the methodological procedure of Grounded Theory is a circular mechanism which helps a researcher to conduct and analyse data concurrently (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Denzin and Lincoln 2008; Birks and Mills 2011; Arthur et al. 2012). Thus, such a circular mechanism permitted me to be very close to my sample and investigate the research issues in-depth through collecting data from the interviews and then supplementing the interview data with data from the questionnaires. I also collected additional data if the examined issues needed more explanation by carrying out further interviews (iteration) or referring to the documentary sources, and using CHAT as theoretical framework for analysing and discussing the findings.

4. 2. 2. Population

To build a comprehensive picture of the examined issue, and since SETs, as mentioned in Chapter 1, have come from various preparation backgrounds (three pathways: Schools of Education, Schools of Arts, and Schools of Languages and Translation), the population of this study has been drawn from the graduates of the three pathways. The population also has included educators who work with SETs - e.g. supervisors who deal with beginning teachers - and university lecturers - who teach teaching methods courses in teacher education programmes. Furthermore,

since the universities of King Saud and Imam Mohammed in Riyadh city house the three pathways, and most of the graduates of these universities are appointed mainly in the Riyadh educational area, the study has targeted the graduates of these universities, who are a 114-strong group of new Saudi English language teachers from the three different pathways.

4. 2. 3. Data gathering

Through using the methodological procedure of Grounded Theory, the data gathering in my study has been of two types: data generating and data collection. Data generating such as interviews have allowed me to be engaged with data sources and as a consequence have close relationships with the participants which has provided me with a better understanding of what goes on (Birks and Mills 2011). Meanwhile the data collecting included two types as classified by Birks and Mills (2011): elicited materials such as a questionnaire, which involve minimal researcher interaction with the participants; and extant texts such as literature review and documentary sources such as documents, reports and textbooks, which are used when the outcomes of the data analysis and interpretation direct the researcher to further investigation of other sources (Birks and Mills 2011). The latter type of data has been used in my study in conjunction with data generated to give a better picture of the studied area since in-depth interviews may not allow time to consider other issues.

Hence, the research design in this study appears to be a mixed methods research approach, which Jonson et al. define as:

the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection,

analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (2007, p.123).

Another reason that supports the use of mixed methods research in this study is that the underlying philosophy of mixed methods research, which emphasises pragmatism (which means that the researcher should apply the method or the mixture of methods most suitable to the real situation) and compatibility (the fact that quantitative and qualitative methods can be used in a single piece of research) (Jonson et al. 2007), seems to be consistent with the approach in my research plan, i.e. Grounded Theory.

However, the combination of methods that has been applied in this study followed the classification of Jonson et al. (2007) and Brannen (2005). They classified mixed methods into two main dimensions: i). ordering (i.e., simultaneous versus sequential); and ii). paradigm emphasis (dominant status versus equal status) (Jonson et al. 2007; Brannen 2005). This study has followed sequential ordering, i.e. it started by collecting data through interviews, which have been supplemented by data through a questionnaire and from documentary sources. Hence, the data collected through interviews explore the methodological practices that have been used by SETs, and identify the main challenges and factors that influence their choice of teaching methods. This data has then been triangulated and integrated by data collected through a questionnaire distributed to the SETs, as well as by referring to documentary sources such as BA teaching plans and textbooks. This step has contributed to a better understanding of the SETs' choices of teaching methods, and the factors that affected these choices. On the other hand, as regards paradigm emphasis, the qualitative approach (interviews) has been the dominant one and the quantitative approach (questionnaire) has supplemented it. Thus the study is partially mixed research (Jonson et al. 2007, Leech and Onwuegbuzie 2009) in which the qualitative data (interviews)

have the greater emphasis. The data collection follows the schedule that appears in Table 4.2.

Table: 4.2. Data collection schedule

Tool	Participant	institution	date
Interview (teachers)	Teacher 1	School 1	18/Nov/2013
	Teacher 2		
	Teacher 3	School 2	20/Nov/2013
	Teacher 4	School 3	20/Nov/2013
	Teacher 5	School 4	22/Nov/2013
	Teacher 6	School 5	25/Nov/2013
	Teacher 7	School 6	26/Nov/2013
	Teacher 8		
	Teacher 9	School 7	27/Nov/2013
	Teacher 10	School 8	28/Nov/ 2013
	Teacher 11	School 9	2/Dec/2013
	Teacher 12	School 10	4/Dec/2013
Questionnaire	Group 1 (6 teachers)	School 11	18/Dec/2013
	Group 2 (8 teachers)	School 12	19/Dec/2013
	Group 3 (5 teachers)	School 13	23/Dec/2013
	Group 4 (4 teachers)	School 14	24/Dec/2013
	Group 5 (9 teachers)	School 15	25/Dec/2013
	Group 6 (6 teachers)	School 16	26/Dec/2013
	Group 7 (7 teachers)	School 17	30/Dec/2013
Interview (supervisors)	Supervisor 1	Office 1	17/Jan/2014
	Supervisor 2	Office 2	18/Jan/2014
	Supervisor 3	Office 3	18/Jan/2014
Interview (lecturers)	Lecturer 1	Office 4	20/Jan/2014
	Lecturer 2	Office 5	21/Jan/2014
	Lecturer 3	Office 6	21/Jan/2014
further interview (iteration)	Teacher 1	School 1	24/Feb/2014
	Teacher 2		
	Teacher 5	School 4	25/Feb/2014
	Lecturer 4	Office 7	3/March/2014
	Supervisor 4	Office 8	4/March/2014
	Teacher 6	School 5	10/March/2014
	Teacher 8	School 6	11/March/2014
	Teacher 9	School 7	13/March/2014
	Supervisor 5	Office 9	17/March/2014

Details of the primary sources: interviews, questionnaire, and the documentary sources are in the following paragraphs.

4. 2. 3. 1. Interview

The interview is the most commonly used data collection tool in naturalistic and interpretive research, particularly when Grounded Theory methods are used. One reason for its popularity is that it gives a chance for the social world to be understood by examining its interpretation through the participants' eyes and how they regard the situation from their own perceptions (Bryman 2001; Neuman 2003; Cohen et al. 2011). Punch (2009) points out:

It is a very good way of accessing people's perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality. It is also one of the most powerful ways we have of understanding others (p.144).

The interview was chosen in this study as the main research tool for data collection due to its strengths which suit the purpose of my study. The strengths of an interview are: it allows for greater depth in understanding the issue under study; it has a higher response rate than other tools because the respondents are involved and motivated (Cohen et al. 2011); it allows the participants to describe what important for them by using their own words; and it allows the interviewer to probe for more details in a particular answer and ensure the participants are answering questions the way they are intended as well as receive direct feedback from them in any particular issue.

However, the method has some disadvantages too. It offers less anonymity than a questionnaire, which makes it less attractive to some participants; analysing and interpreting interviews are time consuming; and the presence of the interviewer may add subjectivity and bias to the data collection which may affect the reliability of the data (Cohen et al. 2011).

There were three main purposes for using interviews in this study. The first was to gather information about the methodological practice of the SETs by asking a group

of them and their supervisors. The second purpose was to use interview data as an explanatory device (Cohen et al. 2011), which might help in understanding and explaining the main factors behind teachers' choices of teaching methods and those which influenced them when they applied innovative teaching methods. Lastly, the interviews contribute in providing some ideas for suggestions and recommendations which will hopefully lead to: improving the current situation of English language teaching in the Saudi context; enhancing English teachers' education programmes with special reference to teaching methods courses; and providing some guidance which may support English language teachers in deploying innovative teaching methods in their classes. This information has been gathered from interviews with a range of stakeholders: groups of teachers, supervisors and university lecturers.

4. 2. 3. 1. 1. Types of interviews

To construct a full picture about the challenges that SETs face in implementing CLT in their teaching practice, the study has targeted three different kinds of participants, SETs, supervisors and university lecturers. As a result, there were three kinds of interviews in this study: teachers' interviews, supervisors' interviews, and university lecturers' interviews. The interviews in this study were semi-structured with open-ended questions to provide more flexibility for both the researcher to ask more questions and for the participants to offer more information (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). The questions of the teachers' and supervisors' interviews have covered most of the aspects related to the methodological practices of the SETs, and the factors that might affect their choice of teaching methods and constrain their implementation of the communicative language teaching method in their classes (see Appendix 8, p:312 And Appendix 13, p: 327). The data gathered from teachers' interviews were

supplemented and triangulated by the data from the supervisors' interviews. The questions of the university lecturers' interviews covered aspects related to the initial preparation of student-teachers. All of the interviews also sought information regarding suggestions and recommendations for improving the current situation regarding the preparation for prospective English teachers in terms of teaching methods, and suggestions and recommendations for how SETs can be supported by using CLT. Thus, the interviews have been closely linked to the aims of the research.

4. 2. 3. 1. 2. The interview sample

The interview questions were aimed at gathering information about the methodological practice of the formative year SETs in the Saudi public schools, the factors that influence their choices of teaching methods, and any suggestions and recommendations that might help improve the current situation. Thus, in order to fulfill these aims, the teachers' interview sample was selected to be representative of the graduates of the three pathways in English language teacher education programmes in KSA. Since the graduates of the English language teacher education programmes in KSA are classified into three types according to their pathways, a form of probability sampling was applied in choosing the interview sample. The population of the study, who were 114 English teachers in their formative year, 44 of whom were graduates of a Schools of Education, 40 of whom were graduates from Schools of Language and Translation, and 30 of whom were from Schools of Arts. They were divided into three stratified homogenous groups (Cohen et al. 2011), each group representing a different pathway. Each member of a single group was given a number randomly, and then each group was divided into four sub-groups and a systematic sampling was applied to choose the first member from all the four sub-

groups in order to have 4 teachers from each pathway (the total sample of teachers' interview was 12 teachers). The supervisors' sample was a non-probability sample using purposive sampling, whereby a sample is built up to satisfy a specific need (Cohen et al. 2011). This sample only targeted those supervisors who visit the new English teachers in schools. Later, due to some emergent issues which needed further investigation, the supervisors' sample was extended to include two more supervisors, i.e. a supervisor who was in charge of teachers' in-service training and another supervisor who was in charge of EFL curriculum design and planning, thus creating a sample of 5 supervisors. I intended to approach the longest serving members of staff as I expected them to have the most experience to share. The same sample was used to answer the 3rd question as well. Similarly, non probability purposive sampling was used to select three university lecturers. Later, in this case too, due to some emergent issues which need further investigation, the university lecturers' sample was extended to include one more lecturer who was in charge of students' admissions, thus creating a sample of four lecturers. I selected lecturers who had experience of teaching methods in language teacher education programmes in selected Saudi universities, and who supervised student-teachers. Thus the whole interview sample was 21 interviewees; 4 teachers from each pathway (amounting to 12 teachers in total), 5 supervisors, and 4 lecturers.

4. 2. 3. 1. 3. *Planning and conducting the interviews*

In planning and conducting the interviews in my study, I adopted the seven stages that were set out by Kvale (1996 cited in Cohen et al. 2011). These stages include:

a. Thematising

This stage mainly answers two questions: Why do we use interview?, and What will we look for?. This stage is called the preparatory stage of an interview and is usually formulated when the purpose or aim of the study is to identify (Cohen et al. 2011). Hence, the main purpose of using the interview tool in this study was related to the aim of the study, i.e. it has been used to investigate why SETs are reluctant to implement CLT. The main issues that were looked for in the interview were the current methodological practice of SETs, the challenges that SETs face in implementing CLT in their teaching practices, and suggestions for improving the current situation.

b . Designing

In this stage the aims of my research were translated into questions which formed the main interview schedule (Cohen et al. 2011). The interview schedule in this study contained three main sections, as shown in Appendix 8, p:312 The first section looked for information that related to the current methodological practice that SETs apply in their teaching. The main question asked in this section was: What are the characteristics of a typical English class you teach? This question was followed by sub-questions or additional questions which aimed to further explore some issues or concepts that thrown up by participants' responses (Rubin and Rubin 2005) such as: 'How do you teach grammar?'; 'Which skills do you emphasise?'; and 'What do you think is the main role of a teacher and a student in the classroom?'. The second section of the interview schedule looked for information that related to the main challenges that SETs face in implementing CLT. The main question was: 'Do you think there are barriers to the use of innovative teaching methods such as CLT in your teaching?'. The second section was divided into sub-sections due the variety of the

factors that affect CLT implementation by SETs. The sub-sections dealt with: challenges that stemmed from the misconceptions that teachers might hold about CLT (example question - 'What do you know about CLT?'); the challenges that were related to CLT preparation and training (example question: 'Were you trained to teach for communicative purposes?'); the challenges that stemmed from the situational, institutional, and socio-cultural factors (such as the exam system, the culture of teaching and learning in KSA, and the school environment).

The third main section of the interview schedule looked for information that related to suggestions and recommendations for improving the current situation of EFL teaching and learning in KSA (example question: 'What do you think are the ways that may help in overcoming the challenges identified around the implementation of CLT?').

The questions of the interview schedule were designed to be open-ended. The advantage of using open-ended questions was that they were flexible; they helped me to probe further in order to investigate some issues in-depth. They also helped to clear any misunderstanding the participants had, and promoted and encouraged the participant to answer the question so that I was able to establish a rapport with them from the outset of the interview (Cohen et al. 2011).

c. Interviewing:

This was done in two phases. In the first phase the interview schedule was piloted by interviewing two teachers (each interview lasted for one hour) to examine the efficiency of the questions and how they related to the study aims, and to measure how long an interview might last. Based on my analysis of the piloted interviews, the interview schedule was then modified to include some probing questions and to shorten some questions in order to reduce the interview time. The interview schedule

was also modified to include some important themes that emerge from the literature, such as the common misconceptions about CLT, the roles of the language teachers, and school level constraints.

In the second phase, the teachers' interview sample was given a choice between being interviewed in the English language or in their mother tongue (Arabic). All of them preferred to be interviewed in Arabic because they felt that it would be easy for them to express themselves in their mother tongue. Thus, in order to avoid confusions in transcribing the data later in the data analysis stage and to keep consistency among the interviews, I decided to have the other interviews (with supervisors and lecturers) also in Arabic. The main interviews were conducted by following some steps: introducing the purpose and the format of the interview to the interviewees; establishing an appropriate rapport with the interviewees so that they could feel secure enough to take part in the interview; and following a certain sequence in asking suitable questions. I used a suitable audio device for recording the interview (Tuckman 1972 cited in Cohen et al. 2011). Also I gave the interviewees some information related to ethical issues such as confidentiality, stressing that they were not obligated to answer any questions they did not want to, and that could withdraw at any stage of the interview. They were informed how the data was going to be used. They were asked to sign a consent form before the beginning of any interview. Most of the interviews lasted 45—50 minutes.

d. Transcribing

At the transcribing stage the oral data was transcribed into written data (in Arabic text) to prepare it for the analysis stage. Later when quotations were selected I translated the selection texts into English. In order to ensure the validity of the

translation I translated the selected quotations back into Arabic to compare between the original texts and the translated texts pick out any missing or misleading information.

e. Analysing data

The data analysis involved two stages. The early stage of data analysis involved the reduction of the data through editing, segmenting, summarising, coding and memoing. The second stage of analysis included the display of data through networks, tables, and diagrams [the data display enabled data to be summarised and organised] (Miles and Huberman 1994). (Look at section 4. 2. 4. for detail of these two stages).

f. Reliability and validity

The validity of the interview data was achieved by performing the constant comparative method which is one of several techniques that aim to look critically at data in order to come up with more valid findings (Silverman 2000; Silverman 2001). The constant comparison is a process in which one set of data is compared with another set of data (Elliott and Lazenbatt 2004). For example, through this technique the emerging themes, codes or concepts from a teacher's interview were checked against the information that emerged from another teacher's interview, as well as any information found with regard to the same issue from the supervisors' interviews or the lecturers' interviews. In addition, a part of the data that had emerged from the interviews was checked against the information that had been found in the questionnaire data. Also as regards the validity of the interview data, I was aware that some of what the teachers said may not be clear or accurate, so I checked this information with another source such as the data from other teachers' interviews or supervisors' or lecturers' interviews. The reliability of the interviews was checked by

rephrasing some questions at a later time during the interview to check that interviewees gave the same information for the same issue (Best and Kahn 1989).

g. Reporting the interview

Reporting the interview included displaying the results under main themes (such as the current methodological practice of SETs, misconceptions about CLT, or socio-cultural factors) and sub-themes (such as teachers' roles, the exam system, or the culture of education in KSA). Moreover, since the original interviews were transcribed into Arabic text, and due to the huge amount of data collected, the selected quotations were only translated into English language before they were used in reporting the findings. Furthermore, these results also were supported by some data from the questionnaire and from the documentary sources in order to have breadth and depth for the examined study. In addition, reporting the interview included discussions of the findings. The discussions of the findings also were supported by some information from the literature reviews, previous studies, and documentary sources.

h. Iteration (further interviews):

In addition to the aforementioned seven stages that were set out by Kvale (1996 cited in Cohen et al. 2011), I added another stage which I called iteration stage. The aim of this stage was to collect further data if any concepts or categories that need further investigation emerged.

Since one of the main purpose of this study was to explore in-depth the roots of the challenges that SETs face in implementing CLT, the study did not stop at the stage of

listing those challenges, but went further to explore the roots of these challenges. Thus, by applying the circular mechanism of the Grounded Theory methodology [which allows the researcher to collect, analyse and return back to his/her sample for further information if there is any (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Denzin and Lincoln 2008, Birks and Mills 2011; Arthur et al. 2012)], I had the chance to re-interview part of my sample in order to explore in-depth the emerged concepts or categories. In addition, due to the nature of some categories and concepts that had emerged from the preliminary data, such as ideas about how student-teachers are admitted in pre-service EFL programmes, and ideas about the communication between MoE and local universities, I extended the supervisors' and lecturers' interview sample to include more participants (two interviewees per each sample) whom I expected to have the capability to answer these inquiries. This kind of sampling is called theoretical sampling and is one of the features of the Grounded Theory Methods. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p.45) argue that in theoretical sampling:

the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges.

4. 2. 3. 1.4. Co-construction

In this study, some techniques and steps were applied to increase the co-construction of meaning in the interview data. These procedures were applied before, during and after the interviews took place.

a. pre-interview:

The first task was to organise suitable interview times with each of the interviewees. So, the interviews were conducted at a time that was convenient for the interviewees,

namely at a time when they were free from teaching and were in happy to participate in an interview. Additionally, the interviewees were given the chance to choose a suitable location for their interviews, whether inside or outside their workplace. In fact, all of them chose to conduct their interviews inside their workplace to save time.

b. during the interviews:

At the beginning of every interview, I always welcomed the interviewees warmly, and started my conversation with everyday talk, using phrases such as ‘How was your day?’, ‘How is it going?’, ‘It’s really good to have you here’. These introductory conversations helped the interviewees to feel secure and comfortable about taking part in the interviews. The interviewees were also provided with sufficient information regarding the aims and purpose of the interviews and how the data would be used. The interviewees were also notified that their responses would be used only for the purposes of the proposed research and that the researcher would not reveal their identity or position. Furthermore, since it has been argued that the language in which the interview is conducted has a substantial impact on the nature of the co-construction of meaning (Mann, 2011), the interviewees in this study were given the freedom to choose the language in which the interview would be conducted, and they all chose to speak in Arabic because they felt that it would be easier for them to express themselves in their mother tongue.

Moreover, during the interviews and in order to let the interviewees to expand their conversations I probed their responses using such phrases as ‘Why do you use...?’, ‘How do you use...?’, ‘How does it help you?’, ‘Did you find it useful?’, ‘What sort of changes do you realise?’, ‘What does that mean?’ and similar prompts when necessary. For example, when a teachers said in his response that "I abide by what is

in the textbook, and most of my activities are also around the textbook material...", I probed his response by asking a question: why did you use textbook? ,and did you find using textbook useful in your teaching?. Another example, when a teacher mentioned that he inclined in his teaching practice " towards teaching grammar and isolated words...", I probed his response by asking: why did you focus on grammar and vocabulary?, and how did you teach grammar and vocabulary?. Actually during the interview process, I had realised that these prompts and probed questions enabled interviewees to continue to share more about their existing practices, and me to understand their experiences more deeply. In addition, in some occasions when interviewees spent more time talking about things outside of my research focus, I found that more prompts and probing made it easier to direct the interviewees' conversation towards my research focus.

Furthermore, the interviewing process allowed me to notice things and modified questions in later interviews with other participants. When completing an interview, I listened to the audio recording repeatedly to collect information, notice important things from it, and think about what I might gain through asking different questions or more probing ones in the next interview. For instance, I had noticed that there were some leading questions (e.g. do you think that a learner should take a role of knowledge receiver or a negotiator?) and I modified it in later interview by asking: in your opinion what do you think the role of a learner?.

c. post-interview:

Briggs (1986) argues that in order to achieve the co-construction of meaning in an interview, the researcher should pay close attention to the process of transcription, because when an interview is transcribed, it may lose part of its meaning, namely that

added by non-verbal expression. In this study, in order to strengthen the meaning of the transcription and to achieve the co-construction of meaning, the following steps were therefore adopted:

(i) All of the interviews were audio-recorded using a digital recorder after obtaining approval from the participants. The audio recording of the interviews helped the interviewer obtain an accurate summary of the interview, as all the answers given during the interview were captured, as well as saving the interviewer's explanations, probing questions and comments for reference purposes.

(ii) Some notes on important issues were taken during the interviews, as well as on non-verbal information that could not be audio-recorded.

(iii) After transferring the interview data into written text (transcription) and to check that the final meanings were what the participants had meant, the two suggestions proposed by Mann (2011) were followed. First, each interviewee was emailed a copy of his interview transcription in order to check it and to provide the interviewer with feedback. Second, since the study adopted the tools of Grounded Theory (which gives the interviewer a chance to re-interview the participants to obtain further information), some transcripts from the first interviews were included in the second interviews to allow interviewees to clarify points and to comment and expand on some unclear issues.

4. 2. 3. 2. Questionnaire

A questionnaire is one of the research tools that can be used in social research. Using a questionnaire in Constructive Grounded Theory methods will add strength and breadth to the data. In other words, since a qualitative approach such as interview has a difficulty in generalising the findings due to the limitations of its participants, using a questionnaire might to some extent be effective in compensating for such

weaknesses because it will allow time to consider more specific issues with a wider group of participants (Popper 2004). In addition, the questionnaire was also used in this study to supplement the data of the interview, which might contribute to providing more comprehensive evidence for studying the research problem rather than using only one approach, i.e. it provided breadth and depth of data. Thus, it provided different ways of conceptualising the research problem because it helped in providing descriptive data about the beliefs, practices and preferred teaching methods of a wide sample of the target population. Besides this, the questionnaire was used for triangulation, i.e. to check the validity of the interview data. Furthermore, since the SETs in this study were from various pathways, using the questionnaire provided the chance to make general comparisons between the three different pathways of English language teacher education programmes in KSA by exploring the similarities and differences between them with regard to the methodological practices of their graduates and the factors that influence these graduates' choices in teaching methods. The questionnaire was prepared after studying the finding of the interviews with teachers.

4. 2. 3. 2. 1. Strengths and limitations of the questionnaire

Like any tool used in social research, the questionnaire has its strengths and limitations. Walker (1985) points out that:

The questionnaire is like interviewing-by-numbers, and, like painting-by-numbers, it suffers some of the same problems of mass production and lack of interpretative opportunity. On the other hand, it offers considerable advantages in administration - it presents an even stimulus, potentially to large numbers of people simultaneously, and provides the investigator with an easy (relatively easy) accumulation of data (p.91).

So, its strength in this study was a result of it being:

- a. useful in describing and comparing the actual methodological practice of newly graduated English teachers in KSA, and the factors that determine their choices and affect their practice of innovative teaching methods such as CLT.
- b. able to reach to larger sample.
- c. able to provide greater anonymity to teachers, which was deemed to be helpful since the questionnaire dealt with issues related to perceptions and feelings.
- d. easy to administer and analyse.

On the other hand, its limitations were a result of:

- a. some participants, to some extent, not giving a true account of their situation and instead reporting what they felt they should do and believe.
- b. its preparation, design and piloting being time consuming.

4. 2. 3. 2. 2. Operationalising the questionnaire:

This process involved the determination of a general purpose and transferring it into researchable objectives in order to gather data to achieve this purpose (Cohen et al. 2011). Thus the first step was to clarify the purpose of the questionnaire. The main purpose of the questionnaire in this study was to investigate some issues that emerged in interviews which related to the SETs' teaching practice and the challenges they face in applying CLT; the purpose was also to compare the three English teacher preparation programmes in KSA with regard to the same issues. The second step was the identification and itemising of subsidiary topics that relate to the central purpose. The subsidiary topics in this study were mainly derived from the outcomes of the interviews with teachers. The third step of operationalising the questionnaire involved formulating specific information about each item (Cohen et al. 2011).

4. 2. 3. 2. 3. *Type of questionnaire*

The type of questionnaire that was used in this study was a semi-structured questionnaire, which had mainly closed questions and some open questions (to give the respondents a chance to add what they thought important and to comment on some issues). The questionnaire was mainly delivered by the researcher; a part of it was delivered with the help of some colleagues in Riyadh due to the limitation of time, and the instructions for the administration of the questionnaire were provided to them. Our roles in administering the questionnaire were limited to submitting and receiving the questionnaire without any interference to participants who were completing it, in order to avoid any suggestion that it might be used for evaluating the SETs' performance.

4. 2. 3. 2. 4. *Type of questionnaire items*

The questionnaire has been formulated to include four sections, as shown in Appendix 12, p: 321. The first section asked for demographic information from participants, such as "*Which university and department did you graduate from?*". The second section was the pedagogical part, which asked about the current teaching practices of SETs, such as "*What teaching method do you use in your teaching? Please clarify your answer*". The third section asked about the challenges that SETs face in implementing CLT, such as "*Do you think the following might be obstacles for you in implementing CLT in Saudi schools?*"; A 'yes' or 'no' or 'I do not know' answer was required for each statement provided, for example: "*Traditional grammar-based examinations have a negative impact on the use of CLT*" The fourth section solicited suggestions that may help in overcoming the challenges.

While formulating the questionnaire, I tried to use items several questions and response modes, such as: dichotomous questions; multiple choice questions; rating scales (closed questions) and open-ended questions. The closed questions, which call for short, check-mark responses, were used because they are easy to fill out, take little time, keep the respondents on the subject, are relatively objective, and are fairly easy to sort and analyse (Best and Kahn 1989). On the other hand, closed questions do not enable the respondents to add any comments or explanation of their answers, while the open-ended questions enable the respondents to add their free responses to some items and to explain them. But open-ended questions are more difficult to sort and code (Cohen et al. 2011).

Moreover, in designing the questionnaire I tried to:

- 1). avoid vague or imprecise questions;
- 2). not repeat questions too often (although this is useful in cross-checking, it irritates respondents);
- 3). have clearly worded questions;
- 4). avoid questions that may be offensive;
- 5). not ask too many open-ended questions as they take too much time to answer properly, and their answers take too much time to analyse (Blaxter et al. 2001);
- 6). make sure that the questions were objective, with no suggestion that a particular response was desired;
- 7). make each question deal with a single idea, worded as simply and clearly as Possible (Best and Kahn 1989).

4. 2. 3. 2. 5. *Questionnaire sample*

The population of the study, the 114 English teachers in their formative year distributed as 44 teachers graduated from Schools of Education, 40 teachers graduated from Schools of Language and Translation, and 30 from Schools of Arts, was divided into three stratified homogenous groups (Cohen et al. 2011), each group representing a different pathway. Each list was randomised and a systematic sampling was applied to choose 15 teachers from each pathway. So, the questionnaire sample consisted of 45 English teachers in their formative year who taught in public schools in the Riyadh educational area. This sample was a probability sample (randomised sample) in order to ensure that every member of the different pathways had an equal chance to be included in the sample. At the beginning, letters seeking permission were sent to 60 teachers in order to get the required number (45) in case some withdrew from participation. To make a representative selection, all the teachers from the different pathways were randomly allocated a number, and the first 20 teachers on the list from each pathway were selected randomly.

Furthermore, even though the total strength of the population (114) does not seem to be large, in reality the access to this population was indeed time consuming. This was because all of participants were SETs in their formative year, and it was not possible to find more than one such teacher in a single school; rendering access to them and gathering them in one place very difficult. In addition, with a past study (my master's dissertation), I had a bad experience in the response rate with a postal questionnaire. Therefore, in order to increase the response rate in this study, the questionnaire was delivered by either me or colleagues in Riyadh city. The sample was limited to English language teachers in their formative year, to exclude some external variables such as teaching experience which may affect the sample characteristic.

4. 2. 3. 2. 6. *Covering letter:*

The purpose of the covering letter was to tell the respondents about the aims of the research, to convey its importance, and to encourage their participation. It also assured them confidentiality and anonymity, and the right to withdraw at anytime. The letter was also an introduction to the researcher and it thanked the respondents in advance (Cohen et al. 2011).

4. 2. 3. 2. 7. *Reliability of the questionnaire:*

Reliability generally means consistency over time (Punch 2009). Consistency over time refers to the extent to which the same instrument given to the same sample at a different time will yield the same result. This kind of consistency was measured in this study by using test-retest reliability. The questionnaire was sent to a small part of the sample (10 teachers) after two months in order to check the reliability of the questionnaire by measuring to what extent the questionnaire items produced the same responses and were consistent with each other regardless of the passage of time (Punch 2009).

4. 2. 3. 2. 8. *Validity and piloting of the questionnaires*

The validity to be measured can be of different kinds; internal, external and content validities. For checking the internal validity, I tried designing the study to limit the independent variables only to the kind of pre-service preparations that English teachers in KSA undergo; at their place of work (school stages), while other variables such as teaching experience was excluded by choosing only those who were in their

formative year. This exclusion helped in tracing the impact of pre-service preparations on the SETs in their formative year (since their teaching styles and the techniques they applied to some extent mirror their initial preparations). Flick (2011) points out that if you want to study the effect of something, you should check that the changes in the dependent variables are traced back to the changes in the independent variables.

External validity should be ascertained if there is any intention to generalise the result of the study (Rothwell 2005), and this has been done in this research by applying a careful selection of the study sample which was highly likely to be truly representative of the whole population (the sampling strategy for the questionnaire has already been mentioned).

On the other hand, content validity, which refers to the extent to which the instrument covers all the aspects of the issues studied and is appropriate to the issues, was done by piloting the questionnaire. This involved showing it to a group of experts in the study field and trying it out on a small sample (10 teachers in KSA) to see how clear and understandable the questionnaire questions were. Then the questionnaire was refined according to experts' notes, suggestions and corrections as well as the feedback from the small sample before the final draft was produced.

4. 2. 3. 3. *Documentary sources*

In this study the documentary sources of the data collection, or what Birks and Mills (2011) call extant texts, were documents and the prescribed textbooks of the Saudi schools. The types of documentary sources referred to in this study were:

- a). documents related to the Bachelor plans or programmes for English departments in a School of Arts and a Teachers' College in King Saud University, a School of Arts

in King Abdulaziz University, and a School of Languages and Translation in Imam Muhammad University.

- b).** documents related to the in-service training programmes such as the training plans and course material for teachers for the scholastic year 2014-2015 at the teachers' training centre in Riyadh.
- c).** documents related to the examination systems for English curriculum in Saudi schools, such as a circular about the exam items and marks distributions for intermediate and secondary stages, a sample of the English final examination paper for the scholastic year 2014-2015.
- d).** the prescribed textbooks that are currently being used in the Saudi schools such as *Flying High, Super Goal, Full Blast, Traveller* and *Life Off*.

All of these documents and the electronic versions of the textbooks were downloaded from web sites of the aforementioned departments, centre and MoE on which they are displayed for the public.

The aforementioned documentary sources were referred to when the outcomes of the data analysis, interpretation, and discussion directed the researcher to carry on further investigation about an emergent issue.

4. 2. 4. *Data Analysis:*

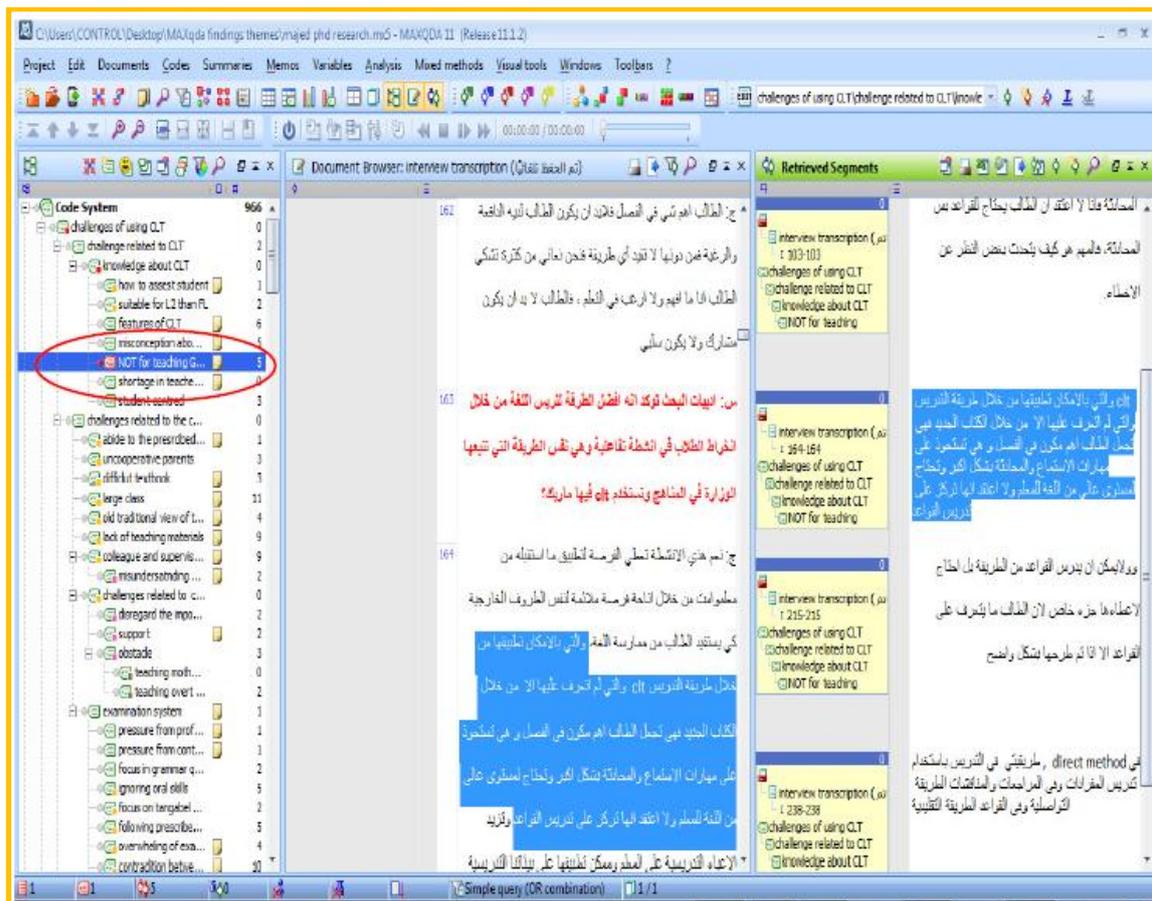
4. 2. 4. 1. *Qualitative data analysis:*

The qualitative data are often not manageable until the information they carry has been systemically reduced. In my study, which used the tools of the Grounded Theory, the data gathering and analysis moved concurrently. Data reduction is the process of coding the data to make it ready for analysis (Cohen et al. 2011). This process involves using inductive reasoning, by which themes, categories and concepts are derived directly from the data through the researcher's careful examination. Also, it uses deductive analysis in its interpretation (Patton 2002). Berg (2001) argues that generating themes, concepts and variables from existing theories or previous studies is also valuable in qualitative research, particularly at the outset of the data analysis. Hence applying the tools of the constructive grounded theory methods in this study helped me to benefit from the findings of some previous studies as well as the concepts in existing theories during my interpretation of the data.

However, after gathering the data, the qualitative data analysis started with the oral data being transcribed into written data (see an example of the data that has been transcribed and translated into English in Appendix 17, p: 336). The data was listened to and read several times so that I became familiar with the data and could identify and establish categories. Then the written data was uploaded to a qualitative data analysis software programme, namely MAXqda (see Appendix 9, p:316). MAXqda is professional software for qualitative and mixed methods data analysis, which I chose over other programmes such as NVivo because it can deal with Arabic text, thus saving me the time I would otherwise have devoted to translating the whole data into English.

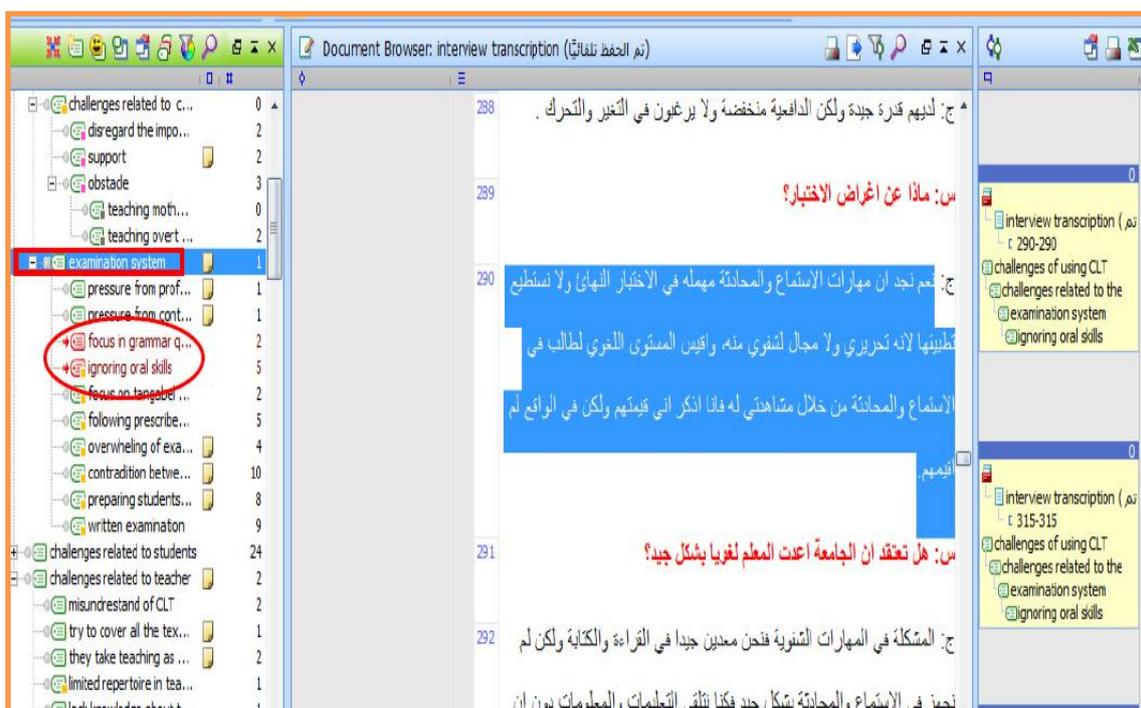
Moreover, I used the coding procedures, as shown in Appendix 9, p: 316, which are usually used in the Grounded Theory Methods, i.e. open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss and Corbin 1990). So initial coding or open coding was the first step in the data analysis. In this step the coding was done line by line, looking for key words which might help to connect the participants' information to the situation under investigation so as to come out with a concept or idea that may help in interpreting the situation. For example, one of the initial concepts that emerged from the interview data was that “CLT is not suitable for teaching grammar”. This concept was thus coded with an initial code, which carried its name, as shown on the left-hand side of Figure 4. 1. All references to this concept were coded using the same code.

Figure: 4. 1.Open (initial) coding



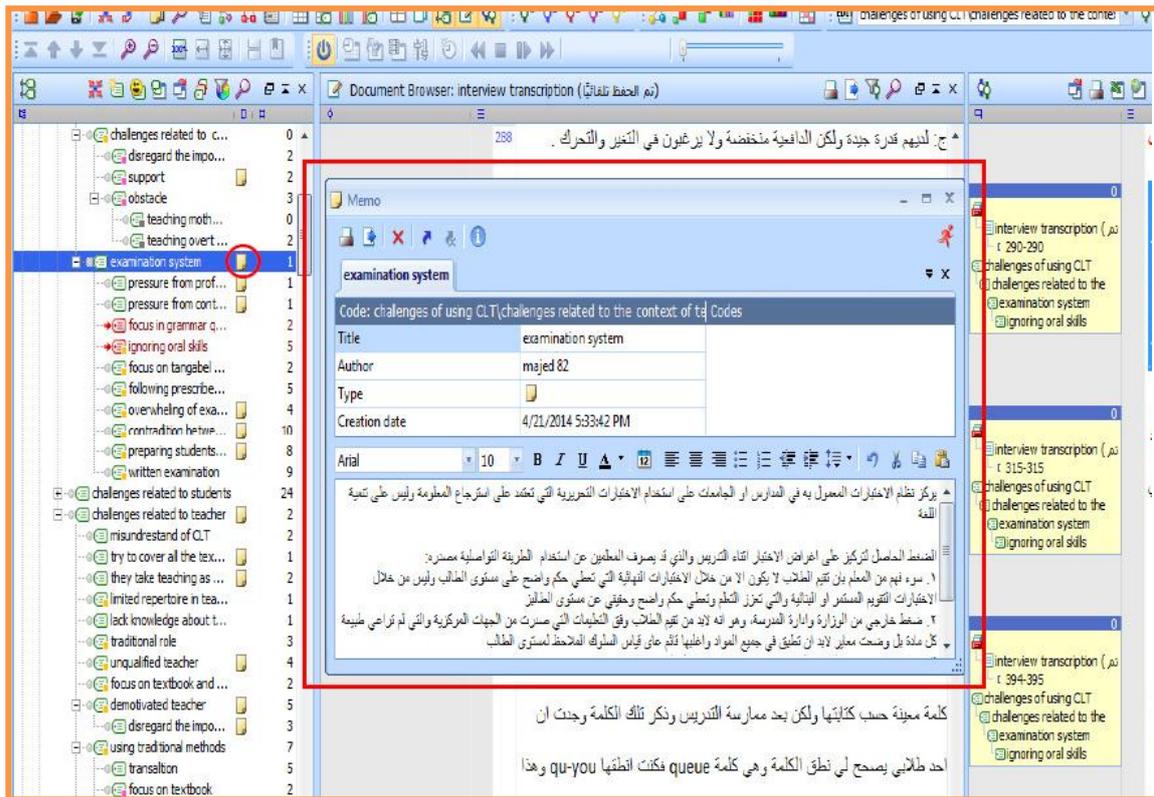
Axial coding was the second step in the data analysis, which helped me identify the relationships among various concepts which resulted from the open coding. For example, as shown in Figure 4.2, the two initial codes in the left column (focus on grammar and ignoring oral skills) have something in common, as they both indicated that the challenge had emerged from the examination system. These two initial codes are thus sub-codes for the axial code (challenges stemming from the examination system).

Figure 4.2. Axial coding



Writing memos was a process used in both steps of coding, as shown in figure 4.3. These memos helped me write some comments about the concepts, their properties and relationships. During these steps, some information which emerged required further investigation through interaction with other participants (what is called theoretical sampling), or through constant comparative analysis with other data in order to strengthen the findings.

Figure 4. 3. Writing memo



Selective coding, which was the selection of coding that conveyed the core concepts that might come under other coding categories, was the final stage of the data analysis. For example, the theme that represented the challenges that stemmed from the institutional factors is an example of a selective code which involved sub-codes such as the challenges that stemmed from exam system and limited in-service training (axial codes). The selective coding helped to gather the core categories together to construct a meaning for the issue under investigation (Goulding 1999; Birks and Mills 2011).

4. 2. 4. 2. Quantitative data analysis

Prior to coding, the questionnaire was checked (edited) for completeness, i.e. it was ensured that an answer to most questions was available. The answers were then checked for accuracy. Finally, questions were checked to ensure they had been understood by respondents the way they were intended by the researcher. The next step was the analysis of whole questionnaire items by uploading them into MAXqda software programme. The questionnaire data was analysed by applying descriptive statistics technique for frequent responses (see Appendix 15, p: 333, for examples of questionnaire responses). Descriptive statistics are numbers that are used to summarise and describe data through percentages, averages, and amounts in tables or diagrams (Trochim 2006). The comparisons and the correlations between the independent and dependent variables were made through descriptive analysis by measuring the frequency distributions, and through diagrams or tables. Meanwhile, the textual data was analysed by the same mechanism that was used with the qualitative data (interview data).

4. 2. 4. 3. Presenting the findings

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) propose four types of mixed methods - parallel, sequential, conversion, and multilevel data analyses. In this study I have applied parallel data analysis, i.e. each item of data was analysed separately and later the information about certain issues (themes or categories) was presented through combing, connecting, and integrating the findings from interviews with the findings from the questionnaires. This kind of presentation helped in providing depth and breadth in the information about the issues of the study. It is worth mentioning that in presenting qualitative data such as direct quotations from the interviews, I used

special coding for each kind of interview. For example I used ‘TI’ code for any quotation from teachers’ interviews, while I used ‘SI’ and ‘LI’ for quotations from supervisors’ and lecturers’ interviews respectively.

4. 2. 4. 4. Applying CHAT theory in presenting and discussion of the data

A change in the educational field, particularly the application of new teaching approaches such as CLT may be considered a complex experience. The complexity comes from the fact that such changes take place in a context or a system (classroom) in which events do not occur in linear way, but with plenty of factors interacting in complex ways and creating dynamics that are part predictable and part unpredictable (Van Lier 1996). Thus, in the light of this view, it seems that the interactions inside a system (classroom) to a large extent determine its characteristics and influence its dynamics. Hence, in order to examine the features of classroom practice, it is necessary explore it in its context, and to describe the interactions that take place in the surroundings (Finch 2003). Such a complex system should be analysed from the bottom up. With such analysis, rather than when researching individual factors out of their context, it may be possible to gain a more holistic picture of phenomena in their context.

The idea of thus studying an issue or activity within its context is a core concept that Activity Theory or Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) relies on (Engestrom 2001; Phillips 2006; Lantolf and Thorne, 2006; Edwards 2011). Phillips (2006, p.2) argues, human activity, from the perspective of CHAT, is:

a concept connoting the function of the individual in his interaction with the surroundings.

Therefore, the study uses CHAT theory as its theoretical framework because it helps uncover the connection between human belief and activity. Instead of seeing the relationship between belief and acting in a linear way, this connection could be seen in a circular way in which human belief influences the activity and the activity influences human belief (Capper 2004 cited in Phillips 2006), as shown in Figure 1.1 which was mentioned earlier in chapter 1.

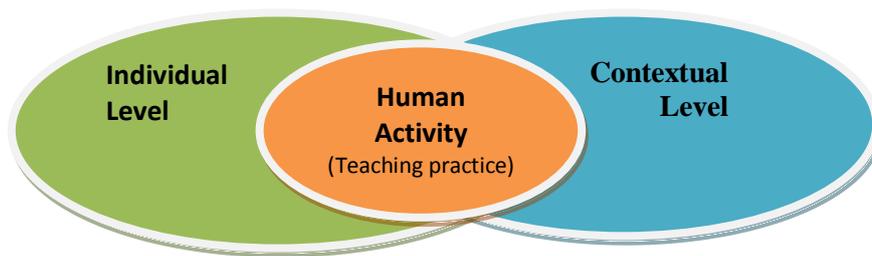


Figure 1.1 Teaching practice as a human activity

4. 2. 4. 4. 1. Characteristics of CHAT:

a. The concept of activity

One of the characteristics of CHAT theory is that it treats human action such as teaching practice as an activity of system. This activity according to CHAT theory is the outcome of the individuals interactions with their environments. This view entails that human activity includes two inseparable levels or contexts, namely cognitive and socio-cultural. This idea considers studying or examining one context as isolated from another context an unproductive task which may not contribute to the comprehension of the holistic picture regarding the investigated issue (Engestrom 2001; Phillips 2006; Lantolf and Thorne 2006; Edwards 2011).

Thus, using the concept of activity in my study as proposed by activity theorists helped me in seeing the relation between human belief and activity. Instead of seeing

the relations between belief and acting in a linear way, this connection could be seen in a circular way in which human belief influences the activity and the activity influences human belief (Capper 2004 cited in Phillips 2006).

Furthermore, the notion of activity will support the assumption that SETs' conceptualisation of their chosen teaching methods is not only the result of their beliefs, but also the outcome of the interactions of their beliefs and the surroundings, which satisfy certain needs or motives. However, the object and the outcome of SETs' activity (teaching practice) may be influenced by some factors or mediated tools.

b. Mediation

The idea of mediation is another important notion within the CHAT theory. The use of tools, both physical and mental, is seen as shaping the way we do things. A tool is anything we use to help us direct the environment to satisfy our needs, or to get required information from the surroundings (Engestrom 2001; Phillips 2006; Lantolf and Thorne, 2006; Edwards 2011).

The idea of mediation may help in bridging the gap in the traditional research that isolates individuals' minds from their culture and society, and in its turn may help individuals to direct their behaviours not only from inside but also from outside by using some tools and artifacts (Engeström 1999). This concept is represented in Vygotsky's triangle (as seen in Figure 4. 4), which means that there may be some tools that might influence the SETs (the *subject* of the teaching practice) in their ways to achieve their *objects*.

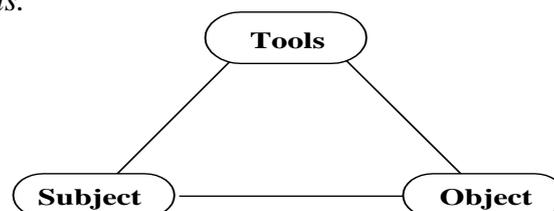


Figure 4. 4: Vygotsky's triangle (Phillips 2006).

In CHAT theory the information that we get from our environment is not only shaped by physical and mental tools, but also both formal and informal cultural and social artifacts or *rules* (as seen in Figure 4.5) in the form of norms, traditions, regulations, values which influence our social relationships, and in turn are influenced by the way people use them.

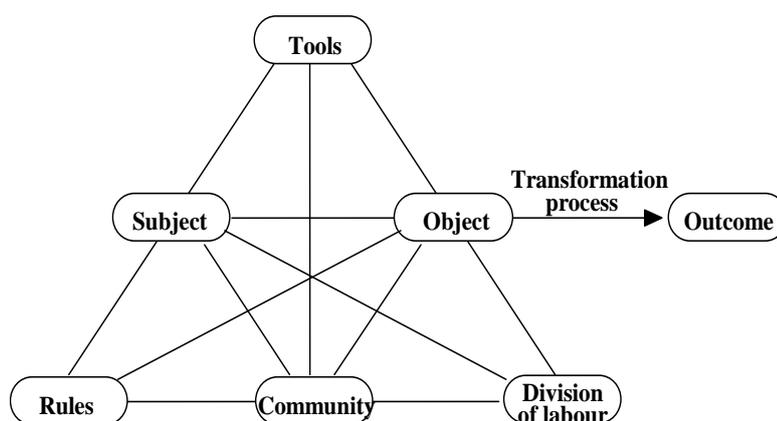


Figure 4. 5: An activity system (Engeström 1987).

In addition to *rules*, our connections within a *community* (people who share the *object* with the *subject* such as school administrators, supervisors, curricula developers) are influenced by the ways in which our institutions are constructed. Such constructing is the outcome of certain social and cultural traditions and experiences that have been passed on from generation to generation, such as the hierarchy structure that has been adopted in some educational institutes as central to education. These cultural and historical traditions play a significant part in influencing how and why we do things (Capper 2004 cited in Phillips 2006). Another level of mediation (as seen in Figure 4. 5) is *division of labour*. Division of labour refers to the distribution of tasks between members of a community, which forms the way the subject(s) act on the object as well as other parts of the system. It includes the roles that people take on in particular contexts such as the role of a teacher as a knower, or the role of a student as a

recipient of knowledge (Engestrom 2001; Phillips 2006; Lantolf and Thorne 2006; Edwards 2011).

Thus, the concept of mediation, as proposed by CHAT theory, once applied in the analysis of my study, helped in forming a holistic picture of most of the challenges or factors that influence SETs in their reluctance to adopt CLT in their teaching practice. It helped in identifying how the physical and mental tools affected the teaching practice inside the classroom such as norms and cultural views that affect the teaching practice; it helped in illustrating the powers and responsibilities that have been assigned to some parts of the community such as supervisors and school administrators. In other words, it helped in comprehending the common object and motive, as well as the mediational means that individuals share in order to act on the object so that the motive is apprehended over time (Engestrom 2001; Phillips 2006; Lantolf and Thorne 2006; Edwards 2011).

c. Contradictions, conflicts and resistance

The aforementioned components of activity systems, including subject, object (see Vygotsky's triangle, Figure 4.4) and the socio-historical components (community, rules and division of labour, as shown in Figure 4.5) at the bottom can mediate change that may lead to an outcome not only for the object but also for each other (Engestrom 1993). Engestrom (1993) also argues that human activity can set off tensions raised by systemic contradictions. These tensions come up when the settings of an activity put the subject in clashing situations that can prevent achieving the object. In some cases, the activity may fail and the subject may not be able to accomplish the object. In other cases, subjects may attain the object but be discontented about how they achieved it.

Hence, the activity system as seen by CHAT not only helps in connecting teaching and learning processes with their context of practice and shows the interaction between their components, but also helps in showing the contradictions and conflicts between various factors in the context in which they interact with each other. So these contradictions within the components of an activity system are a potential force for the development of the activity, or a hindrance to this development. The process of development [or hindrance] is the outcome of continuous transitions and transformations between the components of an activity system (Engeström and Miettinen 1999 cited in Bernat 2015). So in my study the concept of contradiction between the elements of an activity system may help in understanding the nature and levels of SETs' reluctance in adopting CLT.

4. 2. 5. Study limitations

The study aims at investigating the challenges that SETs face in their formative year, while applying innovative teaching methods such as CLT in state schools. The study was limited to:

- a) state schools, where most of their teachers are Saudi nationals, who have graduated from local universities' selected programmes;
- b) new English teachers, who are the target of the study,
- c) educational supervisors, who have connection with the Saudi English teachers in their formative year,
- d) university lecturers, who are staff members of local universities in Saudi Arabia, and have connections with the English teachers and their preparation programmes;
- e) male participants, since the educational system in Saudi Arabia is segregated by sex, and the researcher, as a male, has no access to female education in the study

context;

- f) the findings and the results of this study which cannot be generalised to populations other than the population and institutions of this study.

4. 2. 6. Ethical considerations and access to data

Ethical issues related to the study were carefully considered. I tried my best to abide by the standards advised by BERA and Stirling University. Firstly, permission for the study was sought from Stirling University's Ethics Committee. Secondly, since this study was conducted in public institutions in Saudi Arabia, the access to the sample of the study required the researcher to get permission from these institutions before the data collection commenced. Therefore, I clearly informed the participating institutions in advance about the aims and purposes of the study, and sought their permission to gain access to the sample of the study, as shown in Appendix 9, P: 316. Thirdly, the participants of the study were informed about the aim and the purpose of the research in two ways: in written form in the covering letter for the questionnaire sample; and verbally by the researcher for the interview sample. This information stated that the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were assured, and that they were offered the right to withdraw from this study at any time. In addition, the data collected from the sample was only used for the purpose of this study. Fourthly, consent letters were signed by the participants before the data were collected. Finally, a summary of the findings was sent to the participants, in appreciation of their contribution.

4. 2. 7. Role of the researcher

In quantitative research, the role of the researcher is theoretically nonexistent, i.e. the participants act independently without any interference from the researcher. In qualitative study, the researcher is considered to be the instrument (Denzin and Lincoln 2003). The researcher interacts and cooperates with the participants and collects the information by him/herself. So due to the nature of such research, it is the researcher's responsibility to set some guidelines to protect the participants from physical and psychological harm (Glesne 1999). These guidelines include: firstly avoiding misleading participants by not telling them the true purpose of their participation; secondly, keeping private and confidential all the information (as well as the identity of the participants) that may cause harm to the participants, since a piece of research may include difficult questions that may affect the participant psychologically (Rubin and Rubin 1995). The researcher should attempt to avoid bias or subjectivity, and expectation that may limit his/her ability to conduct the research (Greenbank 2003). It is also the researcher's responsibility to identify his position as the researcher as full participant (insider), or as an outsider who deals with the research in an objective way (Simon 2015). In this study I dealt with data as objectively as possible, by attempting to record the participants' information without personal interference. I tried to understand the situation by asking probing questions, listening carefully and asking more probing questions to get a deep understanding of the situation (Simon 2015).

4.3. Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the research methodology that the study has applied in order to gather data that answer the research questions. The research methodology included the following sections: the research inquiry, population and sampling, data gathering (interview, questionnaire, and documentary sources), data analysis, study limitations, access to data and ethical considerations, and the role of the researcher. The study has shown that CHAT theory will be used as a theoretical framework. Applying CHAT theory will help uncover the relationship between human belief and activity. Instead of seeing the relationship between belief and acting in a linear way, this connection can be viewed in a circular way in which human belief influences the activity and the activity influences human belief (Capper 2004 cited in Phillips 2006). The data that has been gathered will be presented, analysed, and discussed under various themes and sub-themes in the Chapters 5, 6, and 7). So, the data that relates to the first research question will be presented, analysed, and discussed in Chapter 5, while the data relating to the second research question are addressed in three chapters, i.e. chapters 6, and 7.

Chapter 5

The SETs' Current Methodological Practices

Whenever change of any kind is introduced, it is important to understand the current practice of those affected by and expected to carry out the change (Bowers et al. 2007). Such understanding may give a preliminary impression of what goes on and may help explain later, at the stage of data analysis and discussion, why certain challenges emerge at the surface. For this reason, I set out with my first research question to discover the current practice of Saudi English Teachers (SETs) in their formative year in their classes. In this chapter the data generated will be presented, analysed, and discussed under the theme heading of methodological practices in English language classrooms in Saudi schools. These data were generated from research tools which addressed issues relating to the first research question - *Which methodological practices do Saudi English Language teachers in their formative year in state schools say that they currently use in their classrooms?* as represented in the interview questions 1 -3 of Part I (Appendix 8, p: 312) and in Part II of the questionnaire in questions 7 to 13, and15 (Appendix 12, p:321), and This theme also includes sub-themes such as teaching methods, teachers' roles, students' roles, and support from colleagues and supervisors.

5. 1. Findings

It has been argued that teachers' practice and the adoption of particular teaching methods are influenced to some extent by the roles teachers play in their classrooms (Choudhury 2012). Hence, teachers' roles are addressed first to outline their influences on the SETs' selection of a particular teaching method.

5. 1. 1. SETs' roles

The current roles that SETs play according to the findings of the study are:

5. 1. 1. 1. Knowledge transmitter

The research data showed that knowledge transmitter was the prevalent role that SETs in their formative year play in the teaching of the English language. The data revealed that 36 participants in the teachers' questionnaire and 8 interviewees expressed the belief that their main role was to transmit knowledge about language to students. For example, one participant says:

I think I am mostly doing the transmitter role. I spend most of the lesson time in lecturing and explaining grammatical rules. (TI 1)

While this figure shows only those participants who indicate a preference for the role of knowledge transmitter, there are other teachers who do not prefer this role but find themselves forced to adopt it due to some constraints (which will be outlined in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7). One of the participants, for instance, says: 'I aim and encourage them to communicate but the situations inside the classroom force me not to do this '(TI 3).

Furthermore, the study data suggest that being a knowledge transmitter requires teachers to be *the* source of knowledge or at least the most trusted source. For instance, one interviewee states ‘I try mostly to be the source of knowledge, the initiator of the class activities, and the one whose participation covers most of the class time’ (TI 5). Moreover, it appeared also that being a source of knowledge means that the teacher should determine what should be taught in the classroom. One of the teachers argues:

I have to prepare and execute most of the classroom activities ... myself, and I rarely share this job with my students because I believe they are not capable of doing such a job with their limited English. (TI 11)

What is more, the data revealed that SETs in this study mainly depend on textbooks for this transmission of knowledge, as one of the interviewees clearly states:

I abide by what is in the textbook, and most of my activities are also around the textbook material and my questions almost test what students have acquired from the textbook. (TI 5)

Additionally, the view of the teacher as a source of knowledge was also reinforced by some parents in the Saudi context, as one interviewee proclaims:

My students are mainly passive in my classes, they only receive knowledge without any effort and their parents enforce this view when they convey messages to their kids that teachers are all-knowing persons and pedagogues. (TI 6)

5. 1. 1. 2. Lecturer Role

The second dominant role the participants believed they performed was merely doing the lecturer or instructor's role. From the questionnaire data (Q7) it appears that there was a consensus among the participants (42 teachers) that they mostly followed a lecturing style in their teaching of English. This view also appears clearly in the answers of the interviewees (Q2). One of them, for instance, says:

Generally, for the most of the class time, I have to use lecturing or demonstrating as a teaching style. I present the main topic, write the important words on the board, explain grammar rules, translate the new words, read the text and ask some questions for verification. (TI 7)

Furthermore, SETs in this study also thought that lecturing as a teaching style helped them to transmit knowledge in an efficient way, i.e. lecturing is a means to an end, which is knowledge transmission. One interviewee argues that ‘lecturing as a teaching style helps our students to get the required knowledge without any interruption from others’ (TI 8). Some of the participants also expressed the belief that lecturing or instructing in a foreign language also involves the translator role. For instance, as one of the interviewees indicates:

Unfortunately the students’ level in English makes us to use the traditional way most of the time, which involves mainly demonstrating the language items through translation and speaking most of the time in Arabic. (TI 9)

5. 1. 1. 3. The authoritative role

One of the biggest challenges encountered by teachers in general and new teachers in particular in their teaching is how to manage a class (Veenman1984; Fantilli and McDougall 2009). And from my experience as educational supervisor of Saudi English language teachers for six years, I believe that this challenge is difficult for most of the new teachers and it takes up a large proportion of their discussion time with colleagues or supervisors. In this study some SETs expressed the belief that in order to conduct a lesson in an effective way they had to have control over the class. But what kind of control do those participants aim to have? Unsurprisingly, the research data suggested that the kind of control that some of the participants of this study thought that a teacher should have was the kind that gives the teacher authority over his students and allocates most of the class time to the teacher. The authoritative

role, according to 91% of the teachers' interview sample, is considered to be one of the most important roles for the teacher, according to the response to Q2. For instance, one interviewee argues that 'I always insist that students should pay attention to me and not talk while I am explaining' (TI 9). Moreover, it seems from the data that this role complemented the other two roles, i.e. knowledge transmitter and lecturer. One participant indicates the interconnection between these three roles by stating:

I talk most of the time in order to manage my class and to provide a quiet atmosphere for my students to listen to my instruction and to gain knowledge. (TI 7)

Thus, it appears that this role is in harmony with the other roles, i.e. lecturer and knowledge transmitter, in the perception of some participants in this study who expressed the belief that students' quietness in the classroom is a prerequisite for successful teaching and learning. Moreover, it appears that classroom management is one of the hindrances that make SETs reluctant to use pair or group work activities; one of the participants stated: 'We avoid using group work activity because it is hard to control students and it may embarrass us with administrators' (TI 10) [this issue will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6].

Lastly, the three abovementioned teachers' roles that SETs adopt also seem to be affected by the way that they have been taught when they were language learners in their schools. For instance, a teacher says:

What I do with my students is exactly like what my teachers used to do with me in English lessons. I remember that my English teacher used to spend most of the class time lecturing while we, as students, sat calmly and responded to his commands. (TI 1)

5. 1. 1. 4. *Facilitator*

On the other hand, only 5 % of the teachers' interview sample (3 participants) acknowledged that they should now perform some roles that help provide students with opportunities to interact and communicate in the target language. For example, one of the participants states:

Teachers should work as guides who facilitate students' learning by providing them some instruction and letting them communicate in English during group or pair work and give them some support from time to time.
(TI 11)

However, even though the data suggested that this role is less dominant, it seems to some extent that there is an eagerness among some SETs to adopt such a role even though they still believe that the students' English level as well as the classroom surroundings are not conducive to achieving that. One teacher says:

I would like to reduce my interference time and encourage my students to participate more in class through discussion and debate but I believe that the students' level in English as well as the classroom environment limit such activities. (TI 12)

These constraints (students' English and classroom environment) will be discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

5. 1. 2. *Current SETs' Teaching Methods*

The second sub-theme is related to the current teaching methods that Saudi English Teachers (SETs) in their formative year use during their teaching. The findings suggested that the methodological practice that most of the participants applied was "teacher-dominated interactions" (Broughton et al. 1994, p. 22), in which teaching is centred on teachers. For example, as outlined in Table 5. 1, the teachers' questionnaire suggested that 41 of the SETs in their formative year in this study mainly applied the

teacher-centred approach in their EFL teaching, whilst the remaining 4 teachers considered their teaching practices to be student-centred. The same percentage was reflected in the teachers' interviews, where 11 interviewees claimed to mostly use teacher-centred approaches, and the remaining interviewees claimed to mostly use student-centred approaches in their teaching practice. This practice seems to correspond to the traditional attitude that SETs have in their teaching practice which was mentioned earlier, i.e. teachers are all-knowing transmitters of knowledge, while student are only passive receivers.

Table 5. 1: Dominant teaching practice

Sample	Teacher-centred approach	Student-centred approach	Total
Teachers' questionnaire	41 (91%)	4	45
Teachers' interview	11 (91%)	1	12

Moreover, according to the study data, it could be stated that English language classes in Saudi schools are run according to the traditional structure-based approach, which places more emphasis on form over meaningful language (Maria 2006). For example, the data, according to the responses to Q1 in the interviews and Q10 in questionnaire, disclosed that the routine teaching practice of most of the participants in this study was to start their daily teaching by presenting their lessons in lecture form; this included reading a text and translating difficult words, writing new words on the board, pronouncing them, teaching grammatical rules and doing some practice exercises. Then teachers ask some questions to check students' understanding. The students' participation seems to be limited to responses to the teachers' questions or commands and rarely involves any conversational exchange between teachers and

students or students and students. For instance, one of the teachers describes his teaching techniques thus:

In general my teaching techniques rely on writing on the board and lecturing. I try to provide students with sufficient knowledge and request to write them down in their notebooks. I mainly teach grammar and vocabulary because I think that students need these skills in their writing. (TI 4)

Moreover, SETs seem to rely in their teaching practice on teaching a single skill or 'sub-skill'⁵ separately, and they focus mainly on the structure of the language rather than using language for communication purposes. Furthermore, the data suggest that SETs give textbook sub-skills, such as grammar, translation, decontextualised vocabulary, dictation, and pronunciation more focus in their teaching practice than the main skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), as in Figure 5.1. Some of the SETs claimed that teaching sub-skills first provides a good ground for teaching the main skills, according to the responses to Q1 in the teachers' interview. For instance, one interviewee argues:

English is taught as a foreign language in Saudi schools. So in order to improve the linguistic background of my students, I teach them words in a list from their textbooks. Then I teach them the pronunciation and the spelling of these words. When I feel that students have mastered these words, I move on to teaching them another skill, because I believe it is difficult to focus on the main skill if the students have no basic lexical grounding. (TI 6)

Furthermore, the data also indicated that the sub-skills which received the greatest emphasis from the participants of this study were the teaching of grammatical rules and translation into Arabic. For instance, the questionnaire data, according to the

⁵ In this study I use the term sub-skills to refer to some language systems such as grammar, translation, decontextualised vocabulary, dictation and pronunciation because the textbooks in the context of this study refer to these language systems as sub-skills.

responses to Q9, revealed clearly that in their answers the SETs mainly emphasised certain sub-skills such as grammar and translation at the expense of teaching the main skills, as Figure 5. 1 shows.

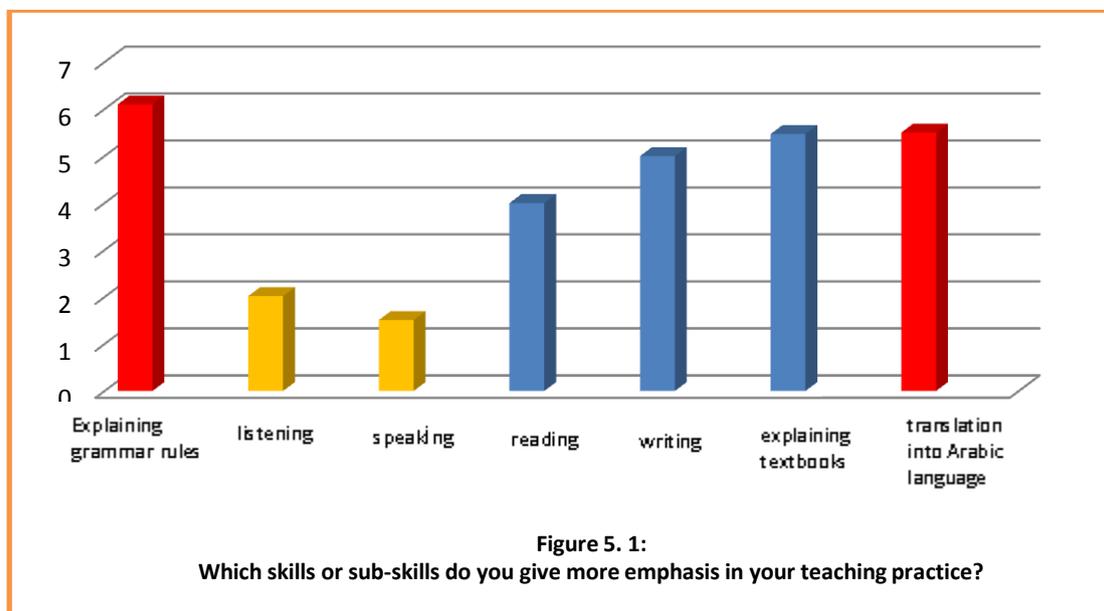


Figure 5. 1 indicates that teaching grammar and translation in most of the classes has priority in the SETs' teaching practice, as these skills have been given 6 and 5.5 out of 7 respectively as a weighted average of the SETs skills emphasis, while the oral skills (listening and speaking) have lower priority in SETs' classes as they have been given 2.0 and 1.5 out of 7 respectively as a weighted average of the SETs skills emphasis. The preference for teaching grammatical points, decontextualised words and translation was also evidenced among the interviewees as 9 interviewees expressed the belief that students should master grammatical rules before they start speaking, reading or writing a single sentence. For example, one teacher states 'I tend to teach grammar because I believe that teaching grammar is so important for students to construct a meaningful sentence' (TI 6).

Beyond this, the data also suggest another reason for the preference for teaching grammar and decontextualised vocabulary: teaching grammar and isolated words is easier than teaching other skills, as an interviewee states:

I am inclined in my teaching practice towards teaching grammar and isolated words, because they are easier and clearer than teaching other skills and a great part of the textbook exercises as well as the final exams focus on these two sub-skills. (TI 10)

Furthermore, the data, according to responses to Q1 in interview and Q9 in questionnaire, show that the common way of teaching grammar which most participants [95%] adopted was the deductive way. Teachers mainly start by explaining the grammatical items explicitly to students, while all students either listen passively or take notes. Then teachers provide students with some examples and ask them to apply the grammatical rules in their own sentences and complete the workbook exercises. One of the teachers says:

I tried deductive and inductive ways in teaching grammar, but later I realised that my students interact effectively if I show them the grammatical forms first and then the examples. (TI 4)

The data also show that teaching grammar was also accompanied by translating grammatical rules and new words into Arabic in order to facilitate the students' understanding. One interviewee states:

I tend to teach grammatical points and new vocabulary by translating them into Arabic, so the grammatical rules and meaning of new words become clear to students and then they are able to apply these rules and words in sentences of their own. (TI 9)

Thus, according to the above findings, it seems that the teaching method that SETs apply widely in their teaching practice is GTM. This result has been expressed

explicitly by some of the teachers' sample. For example, the research data, according to the responses to Q10 in questionnaire and Q1 in interview, discloses that 42 participants of the questionnaire sample and 11 interviewees applied the GTM in most of their teaching. One of the participants, for example, states this explicitly:

The method I use most frequently, and my colleagues do as well, is Grammar Translation Method, in which we emphasise grammar and vocabulary with direct translation and make students just focus on memorising them. (TI 6)

Furthermore, the data findings suggest that the main skills of language, reading, writing, listening and speaking are introduced after the teachers feel that their students have acquired good lexical competence and knowledge in grammar. The data, as shown in Figure 5.1, revealed that writing and reading skills (with 5 and 4 out of 7 respectively as a weighted average) received the second emphasis after sub-skills and before oral skills. One interviewee stated:

The things that I concentrate most on are reading and writing skills and paying more attention to learn the meaning of the new words by using dictionaries. (TI 7)

Some interviewees also attributed the emphasis on reading and writing to their importance in the final exam (this point will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7,) as one interviewee clearly states, 'some teachers think that they have to concentrate on reading and writing because most of the final exam questions involve them'. (TI 5)

On the other hand, the data suggest that teaching oral skills; listening and speaking (which got 2 and 1.5 respectively as weighted average according to Figure 5.1), seems to be limited, or they are never taught at all. For example, one interviewee states:

Teaching listening is completely neglected in my class because there are no language labs or teaching aids that support teaching listening, and [I] regard teaching speaking very limited to classroom conversation to follow rules such as asking permission and greeting. (TI 3)

The limitation in teaching oral skills may attributed to various reasons such as the lack of a language lab, authentic teaching material, and the fact that they are rarely tested in the final examination (detailed discussions about these points will follow in Chapter 7).

Moreover, the data, in responses to Q10 in questionnaire and Q1 in teachers' interview, also disclose that even when oral skills were integrated by some SETs into their teaching practice, they were employed for reinforcing the teaching of structural language rather than for communicative purposes. For example, some SETs (38 teachers in the questionnaire sample), in order to reinforce students' comprehension, reduce the interference of the mother tongue by teaching language structures and patterns through controlled practice with oral drills such as repetition, substitution, and inflectional drills. For instance, one interviewee states:

I try not use Arabic language in my teaching and let my students grasp the correct form of a sentence through repeating some patterns and replacing some words, and I try to focus on how correctly they say them. (TI 11)

This method, in which the linguistic pattern could be acquired through repetition in controlled drills without using translation and which focuses on accurate pronunciation is called, as previously mentioned, the Audio-Lingual Method (Richards and Rodgers 2001).

Besides this, SETs in this study, as suggested by the data displayed above, mostly adopted teaching techniques which suit their teaching styles, foci and roles, such as

repetitive practice, memorisation and substitution drills, and rote learning in order to help their students master the language. One of the teachers states that his preferred teaching technique for teaching new words was:

...[students] listening, repeating after me in chorus and then individually until everyone knows how to pronounce them correctly, then memorising them at home and writing as much as they can. (TI 7)

What is more, SETs in preparing their lessons, mainly complied with the instructions of the assigned textbooks, i.e. they taught what is in the textbooks, and they seldom initiated any activities by themselves. One of the teachers explained this as follows:

We have supervisors, administrators, and parents who urge us to cover the whole textbook material. So we are obliged to do the exercises in the textbooks and to make sure that all of the students write the right answers in their workbooks. [This is] because students are going to be tested at the end of scholastic year on this formation. (TI 7)

So, because most of the exam items are usually from what is in the prescribed textbooks, SETs are requested to rely in their teaching on these textbooks and cover the whole material in them.

Additionally, the data of this study also show that the practice of traditional teaching is not limited to general schooling in the Saudi context, but extended beyond it. The data findings show that traditional teaching practice is widely practised in the Saudi universities in general and language departments in particular. One interviewee states:

Teaching in the teachers' preparation college in Saudi universities is mainly based on providing students with theoretical knowledge through lecturing, without any practical experience. (TI 12)

Moreover, ironically, the teaching method courses are also delivered to student-teachers through applying traditional methods rather than by using innovative teaching methods. For instance, as a participant indicates:

Even in the teaching method courses the instruction is teacher-centred, where lecturers present a teaching method and let the students practise it by following certain steps, which take forms of rote learning, memorisation of some patterns and drills. (TI 8)

5. 2. Discussion

Knowledge transmission was the key word that most of the SETs' teaching practices in this study were centred around. It could be argued that most of what SETs do in their classes is intended to suit this aim. Moreover, the SETs' roles, students' roles, teaching materials and assessment measurements all relate to that ultimate aim. This suggests that SETs in their teaching practices seem to care about the end result of their teaching more than about what goes on in their classes. In other words, the idea of education as a product rather as a process is being stressed in SETs' teaching practices (Welker 1992; Nunan 1988).

Nunan (1988) argues that in product-oriented teaching the focus is on the knowledge and skills which learners should gain as a result of teaching. To achieve this, the SETs apply a teaching style which Jackson (1986 cited in Christopher 2012, p.61) termed 'mimetic teaching', in which some techniques are used to ensure smoothness and precision in the transmission of knowledge from one person (teacher) to another person (student), such as drills, controlled practice, memorisation, and deductive methods. Hence, since the knowledge in this practice mainly flows from teachers to students, this kind of teaching practice places teachers at the centre of the teaching and learning process and allocates most of the classroom time to them. Broughton et al. (1994, p.22) call this kind of practice 'teacher-dominated interactions'. In this kind of teaching, in order to ensure the precision of knowledge transmission to students, the SETs, as discussed earlier, apply techniques that place more emphasis on accuracy

over fluency and give the teaching of grammar rules priority over the other skills that ensure that students speak or grammatically correct sentences. Also, this is supported by applying the mother tongue through translation techniques to ensure that students understand the grammatical rules correctly and can apply them in their own examples.

As previously mentioned, all of these steps come under the umbrella of the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM). Furthermore, SETs also give students some models or patterns and ask them to imitate them to ensure the correctness of knowledge transmission during drills and controlled practice, which usually accompany the application of the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM). Moreover, since the focus of the SETs' teaching practice concerns the quantity of knowledge that students can gain, SETs try to make this process as simple as possible by concentrating on teaching separate skills, using what Wilkins (1976) calls the 'synthetic approach'. He defines this strategy as:

one in which the different parts of language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up. (Wilkins 1976, p. 2)

Furthermore, even though SETs tended to teach language skills separately, they did not give these skills equal importance. This means that the SETs focus on some skills, such as grammar and translation, at the expense of the other skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This result parallels Alseghayer's (2011b) observation that the teaching practice of English teachers in Saudi schools was allocated to grammar (32%), translation (30%), reading (17%), writing (12%), and speaking (9%). Ozsevik (2010), in a study done in the Turkish context, argues that traditional approaches consider grammatical competence as the basis for language proficiency, and that the four language skills should be introduced after the basic grasp of language has been achieved through drills and controlled practice.

In sum, the above mentioned teaching practices are traditional teaching methods that stress the dominance of teachers, marginalise students' interaction, are concerned with the final product of teaching and not the process of teaching and learning, teach discrete skills, and encourage competitive learning among students rather than co-operative learning.

The main features of the SETs' teaching practice, in this study, is summarised in Figure 5.2. The knowledge and activities that are used in the SETs' classes focus on discrete skills with more emphasis on grammar and translation and less emphasis on oral skills (in Figure 5.2, the size of the circles on the left show which skills are given more emphasis). These skills are taught in isolation from each other (the dotted circle indicates that these skills are not taught in an integrated way). Moreover, in teaching, these skills are organised and presented by teachers. Then teachers pass them in a unidirectional process to students (whose roles appear to be peripheral in the classroom, i.e. they seem to be containers waiting to be filled with language knowledge), and the ultimate aim is the final product or the accumulation of knowledge.

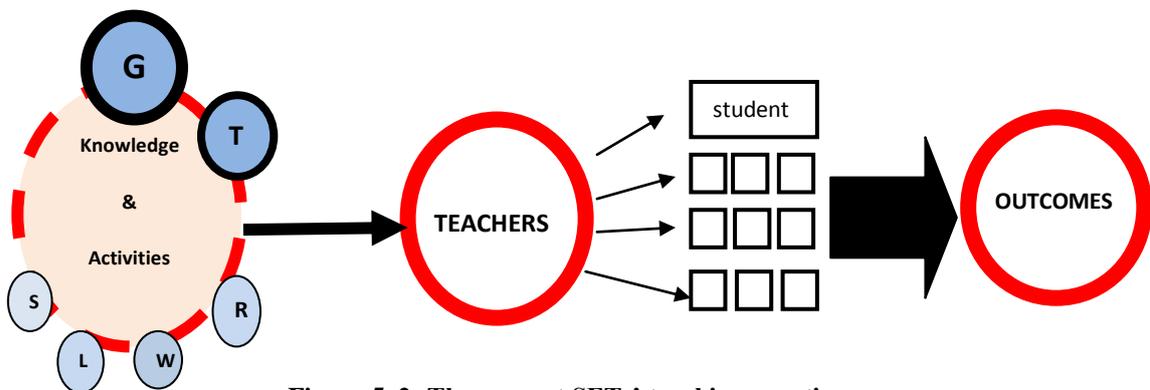


Figure 5. 2: The current SETs' teaching practice

So, the question that could be raised here is: How do SETs come to use the traditional teaching methods? Borg (2003) argues that teachers' cognition about teaching is shaped and affected by different factors including their prior beliefs and experiences. The findings of this study in fact suggest that the adoption of the traditional teaching methods by SETs does not occur by chance. SETs have a long history of exposure to traditional teaching methods since they were learners in general schooling and in pre-service language programmes in KSA. During these experiences SETs were confronted with two models of teaching (the apprenticeship and rationalist models), in which their first image about language teaching and the teacher were constructed. These two models of teaching, unfortunately, have reinforced their orientation toward traditional teaching. For example, through seven years of being language learners in schools, SETs had indirectly learned about how to teach a foreign language when they observed their own language teachers' styles of teaching [or what Lortie (1975) and Lavoire and Roth (2006) called apprenticeship of observation] which was based on traditional or behaviourist principles. Thus, through apprenticeship of observation or the apprenticeship model of teaching, the SETs' first cognition about language teaching had become engraved in their minds. This may last for a long time if they do not pass through another experience which may help them reconstruct their image about language teaching.

It might be assumed that pre-service language programmes in the Saudi context present an opportunity for SETs to correct their previous image about language teaching, since these programmes should take teachers through an experience that aims to teach them directly about how to be an effective language teacher and how to apply some innovative teaching methods and techniques that facilitate language learning. Unfortunately, however, the findings disclose that the model of teaching that

most of the English departments in the Saudi context adopt is the rationalist model in which theoretical materials were presented by using traditional teaching methods and the practical period was delayed until practicum time, if there was any (Day 1992; Wallace 1991; Banegas 2011; Hong and Pawan 2015). In such a model SETs lost important opportunities to practise what they had learned, and the orientation to teach a foreign language through conventional teaching methods was reinforced. Hence, through these two models of teaching and earlier language-learning experiences, SETs built their personal theories about language teaching and learning. However, personal theories are not always in line with the current situation in teaching foreign languages (Molina et al. 2013). For this reason, as the study findings suggest, when SETs encounter challenging situations, such as using a communicative curriculum, they fall back on traditional teaching methods such as GTM and ALM.

Finally, the findings of this study which have shown that SETs in the Saudi context still use traditional teaching methods widely in their teaching practices are in line with the results of other studies in this and other contexts, such as Li (1998) in Korea; Gorsuch (2000) in Japan; Alkhawaiter (2001) in Qatar; Alnough (2008) in Kuwait; Alkhayyat (2009) in Jordan; Almohanna (2010) and Alzaidi (2011) in Saudi Arabia; Ozsevik (2010) and Coskun (2011) in Turkey; Chang (2011) in Taiwan; Shihiba (2011) in Libya; Ansarey (2012) and Chowdhury (2012) in Bangladesh; Vongxay (2013) in Laos; and Kalanzadeh et al. (2013) in Iran.

These studies have showed that English teachers in various EFL contexts still teach EFL for traditional purposes and adopt GTM and ALM as preferred teaching methods at the expense of other innovative methods such as CLT. Indeed, it is not surprising that the results of this study, until this stage, resemble the outcomes of those studies because there were some common themes between them. The contexts of my study

and the above mentioned studies, for instance, can in general be categorised into two main contexts; the Islamic or Arabic context and the East Asian context. The dominant goal of education in both contexts, however, is knowledge transmission, as suggested by the abovementioned studies. In most of the Islamic and Arabic contexts, education is viewed from the perspective of a Kuttab [old religious school dominant in Arab and Islamic countries during the 6th and 7th centuries AD], while in most East Asian contexts education is viewed from the perspective of Confucian Heritage Culture [which was influenced by teachings of Confucius, the Chinese philosopher who lived in China from 551 to 479 BC] (Metz 1992; Alsalloum 1995; Carless 1999; Hu 2002; Wang and Cheng 2005). In both the Kuttab and Confucian cultures, education was a process for knowledge accumulation in long term, and in this process the teachers were seen as knowledge sources and controllers of student learning, and students' role was to gain knowledge through memorisation and imitation (Metz 1992; Alsalloum 1995; Cortazzi and Jin 1996; Hu 2002).

However, the question that needs to be raised here is: Do SETs' current teaching practices suit the purpose of teaching for communicative purposes and applying CLT? Exploring the nature of the teaching and learning processes that usually happen when applying CLT, as mentioned earlier in this study, would provide us with the insight that CLT is an example of a student-based approach that puts students at the centre of the teaching and learning process, considers teachers as facilitators and mentors of students' learning, teaches integrated skills, cares about the process of learning and aims to develop students' communicative competence. So, if we compare the aspects of teaching by using CLT and those of the current teaching practices of SETs responsible for the implementation of CLT, it would seem that to a large extent they

are in opposition to each other. Thus, it could be argued, to large extent, that it SETs cannot be expected to conduct student-centred teaching in their classes because of their prior experiences which do not include examples of such teaching, and because of some other challenges they encounter (which will be discussed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7). Thus it is logical to assume that the dominant teaching methods in the SETs' classes were traditional teaching methods such as Grammar Translation Method and Audio-lingual Method.

5. 3. Conclusion

In this chapter the study findings have shown that the SETs' prevalent teaching practices are diverse forms of the conventional teaching methods, mostly Grammar Translation and the Audio-lingual method.

Moreover, in this chapter it has also been shown that applying communicative activities and using innovative teaching methods, particularly CLT, as the prescribed method of the Saudi MOE, is consequently rare in most of the classrooms of SETs in this study.

However, even though the aforementioned results indicate that SETs' teaching practices rarely match the purpose of teaching English for communication, there are some promising indicators that may help change the direction of the SETs' practice. Given the eclectic nature of CLT, some of what SETs currently do in their classes to improve linguistic competence (teaching grammar in a deductive way using the mother tongue [GTM], improving oral skills by controlled practice and repetitions

[ALM], and teaching discrete skills) could serve as building blocks that teachers can draw on in order to improve students' communicative competence, since linguistic competence is a part of communicative competence. Thus, their pre-service programmes, to some extent at least, have provided SETs with some basic skills that may be considered as the building blocks toward teaching for communicative purposes if they have been developed and reinforced to match the principles of CLT.

Ultimately, however, it seems that the focus on traditional teaching methods in SETs' teaching practice and the reluctance to apply CLT are the result not only of their past experiences but of other influential factors. These factors, as we will see in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, emerge from various sources, i.e. some factors are related to teachers, others are institutional and situational factors, and some others are socio-cultural factors.

Chapter 6

Influential factors at the individual level

6. 1. Introduction

The second research question (i.e. *What factors influence the formative year English teachers' choices of teaching methods?*) is addressed in the interview by Questions 4 - 11, Part II (Appendix 8, p:312) and in the questionnaire by Questions 14, 16 and 17 (Appendix 12, p:321), and. The questions seek to examine the issues influencing SETs' current approach to teaching, along with the reasons for any potential reluctance to implement CLT. This is as a result of the assumption that the decision to adopt (or not adopt) CLT could be as a result of the interaction of various factors influencing SETs' teaching practice, as discussed in the following sections.

This study has applied the principles of CHAT theory in analysing and discussing the data, in order to comprehend the nature of these interactions. According to this theory, as a human activity, SETs' teaching practice, involves two levels: (1) the individual (cognitive) and (2) the social (contextual), which are integrated into one concept, in which one influences the other (Phillips 2006) as it has displayed earlier in Figure 1.1.



Figure 1.1 Teaching practice as a human activity

In order to understand the nature of SETs' teaching practice as a human activity, it is necessary to explore the characteristics of the two levels (i.e. the individual and the contextual) constructing this teaching practice, along with the ways in which these levels interact and influence each other.

As noted in the introduction of this study, the data relating to the second research question will be addressed in chapters 6, and 7. This current chapter will investigate the influential factors stemming from SETs at the individual level, in order to explore their personal beliefs and/or preconceptions concerning CLT, along with the factors and conditions influencing these beliefs.

6. 2. Influential factors at the individual level

6. 2. 1. SETs' knowledge of CLT

As it has been mentioned earlier in the literature review (chapter 3), CLT is an eclectic approach that is derived from a number of methods (Brandl 2008). This reality has led to the emergence of various interpretations of the identity of CLT and the ways in which it can be implemented, i.e. weak and strong versions. It is important to commence with an exploration of SETs' perceptions of CLT, as a teacher's view of teaching is the primary influence on their choice of a specific teaching practice. Such views can also be transformed into classroom practices, and may influence their overall teaching practice (Johnson 1984; Xu 2012).

Thus, the SETs in this study were questioned, in the interview and questionnaire, concerning their perceptions of CLT in teaching and learning EFL. The data suggests that the majority of the SETs (37 teachers in the questionnaire sample), in their

responses to Q12, are of the view that teaching language for communication purposes, through involving students in communicative activities by using CLT, can have a positive contribution to improving the teaching and learning of English language in Saudi Arabia for everyday purposes. The majority of the teachers interviewed, in their responses to Q5, confirmed this view (8 teachers). One states:

I think using CLT can help in establishing real communicative activities. It enables the students to be at the centre of the teaching and learning process and to be negotiators rather than knowledge receivers. It provides a suitable atmosphere for practicing EFL (in a way that) resembles the real external environment (TI 1).

However, although the findings indicate that SETs understand both the importance of teaching EFL for communicative purposes and the use of CLT as a means of accomplishing this intent, data from their reported teaching practices (as indicated by the earlier findings discussed in Chapter 5) demonstrate only limited use of both communicative activities and CLT. Furthermore, the questionnaire data also reveals that some SETs had never attempted to practice communicative activities, or to use CLT during their teaching practice. As demonstrated in Figure 6.1, the questionnaire (Q12) revealed that the majority of SETS (28 teachers) had not attempted to use CLT in their teaching. The reasons for this omission will be outlined later, both in the current chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

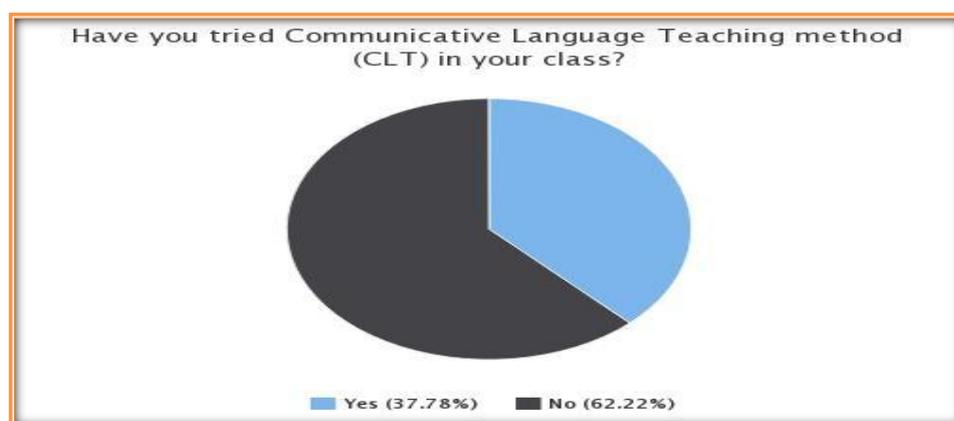


Figure 6. 1

However, this reluctance of SETs to apply specific features of CLT in their classrooms, despite understanding its general significance in the teaching of EFL, raises an important question at the cognitive level, i.e. do they really understand what CLT actually involves? Thus, in order to establish whether they have the essential theoretical background in the features of CLT, SETs answered a number of questions (Q5 in the teachers' interview, and Q14 in the questionnaire) concerning the details of specific features of CLT methodology, which were emerged from the literature review and the previous studies that this study had conducted. The responses to the questionnaire revealed in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1

What is involved in CLT methodology in your view?				
	yes	no	don't know	Responses
CLT is student-centered approach.	35 (77.78%)	2 (4.44%)	8 (17.78%)	45
CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy.	29 (65.91%)	5 (11.36%)	10 (22.73%)	44
CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening skills.	39 (86.67%)	1 (2.22%)	5 (11.11%)	45
CLT requires teacher to be a high proficiency in English.	31 (68.89%)	10 (22.22%)	4 (8.89%)	45
CLT is basically an ESL methodology not EFL.	32 (71.11%)	2 (4.44%)	11 (24.44%)	45
CLT involves no grammar teaching.	34 (75.56%)	4 (8.89%)	7 (15.56%)	45
CLT can only be used with pair/group work only.	23 (51.11%)	14 (31.11%)	8 (17.78%)	45
CLT emphasizes communication in L2.	27 (60.00%)	6 (13.33%)	12 (26.67%)	45

Table 6.1 reveals that a proportion of the SETs' answers correspond to the basic principles of CLT, i.e. the majority of participants (35 teachers from questionnaire sample) state that CLT is a student-centred approach; 29 teachers believe that CLT emphasises fluency over accuracy; and 27 teachers indicate that CLT emphasises

communication in the second language (L2). These views echo the findings from the data emerging from the interviews with the teachers. One interviewee states:

I believe that using CLT will provide students with a great opportunity to practise the target language, increase both student-student and student-teacher verbal interaction. In addition, it emphasises fluency over accuracy, particularly at the earlier stages, which will help to limit the teachers' interference to correct students' sentences, allowing students to learn in a non-threatening atmosphere. (TI 1)

On the other hand, the remaining results in Table 6.1 (which re-represented in Table 6.2) indicate a number of misconceptions surrounding the main principles of CLT, which may indicate a level of deficiency in the initial preparation of SETs, and may, to some extent, also be responsible for their reluctance to implement CLT in their teaching practice.

6.2.1.1. SETs' misconceptions of CLT

Table 6.2 (extracted from Table 6.1) reveals SETS' prevalent misconceptions concerning the principles of CLT, and which may, to some extent, explain their reluctance to implement CLT in their classrooms:

Table (6.2): Teachers' misconceptions about CLT

Item	Yes	No	Don't know
CLT relies heavily on teaching listening & speaking skills.	87%	2.2%	11 %
CLT involves no teaching of grammar.	76%	9 %	15 %
CLT can only be used in pair and group work.	51 %	31 %	18%

6. 2. 1. 1. 1. CLT relies heavily on oral skills

According to the data displayed in Tables 5.1 and 5.2, the first misconception held by the SETs in this study is that CLT relies heavily on oral skills. For example, the

majority of the participants in the questionnaire (i.e. 39 teachers) believe that CLT relies heavily on teaching listening and speaking skills, at the expense of other main and sub-skills. This view is also echoed by the majority of the interviewees (i.e. 9 teachers) who believe that CLT focuses primarily on oral skills. One states that:

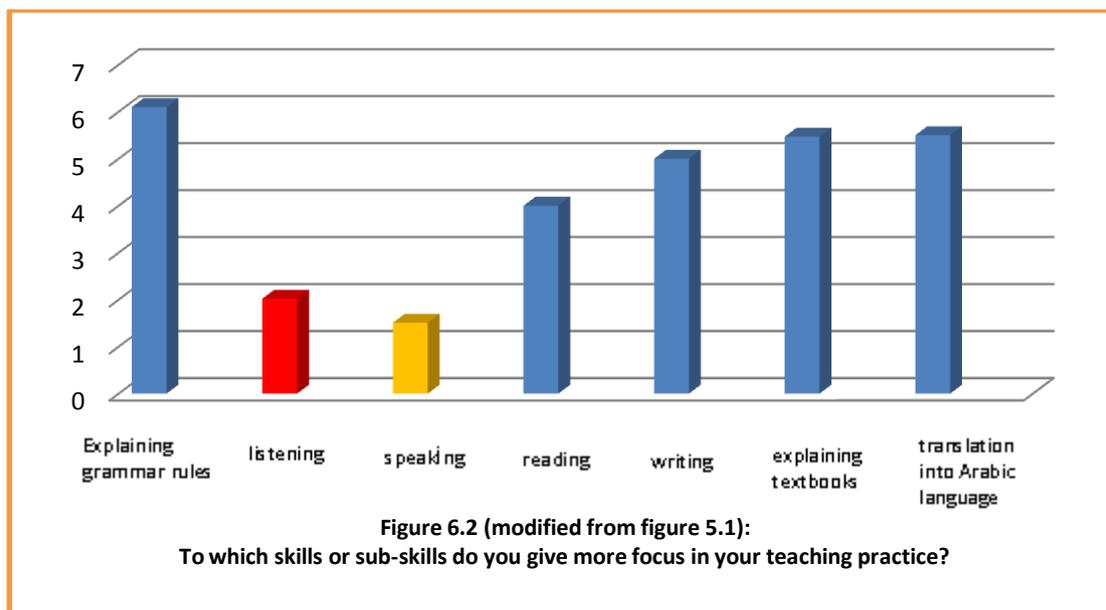
CLT for me means a teaching method that focuses on teaching oral skills more than any other skills. For this reason, teachers should concentrate on listening and speaking in pair and group work. (TI 5)

Furthermore, the data suggests that the SETs' misconceptions about which language skills are the focus of CLT may be attributed to their definition of the terms 'communicative' and 'communication'. Wu (2008 cited in Wong 2012) argues that the different definitions and interpretations of CLT since the 1970s may lead to confusion among teachers concerning the meaning of the term. In this current study, the data suggests that, for some SETs, the denotative meaning of the term 'communication' is merely oral communication, i.e. only listening and speaking skills.

For example, one interviewee states that:

It is difficult to teach only for communicative purposes in our schools, because our schools are not well equipped with language laboratories to improve listening and speaking. (IT 5)

Furthermore, Figure 6.2 (i.e. the skills emphasis of SETs, which is modified from Figure 5.1) clearly demonstrates that SETs rate oral skills as those they emphasise the least during their teaching. Thus, in considering these findings, and establishing the first misconception, part of the SETs' reluctance to use CLT in this situation can be attributed to the correlation between their beliefs and their emphasis in relation to skills. Thus, SETs avoid the use of CLT in their teaching, due to their belief that CLT relies heavily on oral language skills, which they rate as the lowest emphasised skills.



Moreover, a reconsideration of Table 6.1 reveals a further reason for SETs' avoidance of a focus on oral skills, i.e. language proficiency. For example, 31 SETs (from questionnaire sample) expressed the belief that a teacher requires a high proficiency in English to run a communicative class, due to their belief that that it focuses heavily on oral skills.

This situation does not match the language proficiency of some SETs, who consider themselves to be insufficiently fluent in English. As one interviewee notes:

I believe we as English teachers still have some deficiency in our language proficiency through which we feel that we are incompetent to conduct our lessons mostly in English. (TI 5)

One of the teachers also states that:

Teaching oral skills, particular the speaking skill, puts us, as teachers, in embarrassing situations in our classes, because these skills require a high level of English. So because our English is not fluent enough, we try to limit the teaching of these skills in our classes. (IT 7)

Thus, in order to avoid losing face in front of their students, SETs attempt to avoid teaching oral skills in their classes, due to their belief that this would require a high command of the English language.

6. 2. 1. 1. 2. Using CLT involves no grammar teaching

The second misconception revealed in Table 5.2 is that SETS believe the use of CLT does not involve any teaching of grammar. The majority of the interviewees (ten teachers [83%]) expressed the belief that, through applying CLT as a teaching method, teachers should focus on meaning rather than forms. One interviewee states:

I readjust my teaching methods to match with certain purposes, so I sometimes use CLT if a lesson involves a discussion. But when lessons are devoted to grammatical rules, and introducing new words, I turn to traditional methods, because they give teachers a chance to concentrate on structures. (TI 5)

A supervisor attributes the belief that the use of CLT involves no grammar to the misunderstanding by some teachers of the expression 'fluency over accuracy'. He adds:

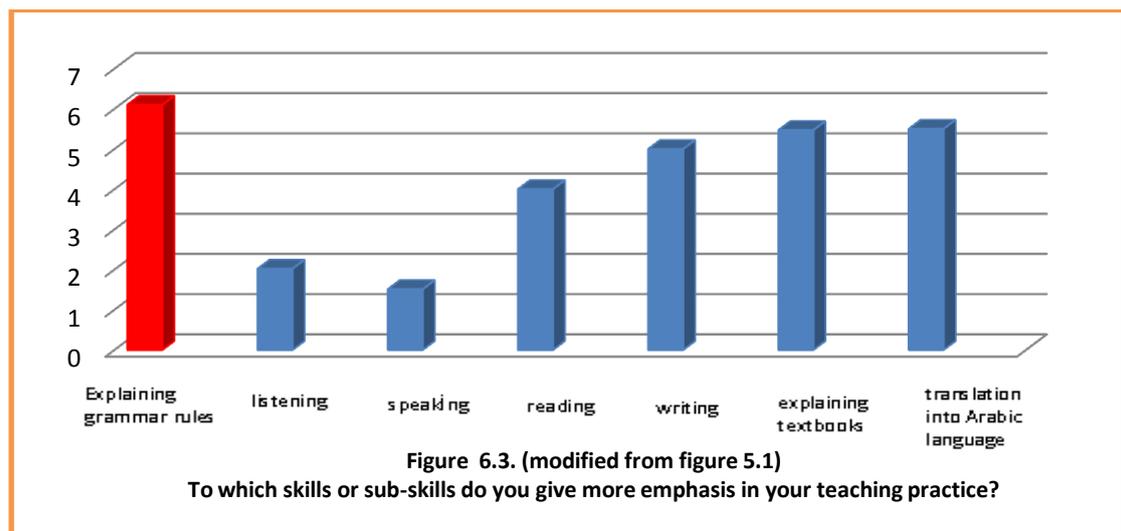
During discussions with supervisees, I have noticed that they have a belief that the CLT emphasis on fluency over accuracy implies a limited teaching of grammar rules, because fluency connotes that students will not concentrate on form but on meaning. (SI 3)

Furthermore, the research data suggests another reason for the reluctance of SETs to use CLT to teach grammar, i.e. a belief that grammar should be taught in a direct manner, to enable students to comprehend grammatical rules. At the same time, they were of the opinion that the application of CLT would prove an obstacle to the teaching of grammar in a deductive way, as professed by one interviewee:

I cannot teach grammatical rules by using CLT. I think that, in order for students to grasp the grammatical points, grammar should be taught explicitly. (TI 4)

Hence, the above view reinforces the main idea held by the SETs in this current study concerning methods of teaching grammar, as demonstrated in the earlier findings in Chapter 5, i.e. to teach grammar in a deductive manner.

This finding is correlated with the result shown in Figure 6.3, which demonstrates the SETs' preference for using traditional methods (e.g. the Grammar Translation Method) as it assists in the fulfilment of their goal or emphasis (i.e. the explanation of the rules of grammar).



In summary of the findings related to the second misconception of SETs concerning CLT, it could be argued that their avoidance of the use of CLT to teach grammar may be attributed to the view that CLT cannot achieve SETs' teaching goals, i.e. teaching grammar in a deductive manner, as a step to preparing students to pass examinations.

6. 2. 1. 1. 3. CLT can only be used in pair and group work

The third misconception held by SETs (as revealed in Table 6.2), concerns the fact that CLT can only be used in pair and group work. It appears from the data findings, that SETs place the management of their classrooms as one of their highest teaching priorities. The questionnaire data (Q14) reveals that 28 teachers of the SETs avoid involving their students in any kind of communicative activity (e.g. pair or group work) due to a belief that the use of communicative activities necessitates a high level of skill in class management. One interviewee states:

Communicative activities, such as pair and group work, require organisation, action, and need big spaces. Besides, some students may not take these activities seriously, because they may have the impression that the aim of these activities is entertainment rather than learning. So I believe applying these activities in large classes like mine may lead to losing control over students. (TI 1)

Furthermore, the findings point to a further reason contributing to SETs' avoidance of pair and group work, i.e. that pair and group work may allow their students to share some authority within the classroom, which would challenge the traditional teaching role of SETs. One of the supervisors states that:

SETs disregard pair and group work, and consequently CLT, because these kinds of activities conflict with their traditional roles of being the knowledge transmitter and the authoritative one. (SI 1)

However, despite the fact that the above findings demonstrate an important challenge encountered by SETs in their attempts to apply CLT, it is not sufficient to simply be aware of this challenge. It is of greater importance to identify the reasons and conditions that have led to the emergence of such a challenge. This study aims not only to list the influential challenges facing the implementation of CLT by SETs, but also to explore the roots of such a challenge. Therefore, the study has undertaken an in-depth investigation to explore possible reasons and conditions contributing to the

emergence of the misconceptions SETs hold concerning CLT. The findings of this investigation are discussed in the following section.

6. 2. 2. SETs' initial preparation

It could be argued that the limited knowledge and misconceptions concerning CLT (along with the lack of confidence to run communicative activities) can be attributed, to some extent, to gaps in the preparation given to SETs in their initial preparation programmes. The study findings suggest that this inadequacy covers two areas of preparation: (1) the pedagogical; and (2) the linguistic.

6 2 .2. 1. SETs' limited teaching repertoire

The data established by this study reveals that, when SETs were instructed to teach for communicative purposes, they reported noticeably struggled in their teaching process and felt less confident about conducting communicative activities. This was due to their deficiencies in certain skills, i.e. knowledge and the teaching repertoire in general. The gaps in SETs' teaching repertoire can take a number of forms, including in relation to pedagogic knowledge (i.e. generic educational knowledge), such as educational psychology and class management, as it has been displayed earlier in Chapter 2 (training provision in the three pathways). For instance, a supervisor claims that SETs in general, and new teachers in particular, lack a number of skills that could have prevented their difficulties in managing their classes. He notes:

In my observation of SETs' lessons, I have noticed that they tend to dominate most of the lesson time. They think that the best way for managing a class is by having a control over everything in the classroom.
(SI 1)

Another interviewee indicates further issues experienced by SETs, including a lack of knowledge of how to motivate students, and understand their psychology from their behaviour. He reveals that:

I could not understand in some cases why my students were distracted in my lessons and resisted taking part in the classroom activities. (TI 11)

Furthermore, the data suggests that SETs have a gap in their knowledge of EFL pedagogic content (i.e. specialised knowledge in the field of EFL learning and teaching) including: language teaching methods; creating communicative teaching material; and evaluating language students, according to the responses to supervisors' interview Q1,5 and 6. For example, one of the supervisors argues that the majority of new EFL teachers in Saudi schools have a gap in the teaching of a foreign language, and methods of preparing for communicative lessons. He states:

Most of the newly qualified English teachers in our schools seem to have little knowledge about how to teach a foreign language, and the best that they do is only to rely on their prior experience as students in public schools. ...Some of them seem have little knowledge about CLT, or they have never been taught about it in their preparation. Such a situation may cause trouble for EFL teachers in their application of the new communicative curriculum, which is designed to be used for applying CLT. (SI 3)

Moreover, the majority of the interviewees (7 teachers) claimed that they had received only theoretical knowledge on how to apply CLT, without any practical opportunities to apply such information. One teacher states:

I did not have that chance to try CLT out in my practicum, or even in microteaching. Also, I did not have the chance to attend any lesson for those who applied CLT in their teaching, and I do not remember our lecturers using those kinds of teaching methods in their instruction. (IT 1)

The issues outlined above may indicate that there are gaps in the SETs' initial preparation programmes. A teacher (from the ARTs schools pathway) indicates the existence of this problem when he argues:

We are unqualified teachers because our department is mainly a literary department, which focuses in teaching English literature, and the educational subjects are limited to only two courses with only four credits. So we feel that we are not prepared well to teach in schools and we still need further qualifications in teaching skills. (TI 6)

Thus, the above results suggest that the factors contributing to the emergence of some of the misconceptions concerning CLT are as a result of the gaps in SETs' pedagogical preparation in general, and in CLT in particular.

This finding accords with other studies within a number of EFL contexts, including Li (1998) in Korea; Alkhawaiter (2001) in Qatar; Ozsvik (2010) in Turkey; Almohanna (2010) and Alzaidi (2011) in Saudi Arabia; Shihiba (2011) in Libya; Chang (2011) in Taiwan; Vongxay (2013) in Laos.

This current study undertakes a more in-depth investigation, not only revealing that EFL teachers suffer from gaps in pedagogical preparation, but also further exploring the roots of both the issues and the conditions that allow these to arise, as outlined below.

6. 2. 2. 1. 1. Pedagogical preparation during pre-service training

The majority of pre-service ESL/EFL teacher education programmes contain two fundamental issues that need to be taken into consideration. Firstly, the kind of knowledge being offered to student teachers (i.e. knowledge base: content knowledge;

pedagogic knowledge; pedagogic content knowledge; and support knowledge), as suggested by Day (1992); Day and Conklin (1992); Kasule (2003); and Rubio (2009). Secondly, the ways in which this knowledge has been delivered (i.e. models of teaching: craft, the rationalist, and reflective models), as suggested by Day (1992); Wallace (1991); Banegas (2011); and Hong and Pawan (2015).

Thus, through the application of the above classifications, the study has shed light on the ways in which SETs are prepared during their initial preparation programmes, with specific reference to their pedagogical preparation, and the variations between the three related pathways.

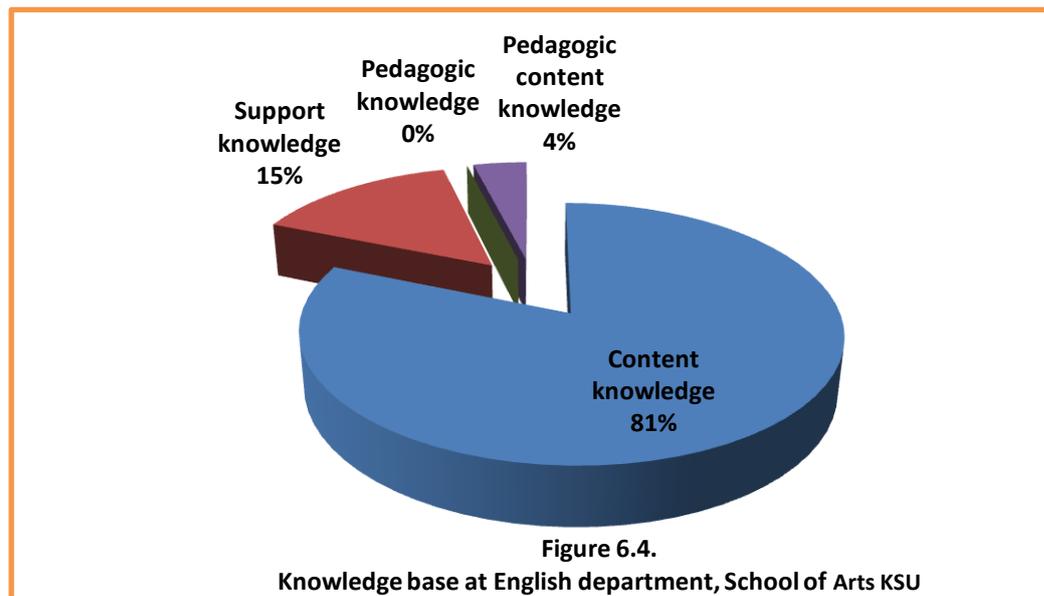
a .The provision of educational courses

The content analysis of the provision of educational courses for student teachers, as shown in Chapter 2, pp: 26-35, suggest a discrepancy between the three pathways of English departments in Saudi universities. Thus, English departments in the Schools of Arts in Saudi universities (i.e. the first pathway) were established to provide essential vocational and professional training in English language and literature to students expected to serve as translators and linguists. Thus, they offer multiple courses in: language skills; composition; grammar; linguistics; translation; and English/American literature (KSU 2014). Hence, the preparation of English teachers is not the main focus of these departments. However, in order to meet the demand for English language teachers, some of these departments have begun to offer educational courses to assist graduates wishing to join the teaching profession. One participant argues:

The graduates of English departments in Arts schools should not join the teaching profession until they get a diploma in education, but as a help to

their students, these departments offer some educational courses to support them in their teaching careers. (LI 3)

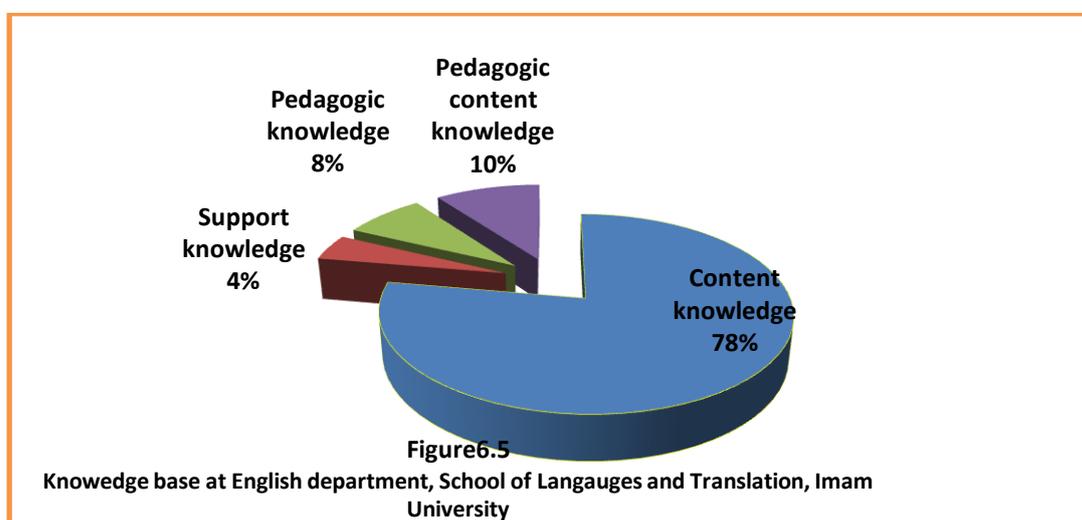
However, a thorough examination of the BA plans of the departments of English language and literature in the Schools of Arts in Saudi universities (as shown on chapter 2, pp: 28-29, Appendix 1 [p: 299], and Figure 6.4) reveal that the kind of knowledge bases offered in these departments consists of the following:



(i)-*content knowledge (subject matters)*: these cover approximately 81.25% of the total BA plan. (ii)- *support knowledge*: these cover approximately 14.84% of the total BA plan. (iii)-*pedagogic content knowledge*: these cover approximately 3.9 % of the total BA plan. While the English departments in this pathway do not state that they include *pedagogic knowledge* (i.e. generic educational subjects) in their BA plans.

Thus, it appears from the content analysis of the BA plans of the English departments in Arts schools, that there are a very limited number of theoretical educational courses, including pedagogic knowledge or pedagogic content knowledge.

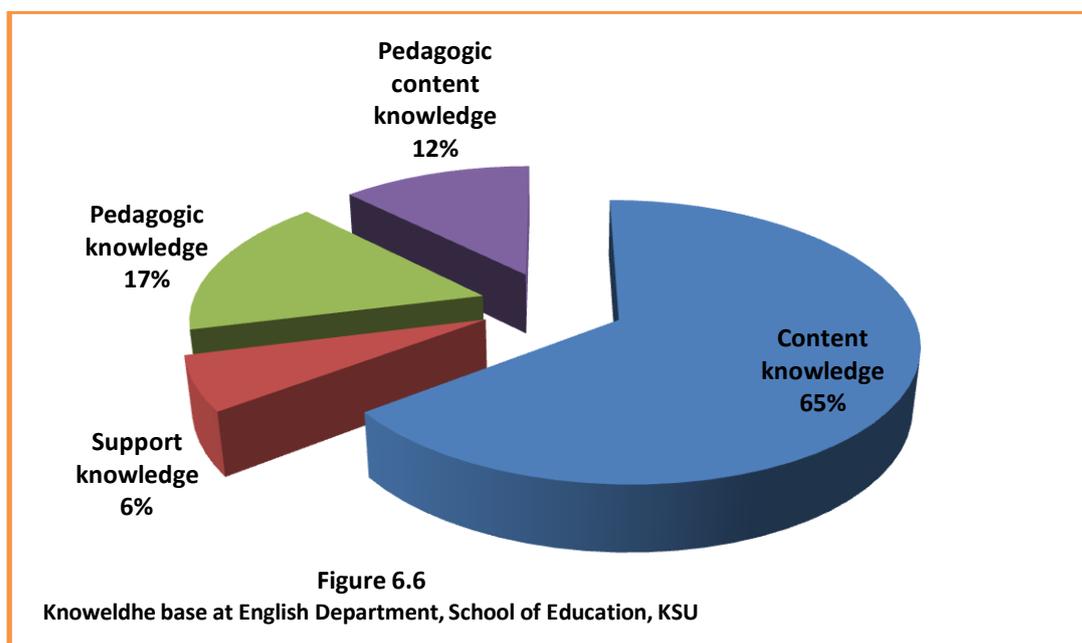
On the other hand, the English Department in the School of Languages and Translation in Imam Muhammad University (i.e. the second pathway), appears to be a multi-purpose department. Its aim is to prepare graduates who have acquired skills in the English language to serve in a number of positions, including as English teachers, translators, and researchers in different scientific research fields (Imam Muhammad University, 2014). Therefore, in order to meet these aims, they offer a number of different courses in various subjects within the BA plan (i.e. 180 credits) (see Chapter 2, pp: 30-32, Appendix 2, p: 300, and Figure 6.5.). These include the following:



i)-*Content knowledge*: these knowledge consist 78% of the total BA plan, e.g. language skills; language sciences; literature; translation and university requirements in the Arabic language and Islamic subjects. ii)-*Pedagogic knowledge*: these knowledge cover 8 % (7 subjects) of the BA plan and delivered in Arabic. iii)-*Pedagogic content knowledge*: three subjects (10 %) presented in English, e.g. EFL teaching methods; testing and evaluation in EFL classes; and using ICT in EFL teaching. iv)-*Support knowledge*: Subjects including linguistics and research methods, which consist of 4 % of the total plan.

Thus, this pathway appears to contain the basic knowledge base primarily covered in the BA plan of the language teacher education programme, despite the variations in the amount of time offered. The educational preparation courses (whether consisting of pedagogic knowledge or pedagogic content knowledge) cover almost 18% (twenty theoretical credits + twelve practical credits) of the total BA plan.

Furthermore, the third pathway (i.e. an English department within a School of Education) is primarily devoted to preparing EFL teachers to work in different educational institutions, in order to fulfil the needs of Saudi society (KSU 2014). The analysis of the BA plans of the English departments in the Schools of Education (i.e. the School of Education in KSU, see Chapter 2, p: 34, Appendix 3, p: 301, and Figure 6.6), reveals that the knowledge base offered in these plans consists of:



i)-*Content knowledge*: 65% of the total BA plan (131 credits) can be broken down into the following: 45% of the content knowledge is in English, while 17.6% of the content knowledge is in Arabic. ii)-*Pedagogic knowledge*: seven subjects (17%) presented in Arabic, including: principles of education; class management; and educational

psychology. iii)-*Pedagogic content knowledge*: four subjects (12%) presented in English, including: EFL teaching methods; testing and evaluation in the EFL classroom; use of the computer in EFL teaching. iv)-*Support knowledge*: This consists of subjects with 6.1% of the credits, including linguistics and research methods.

Thus, in this pathway, the knowledge base appears to cover the majority of the knowledge required in a pre-service language teacher education programme, although the percentages vary. The initial preparation programme in this pathway includes courses covering generic issues in teaching (i.e. pedagogic knowledge), and in particular EFL teaching (i.e. pedagogic content knowledge), which covers almost 28% of the total BA plan (i.e. twenty-nine theoretical credits plus eight practical credits).

Nonetheless, although the above content analysis of the BA plans for University English Departments in Languages and Translation Schools (i.e. second pathway), and Colleges of Education (i.e. third pathway), reveal the existence of a number of courses in teaching methods, a question arises as to the kind of content offered by such courses. The available data relating to this question reveals that the majority of courses focussing on teaching methods are devoted to teaching outdated teaching methods (e.g. GTM and ALM). A teacher sums up this issue with the following argument:

I believe we are not been equipped well in specialised knowledge in teaching foreign languages. ... I remember that we had one course as a teaching methods subject in our department. Its material focused more on providing knowledge about conventional teaching methods, with little attention given the modern ones. (TI 3)

b. The model of teaching and the practical aspect

The above analysis has discussed the theoretical aspect of the educational subjects delivered to student teachers. There will now be a more in-depth discussion of this theoretical content of the teaching model, in order to understand the extent to which theory has been related to practice, and determine whether the practical aspect is undertaken successfully.

The data findings reveal that the majority of knowledge-base courses in the English language departments in all the pathways discussed above (whether focussing on pedagogic knowledge or pedagogic content knowledge) are delivered in a theoretical manner. Additionally, they are delivered using teacher-centred approaches (i.e. lectures), in which the majority of the time is allocated to lectures, while the student-teachers tend to only play the role of the receivers of knowledge, and rarely participate. An interviewee sums up the nature of the activities generally taking place in the majority of BA courses as follows:

Most of the activities in our programme courses, whether language courses or educational courses, have a theoretical basis. And they are conducted by the university teachers in traditional ways, through lecturing, in which teachers utilise most of the lecture time, while students respond to teachers' questions only. (TI 6)

This situation is not improved by the fact that the courses on teaching methods are delivered using traditional, rather than innovative, teaching methods, as indicated by one of the participants:

Ironically, the teaching methods courses are delivered in the traditional way of lecturing by university teachers, without any opportunities for us to practice what we have studied. (TI 1)

The practical opportunities in these pathways are limited to any practicum period available. No opportunities are given for practice teaching through microteaching, or the observation of experienced teachers through attending role model lessons. A supervisor indicates this deficit as follows:

The best practice that student teachers have during their study at universities is only during the practicum period. They do not have the chance to teach through microteaching sessions, or by attending the lessons of expert teachers who apply innovative teaching methods. (SI 3)

Therefore, it appears that the model of teaching applied in English language departments is the rationalist (i.e. theory-to-practice) model (Day 1992; Wallace 1991; Banegas 2011; Hong and Pawan 2015). In this model, it is the theoretical materials that are first transmitted to student-teachers who, following the completion of their course, are then expected to apply them.

However, a number of educational courses are taught by lecturers who lack any background in the field of teaching, and who do not specialise in teaching methods. Thus, a participant from the Arts Schools pathway states that ‘most of the lecturers who teach educational subjects in our department are not specialised in language teaching’. (LI 2)

6. 2. 2. 2. *SETs' linguistic preparation*

The previous section of this study examined some of the challenges facing SETs attempting to implement CLT in their teaching practice, including their limited teaching repertoire (which is also responsible for SETs' misconceptions concerning CLT). However, data suggests that, when it comes to the implementation of CLT,

their limited teaching repertoire is not the only issue traceable to the SETs themselves, as their gaps in English proficiency also contributes to additional complexities.

This section will therefore examine the linguistic preparation experienced by SETs, in order to give an overview of their preparation during their pre-service programmes. Such an investigation will assist in tracing back to the roots of the problems of SETs' language deficiency.

6. 2. 2. 2. 1. Lack of proficiency in the English language

The issue of proficiency in English has been a constant cause of concern for most non-native EFL teachers (Butler 2004). In this current study, the majority of the participants in the teachers' interviews (ten teachers) assessed the SETs' English language proficiency as low. For example, a teacher stated:

Although I believe that the use of the target language in the classroom should exceed 80% of class time, I haven't managed to reach half of that in my classes, because I feel that my language ability did not help me run my classes more often in the target language. As a result, my recourse is to use the mother tongue to enhance students' understanding. (TI 1)

The SETs appear to experience a deficiency in the majority of language skills, as summed up by a supervisor, as follows:

The SETs have a deficiency in most of the language skills and the interference of the Arabic language is a common occurrence in most of their classes. As a result, they lack the confidence to use the target language frequently in front of their students (ST 2).

Notwithstanding their deficiency in language skills, the main concern expressed by SETs in this current study concerning language proficiency related to a deficiency in spoken English, and a subsequent lack of confidence in running communicative classes. For example, a teacher states:

Oral skills are our main problem. We are well prepared in reading and writing, but not in speaking and listening... With our deficient spoken language, we have encountered some embarrassing situations. For instance, on some occasions I was corrected by my students when I mispronounced some words. (TI 6)

These deficiencies also have a direct influence on their implementation of CLT in practice. For example, a teacher points out:

My language ability does not help me to run communicative classes and apply CLT, because I know that teaching communication and adopting communicative activities require a teacher to have a good command of English. So I prefer to use traditional approaches, because they suit my language ability. (TI 5)

Thus, it appears that SETs lack confidence in communicating in English, leading to difficulties in developing communicative activities, and to run their classes entirely in English. This view has been supported by the data from the questionnaire (Q16): 38 participants professed that their spoken English was a challenge to adopting CLT and communicative activities in their classes, while only 4 respondents did not view this aspect as a challenge (see Figure 6.7).

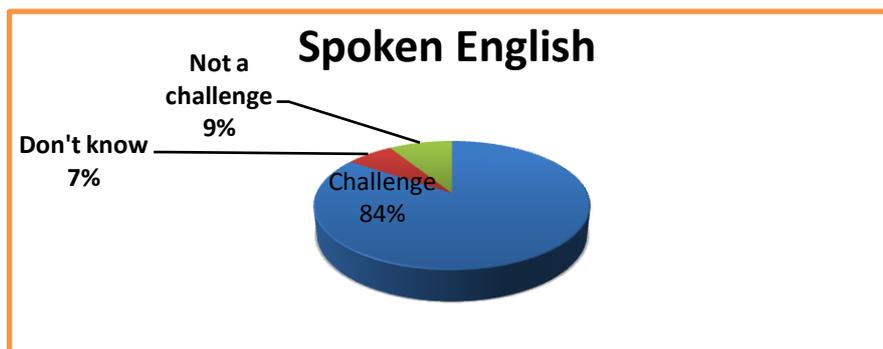


Figure 6.7: Challenge in spoken English

This finding points to an essential aspect of the SETs' issues in using CLT, i.e. their lack of confidence in proficiency in English, along with the ability to run communicative activities. These results run parallel the findings of other studies, including those of Li (1998) in Korea; Adhikari (2007) in Nepal; Ozsevik (2010) in Turkey; Shihiba (2011) in Lybia; and Vongxay (2013) in Laos. These revealed that the deficiencies of most EFL teachers' in English had prevented them from conducting communicative classes.

However, the current study goes further: in order to explore the roots of their language proficiency problem it undertakes an in-depth investigation into the linguistic preparation of SETs during their pre-service teacher education.

The data of this study reveals a number of common issues in the pre-service programmes within the Saudi context, and which compound the issue of SETs' language challenges. According to the participants of this study, these include: the lenient attitude displayed in order to increase students' admission to English departments; an inadequate preparatory year in some departments; limited language exposure and practice during pre-service programmes due to a heavily loaded BA plan; and the traditional teaching methods employed by English departments.

a). Leniency and increase in student admission

The first concerns relating to language proficiency raised by the participants concerned the poor level of English displayed by a proportion of the new intake of students. A proportion of the participants attributed this phenomenon to lack any clear, and agreed, standards for students' admission into the programmes of English

departments, which did not take into consideration the language proficiency of new students. For example, a lecturer states:

It was not a surprise to find some EFL students in our department who have difficulties in most of the language skills. They were unable to respond to simple questions, or to form full simple sentences. (LI 3)

Furthermore, the data also suggests that the majority of English departments in Saudi universities lack any clear, and agreed, standards for students' admission. In some cases, the admission is based on the principle of quantity over quality, i.e. they focus on providing a large number of places in English departments for students, regardless of their language ability. A participant, in response to Q1 in lecturers' interview, points out:

As a part of the governmental policy to provide higher education to most of the Saudi students, local universities try to accommodate a large number of students in each department, and English language departments are among them.... The expansion in student admission is based on quantity over quality, as they accept new students whose linguistic backgrounds and motivation to study English are weak. (LI 1)

Moreover, a further lecturer explicitly indicates the reasons for the acceptance of some students into English programmes, despite their lack of preference for majoring in English. He notes:

Majoring in the English language is, to some extent, not on the top of students' priorities when they apply to university. And the number of students whose first choice is English major is small compared to that of those who are still waiting for places to study at the local universities. As a result, and in order to accept as many students as they can, the admission offices direct some of those students on the waiting list to fill the spaces in some departments and English departments are among these. (LI 3)

Beside this expansion in the acceptance of students, the data (in responses to Q1 in lecturers' interview) also suggests an inconsistency regarding approval standards in some Saudi universities between university admission offices and

English departments. In some situations, this inconsistency can lead to admission offices overriding the prerequisites set by English departments for the acceptance of new students, i.e. language background and placement tests. According to a lecturer:

There is an inconsistency between universities' admission offices and academic departments regarding the prerequisite conditions for admission.... [he adds] We in the English department set some special conditions, such as good language proficiency. But, in most cases, the admission offices do not take them into consideration when they decide to accept new students. (LI 2)

Another lecturer notes of the placement test:

In our department, we used to have a placement test for the newcomers, but we have realised that the admissions office did not take its results into consideration when they offered places to new students. (LT 3)

These interview responses (for Q1 in LI) suggest that the consequences of such decisions are clearly reflected in the rate of student attrition each academic year from English departments, and in the struggle of those continuing to study English in the face of their language deficiency. For example, one of the teachers recounts:

I remember that, in the first term of my study, the number of students who were enrolled in the English department was large (120 students), but at the beginning of the second term the number had dramatically decreased (35 students) and in the final term we were only 12 students. This is because most of those students faced difficulties in studying English; their first choice was not to study English but they were accepted in that department due to the vacancies at the beginning of the academic year. (TI 3)

A lecturer adds:

Those who decide to continue studying in English departments, regardless of their deficiency in the language, face multiple difficulties during their studies, i.e. in the subject matter and the language itself. (LT 1)

Hence, the first reasons identified for the weak English proficiency of SETs include: the increase in student admission; the acceptance of weak students at expense of quality; and negligence of the English departments' prerequisites.

b). Gaps in the preparatory year

The interview responses also reveal that, despite new student teachers being offered places in an English department, they were not provided with adequate linguistic preparation programmes to improve their language proficiency. For example, the interview responses suggest that all SETs share an unsatisfactory impression of the provision of foundation programmes for new students in English departments at ARTs (i.e. the first pathway) and Education Schools (i.e. the third pathway). For example, a teacher criticises their foundation courses, pointing out that:

Our language abilities when we left high school were modest, so when we got places in the English department, we thought that there would be intensive courses in English language at the outset of our study, to improve our linguistic abilities, but in fact we were surprised that we had received the same preparation as other majors, which focus on generic subjects with little emphasis on English language skills. (TI 3)

Furthermore, Table 6.3 reveals the existence of a lack of systematic processes in providing foundation courses to new candidates in English departments at Arts (i.e. the first pathway) and Education schools (i.e. the third pathway).

Table 6.3:

Foundation programmes for English students: Schools of Arts & Education (KSU 2015)

Pathway	Placement test	Foundation courses	Allocated for English students	Provider	Details
English departments in the School of Education and The School of Arts, King Saud University.	No	Generic courses in basic sciences, with little focus on language skills.	No	Deanship of the preparatory year.	In the foundation year, students followed various courses in different majors, including science, maths, religious studies and English language, regardless of their specialisations.

Table 6.3 indicates that the foundation programmes for new candidates at English departments at the schools of Arts (i.e. first pathway) and Education (i.e. third pathway) are assigned by the preparatory year deanship, which provides generic courses in basic sciences, but with little focus on English language skills. Moreover, the foundation courses in these programmes are not only for English language students, but also for all new candidates, attending various colleges, regardless of their majors, i.e. a candidate in Mathematics major will receive an identical foundation programme in language skills as their counterparts following an English major. This can lead to an impression that these are courses in general English, and rather than being designed to prepare those specialising in the English language.

The data from Table 6.4, on the other hand, also reveals that the provision of a foundation year for new students in the English Department in the Languages and Translation School in Imam University (i.e. second pathway), initially appears to provide an improved method, in comparison with the other pathways.

Table 6.4:
Foundation programmes for English students: Schools of Languages & Translation (Imam Muhammad University 2015)

Pathway	Placement test	Foundation courses	Allocated for English students	Provider	Details
English Language Department in Languages and Translation School, Imam University.	Yes	Intensive courses in language skills	Yes	Department of English Language and Translation.	If the marks of the student in the placement test are above 80%, he/she can register immediately in the English department. If s/he obtains between 60-80%, s/he is enrolled in intensive courses for one year and if s/he obtains 80% or more at the end of these courses, s/he can be transferred to the English department. If the student obtains below 60% in his/her placement test, or at the end of the intensive course, his/her offer is withdrawn.

Table 6.4 indicates that the foundation year for new candidates is assigned to the English Department within the Languages and Translation School, which provides intensive courses in English language skills and applies the criteria to assess students' progress. Furthermore, there appears to be a systematic process for the acceptance of new students in the foundation year, depending on their results in the placement test, i.e. if a student obtains 60-80% in the placement test, s/he is eligible to be enrolled in intensive courses in the English language, and at the end of the year s/he needs to score over 80% in order to be officially registered in the English Department.

However, as has been previously argued, it is not only a matter of the provision of specialist courses, with the more important issue being the manner in which these are delivered to students. This raises the issue of whether the language courses (both at the foundation level and in the English Department) have been delivered in manner that increases the language exposure of students. The following section will examine this issue.

c). Student language exposure in English departments

Appendices 1 and 2 reveal a considerable number of courses in language skills given to student teachers in all pathways. However, the following questions arise: (1) In what ways have they been delivered?; and (2) Do they give students opportunities to practice the language?

A further issue tackled by the study with a possible influence on the language proficiency of students, concerns the extent to which students in English departments are able to practice English language independently. The interview responses suggest a very limited language exposure of students at English departments in Saudi

universities, due to number reasons, as discussed in detail below. This limitation in exposure to the language is considered to be the third factor responsible for SETs' language deficiency.

i. Heavily loaded preparation programme

The data thus suggests that the language exposure in English departments in the Saudi context is influenced by issues including the heavily loaded BA plan of the initial preparation programmes in some pathways. For example, Appendix 2, p:300, reveals that students are required to study 180 credits (78courses) over four years in the Languages and Translation department (i.e. second pathway) in Imam University. This is a high number in comparison to the 128 and 134 in English departments in the Arts(i.e. first pathway) and Education Schools (i.e. third pathway), respectively. These programmes are designed to enable students to cover a large number of courses in various areas, i.e. content knowledge; pedagogic knowledge; content pedagogic knowledge; and support knowledge. Despite the need of language learners to acquire such knowledge, the fact that these offer students a large number of credits may reduce their real exposure to the language, as well limit their opportunities for practicing the language. A teacher argues:

With such overloaded programmes, our lecturers usually did not give us a chance to practice what we had learned; they only cared about how they could manage the delivery of this content on time. (TI 6)

The participants in this study claim that the large numbers of courses limit their real exposure to English for day-to-day communication. They claim that the excessive number of subjects they are required to study (e.g. poetry; prose; drama; literary criticism; and syntax and morphology (see appendices 1 and 2)), involve intensive

exposure to literary language and Old English, both of which are far removed from contemporary usage. For example, a teacher, in response to Q10 in the interview, argues:

Language teacher education in most of our local universities, to some extent disregards the teachers' linguistic needs. Although learning literary subjects enhances students' knowledge about the target culture, their language (literary and Old English) does not support EFL learners to communicate in English, because they do not resemble the language of daily life. (TI 1)

A number of the participants also consider the language and content of these literary subjects to be far removed from the students' actual linguistic level and thus doubt if they gain any benefit. An interviewee, in response to Q10 in the interview, argues:

Ironically, we reach a situation in which student-teachers are taught literary subjects, to comprehend which they need at a higher level in language, whilst they struggle to learn basic and general language. (TI 3)

Furthermore, as suggested by the participants, the excessive number of subjects in the study plans of their Bachelor's degree are not limited to literary subjects, with some courses also introducing Arabic languages (e.g. Arabic grammar and syntax), Arabic Literature or Religious Studies. For example, in the second pathway run by the Languages and Translation Department in Imam University, the number of compulsory courses in Arabic and Islamic studies (see Appendix 2, p:301) consists of twenty-two with thirty-nine credits (21.6 % of the programme plan). This is considered a burden for students, with a potential to limit their practice of the target language. One interviewee points out:

The courses that are offered in the mother tongue, such as Arabic grammar and literature, and Religious Studies, occupy a good portion of our study plan and limit our exposure to the target language. (TI 4)

Thus, from these comments, it appears that the heavily loaded syllabus (which, in part, focuses on teaching some courses beyond students' language proficiency, and introducing other courses in the mother tongue), is reducing students' opportunities to practice and improve their language skills.

ii. Traditional teaching in English departments

Besides the heavily-loaded BA plans, as noted above, the student-teachers' language exposure and practice is also reduced by the model of teaching (i.e. the rationalist model) and the teaching methods (i.e. the traditional teaching approaches) adopted by the majority of teachers in English departments in the Saudi context. Thus, this also contributes to the language problems of English language teachers in Saudi universities.

Thus, it appears that the adoption of traditional teaching methods in English departments allocates the majority of lecture time to lecturers. This leads to a reduction in the students' practice time of the target language in classes.

Furthermore, the assessment methods applied in the majority of such departments, which focus on written language and grammar and disregard oral skills, serve to reinforce the adoption of traditional teaching methods. A teacher recounts:

In most of our lectures we only receive instructions and information from our lecturers. And we have to memorise this information because it will be recalled in our final examination. (TI 5)

This, in turn, also contributes to minimising in the language exposure and practice of student teachers in their pre-service programmes.

6. 3. Discussion

Chapter 5 has undertaken an exploration of the influential factors encountered when adopting CLT, relating to the cognitive (individual) level of the SETs' teaching practice as a human activity, as suggested by CHAT theory (Phillips 2006) (see Figure 6.8).

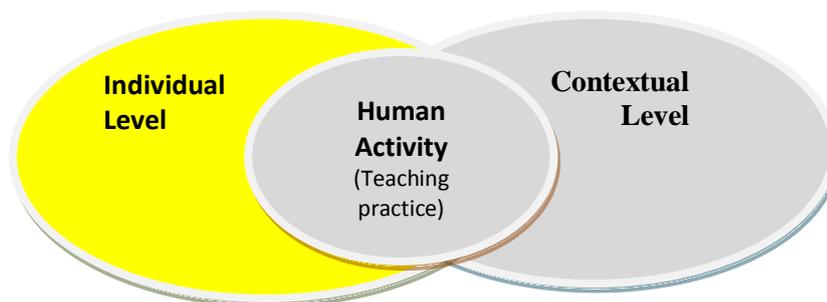


Figure 6.8: The individual level of SETs' teaching practice (modified from figure 1.1)

The interview comments (section 6.2) suggest that the reluctance of SETs to adopt CLT in their teaching practice, at the individual level, is related to their personal beliefs concerning CLT as a result of their prior experience as student-teachers in pre-service programmes, and as language students in general schools. The accumulation of this prior experience has, to large extent, led to misconceptions concerning the meaning of CLT, along with its main principles. These misconceptions appear to have derived, to a large extent, from the preparation of SETs during their initial training. Thus, before undertaking a discussion of these misconceptions, it is necessary to discuss the deep-rooted reasons contributing to their emergence, along with SETs' lack of confidence in running communicative classes. This requires an examination of the ways in which SETs are prepared during pre-service programmes. Thus, the following section will discuss the two problems areas in SETs' initial preparation, as suggested by the data in section 6.2, i.e. pedagogical and linguistic preparation. This

will be followed by a demonstration of the ways in which these problems influence SETs' beliefs concerning CLT.

6. 3. 1. SETs' limited teaching repertoire

It is clear from the subjects provided in the BA plans of the first pathway (i.e. English departments in Arts schools) (see Chapter 2 section 2.5, and Appendix 1, p: 299) that the preparation of EFL teachers is not a priority. It can be argued that these plans lack the basic knowledge required by a student to become a teacher, with the following being rarely, or never, offered: pedagogic knowledge; pedagogic content knowledge; and support knowledge. In addition, practical opportunities (e.g. practicum and microteaching) are also completely lacking. The model of teaching applied by lecturers in this pathway is the rationalist model, which is based on providing theoretical information and delaying the practical aspect (Day 1992; Wallace 1991; Banegas 2011; Hong and Pawan 2015). Thus, in this pathway, the practical aspect of teaching is delayed until the prospective teachers join the profession, due to there being no prior classroom practice. Thus, it is clear that, under such circumstances, a graduate from these departments will struggle, particularly when it comes to teaching for communicative purposes and adopting CLT into their teaching practice. This is as a result of the lack of necessary training in most essential educational aspects. Consequently, it is the conclusion of the researcher that the practice of offering training of language teachers within these departments is an ineffective means of preparing prospective foreign language teachers in Saudi Arabia.

On the other hand, the graduates of the second and third pathways (i.e. the English departments within Languages and Translation colleges and schools of Education)

appear to be given improved preparation in comparison to the graduates of English departments within Art Schools. This is due to their initial preparation programmes, which include courses in generic aspects of teaching in general, and in EFL teaching in particular. They are also given opportunities to practise teaching in schools during their studies (i.e. practicum). However, it can be seen that the pedagogic content knowledge in both pathways is insufficient, i.e. three or four courses are insufficient to prepare prospective teachers to become teachers of a language of which they are not native speakers. Additionally, the study data suggests that the contents of the pedagogic content knowledge courses focus on outdated teaching methods, e.g. Grammar Translation and Audio-Lingual methods, as the data suggested in Chapter 5. This also raises the issue of the fact that the introduction of educational subjects within a BA plan is not, in itself, sufficient, and that the importance lies in the manner in which the subjects are presented, and the ways in which they are delivered. Therefore, in order to accord with updated teaching methods, it is crucial to reconsider the content of such courses.

Furthermore, both pathways also contain a number of drawbacks. Firstly, students are required to study too many courses and credits for a four-year programme. Secondly, the compulsory courses in Arabic and Islamic studies (i.e. university requirement courses) are a burden to students, and a distraction from the core subjects. Thirdly, the pedagogic subjects are presented in Arabic. Thus, the teaching of pedagogic subjects in Arabic, in addition to the compulsory subjects in Arabic and Islamic studies, leads to the number of teaching hours in the mother tongue potentially amounting to one third (29.4%) of the entire BA. This may, in turn, reduce the exposure time of students to the target language. Thus, presenting pedagogic subjects in English would lead to an increase in the experience of students in educational subjects, as well as the length

of exposure to the target language. Fourthly, few practical opportunities are given to teach, and these tend to be limited to the practicum at the final level (i.e. level 8). This leads to the conclusion that the rationalist model of teaching is employed in these pathways, i.e. there is a focus on presenting theoretical issues and postponing practice.

The graduates of pathways containing such shortcomings in their pedagogical preparation subsequently tend to struggle in their teaching careers, including an inability to implement modern teaching methods, due to their lack of confidence in their abilities. This information has led the researcher to conclude that, despite the many positive efforts by the English departments within the Languages and Translation College in Imam University, and the Schools of Education (as shown in Chapter 2 section 2.5), the introduction of ELT in the Saudi universities has not achieved the required standard. Thus, these programmes need many modifications, along with immediate reformatory steps, in order to meet the need for proficiency in teaching English as a foreign language and to create a productive model for the preparation of prospective English language teachers in Saudi Arabia (a detail of these suggestions could be seen in Chapter 8, section 8.3.2).

However, the discussion contained in this section has only covered one aspect (i.e. the pedagogical aspect) of SETs' struggles during their initial preparations. The following section will examine the struggles experienced by SETS in relation to their initial preparation in linguistics, in order to present the complete picture concerning their initial preparation.

6. 3. 2. SETs limited linguistic repertoire

In order to teach it efficiently, EFL teachers require an effective command of the target language. Poor command of the target language also forms an additional obstacle for EFL teachers during their implementation of CLT and in running classes in a communicative manner. The SETs taking part in this current study assess their own proficiency in English as low, feeling that they lack sufficient proficiency in English to teach in a communicative manner. This results in the tendency of SETs to teach Grammar-Translation and Audio-lingual methods, as these are appropriate for their own linguistic level, being less demanding of a proficiency in a language (Carless 1999), while at the same time offering increased control of the classroom (Hu 2002). It could thus be argued that the application of CLT is incompatible with the current language ability of SETs.

Furthermore, this result parallels the data in an official report issued by the Saudi Arabian National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education (NCAHE), which reveals that the average pass percentage of candidates in a teachers' competency test for EFL was 51%. This issue gains in complexity due to 49% having failed the test, and that the lowest score was recorded in the linguistic test (NCAHE 2014). This result is echoed in other studies. Alseghayer (2014) claims that a study undertaken by the Saudi MoE in 2005, found that EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia were considered to be neither competent in English, nor in teaching. This study also reveals that the average score obtained by EFL teachers in a TOEFL paper-based-test was only 430, which (according to the statistics of that test) is considered a modest score. The issue of the language deficiency of non-native English teachers is also echoed in the study data of Huang (2011), which notes that Taiwanese non-native English teachers have a

language deficiency which could be viewed to exist as a result of a lack of regular English practice. Huang also argues there is an urgent need to train non-native English teachers in Taiwan to improve their language skills.

This current study has explored the roots of SETs' language deficiency through means of an in-depth investigation, undertaken through the application of the principles and tools of the Grounded Theory Method. The data collection has been obtained from interviews, supplemented by data from questionnaires, and the subsequent collection of further information from interviews. As a result, it is possible to argue that the roots of this issue can be traced back to the time of the students' admission. The study data suggests that student admission offices at the local universities practice a form of centralisation, which has led the admission offices to set their own conditions for accepting students, without taking into consideration the prerequisites set by the English departments, or the results of the placement tests. As a result, a number of students who lack the motivation to study English, and have poor language proficiency, are offered places in English departments by the student admission offices.

Thus, it can be concluded that the first obstacle for improving students' language proficiency relates to this ignoring of the prerequisites of English departments and the results of the placement tests. In addition, this centralisation (and its consequences) point to a lack of co-ordination between university administrative offices and academic departments, with the latter consequently hindered in their attempts to improve the quality of their own programme plans.

Furthermore, the problem in providing efficient linguistic preparation for SETs extends beyond the above issue. The situation further increases in complexity when the universities do not provide such students with an adequate foundation course. The findings of this current study have established this to be the case in the majority of Saudi universities. This has led to indecisiveness on the part of English departments within Saudi universities in relation to whether they should dispense with their plans, in order to focus on improving the situation, or continue with their plans, thus ignoring their students' issues. The findings of the current study suggest that the majority of English departments have continued to implement their own plans, regardless of their new students' linguistic problems, thus creating further obstacles to the improvement of students' language proficiency.

Thus, instead of improving students' language abilities (i.e. through the introduction of intensive courses in language skills, and increasing students' participation in, and exposure to, the target language), English departments have focussed their BA plans on literary subjects (e.g. poetry and prose), which contain archaic and difficult language far beyond the abilities of their students. It has been argued that literary texts are far removed from Standard English, and are thus inappropriate for the purposes of learning a language (McKay 1982; Savvidou 2004; Khatib et al. 2011). In addition to literary subjects, the BA plans of English departments in Saudi Arabia include a considerable number of subjects in Arabic (e.g. Arabic syntax, literature and religious studies), which also hold the potential to reduce exposure to the target language.

In addition to the issues discussed above, the rationalist teaching model dominates the teaching in these departments. The rationalist model of teaching focuses on theoretical

knowledge, without giving any opportunity for practice (i.e. it delays or ignores practice), thus neglecting the importance of students' interaction and participation in the classroom, while at the same time limiting their exposure to the target language.

Due to the characteristics of their students (as discussed above), along with the inadequate preparation offered, many SETs refrain from applying CLT in their teaching practice and thus fail to teach in communicative manner. Kasule (2003, p.17) argues that:

Teaching English for oral communication implies that the teachers themselves can use English to serve conversational purposes before they can teach pupils how to do it.

However, the limitations in teaching, or in linguistic repertoires (as noted above), have contributed in a negative manner to the construction of the misconceptions held by SETs in relation to CLT. The following paragraphs will examine these misconceptions.

6. 3. 3. SETs' misconceptions about CLT

The researcher is of the opinion, that has been shown in literature review and in section 5.1 in Chapter 5, that teachers who come to the teaching profession from a background such as that of Saudi Arabia, with a rich experience in teaching and learning English in traditional ways (i.e. knowledge transmission), tend to adopt teaching concepts that match their experience. They may consequently oppose (or resist) any practice contradicting their previous beliefs.

Hence, the actions of SETs in this current study while undertaking their teaching practice is, to large extent, in accordance with their existing forms of teaching and

linguistic repertoires. As a consequence, they view their teaching duties through the lens of the tradition that has been dominant throughout their prior experience. It is therefore unsurprising to observe that SETs view teaching as simply a transmission of knowledge, as they have not been exposed to any alternative experience to question their views. As a result (and under the influence of their prior experience), SETs limit their role to the one best suited to the purposes of knowledge transmission (i.e. as transmitters of knowledge), and focus on skills and activities that facilitate their tasks (e.g. reading; writing; grammar; lecturing). Such beliefs have led SETs to hold a number of misconceptions concerning CLT, believing that CLT focuses on skills and techniques that fail to match their own, and that it espouses teaching purposes they feel are inappropriate for the achievement of their teaching aims. These misconceptions are discussed below.

6. 3. 3. 1. CLT relies heavily on oral skills

SETs believe that CLT will not assist them in the achievement of their teaching purpose (i.e. knowledge transmission), as their main focus (as suggested by the data) is on their teaching practice, and on teaching certain skills (e.g. reading and writing) and language systems (e.g. grammar and translation). Due to their insufficient knowledge of CLT, SETs believe that applying CLT, and teaching for communicative purposes, implies a heavy reliance on teaching listening and speaking skills, at the expense of other main skills and sub-skills.

However, this view conflicts with the core concept of CLT, which is to use language for communication, in order to develop the communicative competence of students

through activities such as discussion, expression and negotiation of meaning (Savignon 2002). These activities can assist in improving not only oral skills, but also reading and writing, along with further sub-skills (i.e. grammar). Lee and VanPatten (2003) state that CLT not only emphasises speaking, but also includes reading, writing, grammar, and culture. A probable source of the fallacy that CLT relies heavily on oral skills, as proposed by Wu (2008 cited in Wong 2012), is derived from the word 'communicative' in the term CLT, and its primary aim of developing the communicative competence of students. Wu also attributes this to the various definitions and interpretations of these terms since the 1970s.

In this current study, it could be argued that such a misconception results from a deficiency in SETs' theoretical preparation in teaching methods in general, and in CLT in particular. The misunderstanding, moreover, may lead to a conflict between SETs' teaching emphasis (i.e. grammar, reading, and writing) and their perceived emphasis of CLT (i.e. primarily on listening and speaking). This can therefore be identified as one aspect of the reluctance of SETs to implement CLT.

Moreover, the findings also point to an important issue reinforcing the first misconception, i.e. that the teaching of oral skills requires high levels of language proficiency on the part of teachers. This result indicates that SETs are unhappy with their language proficiency, and may lack confidence in undertaking classes primarily through the medium of English. This leads to their face-saving method of placing little emphasis on teaching oral skills and applying CLT.

6. 3. 3. 2. *Using CLT involves no grammar teaching*

A further misconception held by SETs as a result of their insufficient knowledge, concerns the fact that CLT involves no teaching of grammar. The emphasis on fluency over accuracy, along with the focus on meaning over language form, has led SETs to believe that applying CLT in teaching implies a relegation of grammar. Savignon (1983) and Spada (2007) point out that the emphasis on meaning and the application of CLT has, in some situations, led to a view that grammar is unimportant. Savignon (1983) and Rama and Agullo (2012) argue that the use of language for communication inevitably requires paying attention to form. Communication cannot take place in the absence of grammar and structure. Moreover, as previously discussed, grammatical competence forms an integral part of communicative competence. Thus, the improvement of communicative competence necessitates an improvement in grammatical competence.

Furthermore, the traditional method of teaching grammar may be viewed as a further reason for the belief held by SETs that CLT involves a lack of grammar teaching, i.e. SETs believe that adopting communicative activities, and applying CLT, will fail to provide them with any opportunity to teach grammar in an explicit manner. However, Thompson (1996, p.10) argues that:

The exclusion of explicit attention to grammar was never a necessary part of CLT. It is certainly understandable that there was a reaction against the heavy emphasis on structure at the expense of natural communication.

CLT is therefore an integrative language instruction combining both traditional form-focused instruction and meaning-focused teaching (Celce-Murcia et al. 1997; Pekoz 2008). Thus, CLT also includes the teaching of grammar, as teachers provide many

communicative examples containing the basic structures of the language, and which students are then able to discuss, with the guidance of their teachers.

6. 3. 3. 3. . *CLT can only be used with pair and group works*

A further misconception of CLT held by SETs concerns the view that CLT can only be used with pair or group work. In truth, the nature of communicative activities (e.g. pair or group work) necessitate that the classroom becomes like a beehive, in which everyone takes part in such activities. The data suggests that the classroom atmosphere best suited to SETs' roles and teaching purposes, is one affording full control to teachers, and allows them to work in a silence. Thus, SETs are reluctant to adopt communicative activities, due to the potential for a measure of control to be given to students inside the classroom, while at the same time reducing teachers' talking time.

Hence, SETs appear less concerned with the benefits of communicative activities (e.g. pair, group work or role-play), than the extent to which these activities may lead to a loss of control over their classes. This is due to a measure of control, and choice of learning, passing to the students, being implicit in communicative activities (Thompson 1996; Talley and Hui-ling 2014), and which may conflict with traditional roles adopted by SETs, i.e. authoritative and knowledge transmitter roles. Such concerns may have caused teachers to be wary of using CLT, and so retain the use of traditional teaching approaches. Furthermore, this view may also indicate that SETs receive insufficient training (or preparation) in methods of managing their classes without taking an authoritative role.

However, a number of studies have revealed that these misconceptions concerning CLT are not limited to Saudi Arabia, but are commonly found among EFL teachers in other contexts [Yeom (2004) and Dailey (2010) in Korea; Viet (2008) in Vietnam; Choudhury (2010) in Bangladesh; Liao and Zhao (2012) in Singapore; Ansarey (2012) in Turkey]. It is therefore unsurprising that SETs hold the same misconceptions concerning CLT, as the above studies suggest that, to some extent, the focus of SETs during their teaching practice (i.e. prioritising the teaching of grammar, avoiding teaching oral skills, and having control over classes) are parallel to the focus of EFL teachers in other overseas contexts, such as China, Turkey, Bangladesh, and Taiwan.

6.4. Conclusion *(first level of contradiction in implementing CLT in Saudi context)*

It appears from the comments in this chapter that the first level of contradiction that SETs face in adopting CLT in their teaching practice stems from their qualifications (which includes teaching repertoire and linguistic repertoire) and their interaction with the assumed object of their teaching practice (teaching for communicative purposes and implementing CLT) (Figure 6. 9 shows how this happens).

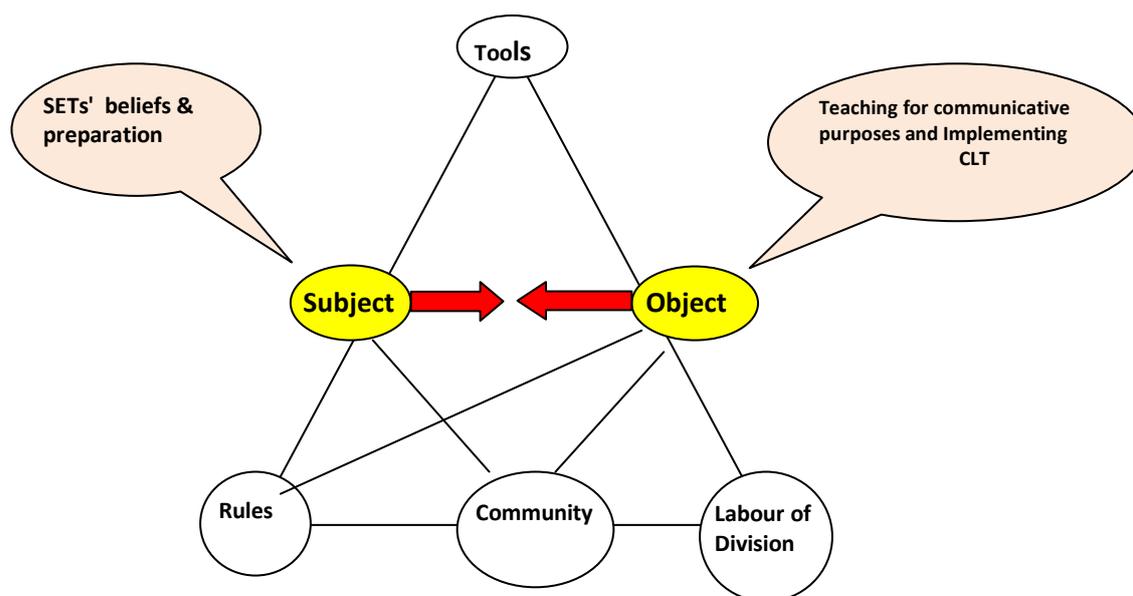


Figure 6. 9: First level of contradiction
(modified from figure 4.5 [Engeström 1987])

Teaching English for communicative purposes and implementing CLT assumes that those in the teachers' roles have teaching beliefs and qualifications consistent with the purpose. The qualifications should include some skills such as a good knowledge about how to create communicative classes, how to run them by applying CLT and how to use language proficiently. However, the findings of this chapter reveal that SETs' teaching beliefs and language proficiency mostly contradict the principles of CLT, as we have seen in earlier sections. These contradictions result either from the SETs' limited teaching repertoire in general and knowledge about CLT in particular, or their misconceptions about some CLT principles, as well as shortcomings in their linguistic skills.

However, it is not surprising that SETs' teaching beliefs contradict CLT principles, if we know how these beliefs are mainly constructed. SETs' teaching beliefs, according to the findings, are the upshot of three factors: 1) their life experiences in society; 2) prior educational experiences as a student in school; and 3) professional education including pre-service and in-service training. It is presumed that teachers' beliefs have

a cultural dimension (society), as well as a personal one (Gabillon 2012). Gabillon argues that the cultural dimension reflects the views of the society that the individual has been raised in. It appears that the predominant cultural view about EFL learning and teaching in the study context, as the findings suggest, is the traditional view, i.e. that of the supremacy of knowledge transmission. Cultural beliefs are considered to be more resistant to change than other beliefs formed later in life, and the former kind mostly construct the base on which the individual builds their own beliefs about education (Gabillon 2012). The personal dimension, Gabillon suggests, reflects the views of individuals about EFL teaching which stem from their prior educational experiences as a student at school. In the context of this study, it could be argued that student teachers who enter the pre-service programmes in Saudi Arabia bring with them the teaching beliefs that were developed from their past experiences as students in general schooling, which were based on the traditional view of education and affected by the dominant cultural view of the society about education. It is believed that prior learning experience and beliefs play a central role in shaping teachers' beliefs and consequently their classroom implementations (Ainscough 1997).

Ainscough argues that prior learning experience may construct the first impression of what EFL teachers are, and this might become a prototype which influences what type of teachers individuals become. This is exactly what seems to have happened to the SETs in this study. SETs formed indirectly, through the apprenticeship model of teaching experienced during their own schooling, their first impression or prototype for the EFL teacher; the SETs saw that their EFL teachers' roles were to a large extent limited to transmitting knowledge and controlling all of the class activities.

Furthermore, it could be argued that the pre-service teachers' beliefs may work as a filter through which student teachers understand the content of their teacher education

courses, and as a consequence such beliefs may serve to constrain their knowledge and in turn their pedagogical content knowledge (Kane et al. 2002). Thus, it could be argued that the core job of teacher education is to readjust the student teachers' prior beliefs (Hall 2005). This readjustment could happen, as Hall (2005) argues, through equipping student teachers with content knowledge (subject matter), pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge (such as teaching methods), and by providing a model of teaching which guides student teachers in readjusting and reflecting on their prior beliefs determining which teaching/learning approaches to employ. This is because the second impression about EFL teachers is formed during teacher education. This impression either reshapes the first impression or reinforces it. Unfortunately, in the context of this study, the teaching model that has been applied in Saudi universities (rationalist teaching model), is based on transmitting theoretical knowledge to student teachers and delaying practice. The adoption of some traditional methods by university lecturers also lead to the reinforcement of the SETs' prototype of EFL teachers, i.e. as knowledge transmitters.

In addition to the limited teaching repertoire, the SETs' limited linguistic repertoire also has contributed to drive SETs' teaching beliefs towards the traditional view of teaching. This is because SETs felt less confident, due to their self-perceived English language deficiency to communicate in English. Therefore, they found it hard to develop communicative activities and to conduct their classes to serve conversational purposes.

Hence, to sum up, the first level of conflict stems from the cognitive level, i.e. the SETs' teaching beliefs and linguistic skill. These teaching beliefs, as we have seen above, have been constructed during two phases: prior language learning phase as students and teacher education phase as student teachers. In both of these phases the

traditional way of EFL teaching was prevalent. Thus, teachers with such preparation and beliefs can be expected to face difficulties in implementing innovations, such as CLT, which contradict their existing beliefs; they are willing to take shelter in applying traditional teaching methods because these give them the required confidence to teach. Hence, SETs seem to lack the confidence to conduct communicative classes and implement CLT because their abilities and preparations did not support them to achieve such aims.

This factor is one of the most influential factors, though it has not been taken into consideration in the current implementation of CLT in the Saudi context, as revealed by the findings of this study. It has been argued by some writers that language teachers' beliefs and understandings of teaching, learning and language proficiency play vital roles in their classroom practices and in their professional growth. For example, Richards and Rodgers (2001) affirm that teachers hold conceptions about language teaching and learning, and that these give them the basis for choosing a particular approach to language teaching. Similarly, Harste and Burke (1977) and Kuzborska (2011) claim that teachers make decisions about classroom instruction in the light of theoretical beliefs they possess about teaching and learning. Teachers' beliefs affect their objectives, procedures, materials, classroom interaction patterns, roles, students, and the schools they work in. That is, teachers interpret and respond to innovations only in the ways which relate to their existing beliefs, practices and linguistic skills. Thus, it follows that ignoring teachers' prior experiences and linguistic proficiency is likely to challenge the assimilation of the new ideas and practices that teachers are encouraged to adopt.

Carless (1998) and Pansiri (2014) suggest that, in order for teachers to effectively apply a new method, it is crucial that they understand both the theoretical principles

and the classroom applications of the suggested method. SETs therefore require adequate preparation, which would also contribute to changing their views concerning the methods of teaching English, resulting in the proposed changes. Wagner (1991) and Levitt (2001) argue that, should innovative ideas and teachers' theories be out of balance, teachers have a tendency to understand innovative ideas in accordance with their own theories, and thus to conform to their own teaching style. As a consequence, the proposed change will not be implemented in the manner suggested by the curriculum planners.

Therefore, it could be argued that gaining adequate knowledge of an innovation forms the essential step in a process that may lead to its efficient implementation (Branden 2009). If teachers are given sufficient knowledge concerning a proposed teaching method, this may lead to the development of a positive attitude, and thus to its introduction into their teaching practice. However, if supplied with insufficient knowledge concerning the proposed method, they may refuse its implementation.

Up to this point, the discussion has focussed on SETs' issues with the implementation of CLT, i.e. the influential factors related to the individual level. In order to observe another aspect of this issue, Chapter 6 will continue the investigation to present and discuss influential factors related to the contextual level.

Chapter 7

Influential factors (Contextual Level)

In this chapter the focus will be on the influential factors that stem from the Saudi context (inside and outside schools) and which influence SETs in their attempts to apply CLT in their teaching practices. These factors involve the institutional & situational as well as the socio-cultural factors.

7. 1. Institutional and situational factors

The second category of influential factors that SETs encounter in their attempts to apply CLT is the institutional and situational factors. These factors are various due to the complex context or system (classroom) that SETs are working in. They include factors both inside and outside schools. The most important factors in this category, as suggested by the study data, are the limited in-service training, exam washback, and school level constraints. Each will be discussed in turn.

7. 1. 1. In-service training in the Saudi context

Although, as outlined in section 2.6 in Chapter 2, in-service training programmes are available for SETs in Saudi Arabia, but the numbers of training courses allocated to English teachers are very limited, as shown in Appendix 5, p:304. For example, the study data show that the list of training courses in one of the teacher training centres in Riyadh includes only 3 training courses (each of which last for 4 days) for English language teachers. These are on general teaching methods for English Language, skills for teaching reading and writing skills, and skills for teaching listening and

writing skills. These 3 courses are out of a total of 112 training courses available in that training centre. The question here is: Do these training courses sufficiently support EFL teachers in the Saudi context to teach for communicative purposes and apply CLT?

It seems from the interview and questionnaire data that there may be some gaps in these training courses. For example, a supervisor, who also works as a trainer in one of the teacher training centres, claims:

There is no training course devoted to how to deal with innovative teaching approaches such as CLT. The available courses are allotted to common directives in how to teach English as foreign language in general, and language skills in particular, which are theoretical and based on personal efforts from the trainers. These courses are old ones, and they have not passed through any revision at least in the last ten years. (SI 2)

These gaps seem to take various forms such as outdated training courses, non-specific teaching methods, no focus on innovative teaching methods (e.g. CLT), theory-based training lacking practice opportunities, and shortness of course duration.

It is worth mentioning that the above information came from the first interviews as well as from the questionnaires which led me to probe further in order to study this issue in-depth. Hence, through applying the principles of the Grounded Theory method, I conducted further interviews with some of the participants as well as referring to some documents such as the training plans of the in-service training centres to evaluate the effectiveness of in-service training courses for SETs in the Saudi context. The study also applied a systematic evaluation process which covered the three main stages in training programmes, i.e. the planning, the execution and the follow up monitoring stages. The findings will be displayed in the following paragraphs.

7. 1. 1. 1. The planning stage for in-service training courses:

The supervisors' interview data suggest that there are some issues in the planning stages of some of the current in-service training programmes. These issues took different forms:

a) . In the defining of the training courses aims, purposes and content, there is no coordination between MoE and local training centres and schools. Most of these training courses are imposed and dictated by the MoE. A supervisor argues:

There is a lack of coordination between GAET and local training centres regarding the planning of the training courses. GAET has not involved any trainers from the local training centres in their planning of teachers' training courses, or negotiated the content of these courses; we have never been asked for our views about these courses. (SI 2)

b) . The English teachers' needs and their realities have not been considered during the planning of the in-service training courses as a supervisor points out:

These training courses were constructed according to the instructions of MoE without doing any analysis about the actual English teachers' training needs. (SI 2)

This result is supported by questionnaire finding when 38 teachers [84%] argue that the content of the training courses did not exactly reflect their own actual needs.

c) . In addition, it seems the content of most of the training courses for English teachers are outdated and have not undergone any modification in recent years. A supervisor states:

Most of training courses in our centre are out of date (10 years old) and unfortunately they are still there without any reform in their aims, content and methods. (SI 2)

7. 1. 1. 2. The execution stage of in-service training courses

The supervisors' interview data also indicate that there may also be some issues in the execution stage of the training courses for SETs in Saudi Arabia. These issues are discussed below:

a. Qualification of the trainers

According to the supervisors' views, most of the training courses in the local Saudi training centers seem to be entrusted to less experienced trainers, whose appointment as trainers is based only their erstwhile positions as educational supervisors. A supervisor (who works as a trainer in the one of the local training centres) claims:

Most of the trainers in the local training centres are ordinary supervisors who have been released from their supervision duties to run training courses for English teachers without acquiring enough preparation to train others effectively. (SI 2)

He also indicates that those trainers rarely receive special training to prepare them to be effective trainers, so the training needs for trainers are also not taken into consideration. For instance, he says:

Trainers' training needs are also ignored by GAET and they are rarely involved in special training courses for trainers. (SI 2)

b . The nature of the content of the training courses:

According to the views of a teacher, most of the training courses in the Saudi local training centres seem to be run for providing theoretical knowledge without any practical opportunities. A teacher reveals:

I have enrolled in one of the training courses, but unfortunately it had a theoretical basis without any practical part. (TI 5)

c . Method of presentation in the training courses

The supervisors' interview data indicate that most of the contents of the training courses seem to be presented through traditional presentation approaches, in which the contents are displayed theoretically and trainee teachers have no opportunities to take an active part in their training, i.e. they are not allowed to practice what they have learned and reflect on their experience. The trainers mainly appear to use a lecturing style with a question-answer technique, and trainees' participation appears to be rare.

For instance one of the teachers who participated in such training argues:

In the training course, teacher trainees still practice the passive role, i.e. receivers of knowledge. Our trainers mostly claim that they do not have enough time for any practice, so they lecture in their sessions and we, the trainees, have to practice them by ourselves without any supervision from our trainers. (TI 7)

7. 1. 1. 3. The follow-up monitoring and transfer of training stage

The supervisors' interview data indicate that most of the training courses of SETs in the local training centres seem to show that the relationship between the trainer, the trainees and the training course is terminated at the end of the training course without any follow up monitoring process to track the impact of the training courses. A supervisor observes:

The idea of tracking the impact of the training courses is very important to us in order to evaluate the effectiveness of our training courses. But unluckily it is neglected in our centres. (SI 2)

It seems from the data that the lack of follow up monitoring has various reasons.

For example, the trainers claim that workload is an obstacle. One of them argues:

Due to the workload we do not have the chance to visit trainee teachers at their sites to see if they apply what they have learned or not. (SI 2)

Another reason for this lack of follow up monitoring is the nature of the content of the training courses. For example, a teacher argues:

We expected to find in training courses content that supports us in our application of the new curricula and textbooks, but what we found were only common directives about how to teach a foreign language in general. (IT 3)

One of the fundamental reasons, according to some participants, for not applying in their classes what they have learned in the training courses is the feeling that these courses are irrelevant to their current situations and that they do not support them in changing their teaching practice.

Moreover, it could be argued that the above obstacle (irrelevant content) is one of the direct reasons that a small number of the participants express as a justification for their resistance to join in-service training. A teacher expresses this as follows:

I do not find training courses attractive because most of their materials are fragmented and not related to what we have in real classrooms. So I prefer to stay in my school rather than join these training courses. (TI 5)

Moreover, trainers in the local training centres argue that due to the time limitation for the execution of training courses, they are compelled to shorten the course content to include only the theoretical part. A trainer argues:

Due to the limited time for most of our training courses we are compelled to present them by providing only theoretical knowledge without any practice part. As a result, we could not track their impact in schools. (SI 2)

As a result, they feel that there is no benefit from following up trainees since they have not been trained practically.

In addition, the data indicate that the follow up process is not limited to the trainers in the training centres but also entrusted to the educational supervisors who visit teachers in their schools and send their feedback to the training centres. But the data also show that due to the increasing administrative workload of the supervisors, they neglect the follow up process also. According to a supervisor:

I hope that the English supervisors are released from the administrative work in order to give them time to track the impact of any training courses that their supervisees have enrolled in. (SI 1)

Furthermore, the data of this study also indicate that trainees' feedback, which to some extent is considered as a kind of follow up, seems to be also lacking in most of these training courses. For instance, a teacher indicates:

The feedback and evaluation process for the training programmes in the training centres is almost deactivated. The training courses have been there from ten years ago without any reform. (SI 2)

The above findings, whether about the planning, the executing, or the follow up stages of the training courses, parallel those of other studies in other contexts. Examples are the studies of El-Laithy (1989) in Qatar; Ozer (2004); Kucuksuleymanglu (2006); Bayrakc (2009); Uysal (2012) in Turkey; Dembélé and Schwüle (2007) in Guinea; and Abdelhafez (2010) in Egypt. These studies revealed that in most cases the topics of teachers' training courses were imposed and the English teachers' actual needs had not been taken into consideration before organising training courses for them. Most of the training courses discussed in the studies provided theoretical knowledge, without any practical application or chances to reflect on the courses and offer feedback and evaluation. However, this study differs from the aforementioned studies in that it does

not stop at that the level of enumerating the problems, but it explores in depth the reasons at the root of such problems.

The above findings are related to one of the institutional factors (limited in-service training). The second institutional factor is the exam system in Saudi schools that affects the implementation of CLT and teaching for communicative purposes.

7. 1. 2. Examination system

It has been argued that there is a close connection between language teaching and language assessment. So this relationship should be taken into account in the investigation process of both, i.e. it is hard to investigate language teaching without referring to language testing (Aftab et al. 2014). Thus, in this study, another aspect that is worth considering is whether the language testing (as a part of the institutional factors) in the Saudi context has any influence on SETs' practice of using communicative activities or applying CLT. The final written examination system of the English subject in Saudi schools has gone under investigation to uncover its likely effect on Saudi English teachers' (SETs) teaching practice. This investigation has been done, firstly, by exploring the examination system in Saudi Arabia as regards English and by analysing a sample of a final written examination paper. Secondly, the study sample was asked whether the purposes and the contents of their examination papers match the EFL curriculum in Saudi context or serve other purposes. Thirdly, in order to explore the effect of the examination on SETs' teaching practice a model which was proposed by Hughes (1993 cited in Bailey 1996) was used as a framework for reference. In this model, Hughes suggests that examination can affect three major aspects; participants, process, and product. He argues, for instance, that the nature of a test may impact on the views and attitude of teachers and

students (participants) towards their teaching and learning. These views or attitudes, in turn, may then affect what goes on in the classroom (process), which may include the adoption of activities and approaches that are dedicated to teaching and learning the exam items, which in the end may affect the learning outcomes (product). Thus, such investigation may help in determining the extent to which the effect of the written exam contributes to the limited adoption of CLT and the use of communicative activities in the teaching practice of the SETs, who are in their formative year.

However, as outlined in section 2.4 in Chapter 2, the structure of the written examination papers of the final and mid-term exams for English in the Saudi schools is based on a circular from the General Directorate of Curricula's English language department at the Ministry of Education. This circular shows the main items that a written exam should cover, as well as the marks distribution for the English subject at the intermediate and secondary stages [a copy of the circular is attached at Appendix 5, p: 304]. English teachers in Saudi schools have to abide by these instructions when designing the final and mid-term exams. According to one interviewee:

When they set their written examinations, English teachers have no choice but to follow the model adopted by the Ministry of Education for the exam items and the marks distribution. English teachers cannot change the test style because that would be a violation of the MoE policy. (TI 5)

The study findings display that the analysis of a sample of the final examination papers for English language subject in Saudi Arabia (Table: 7. 1) [a copy of this sample is attached at Appendix 6, p: 307] shows that the exam in most of the Saudi schools is objective with a combination of multichoices questions and cloze questions whose purposes range from testing the knowledge of simple grammar and vocabulary to the comprehension of short passages. These questions are

mainly devoted to promoting certain language skills such as reading and writing skills, with particular emphasis to enhance the linguistic competence, i.e. the grammatical and textual competences.

Table: 7. 1
Analysis of the test items in a sample of the final exam paper for English in Saudi schools

Items	Competence
Guided composition (based on memorising a given text)	Textual, spelling
Dialogue completion	Textual
Text comprehension	Textual/textual coherence
Cloze test: fill in the blanks	Textual, grammatical
Writing correct grammatical form	Grammatical

7. 1. 2. 1. The potential impact of the written examination on SETs' teaching practice

The impact of the written examination on SETs' teaching practice will be shown according to the trichotomy model of Hughes (1993 cited in Bailey 1996), under the categories of participant, process and product.

7 1. 2. 1. 1. Participants (stakeholders)

As indicated in the introduction of this study, the status of the written examinations (school examination and Qiyas) for English and other subjects is very high in the Saudi context among both micro-level (teachers, students, administrators) and macro-level (parents, university admissions, employers, curricula designers) participants/stakeholders. This is because they play vital roles in the decision making of these different stakeholders, and because these written tests are the prevalent and the only criterion to assess students' achievements. For example, a supervisor argues:

The sole standard for assessing students' attainment in Saudi schools is their examinations score either in the school examination or the Qiyas examination. (SI 3)

Thus, it seems that the attitude and the roles of the participants (stakeholders) may be influenced by these examinations. Some examples of such participants and the influence on them are discussed below:

a). Students and their parents depend heavily on the outcomes of these tests because they consider them key for the prosperous future of students and families, either in professional or educational situations. A teacher highlights this issue when he says:

Students are keen on getting high marks in their final examinations as well as in the General Aptitude Test. These marks will help students to secure places in local universities or colleges, as well as support them in competing for suitable jobs. (TI 7)

This status enhances the students' motivation to do well in these examinations, in addition to increasing their desire to pass these exams rather than learn the language itself; their parents share the same view. For instance, a supervisor points out students and their guardians increasingly demand teachers to focus more items that are likely to be in the exam at the expense of the other skills:

Most of our students, particularly in the secondary section, are less concerned about learning language than getting high marks in the written exams; so they and their parents push teachers to prepare them for the final exam rather than to teach them skills that are unlikely to be tested in the final exams. (SI 3)

b). Another pressure that may contribute to the focus on exams comes from school administrators, who are keen on improving school ranking. They believe that getting high marks in the General Aptitude Test (Qiyas) will better their school's rank and enhance its reputation. A supervisor indicates:

To some extent there is an increased concern among our schools, particularly the private schools, to improve the school ranking, and the main standard in this ranking is the students' achievement in Qiyas. (SI 3)

c). English teachers, in turn, also have shown great interest in language testing at their schools as 10 out of 12 teachers in the interview sample indicate that the preparation for written exams is one of their greatest concerns in teaching practice.

Furthermore, the teachers' interview comments suggest that English teachers (SETs) are interested in the examination because on the one hand, they wish to respond to the importance given to the examination in the Saudi context; this is because the examination is the sole criterion to assess students' attainment. A teacher states:

Due to the significant concern about examinations that they encounter everyday from different groups such as students, parents, and administrators, the teachers tend to modify their teaching practice to match the exam purposes. (TI 5)

On the other hand, the data also show that another reason for the teachers' interest in the written examination is that part of their annual report is based on how well their students perform in the final examination. One interviewee argues:

The students' attainment in the final examination is taken into account in the teachers' final report, so teachers try their best to prepare their students to do well in the final exam. (TI 9)

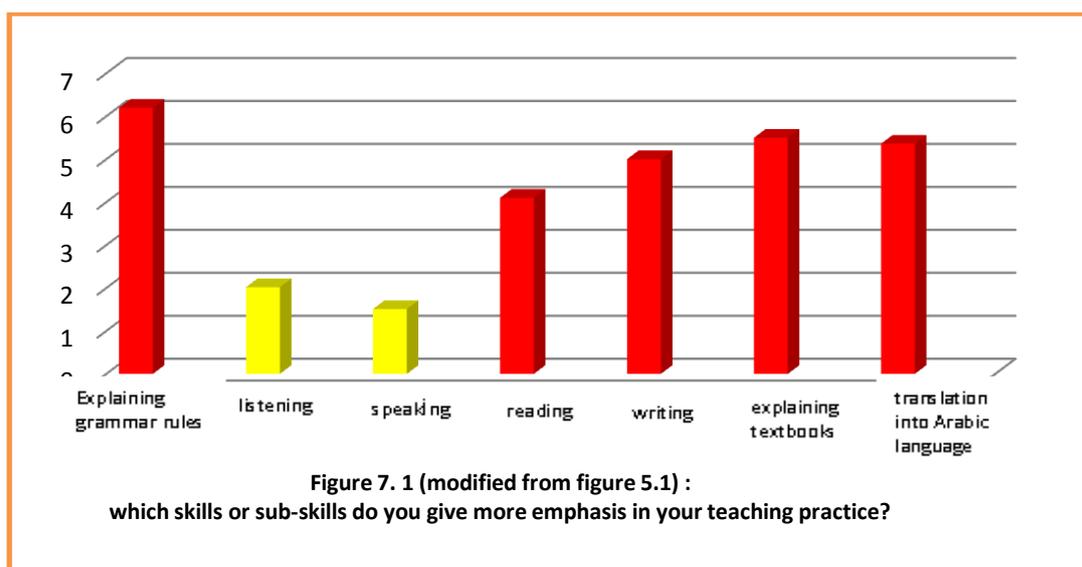
7. 1. 2. 1. 2. Process of teaching

The second thing that might be impacted by final examination is the process of teaching inside classrooms. The data show that the written exams have a direct effect on the teaching process, i.e. the teaching content and the teaching methods. Looking back at the analysis of the sample of a final English examination paper, as well as at the questions and marks distribution of written examinations (Appendices 6 & 7) it appears that the current exam paper and the exam instructions focus on testing certain

skills and sub-skills such as composition, reading comprehension, isolated vocabulary and basic grammar rules. These skills are therefore likely to be the ones that are most requested by students and most frequently taught by SETs. In the following sections the study shows how the process of teaching in SETs' classrooms has been affected by what the final examinations in Saudi context focus on.

a .Teaching content:

As expected the questionnaire data suggest that the teaching content in most of the SETs' classes reflects the exam items, i.e. SETs have given more attention to activities that contain grammar, translation, vocabulary, composition, and reading comprehension than to those dealing with oral skills, as shown in Figure 7.1.



The findings show, as discussed in Chapter 5, that teaching grammar has got the highest priority in the SETs' teaching duties. For example, the above figure shows that SETs gave the emphasis on explaining grammar rules 6 point, thus making it the highest rated among all items in their teaching content. The emphasis on writing and reading was in the second position with 5 and 4 points respectively. The oral skills (listening and speaking), on the other hand, have the lowest priority in SETs' classes

with only 2 and 1.5 points respectively on the same scale. These views also were echoed among the interviewees as teacher states:

In our teaching practice we focus directly or indirectly on promoting reading and writing skills, as well as grammatical sub-skills because they may come up in the exams. And we give little attention to listening and speaking because they usually do not appear in the examination paper. (TI, 12)

Also the teachers' interview comments suggest that the concentration on preparing students for passing exam increases usually at the end of the term, and going through some samples of previous written examinations is a common practice of SETs in their classes. For example, a participant indicates:

When the exam time approaches, most of our lessons are dedicated to practising the papers of previous examinations to help students to become familiar with exam items. (TI 3)

b. Teaching methods:

The teachers' interview comments suggest that the written examination also has an impact on the kind of teaching method that SETs use. Thus, in order to fulfil the examination's purposes, SETs' conduct lessons using traditional teaching approaches. The dominant teaching methods in SETs' lessons appear to be the structure-based approach, which places more emphasis on form over meaningful language. For example, SETs tend to apply GTM as their first choice because it help them to teach grammatical points (one of their main foci in teaching practice) (as shown in Figure 6.1). A supervisor points out:

Teachers apply teaching methods that facilitate their own teaching objectives. And since teaching grammatical rules explicitly is one of their priorities, so they tend to use GTM widely because it helps them to achieve their teaching objectives in a simple way. (TI 6)

In order to increase their students' understanding of the grammatical rules, SETs usually use the translation technique in their teaching practice, as shown in Figure

7.1.A teacher explains this issue thus:

English teachers tend to teach grammatical points and new vocabulary by translating them into Arabic, so the grammatical rules and the meaning of new words become clear to students, who are then able to apply these rules and words in sentences of their own. (TI 9)

In addition, due to the impact of written examination, the rote memorisation and repetition learning styles prevail in Saudi schools. This is because, as the data show, the memorising of composition passages, vocabulary and some expressions might help students to perform well in the written examinations. A supervisor argues:

Students' role is limited as receivers of knowledge and grammatical rules; they learn them by heart in order to recall them in the final examination. (TI 10)

7. 1. 2. 1. 3. Product:

It appears from the data due to the heavy focus on teaching certain skills and sub-skills (grammar, reading and writing skills), which match with examination purposes, that the final product of the SETs' teaching is the enhancing of the linguistic competence and its sub-competences; textual competence, coherence competence, and grammatical competence as shown in Table 7. 1 and ignoring the communicative competence. One interviewee professes

The things that I most concentrate on are reading and writing skills as well as paying more attention to the meanings of the new words by using dictionaries. (TI 7)

On the other hand, the data also indicates that the oral skills, listening and speaking, seem to be neglected or given very limited attention. A participant points out:

Teaching listening skills is completely neglected in my class because they are not tested in the final examination. (TI 2)

7. 1. 3. *School level constraints*

In addition to the aforementioned institutional factors, there are some situational factors in the school environment that prevent widespread implementation of CLT in Saudi schools such as large classes, teaching load, and the availability and appropriateness of the teaching materials.

7. 1. 3. 1. *Large classes*

The data shows that 86 % of the SETs in this study have large classes whose size ranges from 36 to over 41 according to Figure 7. 2.

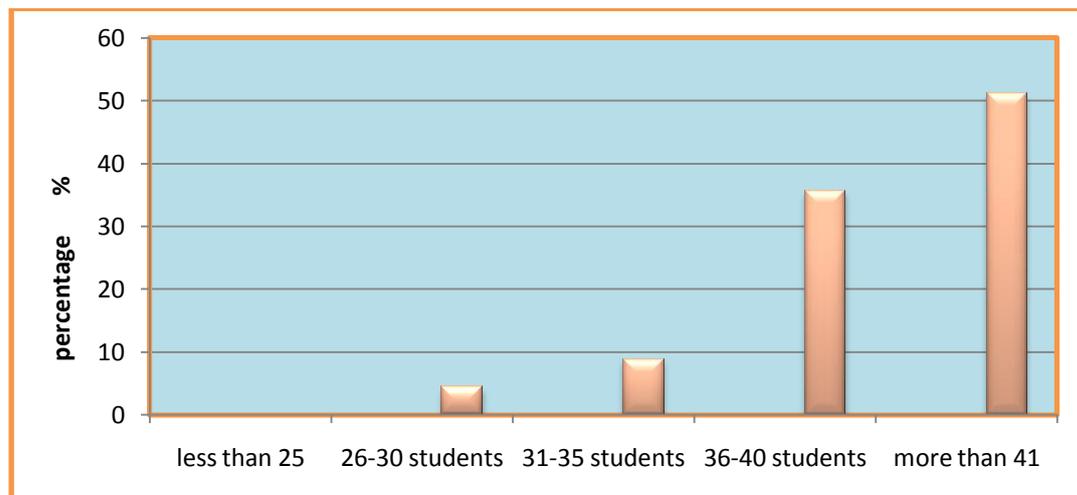


Figure 7. 2:
Number of students in the classrooms

Thus, the findings show that the participants of this study complain that having crowded classes is one of the big constraints that might prevent them from applying any communicative activities. One of the teachers explains:

With the large number of students in our classes, it is impossible to conduct group work because large classes are hard to control. (TI 8)

The data also suggest that class management is not the only problem with the large classes; there is also the need to determine what the students require and the time limitation of the lesson period (45 minutes). A teacher opines:

...dealing with each student's need individually is time consuming in large classes. (TI 1)

As a consequence, SETs tend to apply teacher-centred approaches because they better suit their larger classes. As a teacher indicates:

With large classes we do not have the chance to apply any student-centred approach, or activities such as role play and games, because they are difficult to organise and manage. (TI 12)

7. 1. 3. 2. *Teaching load:*

Another factor that might limit the SETs adoption of CLT is their teaching load. SETs, from the first day of teaching, seem to have fully loaded teaching hours, i.e. 24 periods weekly in addition to some administrative work and student supervision duties at the beginning and the end of the school day and during breaks. A teacher complains:

With 24 periods of teaching weekly and administrative work I could not find enough time to prepare communicative activities. (TI 11)

Furthermore, a supervisor argues that the teaching load is an obstacle not only to the application of communicative activities, but also to the attendance of SETs at joining training programmes and exchange visits with their colleagues. His argument is:

English teachers always complain that teaching loads prevent them from enrolling in training courses because there is nobody to cover their classes. (SI 3)

7. 1. 3. 3. The availability and appropriateness of teaching materials

Another situational factor that influences the implementation of communicative activities and the application of CLT is the lack of the teaching material and equipments that some schools suffer from. A supervisor explains:

In some schools there is no resource room, and if there is one it is not equipped with internet access and the teaching materials are out of date. (SI 3)

Moreover, the data also suggest that even the available teaching materials in the schools are to some extent not authentic communicative materials. For example, a teacher points out:

The best of teaching materials available in our schools are posters and flash cards. Our schools are not equipped with a language lab and even the textbooks are not accompanied by cassettes or CDs. (TI 1)

In addition to that, although authentic materials such as foreign movies, magazines, newspapers, and stories are available to some extent in the Saudi markets, bringing them to classrooms may raise some cultural concerns, i.e. they may contain some elements that might not be in keeping with the Saudi culture, such as pictures of unveiled women and alcoholic drinks or some words and expressions that are unacceptable in the Saudi culture like ‘intimate friends’. For instance, a teacher says:

It is not possible to display any materials like films that might include some scenes that are unacceptable in our society such as unveiled woman, even though students can watch these in their homes. (TI 7)

Besides that, most of the SETs in this study did not receive any training in how to create communicative materials. For instance, a supervisor explains:

With the limitation of the teaching materials, teachers themselves have not been taught how to make teaching aids by themselves. (SI 2)

This result resembles that of other studies [Li 1998 in Korea; Alkhawaiter 2001 in Qatar; Adhikari 2007 in Nepal; Almohanna 2010 and Alzaidi 2011 in Saudi; Ozsevik 2010 in Turkey; Vongxay 2013 in Laos; and Chang 2011 in Taiwan] that mentioned the large classes, teaching load, and the nature of the teaching materials among the contextual factors that limit English teachers' adoption of communicative activities and implementation of CLT in their teaching practice.

7. 2. The socio-cultural factors

In the previous section (6.1), the influential factors related to the institutional and situational aspects were presented and analysed. In this section (6 .2.) the investigation about the challenges to the implementation of CLT in the Saudi context will continue by highlighting an important issue, i.e. the socio-cultural features of the Saudi context. These factors will include the culture of education in Saudi Arabia and the status of English language in the Saudi context.

7. 2. 1. Traditional view of education

One of the most important socio-cultural factors that might impact the implementation of CLT in Saudi schools is the cultural view of education. As outlined in the introduction of this study, it could be argued that the dominant view of education in the Saudi context is that of knowledge transmission. This view has its own historical reasons stemming from the informal teaching of religious subjects (Kuttab). The data findings affirm that as a supervisor states, 'the common teaching practice among most teachers in the Saudi context, irrespective of their subjects, is the knowledge

transmission' (SI 3). Moreover, this traditional view of education has also affected the process of teaching and learning English as a subject in the Saudi context. For example, 35.5% of the questionnaire sample (16 teachers) and 66% of the teachers' interview sample (8 interviewees) have rated the transmission model as their top teaching practice in their classes. While some teachers pay lip service to CLT, they still practise the transmission methods, as one of the supervisors claims in relation to his supervisory visits to English teachers:

Some English teachers in our schools pretend that they teach English for communication purposes, but in reality most of their teaching practices focus on knowledge transmission. (SI 3)

Some teachers argue that they adopt this practice (teaching as knowledge transmission) due to the increasing pressure from schools and society. For instance, a teacher points out that:

I aim to teach my students new vocabulary and encourage them to communicate, but the situations inside the classroom force me not to do this. (TI 3)

The traditional view of knowledge transmission is also embedded in the minds of the students' guardians who insist that their children should learn for the sake of accumulating as much theoretical knowledge and skills as possible in order to get high marks in the final school exams and the university admission exams. For instance, a participant argues:

Parents always insist that their children should get high marks in the written examinations and the only means for that according to their understandings is to concentrate only on getting theoretical knowledge which will help their children in achieving their aims (TI 5).

Furthermore, the traditional view of education seems to be pervasive in all aspects of the teaching and learning process of English as a subject in the Saudi context,

i.e. it has affected teaching styles, learning styles, evaluation system⁶, as well as the teachers and students' roles. Hence, the following paragraphs will display the various aspects that have been affected by the cultural view of education, which might contribute to reinforce the SETs' reluctance to implement CLT in their teaching practice.

7. 2. 1. 1. Traditional teachers' role

According to the study data the beliefs of the SETs about teaching are impacted to a large extent by the traditional view of education. Thus under the influence of this view, the SETs play certain roles (displayed below) compatible with this view to help them to achieve their aims.

a .Knowledge transmitter and source of knowledge:

The data discloses that SETs' roles have been influenced by the culture of education in the Saudi context. Thus, since the prevailing culture of teaching among SETs is the transmission of knowledge, it is not surprising to see that the predominant role of SETs is that of knowledge transmitter. For example, a teacher describes his prevalent role in the classroom thus:

[The teacher is] the sender and the students are the receivers of the knowledge in most of my classes. (TI 4)

The data also suggests that it is common in such a culture of teaching that the one who transmits knowledge should be the source of knowledge or at least the most trusted

⁶The effect of the cultural view of education on the examination or evaluation system has been included in exam washback section.

source. This role, if we consider that English is taught as a foreign language in the Saudi context, is reminiscent of Kuttab era when teachers (who were among the very few literate people) were considered the source of knowledge. Here, EFL teachers, at least in their school environment, are among the very few people who speak English, and they are considered to be the source of knowledge in this subject at least by their students and the school community. A supervisor indicates that:

Our society looks to teachers, whether veteran or novice, as the most knowledgeable persons who have the ability to transmit knowledge to students in an effective way. (SI 2)

This view (teachers as source of knowledge) seems also to be assured by the students' guardians as a supervisor points out the students' parents convey a clear message to their children that :

Whatever teachers say is right because they are all-knowing persons and pedagogues. (SI 1)

The data also suggests that in order to fulfil this role the SETs mainly depend in their teaching on using the prescribed textbooks to avoid any unexpected events in class. A supervisor highlights this point when he says:

In order for SETs cover up their limitations in the subject matter and teaching skills, they always rely completely on using textbooks; they stick to textbook activities in order to avoid losing face in front of their students. (SI 3)

b .Authority role:

The data of this study suggest that it is norm in the Saudi schools, under the influence of the traditional view of education, for teachers to enforce a peaceful and quiet environment inside their classes so that they can work in keeping with tried and tested ways. This kind of role also has its own historical roots in the way that teachers taught in the Kuttab in which students sat in rows around their teachers and listened in silence

without any interaction until the teacher gave them permission (Elyas and Picard 2010). Thus the teachers, under the influence of the traditional view of education, feel duty-bound to bring about such an environment in their classes. The authority for doing so that is given to teachers has the effect of teachers dominating most of the class time, determining most of the teaching materials and activities, and expecting students to remain passively silent knowledge receivers. The words of one teacher sum this up:

I talk most of the time in order to manage my class and to provide a quiet atmosphere for my students to listen to my instruction. (TI 7)

In addition, the adoption of traditional roles for teachers, such as the authoritative role, is also demanded by the head teachers, who use it as one of the standards for teachers' performance evaluation. A teacher sheds light on this point when he says:

A good class, from the school administrators' view, is one in which a teacher has control and students learn in a quiet way. (TI 5)

Furthermore, this view also extends to influence the educational supervisors' focus in their directive and evaluation visits to their supervisees. For instance, a participant indicates that 'class management skill is one of the top skills that supervisors check in their supervisory visit' (TI 3). As a consequence, SETs tend to neglect some activities that necessitate action, students' movement and reorganisation of the classroom setting required for pair or group activities, games, role play and co-operative learning. For instance, a teacher says:

We avoid using group work activity because it is hard to control students and it may embarrass us with administrators and supervisors. (TI 10)

7. 2. 1. 2. Teaching style

Another aspect of the teaching process that has been influenced by the traditional view of education is the way teaching is done. It could be argued that the traditional view of education (knowledge transmission) mainly promotes the adoption of a teacher-centred approach rather than a student-centred approach. However, the data discloses that the choice of the teaching approaches or styles has been impacted by the roles that SETs play. Thus, it is not surprising to hear from the sample of this study that the prevalent teaching approaches that they have adopted are the ones centred around teachers. This kind of teaching style is compatible with the traditional view of education and teachers' traditional role. Through this style, SETs have found it easier to fulfil the roles of knowledge transmitter, source of knowledge, and authority. SETs have presented their lessons by using teaching methods such as lecturing that let them to dominate most of the lesson time. For instance, a teacher points out:

In general my teaching techniques rely on writing on the board and lecturing. I try to provide students with sufficient knowledge and request them to write down [what I write on the board] in their notebooks. (TI 4)

The study also suggests that the teaching model that SETs adopt is the rationalist teaching model (which is based on presenting theoretical knowledge and delaying practice), because it suits their teaching purposes and limits student interactions. SETs mainly adopt lecturing as a tool to help them practice this teaching model. A supervisor states:

Teachers tend to lecture for a long time in order to transmit knowledge without interruption from students. (ST 3)

Furthermore, the data shows that the traditional view of education has also affected the teaching process in higher education. For example, the teacher-centred approach is common not only among general schools in the Saudi context; it is also the popular

approach in the teachers' preparation programmes in higher education. Most participants had experiences similar to this one:

Most of our initial preparation courses were run by presenting theoretical knowledge; our lecturers lectured without any participation from student teachers. (TI 7)

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the data also displays another noticeable feature of the culture of teaching in the Saudi schools, which is the isolation of teachers. This means that most of the SETs run their classes alone without any participation from their colleagues, which indicates the lack of a teachers' community in most of the Saudi schools. A supervisor comments about this:

We as educational supervisors request exchange visits among teachers, but we have noticed that most of our teachers, whether veteran or novice, have preferred to work in isolated classrooms, and they feel uncomfortable when someone [other than their students] attends their classes. (SI 2)

7. 2. 1. 3. Culture of learning and students' roles

Choudhury (2011) argues that students' roles are mainly dependent on the roles that their teachers adopted. Thus, as the data suggests, the dominant role that students play in most of the English language classes are that of knowledge receivers; they rarely discuss or negotiate their learning with teachers. A supervisor sums up this situation regarding SETs' roles thus:

They were merely passive learners, only awaiting their teachers' instruction without any participation from them. (SI 2)

This role seems to be congruent with the traditional view of education and the students' learning outcome, i.e. to accumulate knowledge and recall it in the final exams. So students tend to be silent during most of the class period in order to absorb knowledge efficiently. A teacher highlights this issue:

Unfortunately, students in my class are only listeners and they rarely participate even if I encourage them to do so. (TI 11)

The data also discloses that students tend to adopt some learning styles such as memorisation, imitation and rote learning that help them to accumulate as much knowledge as possible about the subject. A supervisor comments on this:

During my supervisory visits, I have noticed that SETs tend to use some techniques that help students to enhance their understanding of the subject matter. These techniques mainly depend on learning by heart, repetitive drill and imitation... even in composition lessons students request pre-written models in order to memorise and recall [the model] in the final examinations. (SI 1)

Moreover, it is interesting to notice that the cultural view of education (transmission of knowledge, and the concept that the best student is the one with most knowledge about the subject) tends to create an atmosphere of competition rather than co-operation among students in Saudi schools. As a result, the study data has suggested, students tend to learn singly without sharing their learning with their classmates. A supervisor highlights this issue when he argues thus:

The idea of competition in teaching and learning is the norm in the Saudi context. For example, students and their parents always want to get high marks and be the best student in the class, so they do not share their learning with others. (SI 3)

7. 2. 2. Status of English in the Saudi community

The second most important socio-cultural factor that limits the effectiveness of English teaching in the Saudi context is the status of English in the Saudi communities. Despite the significance of English language as the lingua franca, and despite the funding that Saudi government has provided for teaching English, the status of English among some people in Saudi Arabia is still secondary. It is worth

mentioning here that I remember that when MoE considered introducing English in the primary school curriculum in 2001, there was much heated debate in some parts of the local community. The official introduction of English to primary school was delayed till 2004, and it was only introduced in the upper section of the primary schools. Thus, the view of some of Saudi society seems to be that English is a school subject rather than a live language, i.e. students study it in order to pass exams but not to practise it later in life. This view, unfortunately, is still in our schools, as demonstrated by a teacher's statement:

English Language is not among the popular subjects that students would like to learn, and they study it because it is a part of their scholastic curriculum. (TI 5)

Such a view may contribute negatively to students' motivation and interaction in English classes. This could in turn also limit the teaching of English for communicative purposes or the application of any student-centred approach such as CLT that relies on student interaction. In a teacher's words:

Students' lack of motivation and reluctance to study English for communication is one of obstacles faced by communicative activities. (TI 2)

7. 3. Discussion

Chapter 7 has explored the data that reported on influential factors that are encountered when adopting CLT; these factors relate to the contextual [social] level of the SETs' teaching practice as human activity, as suggested by CHAT theory (Phillips 2006) as in Figure 7.3.



Figure 7.3: The contextual level of SETs' teaching practice (modified from figure 1.1)

This exploration suggests that part of the SETs' reluctance to adopt CLT in their teaching practice is related to the factors that stem from the context in which they work. These contextual factors include the institutional & situational factors as well as the socio-cultural factors.

7. 3 .1. Institutional and situational factors

Apart from individual level, the second category of the influential factors that SETs encounter in their attempts to apply CLT in their teaching practice consists of institutional and situational (contextual) factors. These factors are various due to the complex context or system (classroom) that SETs are working in. These include factors inside and outside schools, as shown in section 7.1. The most important factors in this category are the limited in-service training, exam washback , and school level constraints. The following paragraphs will discussed them in details

7. 3. 1. 1. *Limited in-service training*

It has been argued by some researchers (Gnawali 2014; Almaini 2009; Alseghayer 2014) that the initial teacher preparation programmes alone are not enough for preparing effective teachers. They add that such programmes, to some extent, equip prospective teachers to join the teaching profession with minimal teaching knowledge and skills. It has also been argued that when teachers practise real teaching, they may encounter various situations for which they are not prepared such as curriculum innovation, using a prescribed textbook and adopting new teaching approaches. There are many challenges such as class management and applying new technology. All of these may exceed teachers' abilities, and they indicate how complex the situation in a real classroom is. As Easen (1985, p. 4) indicates

...becoming a teacher is really a demanding experience and involves learning how to survive and how to cope with the complex world of the classroom.

Thus, teachers may feel that they are in need of further training beyond their initial preparation that might help them survive in their teaching careers, support them to cope with such situations, and help them overcome emerging challenges. As a consequence, both novice and veteran teachers need ongoing training programmes in order to enhance their knowledge, skills and performance as well as to meet the demand of the required change and the demands of their communities (Gnawali 2001; Poudel 2014). In-service training courses may enhance teachers in various ways, as Bhan (2006 cited in Poudel 2014, p1) indicates:

...to upgrade the qualification of a teacher, to upgrade the professional competence of serving teachers, to prepare teachers for new roles, to provide knowledge and skills relating to emerging curricular change, to make teachers aware of critical areas and issues, and to overcome gaps and deficiencies of pre-service education.

Furthermore, in my view, it seems that the need for an intensive ongoing training is twofold when there are shortcomings in the initial preparation programmes as in the case of this study. Most of the teachers in this study hope that the in-service training will match their training needs, bridge the gap in their pre-service training, and support them in their mission to teach for communication and apply CLT in their teaching practice. SETs claim they are in need of training courses that provide theoretical and practical opportunities for teachers to train them in teaching for communicative purposes, creating communicative activities, applying CLT in their teaching practice, and improving their linguistic abilities.

Unfortunately, SETs' hopes are dashed since the quality of the teachers' in-service training provision in KSA is inadequate, as suggested by the data of the study. So instead of freeing SETs from their rooted teaching beliefs and leading them to apply CLT, the inadequacy of the in-service training reinforces in SETs the feeling that they are incapable of teaching for communicative purposes and applying CLT. This in turn pushes them to adopt traditional teaching methods as a survival kit that protects SETs in their classes. The gaps in the in-service training are pervasive in all its stages, as suggested by the data. The following discussion will focus on displaying the gaps in each stage, which may help the decision makers to bridge the gaps in these programmes and take further steps for adjustment.

7. 3. 1. 1. 1. The planning stage of in-service training programmes

According to the findings of this research, it appears that there is a centralisation in the provision of in-service training courses in Saudi context by the MoE. This centralisation appears clearly in the decision to choose the aims, purposes and the

contents of the training courses, which are determined by the MoE alone. Thus, the teachers' training needs, including SETs, seem to be analysed by a body, which is alien to the context of the teaching (Almaini 2009). This shows how big the gap between the governing bodies in KSA who are responsible for EFL planning and teachers' training. As a result, such needs analyses may not be able to determine the actual training needs of the English teachers in Saudi Arabia, since they do not take on board the views of the beneficiaries (trainee teachers) in the process of planning the training (Almaini 2009). The literature consistently indicates that an effective in-service training programme should put trainee teachers at its core. It should take into consideration trainee teachers' needs and experience, respect their views, negotiate the contents of the courses with them, and act on their feedback before planning any training courses [Hayes 2000; Fullan 2001; Sandholtz 2002; Atay 2007; Uysal 2012]. Such involvement will help in increasing teachers' awareness about their teaching and enhance their professional confidence (Daloglu 2004; Hayes 2000).

Thus, due to this centralisation, what is really missing here is the realisation that SETs work in a complex educational system and as a result their training purposes also become complex. El-Laithy (1989, p. 69) argues that 'the more complex the system is, the greater the need for such [training] courses'. This complexity necessitates that the training courses should be diverse and that the determination of their purposes should not be assigned to one part (MoE). It should take into consideration the needs of the teachers, the educational context and the community. Hence, as suggested by the supervisors' interview, the consequence of the centralisation in defining the aims, purposes and contents of the training courses in the Saudi context is that the primary SETs' training needs seem to have been ignored. The training courses do not appear to

be very intensive, i.e. having only three training courses in general directives about how to teach English is extremely limited..

Therefore, it can be argued that the training purposes and types that are missed by the training centres in the Saudi context, according to the findings of this study, are various due to the complexity of training needs. So the following training courses, which SETs are in need of, are lacking in the Saudi training centres:

a. Induction programme

Since SETs are in their formative year, they, like any other novice teachers, need the support of others at the outset of their teaching career. Since SETs also work in an educational context which seems not to have adopted the monitoring system or collegial support (Alseghayer 2011b), they may be in need of an induction programme. Such a programme is normally designed to provide systematic support to the beginning teachers, boost their knowledge, concepts and skills, and help in amending any shortcoming in their initial preparation. It also may help them to overcome any emerging challenge such as classroom management (El-Laithy 1989; DfE 2015). Odell (1986) and DfE (2015) indicate that an induction programme is a transitional period between the teachers' pre-service education and their continuing professional development, which normally covers the whole first year of teaching. Moreover, Feiman-Nemser claims that induction period is very crucial for the beginning teachers because it supports them in shaping their teaching identity, building their teaching practice, and retaining their positions (Feiman-Nemser 2001 cited in Kessels 2010). Induction programmes might encompass the following elements (MoE 2010):

i). orientation programme, which allows new teachers to get accustomed to their

schools' structure, and defines their duties and rights.

ii). mentoring, which might be organised by supervisors or experienced teachers in schools to support new teachers' professional practice.

iii). professional development and training suitable for new teachers.

However, a thorough look at the training plans for SETs in the Saudi context (Appendix 5, p: 304), as well as the findings of this study, indicate that the induction programmes are missing. Hence, the lack of induction period in a context, such as the Saudi one, in which teachers take on the responsibility of teaching from their first day at work without any support from others, might lead SETs to suffer from so called 'practice shock' (Gold 1996 cited in Kessels 2010). As a consequence, SETs might feel low self- efficacy, stress (ibid.) and low confidence. Moreover, the lack of an induction programme in the Saudi context might lead the SETs to miss a golden opportunity which might overcome some of the challenges that they face in their teaching practice and support them to be effective teachers.

b. Pedagogic training

The participants (SETs) of this study claim that they encounter new situations that they were not prepared well for, such as adopting an innovative curriculum and facing challenges in using CLT in their teaching, Furthermore, a thorough look at the training plans for SETs in the Saudi context, as well as the findings of this study, indicate that to some extent the pedagogic training programmes are also inadequate. Hence, it could be argued that SETs are in need of further pedagogic training courses that are devoted mainly to help them handle the change in their situations. El-Laithy

(1989) and Abebe and Woldehanna (2013) argue that the pedagogic training courses that could be offered to English teachers are, for example:

- i). courses that introduce English teachers to new curricula, new syllabi, and new methods and approaches.
- ii). courses that help English teachers to apply technology in teaching English and creating new teaching aids.
- iii). courses that provide English teachers with techniques in how to assess and evaluate students' performance.
- iv). courses that acquaint English teachers with the latest knowledge in psychological, sociological or cultural development.

The availability of such programmes may help SETs, in the Saudi context, to enhance and refresh their knowledge about innovative teaching approaches such as CLT. It may provide practical opportunities to apply CLT in classes by observing senior teachers or through microteaching. Also these pedagogic programmes may also help them design teaching aids and apply technology in their classes, as well learn the appropriate way for assessing students' outcomes.

c. Initial training

As established in section 2.6 in Chapter 2, in order to meet the increasing demand for English teachers and the shortage in the number of English teachers who graduate from English departments, the Saudi MoE decided to recruit some graduates of Arts schools who have majored in English but lack any qualification in education. Such untrained or unqualified teachers do not in fact have the absolute minimum of pedagogic training required to be English teachers, which their counterparts in other pathways have. Thus, if the qualified English teachers, in the Saudi context, face some challenges due to the lack of the appropriate in-service training to supplement

their pre-service preparation, it would be fair to say that unqualified English teachers' challenges may be double that of their qualified colleagues, because the pre-service preparation of the former does not include any preparation in education, especially in the teaching and learning process. As result, they are in need of a requalification programme or what is called initial training, which may help unqualified teachers in acquiring the basic knowledge, skills and experience for teaching and learning English as a foreign language. Such programme can be done in collaboration between MoE and the local universities. But it is worth mentioning here that the lack of formal connection between MoE and the Saudi universities might also hinder the adoption of such a programme.

d. Linguistic training

What may make the situation even more complex is if the teachers are not proficient in English as is the case here with SETs. SETs in the Saudi context are in need of further linguistic training. However, a thorough look at the training plans for SETs in the Saudi context, as well as the findings of this study, indicate that linguistic training programmes are also absent. It could be argued that the language deficiency of SETs' and the lack of linguistic training courses in the Saudi Arabia may be considered as great hindrances to the adoption of innovative teaching methods such as CLT. Huang (2011, p. 74) argues that in-service training courses:

... are occasions where teachers expect to find possible answers to the problems they encounter in their daily practices, especially related to new educational policy like CLT pedagogy, which calls for changed teaching practice.

Thus, English teachers such as SETs with their language deficiency may feel less confident to use the language they teach, particularly in the spoken form, in front of their classes. As a consequence, they may not be able to run language classes

communicatively, as they tend to use traditional teaching methods as a survival kit. Some researchers (Cullen 1994; Butler 2004) indicate that language teachers should improve their language performance so that they can use it more fluently and confidently in their classes.

In spite of all these urgent complex needs, the training plans in most of local teachers' training centres may still show that there is no room for such programmes, i.e. courses for induction, specialised pedagogic training, initial preparation and linguistic training are absent in the training plans in Saudi Arabia.

7. 3. 1. 1. 2. The execution stage of in-service training courses

The defects in the in-service training are also pervasive in the execution stage of the current training courses. For example, the execution of these courses has been entrusted to trainers without adequate experience who are likely to be ineffective, as suggested by interview data. This issue contradicts with GAET's claims (as mentioned earlier in the findings section) that it has appointed qualified trainers in the training centres in order to meet teachers' training needs. Hence, it could be argued that unqualified or inexperienced trainers may not be able to run effective training courses due to their limited experience in teachers' training and they may resort to the use of traditional teaching/training approaches. This is exactly what happens in the local training centres when most of the training courses, due to the limited experience of most of the trainers, are run by applying the rationalist model or the applied science model of teaching, in which the presentation of the course depends mainly on displaying the knowledge theoretically and letting the practice be done by trainees on their own (Day 1992 ; Wallace 1991; Banegas 2011; Hong and Pawan 2015). In such a model, the trainees' reflection on their learning is absent and peer support is limited.

Accordingly, instead of amending SETs' beliefs about teaching methods (using traditional teaching methods), the in-service training programme, with its courses presented in compliance with the rationalist model, confirms their beliefs about how to teach EFL. In other words, SETs have passed through an experience, as students in general schools and language learners in universities, in which teaching and learning English were done by applying the rationalist model and using traditional teaching methods; they have pinned their hopes on in-service training courses to help them to change their views about teaching EFL. These hopes are dashed when the training courses offer no alternative.

However, the literature on in-service training affirms that using a holistic and experiential approach in which a variety of tools and techniques are applied, and in which trainees have opportunities to practise, and reflect on, what they have learned in a friendly and peer supported atmosphere is considered to be effective for in-service training programme (Bax 1997; Hockly 2000; John and Gravani 2005; Uysal 2012). Indeed, it seems that such methods are not run in the training courses in the Saudi context.

Furthermore, it also appears from the data that there is no diversity in the methods and types of training courses, i.e. most of the training courses are executed through conventional presentation methods such as lectures or seminars at the training centres. In contrast, the literature argues that in-service training should be done in various ways; for example, Lieberman (1996 cited in Wichadee 2011) determines some ways in which teachers' training could be done:

a). Direct or immediate training - This is normally done using conventional training methods such as sessions, conferences, seminars and workshops. This kind of training is generally available in most training centres in the Saudi Arabia.

b). School-based training - This kind of training is based on cultivating the reflective skills of the trainees by applying some examples of reflection practice. This training could be done, for example, through peer coaching, action research, critical friends, portfolios, and students' response.

c). Self-training – In this kind of training, teachers can improve their teaching practice through intensive and extensive reading, or by joining subject networks.

7. 3. 1. 1. 3. Follow up monitoring and transfer of training stage

The follow up monitoring stage, as suggested by the data, is completely neglected in the Saudi context. Goldstein and Ford (2002 cited in Grossman and Salas 2011) argue that learning or acquiring new knowledge and skills is not enough for training to be considered effective, and that it is crucial to successfully transfer the outcomes of the training into work sites which in turn contribute to improve the work performance.

Grossman and Salas (2011, p. 1) argue that

...although organizations invest billions of dollars in training every year, many trained competences reportedly fail to transfer to the workplace.

However, it seems that the transfer of training into schools or classrooms is problematic in the Saudi context. It could be argued that there are some obstacles that may limit the successful transfer of training. These obstacles may take the following forms.

a. Decontextualisation and isolation of teachers' training

The findings of the study show that in-service training courses in the Saudi context, similar to other contexts such as the Chinese (Wen and Ren 2010) and Qatari (El-Laithy 1989) contexts, are decontextualised and isolated from real classroom situations in both the execution and follow-up stages. This isolation of the training site from the workplace may limit the successful transfer of training, because it does not provide chances for follow up monitoring processes to ensure that trainees are applying what they have learned in their classes.

b. The lack of follow up monitoring

Furthermore, the execution of the training courses by single training sessions without any follow-up monitoring is another obstacle that limits the successful transfer of training. Wichadee (2011) argues that running a training course in a single session with no follow-up may be ineffective. It has also been argued that:

...without follow up coaching support system, old behavior comes back and people return to their comfort zone' (Breakthrough 2014, p. 3).

Thus, follow up monitoring may help in increasing the transfer of training into the workplace and in evaluating the effectiveness of the training courses by gathering some information (from classroom observation or trainees' feedback) about what works in a classroom and what need amendment in a training course, so that right decisions can be taken in future about how to evaluate them. Moreover, Waters and Vilches (2000 cited in Uysal 2012) argue that school-based follow up monitoring is a factor that helps connect theory with practice. They also consider it a good indicator of the effectiveness of a training programme which also enhances the self confidence of teachers, and supports working relationships.

c. Discomfort with change:

One of the fundamental reasons, according to some of the participants, for not applying in their classes what they have learned in the training courses is the feeling that these courses are irrelevant to their current situations and do not support them to change their teaching practice.

However, to sum up the discussion about the first institutional factor, it could be argued that the in-service training provision in KSA, to a large extent, does not mediate the struggles that SETs go through in their attempts to teach for communication and apply CLT. In contrast, it reinforces the tendency to adopt traditional teaching methods at the expense of innovative teaching approaches. As a result, due to the lack of communication between the Saudi MoE (represented by GAET) and the educational field (represented by schools) in the Saudi context, the complex training needs of SETs have not been identified. Hence, the in-service training in the Saudi context, based on the study findings, is in need of immediate reform at various levels in order to be able to contribute positively towards supporting SETs in their teaching practice as well as in their language proficiency.

7. 3. 1. 2. Exam washback

The second institutional factor is the washback of the final written examinations. It is argued that language testing is thought to have a substantial role to play in the language teaching and learning process. There is a clear evidence that examinations have impact on the teaching and learning process. The impact of examination results on teaching and learning is known as the washback effect (Alderson and Wall 1993; Hughes 2003; Cheng 2003). The washback effect can be categorised into two major

types (positive and negative) based on whether it is advantageous or disadvantageous for the teaching practice (Hughes 1989; Cheng 2003). The washback effect can also be classified into 'strong' and 'weak' (Watanabe 2004 cited in Cheng et al. 2004)

The study findings show that the purposes of the examination of the English language subject (which tests the students' linguistic competence) in the Saudi context contradicts the ultimate aim of teaching and learning English as a foreign language (which is to improve the students' communicative competence). The paradox in this issue is that, as regards English, the curriculum design and the examination system are in the hands of one body, i.e. the Saudi Ministry of Education. This phenomenon indicates that even though the English language curriculum design and examination system are under one umbrella (that of the MoE), it would appear that they are isolated and there is a power tension between them regarding what should be taught in English language classrooms in Saudi schools. It could be argued that the lack of the compatibility between the written curriculum and what is tested is the significant feature of this discrepancy. To clarify this issue more, Steffy and English (1997 cited in Nkosana 2010) argue that there are three general curricular contents that direct teaching practice. These are the written curriculum, the taught curriculum, and the tested curriculum. Steffy and English (ibid.) state that an effective teaching practice is the one that has the three curricular contexts in balance, i.e. the written curriculum ought to be similar to the one that is taught and tested. The assumed relation between these three elements is illustrated in Figure 7.3 which shows a systematic sequence in their relations, i.e. the written curriculum content is the one that is taught and tested, while these curricula influence each other positively through constructive feedback.

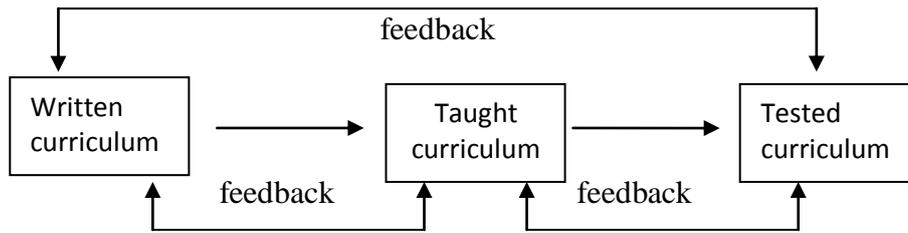


Figure 7.4
The relation between the three curricular contents

Steffy and English (ibid.) also argue that when there is no compatibility between the three curricular contents, more of what is tested is taught. As a result an unsystematic sequence may appear in their relations, as illustrated in Figure 7. 5, where the inverted and solid arrow indicate that the tested curriculum has a greater impact on what is taught, while the dotted arrow shows that the written curriculum has limited effect on the taught curriculum and the constructive feedback is absent.

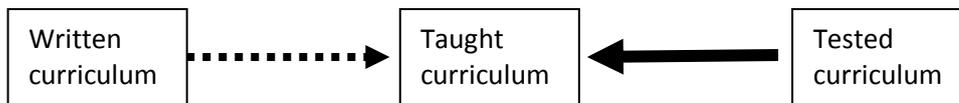


Figure 7. 5
The relation between the three curricular contents in SETs' teaching practice

However, the data analysis suggests that the washback effect of the written examination is not a limited phenomenon but an extensive, multi-faceted and a complex one (Cheng 2005). To understand this kind of complexity, a model was proposed by Watanabe (2004 cited in Cheng et al. 2004), which identifies the dimensions of the washback effect, i.e. the specificity, intensity, and value of the washback. Watanabe (ibid.) argues that the specificity dimension refers to whether the washback is general (a kind of impact that could be created by any test), or specific (a kind of impact that could be associated with one or more aspects of a test). The second dimension is that of intensity (strength) which indicates whether the washback

is strong (washback affects most aspects of the teaching practice) or weak (washback affects a limited part of the teaching practice). The third dimension is that of value, which may be positive or negative. The following paragraphs will discuss these dimensions.

7. 3. 1. 2. 1. Dimensions of the complexity of washback effect in the Saudi context:

a. Specificity:

The status of the written exam as it appears in the data analysis is very high. As a result its washback appears to be general, on the one hand, because it affects various parts at the micro, and macro levels. Consequently, a great deal of attention has been given to the exam results due to their vital role in different aspects in the Saudi context. For example, students, parents, school administrators, employers and teachers heavily depend on exam results in most of their decisions. On the other hand, this great concern with examinations results leads teachers to concentrate on teaching certain skills such as writing, and reading and on promoting linguistic competence and its sub-competences such as grammatical, textual and textual coherence skills because these are likely to be tested in the written examinations. At the same time they ignore teaching oral skills such as listening and speaking because they are not tested in the written examination. This kind of washback which leads to concentration on certain skills over other is known as specific washback (Watanabe 2004 cited in Cheng et al. 2004).

b. Intensity

The washback effect of the written examination in the Saudi context is very strong; this washback effect increases the concern with the exam items, which leads to the taught curriculum reflecting (and teachers teaching) only the skills that are tested. Teachers, in such situations, thus teaching in an examination-oriented way modify their teaching practice to match the exam items (Shohamy 1996). Furthermore, under the strong impact of examination, teachers tend not to emphasise knowledge and practice that fosters the use of language in real life situations; they prepare students to do well in examinations (Ahmad and Rao 2012b). Students in turn tend to treat English as a subject and not as a living language, and they value success in the examination over the promotion of oral skills in the target language (Aftab et al. 2014). In other words, this strong washback motivates students to concentrate on learning certain skills that are likely to be tested in exams, such as reading and writing, and it also de-motivates students in terms of learning English for the sake of communication. As a consequence, teaching focuses on reading and writing skills through some exercises which involve rote memorization, reading comprehension, grammar and decontextualised vocabulary. Even though this kind of teaching and its related assessment seem to improve reading and writing skills, they only teach or assess the lower order skills (recall and recognition) and ignore the higher order skills as well as the oral skills (Aftab et al. 2014).

c. Value

The value dimension of the Watanabe (2004 cited in Cheng et al. 2004) model refers to whether the washback effect is positive or negative. The analysis of the findings indicates to a large extent that the examination washback has a negative impact on the

teaching practice of most of SETs in the Saudi context. The increasing demand for examination-oriented teaching and the concentration on teaching and learning certain skills and sub-skills have contributed negatively, leading SETs to modify their teaching methodology or to adopt traditional teaching methods such as the Grammar Translation method and the Audio-Lingual method because they seem to match their classes' aims and the purposes of the written examinations. Hughes (2003) argues that objective assessments such as cloze tests, matching and multiple choices questions lead to a negative washback on teaching practice because they only deal with the lower order skills.

Furthermore, the analysis of the data also suggests that the negative washback effect of written examinations has also left an impact on the final product of the teaching and learning process (i.e. the students' learning) in most of the SETs' classes. The washback effect and the kind of teaching practiced by SETs may lead to rote memorisation of some items and the students' role becoming a completely passive one. It also leads to a focus on linguistic competence, ignoring communicative competence and excluding CLT from most SETs' teaching practice.

These results related to the exam washback in the Saudi context echo the results in other contexts which show that teaching of content and methodology is also affected by the washback effect of exams; for example Pizarro (2009, in the Spanish context), Aftab et al. (2014, in the Pakistani context), Salehi and Yunus (2012, in the Iranian context) and Cheng (1997, in the Hong Kong context) refer to this. But unlike the other studies, which focus on national and international standardised (high-stakes) tests, such as those of Qi (2004) in China; Cheng (1997; 2004) in Hong Kong; Watanabe (2004) in Japan; Yildirim (2010) in Turkey; Tsagari (2011) in Greece; and

Salehi and Yunus (2012) in Iran, this study focuses on both the high-stake tests (QIAS) and the low-stake tests (school final written examinations).

In contrast to the other studies that have shown that there were consistencies between the curricula designers and exam constructors particularly in high-stake tests, this study shows that in the Saudi context there was discrepancy between the English curriculum designers' aim (to teach English for communication purposes) and the exam purposes (to test linguistic competence such as grammatical and textual competences). On the other hand, though some of the studies that display the exam washback (Qi 2004 in China; Cheng 1997 and 2004 in Hong Kong; Watanabe 2004 in Japan; and Yildirim 2010 in Turkey) have shown that there were inconsistencies between what test setters' intend (to evaluate the communicative competence) and what teachers and students practise in classrooms (to promote the linguistic competence), this study has disclosed that there was consistency between what the test setters' intended in the Saudi context (to evaluate the linguistic competence) and what the teachers and students practised in the classrooms (to promote the linguistic competence). These two results indicate that the designs of the English language examinations in the Saudi context were not consistent with the current development in the field of language teaching and testing, i.e. to promote the communicative competence. In contrast to other studies that have disclosed that there was a positive washback from exams in terms of bringing about changes in the teaching content or material (such as applying communicative activities) due the high-stake exams evaluating oral skills (Cheng 1997 and 2004; Watanabe 2004; Alderson and Wall 1993), this study has revealed that exams have a negative impact on reinforcing the usage of traditional materials to teach grammar and vocabulary and neglecting oral skills.

7. 3. 1. 2. 2. *Contradiction between assumed aim and the evaluation tools*

From the aforementioned discussion it could be argued that another level of contradiction in implementing CLT in Saudi context seems to arise from the divergence between the assumed aim of teaching EFL in the Saudi context (communicative purposes) and the nature of the school based examination (testing the students' linguistic competence), as shown in Figure 7. 6.

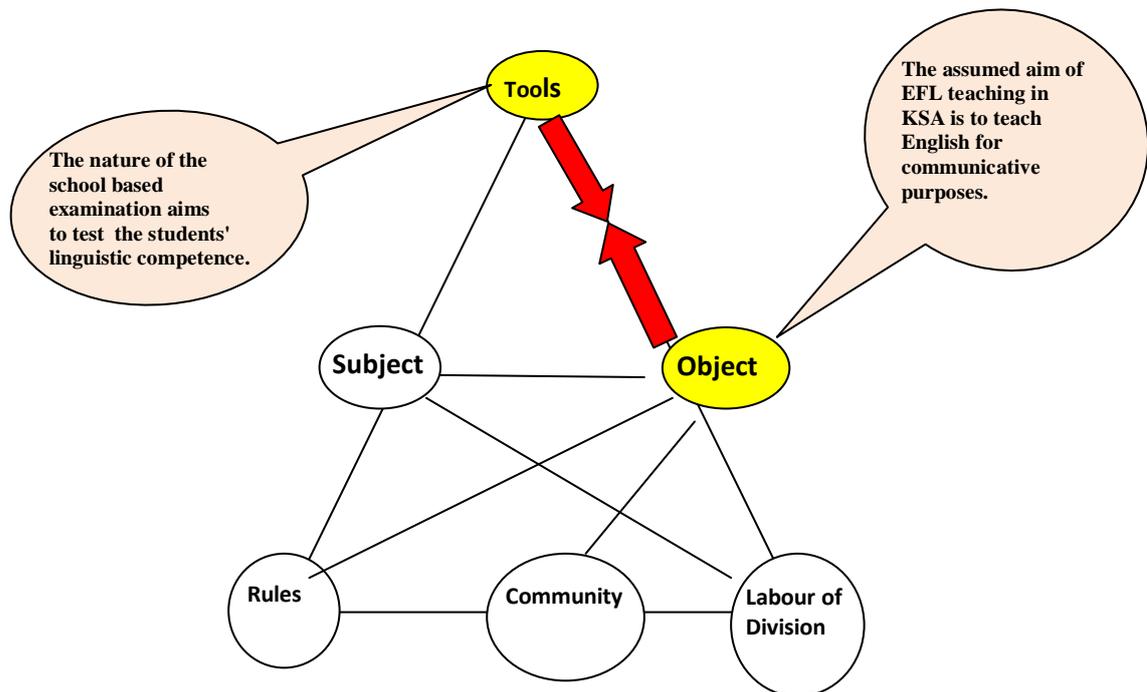


Figure 7.6: contradiction between EFL aims and evaluation tools
(modified from figure 4.5 [Engestrom 1987])

It seems from the study findings that the examinations in the Saudi context are not employed to serve or reinforce the ultimate aim of teaching and learning English as a foreign language (improving the students' communicative competence) in the Saudi context. The paradox in this issue is that the curriculum designing board and the examination system board for English subject are in the hands of one body, i.e. the Saudi Ministry of Education. Furthermore, this discrepancy indicates that even though the English language curricular design and examination system are under one

umbrella (that of MoE), it appears that they are isolated and there is a power tension between them regarding which curriculum (written or tested curriculum) should be taught in English language classrooms in Saudi schools. It could be argued that lack of the compatibility between the written curriculum and what is tested is the significant feature of this discrepancy. Moreover, findings also indicate that the written examinations' (school or Qiyas test) washback negatively impacts the SETs' teaching practice, confines the taught curriculum to those areas likely to be tested, neglects teaching English for communicative purposes, and contributes to the exclusion of CLT in most of the SETs' lessons.

7. 3. 1. 3. *School level constraints*

After exploring the most important institutional factors that influence the implementation of CLT in KSA, the focus of the study shifted to the exploration of the dominant situational factors. It could be argued that, according to the study results, the environment in most of the Saudi schools seems to be unprepared for the implementation of CLT since they have classes too large and authentic material too limited to effectively implement CLT.

7. 3. 1. 3. 1. *Large classes*

Based on the data, it was observed that the participants considered crowded classes as one of the most important structural challenges that made them unable to implement CLT. Li (1998) and Hu (2000) argue that teachers perceive class size as a constraint on implementing the CLT in their schools. It appears that large classes normally present some problems for teachers. For instance, applying in large classes communicative activities that rely on the interaction in pair or group work may lead

SETs to lose control over their classes. And since we have seen from the findings that the class management is very crucial for teachers in order to teach in a quiet atmosphere, SETs tend not to apply communicative activities and CLT in their teaching practice; they consider such activities as challenges that might lead them to lose control of their classes. Another issue that may arise in large classes is that it is hard for SETs to analyse each learner's need and give individualized, interactive instruction which corresponds to all learners' needs. For that reason, SETs tend to apply teacher-centred approaches such as GTM or ALM because they suit teaching in large classes, though not teaching for communication.

7. 3. 1. 3. 2. Teaching load

Another situational factor at the level of the classroom that prevents SETs from teaching for communicative purposes and applying communicative activities by adopting CLT is their teaching load. SETs claim that it is hard to take on communicative activities with their overloaded of teaching in addition to other administrative work because they need much time for preparation. So SETs tend to use traditional teaching activities because they are easy to prepare and present. The data also indicate another issue that is related to the overloaded teaching hours; there are limited opportunities for teachers to join any in-service training in general and in CLT in particular, due to the workload.

7. 3. 1. 3. 3. Limited communicative materials

Another factor that has limited the use of CLT is the lack of communicative materials. It has been argued that since the aim of language teaching is to prepare students to

communicate in real life situations, the classroom activities should mirror the real life situations and use real world or authentic material (Richards 2006). It also has been argued that the authentic materials should include opportunities for students to be exposed to the target language and its culture, as well as support teachers to adopt innovative teaching methods (Clarke and Silberstein 1977 cited in Richards 2006; Richards 2006). However, to some extent, the materials that SETs use in classrooms are traditional materials, such as posters and flash cards, which do not facilitate creating communicative activities. It appears, as suggested by the data, that the lack of employable communicative material in the Saudi context has a cultural rather than a financial reason. In other words, it seems that authentic language teaching material such as magazines, films, songs, and stories may contain some aspects that offend the local culture. Thus, teachers and school staff in general try not to bring them to classrooms. I remember that during my time as a member of the national committee for the English subject in 2001, the English textbook series was vetted to suit the local culture before introduction into the local market. Such kind of localization may result in the omission of some authentic materials from textbooks.

7. 3. 1.3.4. Contradiction between the nature of the textbook activities and teaching aids

The school level constraints indicate to another source of contradiction in implementing CLT in the Saudi context. This level of contradiction arises from the inconsistency between teaching styles or teaching aids that SETs apply in classrooms and those that are adopted in English language textbooks in Saudi Arabia, as shown in Figure 7.7. While the activities in the textbooks are communicative in nature and designed to be executed through teaching styles that are compatible with the principles of CLT (such as pair or group work, role play and problem solving), the

findings show that, due to the fact that large classes are the norm in the Saudi schools, activities have been executed through traditional teaching and learning styles such as lecturing, memorisation, and repetition. In addition to that, although the materials such as movies, magazines, newspapers and stories are recommended to be used to increase language exposure, the findings indicate that applying them in classrooms may raise some cultural concerns regarding the cultural inappropriateness of ideas they may contain (for example, pictures of unveiled women, alcoholic drinks and some words and expressions such as intimate friends that may offend the Saudi culture). Thus, all of these issues reinforce the adoption of traditional teaching methods and contribute to the exclusion of CLT from the SETs' teaching practice.

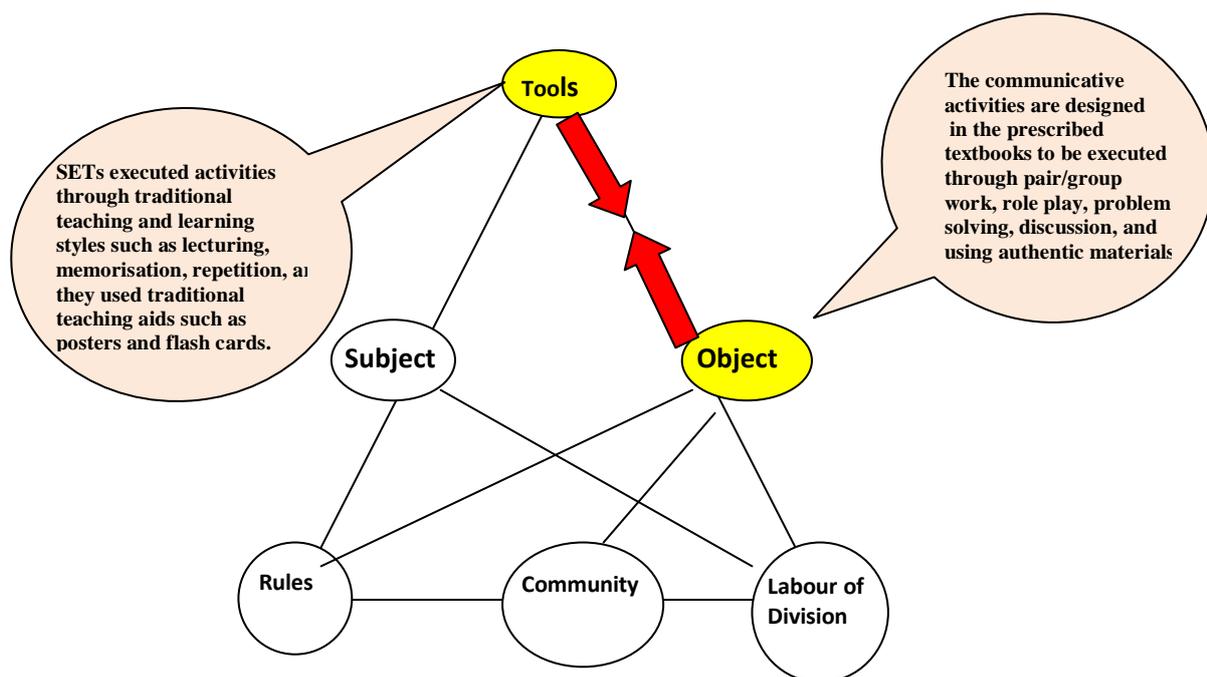


Figure 7.7: contradiction between teaching aids and textbook activities
(modified from figure 4.5 [Engestrom 1987])

7.3.2. Socio-cultural factors

The previous section (7.3. 1) discussed the data related to the second category of influential factors, i.e. the institutional and situational factors. In this section the discussion will focus on data related to socio-cultural factors. These factors include the cultural view of education and the status of English language in KSA.

It appears that the reluctance to implement CLT in the Saudi context is not limited to the gaps in the teachers initial preparation programmes, or in the provision of in-service training courses, or the potential exam washback; they also go beyond and seem to have deep roots in the traditional view of education in the Saudi context.

According to the findings of this section, CLT and the Saudi culture of teaching and learning are in conflict with each other on various fundamental issues including their views about the language teaching and learning process, teachers and students' roles, teaching and learning styles (see Table 7.2). The discussion in this section will highlight these points in the following paragraphs:

Table 7. 2
Comparison between CLT principles and the view of education in the Saudi context

Aspect	Saudi culture of English teaching and learning	CLT
<i>View</i>	Traditional view: knowledge transmission	Language as communication
<i>Focus</i>	Structural feature of language	Functional and Structural features of language
<i>Aim</i>	Linguistic competence	Communicative competence
<i>Approach</i>	Teacher-centred teaching approach	Student-centred teaching approach
<i>Skills</i>	Reading and writing skills Ignore listening and speaking skills	Four language skills
<i>Priority</i>	Accuracy over fluency	Fluency over accuracy
<i>Material</i>	Traditional materials: board, flash cards and posters	Authentic materials like newspaper, stories and films
<i>Teachers' role</i>	Source of knowledge, Knowledge transmitter, Lecturer, authority	Facilitator, Participant, Organiser
<i>Students' role</i>	Knowledge receiver	Negotiator

7. 3. 2. 1. The effect of the cultural view of education on adopting CLT

As mentioned earlier in section 2.1.1 in Chapter 2, it could be argued that the dominant view of education in the Saudi context is the knowledge transmission (Mansour 2007; Alseghayer 2011a). This view actually has its own historical roots in the informal teaching of religious subjects (Kuttab) that developed in the Arabian Peninsula in the first couple of centuries of Islam (Bouzoubaa 1998), i.e. during the sixth and seventh centuries AD of the Gregorian calendar. Szyliowicz (1973, p. 51) argues that the dominant teaching method at Kuttab was the

... delivery of lecture with the lecturer squatting on a platform against a pillar and one or two circles of students seated before him... the teacher read from a prepared manuscript or from a text, explaining the material, and allowed questions and discussion to follow the lecture.

7. 3. 2. 1. 1. The effect of the cultural view on the purpose of EFL teaching in Saudi context

Today the same scene is repeated in most of the Saudi schools, as the interview comments and questionnaire suggested. This indicates that modern education in the Saudi context is still operating under the influence of the cultural the view of education. The findings of the questionnaire and interviews show that view in Saudi schools is that education is the accumulation of knowledge rather than a process of constructing and applying knowledge for certain purposes (Hu 2002). Thus, under the influence of this culture the teaching and learning model in the Saudi context may be considered to be a spoon-feeding model or as Maley (1982 cited in Hu 2002) suggested, an 'empty-vessel' model. In this model the knowledge is transmitted through an imitative and mechanical process, i.e. a mimetic process (Paine 1992; Degen et al. 1998). Jackson (1986, p. 117 cited in Cummings 1997, p. 77) argued that the mimetic view "gives a central place to the transmission of factual and procedural

knowledge from one person to another, through an essentially imitative process". Hence, the teaching according to this view focuses on how the knowledge is to be transmitted and elaborated to students in a linear and direct way rather than by helping them to construct and apply acquired knowledge for immediate purposes or needs (Brick 1991; Jin and Cortazzi 1995 cited in Hu 2002). As a result, the concept of education as a product rather than a process is being affirmed here (Welker 1992).

Therefore, the language teaching methods sanctioned by this view are mainly the teacher-centred ones which focus on promoting the structural features of the language (grammar and vocabulary), and in which the teachers dominate for the duration of the class, select the knowledge from authoritative sources (mainly textbooks), explain and elaborate aspects of this knowledge to students, who in turn memorise, repeat and comprehend them and then recall them at the final examination (Hu 2002). The study suggests that this is the reality of the English language classrooms in Saudi schools.

This view is echoed in Mansour's (2007) words as he argues that knowledge acquisition is the main purpose of the teaching and learning process in the Saudi context and that it is done through teacher-centred approaches such as lecturing.

As a consequence, it could be said the CLT philosophical assumption [which bases itself on the concept of language as communication (Richards and Rodgers 1986) and implies the promotion of structural and functional feature of a language (Littlewood 1981)] seems to be inconsistent with the culture of education in the Saudi context.

There is a core difference between the theory of language teaching in the traditional teaching methods (such as Grammar Translation or Audio-Lingual methods, which are the prevalent ones in the SETs' teaching practice) and that of the CLT approach.

The difference is that the traditional teaching methods focus on only the structural features of a language, whereas this is considered insufficient by the proponents of CLT who insist that language teaching should focus on both the structural and the functional features of a language in order to use that language for communication purposes. Thus, adopting the Saudi cultural view of education is one of the fundamental factors that limit the implementation of CLT in most of the SETs' teaching practice.

Thus, it appears from the aforementioned discussion that another form of conflict or contradiction in implementing CLT in the Saudi context arises from different perspectives that members of one community have about the aims of teaching English, as shown in Figure 7.8.

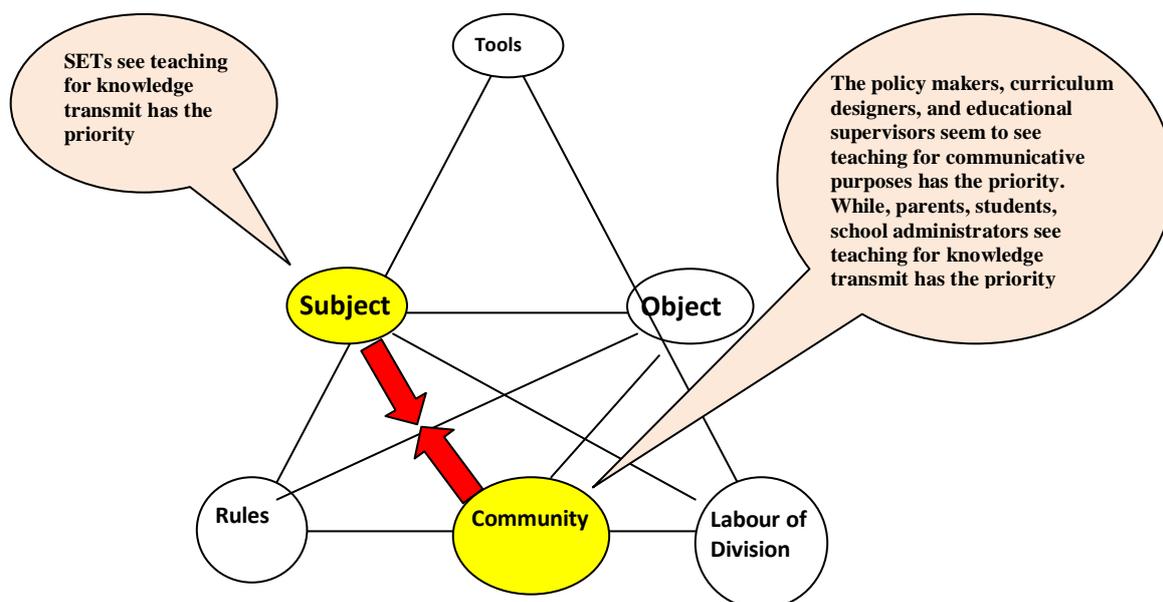


Figure 7. 8:
Contradiction on the purpose of EFL teaching
 (modified from figure 4.5 [Engestrom 1987])

For example, in the context of the study there was a discrepancy related to the purpose of EFL teaching. This was between the purpose that policy makers, curriculum designers, and educational supervisors had on the one hand, and the purpose that

teachers, parents, students and school administrators had on the other hand, as suggested by the interview comments in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. The policy makers, curriculum designers, and educational supervisors seem to see teaching for communicative purposes as the ultimate goal, and therefore assign some textbooks, which are based on teaching language for communicative purpose, and ask teachers to adopt CLT as the prescribed teaching method in order to help achieve their aims. Meanwhile some teachers, parents, students and school administrators, due to certain reasons such as exam purposes (as shown in section 7.1.2.), see knowledge transmission as the main purpose. So the conflict right at the level of the aim of the activity led those in the classroom (teachers and students) to adopt the activity that suited their qualifications and their needs.

7. 3. 2. 1. 2. The effect on teachers and students' roles:

On the other hand, the traditional view of education in the Saudi context also has left its impact on the role that SETs and their students have adopted in the classroom.

Elyas and Picard (2010, p. 141) argue that:

Like other teachers in KSA, English teachers are also imbued with a 'preacher-like' image and as a result mirror the traditional transmission of religious teaching in their English teaching practices.

Latta and Wunder (2012) argue that to be a teacher in the mimetic tradition is to be fully educated with factual and procedural knowledge and the ability to transmit that knowledge to others. The findings of this study clearly display that a teacher's role is still more dominant than a student's role. Teachers, according to the cultural view of education in the Saudi context, are considered to be the sources of knowledge and the knowledge transmitters, while students are merely knowledge receivers. Being a

source of knowledge and knowledge transmitter gives SETs in the Saudi schools an impression that they have control over their students and their learning (authority role) since they select knowledge items, and interpret and elaborate them to students.

Teachers' dominance in Saudi schools also has its own historical roots dating back to the time of Kuttab. At that time the Kuttab was the only place that children could learn in (Bouzoubaa 1998), and this kind of teaching was done generally by one teacher who played most of the roles at school such as source of knowledge, knowledge transmitter and assessor. During this period, the Kuttab teachers used to be among the few people who could read and write. So the local people were in need of these teachers' services inside and outside schools. As a result teacher received the deep reverence of the community (Elyas and Picard 2010). Alkubaidi (2014) and Alrabai (2014) argue that in the Saudi educational culture, teachers dominate the learning process, and students rely on them as the main source of knowledge.

Thus, these kinds of roles that teachers and students play in the English language classrooms in Saudi school affected by the traditional view of education, seem to be incompatible with the roles that are allocated to students and teachers by the language theory underlying CLT. CLT sees teachers as facilitators and organisers of students' learning. It focuses on giving students more emphasis than teachers. Thus, one of the significant divergences between SETs practice and the acceptance of the facilitator role is that such a role puts 'teachers on a par with students and detract[s] from teacher authority' (Hu 2002, p. 99). In the same vein Elyas and Picard (2010, p. 139) argue that since teachers have absolute power in the classroom 'it is not surprising that they are reluctant to relinquish this power in favour of more "student-centred" pedagogy'. As a result, SETs, to large extent, resist this role and persist in using traditional

teaching methods such as Grammar Translation and Audio-lingual methods, which give them full control over their classes. To sum up this point, it could be said, as

Richard and Rogers (1986) suggest, that SETs' roles are related to:

- a). the types of function teachers are expected to fulfill,
- b). the degree of control the teacher has over how learning takes place,
- c). the degree to which is the teacher is responsible for determining the content of what is taught, and
- d). the interactional patterns that develop between teachers and learners.

Thus, from the above discussion, it seems that another level of contradiction in implanting CLT in the Saudi context arises from the conflict between the traditional roles that cultural norms and community assign for teachers and students and the roles assigned to them by CLT, as shown in Figure 7.9. The findings of the study disclose that SETs' and students' roles have been influenced by the cultural view of education in the Saudi context. So it is not surprising to see that the predominant roles of SETs are: the source of knowledge, the knowledge transmitter, and the controller.

Meanwhile the students play the role of knowledge receivers. Thus, these kinds of roles seem to be incompatible with the roles that are allocated to students and teachers from the point view of the language theory underlying CLT. CLT sees teachers as facilitators and organisers of students' learning. It focuses on giving students more time than teachers. Thus, the discrepancy between the SETs' prescribed roles and existing roles seem to drive SETs to reinforce the adoption of traditional teaching methods and thus contribute to the exclusion of CLT from their teaching practice.

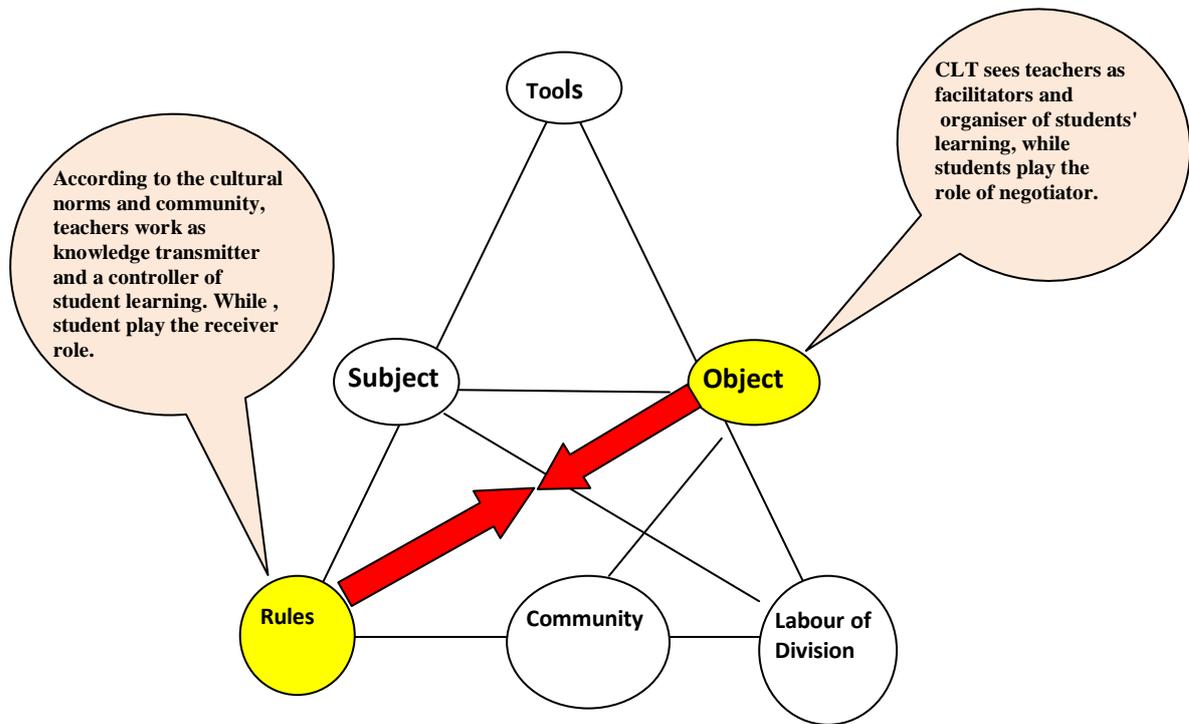


Figure 7.9: contradiction between roles
(modified from figure 4.5 [Engestrom 1987])

7. 3. 2. 1. 3. The effect on teaching and learning styles and teaching materials

It is clear from the findings that the cultural view of education in the Saudi context has also affected the style of teaching and learning that SETs and their students have adopted. SETs have selected some teaching styles that are compatible with the roles that they play in the classroom which also give them power over their classes. These styles include presenting their lessons through lecturing, in which most of the class time is allocated to teachers, while students passively to receive knowledge. This result echoes Fareh's (2010) observation about English teachers in Arabian contexts. He indicates that teachers spend the majority of the lesson talking and rarely allow students a chance to speak or ask questions; thus, classes are usually quiet as students take a passive role in the learning process.

In order to ensure mastery of this knowledge students have adopted some learning styles such as memorisation and repetition, as suggested by the study findings. However, such teaching and learning styles seem to limit the students' time spent in interaction and encourage them to be passive rather than active learners. Thus these styles of teaching and learning seem to be inconsistent with CLT, which emphasises that students' learning should be done through interactive task such as group work, role play, and games, in which students can practice language in a meaningful situation which resembles real life.

7. 3. 2. 2. Social status of English in the Saudi context

The social status of the English language is another socio-cultural issue that influences the effectiveness of English teaching in the Saudi context. It appears from the findings that although teaching and learning English is one of the very important issues for most of the Saudi people, there are some parts of the community which still consider learning English as a threat to the native language and as an attempt to change the culture and identity of the country. Szyliowicz (1973) and Mahboob and Elyas (2014) argue that there was a general reluctance to teach foreign languages among the local community in Saudi Arabia throughout the early history of education. This reluctance, as argued by some authors (Al Dameg 2011; Al-Seghayer 2013; Elyas and Picard 2010; Mahboob and Elyas 2014), is due to the fears that learning English or any other foreign language may influence the learning of Arabic, particularly at a young age, or that learning English may lead to changes in the Saudi culture and customs. And as we have seen in the literature review, this reluctance to learn foreign languages appeared once more when the MoE attempted to introduce English teaching in the primary section, implying that such fear is still alive in the Saudi context.

However, such views have some impact on students' motivation to learn English for communicative purposes and limit their learning to what is required to pass the final exam. This view also makes the situation more difficult for English teachers who adopt teaching for communication and implement CLT in their teaching practice.

7. 4. The isolated state of EFL institutions in the Saudi context

In addition to the aforementioned contradictions which arise from the individual level (Chapter 6) and contextual levels (Chapter 7), the interviews comments affirmed that the key parties that are involved in EFL teaching and learning in Saudi context are isolated from each other as regards their operations, as shown also in Chapter 2. These key parties or systems, as shown in Figure 7.10 are the MoE (the system responsible for planning and designing for educational innovation), the pre-service programme in the universities (the system of preparing those who will apply the innovation), the in-service training centres (the system of supporting SETs during their implementation of innovation) and the schools (the place for executing the innovation).

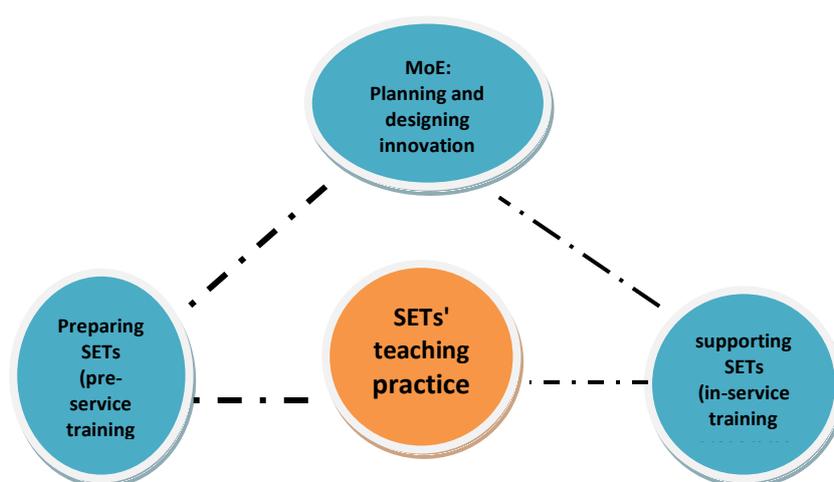


Figure 7.10: Isolation of EFL institutions

These systems should to be in active coordination in order to support the effective implementation of CLT, but in reality, there are no communication channels between these systems as the findings revealed earlier; they are isolated from each other. This isolation challenges the implementation of CLT in the Saudi context. The impact of such isolation could be seen clearly in the phases of initiation and actual implementation of CLT in the Saudi context. In the initial phase (before introducing an innovation), Wedell (2009) argues, in-depth evaluation of the innovation context is crucial. This is because such an appraisal could identify: 1) the contextual factors, which might influence the implementation; 2) the pedagogical or linguistic needs for those who will apply the innovation; and 3) the suitability of the innovation's characteristics, including feasibility (will it work), relevance (is it needed), and acceptability (compatibility with existing educational beliefs). The absence of such an appraisal, as the case in context of this study, might hinder the effectiveness of any innovation. Meanwhile, in the actual implementation of CLT the isolation of schools and training centres from each other has left a negative impact on the support available to SETs for this implementation. Branden (2009) argues that in order for an innovation to take place in teaching practice, it is not enough to notify teachers about the innovation and then leave them to their own devices. Teachers should be supported through all of stages of the implementation inside schools (by their colleges, head teachers, and supervisors), and outside schools (by training programmes that help them overcome their challenges).

7. 5. Conclusion

The factors discussed in this chapter suggest that Saudi Arabia is still not sufficiently ready to adopt a fully implementation of CLT. There are some fundamental institutional and situational factors in the Saudi context that are in conflict with the implementation of CLT. For instance, the quality of the in-service training programme, examination purposes and classrooms structure seem to be incompatible with the ultimate goal of teaching for communication. Furthermore, there are some socio-cultural elements in the Saudi context that are in conflict with CLT. For example, the theory of language teaching underlying these cultural elements which adopt a behaviourist view are completely in contrast to CLT principles which adopt a constructive and holistic view. There is also conflict in terms of the roles that have been adopted by teachers and students. CLT encourages giving more time to students to arrange their learning and urges teachers to work as facilitators for students learning and encourage creative and imaginative learning. However, these principles are reversed in the traditional methods which give teachers authority over their students and encourage superficial learning such as memorisation, repetition and imitation.

Thus, to sum up the discussion in this section, it could be argued that the lesson of this study seems to be that for an effective innovation (such as implementing CLT) to take place in the Saudi context, there are two major prerequisites: strengthening the confidence of those who will execute the innovation, and paving the way for a smooth and gradual introduction of the innovation by mediating the challenges and obstacles that the innovation may face. The strengthening of the teachers' confidence could be done by providing them with good preparation (which includes pedagogical and

linguistic preparation) and support that are compatible with the change. The paving of the way could be done by considering the contextual factors that might obstruct the implementation of the change. Thus, a change in SETs' teaching practice could take place if it affords more comfortable and effective classroom practice for teachers.

Thus, in the coming chapter (Chapter 8) I will propose some suggestions and recommendations that may help mediate the current situation and enhance the effective implementation of CLT.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

8. 1. Introduction

The concluding chapter has four sections. The first section summarises briefly the aims and the main findings of the study. The second section proposes some suggestions and recommendations for improving the English Language Teaching education in the Saudi context. The third section summarises the main contributions of this thesis to the field of the English Language Teaching education in the Saudi context. Then the chapter concludes with outlines of the main limitations and some suggestions for further research and study.

8. 2. Summary of the research

The study set out to explore the challenges factors that Saudi English teachers encounter in their teaching practice in implementing teaching for communicative purposes and their attempt to implement CLT as a teaching method in their classes. In addition, this study also explored the roots of these challenges in order to understand where they stem from.

While many previous studies that have been done in EFL contexts have given a great deal of attention to enumerating the various factors encountered in the implementation of CLT, little attention has been given to explore deeply the reasons responsible for the emergence of such challenges in implementing CLT. For instance, when some of these studies showed that one of the obstacles that hinder the adoption of CLT by EFL teachers was the shortcomings in the teachers' pedagogical knowledge, there was no

further investigation into the theoretical and practical opportunities that EFL teachers had received in their pre-service and in-service training in their countries.

Furthermore, when some of these studies mentioned that some EFL teachers have a gap in spoken English that limit their implementing CLT, there was no further investigation into how EFL teachers were prepared linguistically in pre-service programmes. Therefore, my argument in this study is that even though listing the challenges facing implementation of CLT in EFL contexts is important, going to the root of these problems as well as understanding the nature of the interactions between these factors are more likely to provide a better understanding of why the desired change has not taken place, and how it might be fostered. Accordingly, my research study questions were:

- i)- Which methodological practices do Saudi English Language teachers in their formative year in state schools say they currently use in their classrooms?
- ii)- What factors influence English teachers' choice of teaching methods in their formative year?
- iii)- How might ELT education in the Saudi context be altered in order to close any identified gap(s) between the methodology informing the syllabus (CLT) and the current teaching methods used by the English teachers in their formative year?

In order to answer these research questions, I used the tools of the Grounded Theory methods as a methodological approach for gathering data through interviews, questionnaires, and from documents. The interview data were collected from a group of 12 English language teachers from state schools, 5 educational supervisors, and 4 university lecturers. The questionnaire data were collected from 45 English language teachers from state schools. The main themes for reporting the findings were generated through various strategies derived from Grounded Theory such as open, axial and selective coding. The answer to each research question is provided below.

8. 2. 1. Which methodological practices do Saudi English language teachers in their formative year in Saudi state schools say they currently used in their classrooms?

This question was posed firstly because I believe that whenever change of any kind is introduced, it is important to understand the current practice of those affected by and expected to carry out the change (Bowers et al. 2007). According to the findings of the study, as shown in Chapter 5, it could be summed up that the current methodological practices of SETs are traditional teaching methods that stress the dominance of teachers and result in: marginalising students' interaction; a concern with the final product of teaching and not the process of teaching and learning; teaching discrete skills; and encouraging competitive learning rather than co-operative learning among students.

Furthermore, the main features of the teaching practice of SETs in this study could be summarised as in Figure 5.2, which was mentioned previously in Chapter 5.

According to this figure, the knowledge and activities that were used in the SETs' classes focused on discrete skills with more emphasis on grammar and translation and less emphasis on oral skills (the size of the circles on the left side of the figure shows which skills were given more emphasis). These skills were taught in isolation from each other (the dotted circle indicates that these skills are not taught in an integrated way). Moreover, in teaching, these skills were organised and presented by teachers. Then teachers passed them in a unidirectional process to students (whose roles appear to be peripheral in the classroom, i.e. they seem to be containers waiting to be filled with language knowledge), and the ultimate aim was the accumulation of knowledge.

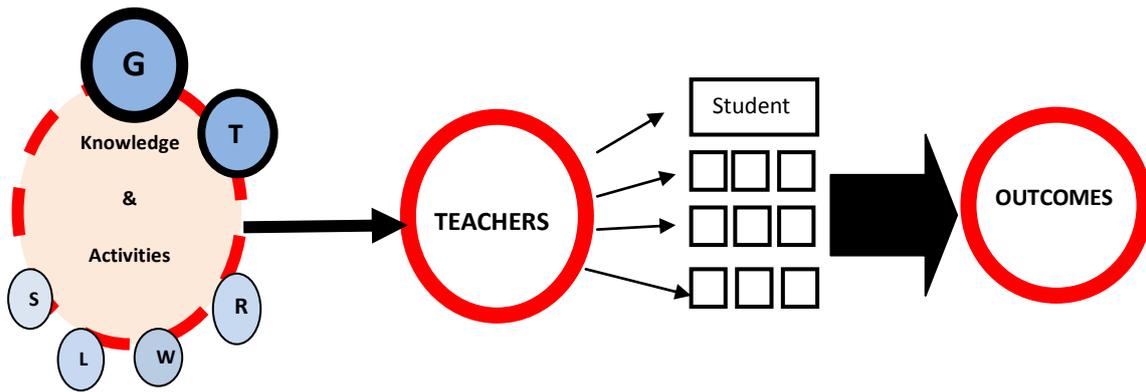


Figure 5. 2. The current SETs' teaching practice

8. 2. 2. What factors influence English teachers' choice of teaching methods in their formative year?

The findings demonstrated that teaching for communicative purposes and the implementation of CLT by SETs were influenced by various factors which stemmed from two levels of the SETs' teaching practice (the individual and contextual levels) as well as from the interactions between these two levels, as shown in Figure 1.1 which was mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, then in Chapters 6 and 7.

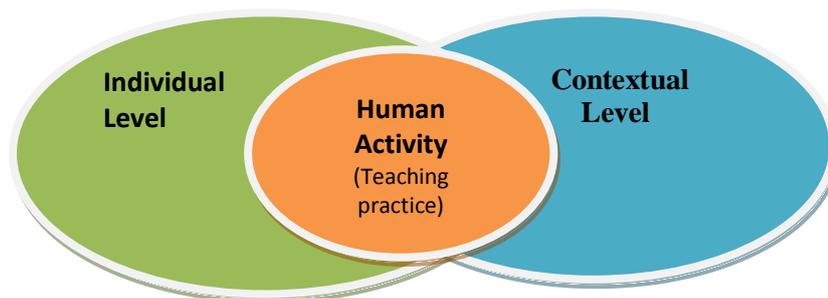


Figure 1.1 Teaching practice as a human activity

8. 2. 2. 1. The influential factors that are related to SETs (the individual level)

The data findings in Chapter 6 suggested that SETs on the individual level had some misconceptions about some of the main features of CLT. In addition, the data suggested that SETs expressed the belief that they were unable to run communicative classes and adopt CLT in their teaching practice because they did not feel confident about doing these tasks. The data showed that this feeling resulted from SETs' inadequate pedagogical and linguistic preparations in their pre-service programmes, as well as due to the inadequate information that they had received about the change (teaching for communication and applying CLT) that they should bring about in their teaching practice.

8. 2. 2. 2. The influential factors that are related to the contextual level

At the contextual or social level, as the study data suggested in Chapter 7, there were two main kinds of constraints that hindered SETs from teaching for communicative purposes and applying CLT in their teaching practice. These factors were the institutional & situational factors and the socio-cultural factors as discussed below.

a . The institutional and situational factors

The data findings, in Chapter 7 (Section 7.1), suggested that the readiness of the Saudi context to adopt a full implementation of CLT was not sufficient. There were some fundamental institutional and situational factors in the Saudi context that were in conflict with the implementation of CLT. For instance, the content of the in-service training programme, examination purposes and classrooms structure seemed to be incompatible with the ultimate goal of teaching for communicative purposes.

b. The socio-cultural factors

The data findings, in Chapter 7 (Section 7.2), suggested that there were some socio-cultural elements in the Saudi context that were in conflict with the features of CLT. For example, the theory of language teaching underlying CLT and the one that is dominant in the Saudi context are completely in contrast. While CLT adopts a constructive and holistic view of the teaching and learning process, the traditional view of education in the Saudi context adopts the behaviourist view. Also the roles that had been adopted by SETs (knowledge transmitter) and students (knowledge receiver) were not in harmony with the roles that teachers and students should adopt according to the principles of CLT, i.e. as the facilitators of learning and the negotiators of meaning, respectively. Moreover, the social status of English language is another socio-cultural issue that influences the effectiveness of English teaching in the Saudi context. It appears from the findings that despite the significant importance of the English language as the lingua franca and the language of science, and in spite of the Saudi government investment in the teaching of English, the status of the language in a considerable part of the Saudi community is still secondary, due to the perception that teaching and learning English is a threat to the native language and an attempt to change the culture and identity of the country (AlSeghayer 2013).

8. 2. 2. 3. The interactions between the two levels of SETs' teaching practice

The findings of the study, as shown in Chapter 7, suggested that the SETs' reluctance in implementing CLT in their teaching practice was the outcome of the interactions between the two levels of the influential factors (individual and contextual levels), i.e. it was the whole rather than the single factor that generated the problem. And as a result of these interactions between the two levels, there were some contradictions

that might be considered the challenges that lead SETs away from implementing CLT in their teaching practice. These challenges came in six levels (for more details refer to Section 7.3):

- a) Level one: The prerequisite qualification for SETs
- b) Level two: The purpose of teaching English in the Saudi context
- c) Level three: The assumed aim and the evaluation tools
- d) Level four: Teachers' and students' roles
- e) Level five: Teaching and learning styles and teaching materials
- f) Level six: Situational issues

In addition to the aforementioned contradictions the data findings suggested, as shown in Section 7.4, that key parties that are involved in EFL teaching and learning in Saudi context are isolated from one another. These key parties or systems are the MoE (the system responsible for planning and designing innovation), the pre-service programme in the universities (the system preparing those who will apply the innovation), and in-service training centres (the system supporting SETs during their implementation of the innovation) as well as the schools (the system or place of execution the innovation). The isolation of these key parties from each other has made a negative impact on the implementation of CLT by SETs in the Saudi schools.

8. 2. 3. *How might ELT education in the Saudi context be altered in order to close any identified gap(s) between the methodology informing the syllabus (CLT) and the current teaching methods used by the English teachers in their formative year?*

The answer for the third question will be presented in the following section in form of suggestions and recommendations.

8. 3. Suggestions and recommendations

Fullan and Park (1981, p. 10) define the actual implementation of an innovation as ‘alterations from existing practice to some new or revised practice in order to achieve certain desired student learning outcomes’. According to this definition and based on the findings of this study, CLT has not yet been implemented in the Saudi context. Fullan (2001) identifies three phases for the implementation of an innovation. The first phase is initiation, during which a change begins (through gaining information about the change in pre-service preparation and in-service training, setting school policy, etc.). The second is the actual implementation, when teachers begin to use the innovation in their teaching practice classroom. The third, institutionalisation, occurs when the innovation becomes fully incorporated in everyday classroom practice. In effect, then the Saudi MoE in introducing the new curriculum and adopting CLT, has made a big leap from the zero level to the second phase (implementation) without passing through the first phase (initiation). It could be argued, however, that the initial phase of the innovation is a fundamental phase because during this phase an outline of the features of the change and the teachers who could deal with it might be introduced. Also, as Wedell (2009) argues an in-depth evaluation of the innovation context could also be undertaken during the initiation phase. Such an appraisal could identify and analyse: a) the contextual factors that might influence the implementation; b) the needs (pedagogical or linguistic) of those who will apply the innovation; c) the innovation characteristics, i.e. feasibility (will it work?), relevance (is it needed?), and acceptability (compatibility with existing educational beliefs).

According to the study findings, omitting the initiation phase has had a considerable negative impact on the implementation of CLT in the Saudi context. So the question now is: How can the Saudi system implement and take advantage of the initial phase?

8. 3. 1. Bridging the isolation between the key parties involved in EFL teaching and learning in the Saudi context

The change that is currently taking place in the EFL curriculum in the Saudi context is not a project that be achieved effectively by the efforts of a single governing body (MoE). In my view, it is a comprehensive initiative that also involves various players (such as local universities, training centres, and schools) who should play essential roles at various stages and work in an integrated way in order to achieve the desired change. Thus, managing change in the educational field, such as implementing CLT in English classrooms in Saudi schools, necessitates constructing a highly collaborative and networked system that involves all key parties such as the MoE, local universities, in-service training centres and schools (Pansiri 2014) before, during and after the introduction of the change. Such a system would help the engaged parties to understand and cope with the proposed change, adjust their plans to match it, minimise the resistance to the change, and work in a joint project to maximise its implementation. In this study we have seen that the change in the EFL context in Saudi Arabia, that of adopting teaching for communicative purposes and implementing CLT, has been brought about by the MoE only at the level of designing a new communicative curriculum. However, this was done without combining curricular innovation with further adjustments at other levels, such as in teachers' preparation, in-service training, the examination system and school environment, and without considering the impact of the socio-cultural features of the Saudi context. In other words, due to the lack of communication between MoE and local universities, the Saudi MoE failed to take into consideration the fact that change of the EFL curriculum demands special preparation of those who are going to

execute and apply this change in schools. Thus, such a change may not succeed because teachers who carry out the change are inadequately prepared for the change. If the MoE considers this obstacle, we may see a new channel and partnership between the MoE and local universities being established. Through such a channel of communication, knowledge about the change or innovation could be provided to the English departments which may in turn adjust their plans to match the new change. Thus, through the communication channels, the designers or the planners of the EFL curriculum in the Saudi context could describe the main features of the curriculum and negotiate with the English departments with regard to the main capabilities that EFL teachers should possess in order to teach such a curriculum. Branden (2009, p. 662), indeed, argues that ‘gaining knowledge about an innovation constitutes the crucial first step in a process that may ultimately lead to the implementation of the innovation in the language classroom’.

In addition, due to the lack of communication between the governing bodies, the MoE also did not realise that the new change in the EFL curriculum should also take into consideration the nature of the school environments and teachers' training needs. For this reason, we have seen that SETs were unhappy about their in-service training opportunities because they did not support the new change being implemented.

Moreover, establishing a networking system between all key parties would not only help in providing enough information about the change, but it would also provide a chance to run an in-depth appraisal to see whether or not the change is compatible with the situations of the change agents (teachers and contextual factors). Such an evaluation might help in providing predictable indicators to determine whether teachers transfer the change to their teaching practice or resist the change. According

to Kelly (1980) innovation can match the working context if it is feasible (able to be put into practice), acceptable (compatible with teachers' beliefs and teaching approaches), and relevant (meets the needs of the learners). All of these criteria could be verified if the communication channels between the key parties who are in charge of EFL teaching and learning in the Saudi context are activated.

This study, furthermore, could be taken as an example of an in-depth appraisal of the applicability of CLT to the Saudi context that the MoE could refer to in order to improve the current situation. The main conclusion of the study was that in order to introduce innovation, such as implementing CLT, in the Saudi context, there are two major requirements – namely, strengthening the confidence of those who will carry out the innovation, and paving the way for smooth and gradual introduction of the innovation by mediating the challenges and obstacles that it may face. The strengthening of the teachers' confidence could be done by preparing them appropriately (both pedagogically and linguistically) and providing on-going support that is compatible with the change, while paving the way for what should be done by considering the contextual factors that might challenge the implementation of the change and minimising their negative impacts as far as possible. Thus, in relation to this issue and in addition to the aforementioned point (closing the gap between the key parties), the study also suggests that some adjustments should be made to the pre-service and in-service training programmes, as well as to the examinations and the school environments in order to boost the implementation of CLT in Saudi schools.

8. 3. 2. *Adjustment in English language departments (pre-service programmes)*

According to the study's findings, SETs suffered in their initial preparations from two fundamental issues, i.e. shortcomings in their language ability and a limited teaching repertoire. Thus, the study proposes some suggestions that may help in improving SETs' preparations.

8. 3. 2. 1. *Suggestions for boosting student teachers' language ability*

a). The English departments in the Saudi universities should consider the English language level of the applicants among the entry requirements for their Bachelor degree programmes. In order to have clear standard entry criteria, English departments should request that applicants show that they have the required English level based on the result of one of the accredited international language systems, such as a score of 5 in IELTS, or equivalent in TOEFL or other accredited language tests.

b). English departments should also enrol new students onto foundation courses which may last for one or two terms based on the students' progress and levels of proficiency in English. These foundation courses should provide students with intensive preparation in language skills and with opportunities to practise what they have learned. The final decision about enrolment in the first year should be based on the students' performance in the foundation courses.

c). The first two years of the BA programme, which normally lasts for four years, should also focus on improving the language skills of the student-teachers and provide them with practical opportunities (such as using authentic materials, peer interaction, extensive reading and writing of journals, and presentations) for

exposure to speaking and writing in the target language. Students should be also encouraged to extend their exposure to the target language outside their departments by taking advantage of available technology. For example, they could log on to some trusted English language learning web sites, watch movies and join interactive online networks for English learning and teaching.

8. 3. 2. 2. *Suggestions for improving the teaching repertoire*

a). According to the findings of the study, the teaching plans in most of the English departments in Saudi universities are overloaded due to a large number of literary, Arabic and university imposed subject matter, at the expense of other important subjects such as pedagogic and pedagogic content subjects. So a reduction of these subjects is crucial in order to increase the amount of the pedagogic knowledge (such as the philosophy of education, educational psychology, curriculum theory and classroom management) and pedagogic content knowledge subjects (such as ELT Methodology, ELT approaches and methods, teaching EFL skills [listening, speaking, reading, writing], teaching grammar, second/ foreign language acquisition, teaching and reflection, creating teaching material, and language evaluation). Through these more important subjects student-teachers could construct a good understanding of how to teach for communicative purposes, create communicative activities, and use CLT to achieve the desired goals of teaching.

b). According to the findings of the study, the teaching model that is adopted in most of the English departments in the Saudi universities is the rationalist model, which ‘involves the teaching of scientific knowledge to students who, in turn, are expected to apply this knowledge in their teaching’ (Day 1993, p. 6; Wallace 1991; Banegas

2011; Hong and Pawan 2015). As a result, the practical opportunities in this model (rationalist model) are very limited, as we have seen in Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2, and the gap between theory and practice is wide. Thus, in order to strengthen the student-teachers' teaching repertoire English departments should adopt the reflective teaching model (Wallace 1991) or what Day (1993, p. 10) calls the integrative model'. In such a model, a student-teacher could obtain the knowledge base (content, pedagogic, pedagogic content, and support knowledge) through a variety of experiences and activities such as microteaching, observation, simulation, and role play (Wallace 1991; Day 1993). Moreover, this kind of model encourages student-teachers to adopt reflective skills and practice when they learn how to teach English. Thus, through this kind of model student- teachers could have the chance to examine and reflect on what they have learned about CLT and teaching for communicative purposes as they involve themselves in activities or experience such as microteaching. As a result of the process of acting, reflecting, and reacting (Day 1993), student-teachers could develop their own hypothesis about what could work in their classes before they start real teaching.

c). Establishing a real partnership with local schools could help provide student-teachers with opportunities for exchange visits with schools teachers (Abahussain 2006). Such visits would familiarise student-teachers with the school environment, give them chances to attend and observe real English lessons, and establish good rapport before they start their practicum periods.

d). The teaching plans of the English departments in the Saudi universities should include practicums. The practicum period is considered an important component of a good teacher education programme (Wilson 2006). Ulvik and Smith (2011, p. 520)

argue that the practicum could 'provide student teachers with authentic hands-on experience in teaching..... to develop their teaching skills and to start collecting experiences to enrich their professional wisdom'. So, acquiring knowledge about how to teach is not enough; it is important to practice this knowledge in real teaching, and that could be done in the practicum period (Abahussain 2006; Haigh et al 2006). Therefore, it is crucial for the English departments to offer efficient practicum programmes for their student-teachers. To achieve this, practicum programmes should, firstly, provide student-teachers with environments in which they feel safe and supported (Abahussain 2006; Haigh et al 2006). This could be done through the exchange visits that are proposed in the previous point (c), which would help them to establish rapport with school teachers before and during their practicum period. Secondly, in order to provide student-teachers with supportive environments, involving cooperating teachers (mentors) should be one of the main components of the practicum programmes. This is because through the relationship with mentors, student-teachers could see real examples of different teaching situations, as well as receive positive feedback about their teaching practices. Thirdly, in order to enhance the reflective skills and practice for student-teachers, practicum programmes should let them work with peers. The activities that allow for working with peers, for example, are peer observation, discussion, and workshop. Working with peers will enhance student-teachers' learning and prepare them to practice peer supported learning with their own students in their future teaching profession (Abahussain 2006). So, it is recommended that the university-based supervisors should have the ability to create and involve student-teachers in some activities that allow for peer interactions, such as attending peer observation classes

and discussions that could take place after the observation (post-conference sessions).

8.3.3 Adjustments to in-service training programmes

SETs also need on-going training to support them during their attempts to implement CLT. This kind of support depends on their actual training needs. Since SETs work in a complex educational system, their training purposes also tend to become complex. So, according to the in-depth appraisal that this study has done for the in-service training programmes in the Saudi context, SETs are in need of the following training courses:

8.3.3.1. Induction programme

This type of programme is normally designed to provide systematic support for new teachers by strengthening their knowledge, concepts, and skills, and by helping in the amendment of any shortcoming in their initial preparation. The programme may also help them to overcome any emerging challenges, such as managing classrooms and dealing with students' behaviours. Induction programmes might encompass the following:

- a). Orientation programmes, which introduces new teachers to their schools' structures, and define their duties and rights.
- b). Mentoring, which might be organised by their supervisors or experienced teachers in their schools to support new teachers' professional practice.
- c). Professional development and training, which would suit new teachers and help them bridge any identified gap in their initial preparations.

8. 3. 3. 2. *Pedagogic training*

It could be argued that, in the Saudi context, English teachers are in need of further pedagogic training courses that are devoted mainly to helping them cope with the change in their situations. El-Laithy (1989) mentions that pedagogic training courses (i.e. training courses in pedagogic knowledge and content pedagogic knowledge) that could be offered to English teachers are, for example:

- a) Courses that introduce English teachers to new curricula, new syllabi, and new methods and approaches;
- b) Courses that help English teachers to apply technology in teaching English and in creating new teaching aids;
- c) Courses that provide English teachers with techniques to assess and evaluate student performance;
- d) Courses that acquaint English teachers with the latest knowledge in psychological, sociological, and cultural development.

8. 3. 3. 3. *Linguistic training*

The issue of the language proficiency of non-native English teachers is one of the challenges that needs immediate support from different sources, and in-service training programmes should be one of them. The results of this study indicate that SETs in the Saudi context are in need of further linguistic training.

8. 3. 3. 4. *Teacher training model requirements*

The training programmes suggested above could be carried out effectively if two models of training are used: site-based and self-directed training models (Gaible and Burns 2005).

a. A site-based teacher training model is usually done in the workplace (schools), with teachers working collaboratively with colleagues to learn and practice new skills. The site-based training model often focuses on the specific, situational problems that individual teachers encounter as they try to implement new techniques in their classroom practice (Hooker 2008), for example implementing CLT and communicative activities. This model of training may include a variety of approaches, such as observation, open lessons, lesson study, study groups and mentoring (Hooker 2008).

b. Self-directed training model: In this training model, teachers initiate and design their own training programmes according to their individual needs, and may also share sources and discuss problems and solutions with their colleagues (Hooker 2008). This type of training helps teachers to become long-life learners. It can involve watching video examples of classroom teaching, reading books, writing journals or diaries, taking online courses, or observing classes taught by colleagues (Hooker 2008).

8. 3. 4. Adjustments at the contextual level

The context where SETs work also need to make some adjustments in order to be compatible with the aims of teaching for communicative purposes and applying CLT.

8. 3. 4. 1. At the school level

At the school level there are certain things that need immediate modifications. These are discussed below:

- a) In order to effectively implement CLT the number of students in the classroom should be reduced to at least 20–25 students.
- b) It is recommended that SETs have preparation time in their teaching loads in order to give them enough time to prepare for communicative activities, attend workshops and training sessions, and observe and exchange visits with colleagues.
- c) Schools should be equipped with authentic materials such as stories, journals, films, as well as other media like the internet that helps SETs to connect what they teach with the real life situations.

8. 3. 4. 2. Examination systems

Examination systems should also be revised in order to match the purposes of teaching for communication. So, there should be room in the examination systems to examine all of the language skills including the oral skills. In addition, the examination should not be limited to a written one; there should be a variety of activities that match the desired goal of teaching and could be used at the same time as the tools for examining student progress in aspects such as oral presentation, debate, group discussion, role play and problem solving.

8. 3. 4. 3. Incremental change

Changing teachers' beliefs is not an easy task and it may take a long time to bear fruit. Thus, introducing change radically is risky and may increase teachers' reluctance to implement the change, as was the case with SETs in this study. So, from my point of view, in order to have sustainable change and reduce resistance, it is better to introduce the change (teaching for communication and applying CLT) gradually rather than rapidly. Also in my view, it could be introduced gradually in three stages.

Firstly, this could be done by providing intensive information to teachers about the change through brochures, conferences, workshops, and training sessions. This would give SETs time to gain knowledge and understand the change before practising it. Secondly, the teachers could be allowed to observe, as role models, more experienced teachers, who run classes by applying the desired change. This would let new teachers see how those experienced teachers apply the change. Thirdly, teachers could try a small part of the change in their classes and reflect on their action in order to identify any weaknesses that need adjustment. For example, teachers could start teaching by using some teaching styles that allocate most of the lesson time to teachers, such as lecturing, and then from time to time, introduce some activities that reduce teachers' time and increase students' participation, such as pair or group work. Also, teachers could use some techniques that they and their students are familiar with, such as translating into the mother tongue and teaching grammar explicitly, but these techniques should be used as a means to achieve the desired goal (teaching for communication).

8. 4. Contributions of the thesis

This research has contributed to the English language teaching research field by identifying the nature and the roots of the challenges that SETs encounter in their attempts to implement CLT in their teaching practices.

8. 4. 1. Contribution to the Saudi Arabian context

a). Policy makers and curriculum developers:

My research has identified how the interactions and the contradictions between the influential factors that stem from the individual and contextual levels of the SETs'

teaching practice affect the implementation of CLT in the Saudi context. So, the research has provided an in-depth appraisal of the nature and the roots of these challenges as well as highlighted the interactions and the contradictions between these factors as the main forces that potentially drive SETs away from applying CLT in their teaching practice. As a consequence, the outcomes of this research in turn have the potential to inform policy and curriculum development and the actions of local educators and the foreign contractors in Saudi Arabia. This research also demonstrates that taking the nature, the roots, and the interactions of influential factors into consideration in any further reform may provide a better chance of effective implementation of the intended change (teaching for communication and applying CLT).

b). Pre-service programmes plans

The in-depth investigation of my research has contributed to understanding how the EFL teachers were prepared (linguistically and pedagogically) in some English departments in Saudi universities. It has also identified the main limitations to these programmes. The study has also proposed some suggestions that might help the developers of these programmes to reform the current situation.

c). In-service training programmes

The in-depth investigation has contributed to understanding the kind of the training provision that EFL teachers receive in the Saudi context. It has also contributed to identifying the main limitations of current training programmes and the kind of training courses that EFL teachers need. This information might help the developers of these programmes reform the current situation.

8. 4. 2. *Contribution to the educational research field*

a). The outcomes of this research contributes to the literature of the educational research field by providing in-depth insights about the implementation of CLT in the Saudi context, which may lead to an understanding of the challenges faced during the implementation of CLT in other EFL context.

b). By applying CHAT theory (investigating the issue within its context and understanding the interactions and the contradictions in this context), the study has provided a practical example of how to understand change conducted in the field of education, a process which is considered complex, hard and frustrating (Fullan 2009).

c). By adopting the tools of Grounded Theory, the study has provided a practical example of how to investigate an issue within the educational field, which is considered complex (Fullan 2009). This is because, by applying the procedures of Grounded Theory, the study has managed not only to identify the factors that influence the implementation of CLT in the Saudi context, but also extended the exploration to the roots of these factors.

8. 5. *Limitations and further study.*

8.5. 1. *Limitation of the study*

a). The study set out to investigate the nature and the roots of the challenges that influence Saudi English teachers in their formative year. Therefore the research findings are relevant to this group only.

b). The investigation in this study is also limited to state schools, universities, and local training centres and excluded private schools, institutions, and universities in the Saudi context.

c). Due to the segregation by gender in Saudi education, the investigation in this study is limited to male teachers, lecturers, and supervisors, and has excluded female participants because the researcher did not have access to them.

8. 5. 2. *Further studies*

a). The problems identified in the study are related to the experience of SETs as novice teachers. So, in order to understand the problems that veteran teachers face in CLT implementation, further study would be required.

b). The problems identified in the study are related to the experience of male SETs. So, in order to understand the problems that female teachers face in CLT implementation further study should be done.

c). The investigation in this study has highlighted some socio-cultural issues such as the traditional view of education that are related to the Saudi context; in order to understand explore the same issues in other contexts, studies will have to be done in those contexts.

d). The investigation in this study has identified part of the shortcomings in the in-service training programmes in the Saudi context, i.e. those are related to the novice English teachers' (SETs) training programmes. So, in order to understand the problems that faced by the veteran English teachers further study should be done.

e). Finally, this study is limited to the challenges facing the implementation of CLT by the novice teachers (SETs in their formative year). If this study were to be repeated, the researcher would ensure that veteran teachers were included in order to obtain a full picture regarding the issue under investigation.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

BA plan in English department, KUS, School of Arts

(the subjects in bold are the educational courses) Level

1			Level 2		
Course	Title	Hrs	Course	Title	Hrs
Eng. 111	Basic Language Skills (1)	3	Eng. 114	Composition: Writing parag.. (1)	3
Eng. 112	Listening and Speaking (1)	2	Eng. 115	Reading Comprehension (2)	3
Eng. 113	Reading Comprehension (1)	2	Eng. 116	Remedial Grammar	3
Eng. 118	Translation (E-A)	2	Eng. 122	Listening and Speaking (2)	2
Eng. 120	Vocabulary Building	2	Eng. 181	Introduction to Literary Terms	3
Arb. 101		2	Slm. 102		2
Slm. 101		2			
Total		15	Total		16

Level 3			Level 4		
Course	Title	Hrs	Course	Title	Hrs
Eng. 212	Translation (1)	2	Eng. 231	Appreciating Poetry	2
Eng. 213	Composition (2)	2	Eng. 312	Essay Writing	2
Eng. 241	Appreciating Drama	2	Eng. 323	Linguistics II	2
Eng. 251	The Rise of the Novel	3	Eng. 328	Phonetics	2
Eng. 320	Linguistics (1)	3	Eng. 371	Introduction to American Lit	3
Arb. 103		2	Arb. 104		3
Slm. 103		2	Slm. 104		2
Total		16	Total		16

Level 5			Level 6		
Course	Title	Hrs	Course	Title	Hrs
Eng. 324	Applied Linguistics	3	Eng. 351	19 th Century Novel	3
Eng. 329	Language Acquisition	3	Eng. 361	Literary Criticism (1)	3
Eng. 332	Romantic Poetry	3	Eng. 406	<i>Techniques of Language Teaching</i>	3
Eng. 344	Shakespeare	3	Eng. 411	Translation (2)	2
Eng. 412	Speech	2	Eng. 420	<i>Language Evaluation</i>	2
Arb. 105		3	Eng. 422	English Phonology	2
Total		17	Total		15

Level 7			Level 8		
Course	Title	Hrs	Course	Title	Hrs
Eng. 413	Advanced Writing	3	Eng. 407	Language and Society	3
Eng. 421	History of English Language	2	Eng. 424	Transformational Grammar	3
Eng. 423	Eng. Morphology & Syntax	3	Eng. 432	Modern Poetry	3
Eng. 427	Linguistics (3)	2	Eng. 443	Modern Drama	3
Eng. 429	Style and Discourse	3	Eng. 451	Modern British Novel	3
Eng. 431	Victorian Poetry	3	Eng. 461	Literary Criticism (2)	2
Total		16	Total		17

Appendix 2

BA plan for English language and translation college Imam Muhammad University (the subjects in bold are the educational courses)

level	Course Title	Level	Course Title
1	Listening & Speaking	2	Listening & Speaking
1	Reading	2	Reading
1	Writing	2	Writing
1	Grammar	3	Grammar
6	<u>TEFL Methods (Eng)</u>	3	Introduction to literature
4	The Novel	3	Essay Writing
4	Poetry	4	Essay Writing
3	Introduction to Translation	4	Translation
3	Introduction to Linguistics	3	Research Methods
4	Syntax	3	Phonetics & Phonology
4	Drama	7	<u>TEFL Methods (Eng)</u>
7	<u>CALL (ENG)</u>	4	Foreign Language
5	The Novel	6	The Novel
5	Poetry	6	Poetry
5	Essay Writing	6	Essay Writing
5	Translation	6	Translation
5	Drama	6	Drama
5	Semantics	6	Theories of Linguistics
6	Literary Criticism	5	History of English Literature
7	History of English	7	The Novel
7	Translation	7	Research
7	Literary Criticism	7	Language & Society
5	Foreign Language	8	Translation Project
8	<u>Practicum</u>	1	<u>principles of pedagogy (Ar)</u>
2	<u>principles of pedagogy (Ar)</u>	3	<u>History and policy of Education in KSA (Ar)</u>
5	<u>Principles of curriculum (Ar)</u>	6	<u>Educational policy and admenstration (Ar)</u>
6	<u>Educational psychology (Ar)</u>	7	<u>Educational Evaluation(Ar)</u>

Appendix 3

Teacher college, KSU Study Plan Of English Department

First level (first semester)

Credit Hours	Course Title	Course Code
2	Mathematics Principles	130 Math
8	English (1)	140 Eng
3	Computer skills	140 Tech
2	Communication Skills	140 Com.

Total 15

Second Level (second semester)

Credit Hours	Course Title	Course Code
2	Introduction to Statistics	140Stat.
8	English (2)	150 Eng
2	Writing Skills	140 Ara.
3	Learning, thinking, and research skills	140 Curr.
1	Health and Fitness	150 Health

16Total

Third Level

Credit Hours	Course Title	Course code
2	Listening & Speaking (lab.)	231 Eng
2	Reading and Writing	232 Eng
2	Grammar	233 Eng
2	Vocabulary	234 Eng
2	Introduction to Islamic Culture	101 Islm
2	Students Guidance	302 Ps
2	Principles of Education	203 Edu

Total 14

Fourth level

Credit Hours	Course Title	Course code
2	Debate & Discussion	Eng
2	Advance Reading	242 Eng
2	Advanced Writing	243 Eng
2	Introduction to linguistics	244 Eng
2	Introduction to literature	245 Eng
2	Phonetics	246 Eng
2	Islam and Society	102 Islm
2	Functional syntax	109Arb
2	Educational psychology	202 Ps

Total 18

Fifth level

Credit Hours	Course Title	Course code
2	Analytical reading	351 Eng
2	Specialist writing	352 Eng
2	Western culture	353 Eng

2	Applied linguistics	354 Eng
2	Second language acquisition	355 Eng
2	Syntax	356 Eng
2	Economy system in Islam	103 Islm
2	Teaching curricula	321Curr
2	Class management	301 Edu

Total

18

Sixth level

Credit Hours	Course Title	Course code
2	Social linguistics	361 Eng
2	Critical writing	362 Eng
2	Analytical reading (2)	363 Eng
2	Introduction to translation	364 Eng
2	Pragmatics	365 Eng
2	Optional course	---Eng
2	Quran interpretation	113Qur
2	Management and guidance	302 Edu
2	English teaching approaches (1)	305Curr
2	Educational evaluation	303 Ps

Total

21

Seventh level

Credit Hours	Course Title	Course code
2	Language and culture	471 Eng
2	Psycholinguistics	472 Eng
2	CALL	473 Eng
2	Language testing	474 Eng
2	Translation applications	475 Eng
2	Optional Course	---Eng
2	Political system in Islam	104 Islm
2	English teaching approaches (2)	405Curr
2	Electronic learning systems and its means	400Tech

Total

18

Eight level

Credit Hours	Course Title	Course code
8	Internship	Curr
4	Graduation project	481 Eng

Total

12

Appendix 4
English Language and Literature Department (Faculty of Arts) in King Abdul-Aziz
University

Internal English Program Bachelor of Arts Degree - Study Plan							
Year One- Preparatory Year							
Semester One				Semester Two			
Course Title	Code Number	Credit Units	Prerequisite	Course Title	Code Number	Credit Units	Prerequisite
Islamic Studies I	ISLS 101	2		Statistics	STAT 111	3	
Arabic Studies I	ARAB 101	3		Development Of Thinking Skills & Scientific Research	IS 101	3	
English Language I	ELCA 101	3		English Language II	ELCA 102	3	ELCA 101
Computer Skills	CPIT 100	3		Communication Skills	COMM 101	3	
Mathematics	MATH 111	3					
Total		14		Total		12	
Year Two							
Semester Three				Semester Four			
Course Title	Code Number	Credit Units	Prerequisite	Course Title	Code Number	Credit Units	Prerequisite
Listening & Speaking I	LANE 211	3	ELCA 101+102	Listening & Speaking II	LANE 214	3	LANE 211
Reading I	LANE 212	3	ELCA 101+102	Reading II	LANE 215	3	LANE 212
Writing I	LANE 213	3	ELCA 101+102	Writing II	LANE 216	3	LANE 213
French I	LANF 221	3	ELCA 101+102	French II	LANF 241	3	LANF 221
Islamic Studies II	ISLS 102	2	ISLS 101	Islamic Studies III	ISLS 103	2	ISLS 102
Elective Course		3					
Total		17		Total		14	
Year Three							
Semester Five				Semester Six			
Course Title	Code Number	Credit Units	Prerequisite	Course Title	Code Number	Credit Units	Prerequisite
Introduction To Linguistics	LANE 321	3	Level 3+4 Courses	Phonetics	LANE 332	3	LANE 321
Research Methods	LANE 331	3	Level 3+4 Courses	Morphology	LANE 333	3	LANE 321
Introduction To Literature	LANE 341	3	Level 3+4 Courses	Syntax	LANE 334	3	LANE 321
Introduction To Translation	LANE 350	3	All Level 3+4 Courses	Phonology	LANE 335	3	LANE 321
Islamic Studies IV	ISLS 104	2	ISLS 103	Fiction	LANE 342	3	LANE 341
Principles Of Public Administration	PAD 101	3		Drama	LANE 343	3	LANE 341
Total		17		Total		18	
Year Four							
Semester Seven				Semester Eight			
Course Title	Code Number	Credit Units	Prerequisite	Course Title	Code Number	Credit Units	Prerequisite
Applied Linguistics	LANE 423	3	LANE 321	Sociolinguistics	LANE 422	3	LANE 321
Semantics	LANE 438	3	LANE 321	Seminar In Linguistics	LANE 424	3	LANE 321
Criticism	LANE 446	3	LANE 341	Shakespeare	LANE 448	3	LANE 341
Poetry	LANE 447	3	LANE 341	Modern Literature	LANE 449	3	LANE 341
Practicum I	LANE 462	3	All Level 3-6 Courses	Practicum II	LANE 463	3	LANE 462
Elective Course		3		Elective Course		3	
Total		18		Total		18	

(KAU, 2015)

Appendix 5

In-service Training plan

2 nd term														days	targets	Training plan 2013/2014		
Monday	Monday	Monday	Monday	Monday	Monday	Monday	Monday	Monday	Monday	Monday	Monday	Monday	Monday					course
week							week											
14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1					
				B31										3	مرشدو الطلاب	دراسة الحالة	1	
													B32	3	معلمو الابتدائي	معلمي تعليم الكبار	2	
										B33				3	معلمو التربية الخاصة ومرشدو الطلاب	اضطرابات طيف التوحد وطرق تشخيصها	3	
									B34					4	أمناء المصادر	مصادر التعلم	4	
			B35											3	English teachers	Skills of teaching reading and writing	5	
				B36										3		Skills of teaching listening and speaking	6	
						B38						B37		3		General directives in teaching English	7	
				B40						B39				3	معلمو العلوم	التعلم النشط علوم	8	
						B41								3	معلمو التربية الفنية	معالجة الصور (الفوتوشوب)	9	
		B42												3	معلمو المرحلة الابتدائي	التعامل مع طلاب المرحلة الابتدائية	10	
			B43											3	معلمو المرحلة المتوسطة والثانوية	التعامل مع طلاب المرحلتين المتوسطة والثانوية	11	
						B44								3		كيف أصمم أسئلة الفاعلية	12	
								B46		B45				3		إدارة الصف	13	
									B47					3		الكارزما	14	
B48														3		الصحافة المدرسية	15	
				B49										3		تريز لحل المشكلات بطرق إبداعية	16	
			B50											3		الذكاءات المتعددة	17	
			B51											3		تعديل السلوك لدى طلاب الاحتياجات الخاصة	18	

2 nd term														days	targets	Training plan 2013/2014	
week							week									course	م
14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1				
				B52										2	طرق تدريس المتخلفين عقليا	19	
	B53													3	فن التعامل مع ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة	20	
	B54													3	تعديل السلوك	21	
							B55							3	استراتيجية التفكير الناقد	22	
				B56										3	التصورات الذهنية والتغيير (البراداييم)	23	
					B57									3	فن اكتساب لغة جديدة	24	
								B58						3	فن محادثة الجمهور	25	
										B59				3	تحليل العلاقات البشرية في التعليم	26	
B60														3	التدريس باستخدام القبعات الست	27	
						B61								3	التدريس وفق الإبعاد الخمسة (الخبرة التربوية)	28	
				B62										3	التخطيط لقيادة الصف	29	
			B63											3	التربية الإعلامية في مواجهة الإعلام الجديد	30	
	B64													3	الإبداع في تطوير الأداء المهني للمعلم	31	
								B65						4	بناء منظومة القيم	32	
							B66							3	التعلم السريع	33	
				B67										3	فنون العمل الجماعي	34	
										B68				3	أساسيات التفكير	35	
				B69										3	فن توظيف الإعلام الجديد في التعليم	36	
						B70								3	التدريب الاحترافي	37	
									B71					3	السيورة الإلكترونية	38	

المعلمون

Appendix 6

The Distribution of the English Language Marks for Intermediate and Secondary Stages.



إدارة الإشراف التربوي / قسم اللغة

وزارة التربية والتعليم
الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بمنطقة القصيم
الإنجليزية

توزيع درجات اختبار نهاية الفصلين لمادة اللغة الإنجليزية للمراحل الدراسية المتوسطة والثانوية

Stage Items						
	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade
	1st & 2nd Terms			1st & 2nd Terms		
Composition(guided / free) تعبير	-	-	4	6	6	6
Dialogue or letter writing رسالة	-	-	4	3	3	3
Comprehension questions on a seen passage	4	4	6	6	6	6
Information questions based on P.B about أسئلة حول	6	6	3	-	-	-
Grammar قواعد	5	5	5	6	6	6
Vocabulary كلمات	6	6	5	6	6	6
Spelling (dictation) إملاء	4	4	3	3	-	-
Handwriting خط	5	5	-	-	-	-
Questions based on the Reader(Lessons 7&8) أسئلة القراءة	-	-	-	-	3	-
Questions based on the Writing Book أسئلة حول كتاب الكتابة	-	-	-	-	-	3
Total Marks مجموع الدرجات	30	30	30	30	30	30

mark distribution for mid-term exam

Mid Term Test	Grade	Marks for Items					Total
Intermediate	1 st + 2 nd + 3 rd	Composition	Reading Comprehension	Grammar	Vocabulary	Orthography	10 Marks
		2	2	3	2	1	
Secondary	1 st + 2 nd	2	2	3	3	X	
	3 rd	3	2	3	2		

student participation marks

Participation Grade	Marks for Items			Total
Intermediate + Secondary	Participation	Homework	Projects	10 marks
	5	2	3	

Appendix 7

A sample of Final examination paper for English



Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia
Ministry Of Education

English Language

first term

General Certificate Examination for Secondary Schools. 3rd year 1434-1435 Time : 3 hours

Name

Corrected by		
Revised by		
Total marks	Thirty marks	30

6

1 - Composition Write composition about *water*

you may use the following words: { sun..... shines.... sea / tiny drops.....evaporate / rise...sky... clouds / blown over... land become to heavy.....rain falls / some underground / downhill.....hard rock }

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



2- Dialogue b- Complete the following dialogue: (does - it does not - do)

Alan: a planet radiate light?

Khaled : No ,

Alan : Well, planets reflect light?

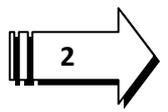
Khaled : Yes they do.



3- Vocabulary Choose the correct words:

{ beneath - needy - melts - unique - planet - demand }

- 1- The for soft drinks increases in hot weather .
- 2- The fourth from the sun is called Mars .
- 3- The sun is in the Solar System .
- 4- If you heat ice , it
- 5- He was a good man .He always gave food to
- 6- The first floor of a building is always the second floor.



4 - Comprehension

4- Read the passage and answer the following questions:

The sun has nine planets. Earth is the third of them. Earth is about twice as big as Mars. Its diameter is around 12,700 kilometres. There are approximately 365 days in a year on Earth. That is the time it takes to make a complete orbit of the sun. There are 24 hours in a day. This is the time it takes to spin once around its own axis. The Earth's axis is not vertical. It is tilted at an angle of about 23 degrees. As it goes round the sun, different parts become closer to it. For this reason, the Earth has seasons. Earth is the only known planet that has got life on it. Life can't exist on any of the other planets in our solar system.

1-How many planets are there in our solar system?

.....

2-Where is Earth in space?



.....
Put (T) or (F)

- 1- The sun has nine planets ()
- 2- There are 350 days in a year ()

Choose the correct answer

- 1- There are (20 - 24) hours in a day .
- 2- Earth is the (third - fourth) of them

5- Grammar:

a- Choose the correct answer:

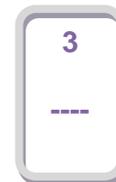
- 1- She (has - have) called her mother
- 2- They (were - was) watching television
- 3- They have (*been* - *be*) *building that bridge for two years .*
- 4- You didn't travel abroad, (*don't you* - *did you*)
- 5- He (does not - do not) smoke
- 6- I (am - is) at school.



6 – Writing

a. Do as shown between brackets

- 1- *Like* (add *S*)
- 2- *Stop* (add *Ing*)
- 3- *Repeat* (add *ed*)



10. Do you think there are barriers that face the using of innovative teaching methods such as CLT your teaching? If yes, what are they?

Sub-questions:

a. To what extent do you think that it is necessary to run class by using only the target language? why?

b. Teachers' language proficiency is also important for implementing CLT. Do you believe that the preparation that teachers receive in LTE is enough to increase their language ability? If not, why? How can it be improved?

c. do you have enough time to prepare and run your interactive exercise in your class? If no why?

d. . Students' needs in a particular teaching context are important when designing or selecting a CLT based syllabus, do you think students' needs in our context have been taken into consideration in designing school textbooks? Why?

e. Have you ever come across any of these challenges in your teaching:

- i. Students have low-level English proficiency.
- ii. Students have a passive style of learning.
- iii. Students resist participating in communicative class activities.
- iv. Students lack motivation for developing communicative competence.

f. How students' proficiency in English is assessed; Do you think it is the best way to assess them? If not, why not?

g. to what extent do you think that a teacher should prepare his students to do well in the final exam?

h. Do you think that there is a match or mismatch between the curriculum (syllabus) objectives and final exam purposes? If yes, to what extent?

i. Do you think your history, culture, tradition, religious belief or any other issue stand as barriers or as aids to teaching and learning English?

n. Do you think CLT is appropriate in the context of teaching and learning English in KSA?

j. Teaching a foreign language involves teaching about the foreign culture. Are there any barriers to teaching the foreign culture in Saudi schools? What are they?

l. do you receive any support from others such as your head teacher, supervisors, colleagues regarding your teaching?

m. Have you ever come across any of these challenges in your teaching:

- i. There is insufficient support from the administration.
- ii. Teachers lack authentic materials such as newspapers, magazines, movies etc.
- ii. The traditional view of teachers' and learners' role is not compatible with CLT.
- iv. Classes are too large for the effective use of CLT.
- v. Grammar-based examinations have a negative impact on the use of CLT.
- vi. There is a lack of effective and efficient instruments to assess communicative competence.
- vii. CLT does not take into account the differences between EFL and ESL teaching contexts.
- viii. Western educational assumptions are not suitable within Arabian contexts.

Teachers' language proficiency

Time & load

students' proficiency and need

Exam system

Culture

Support

appropriateness

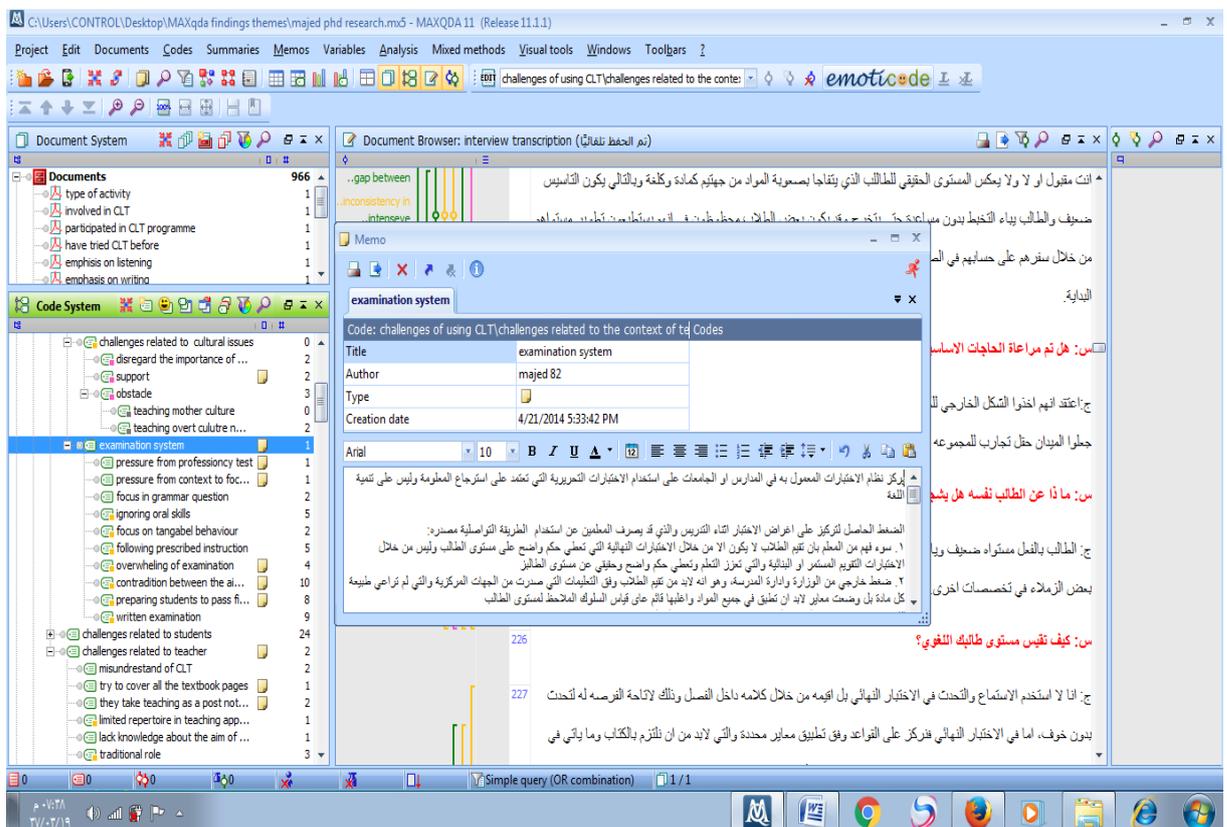
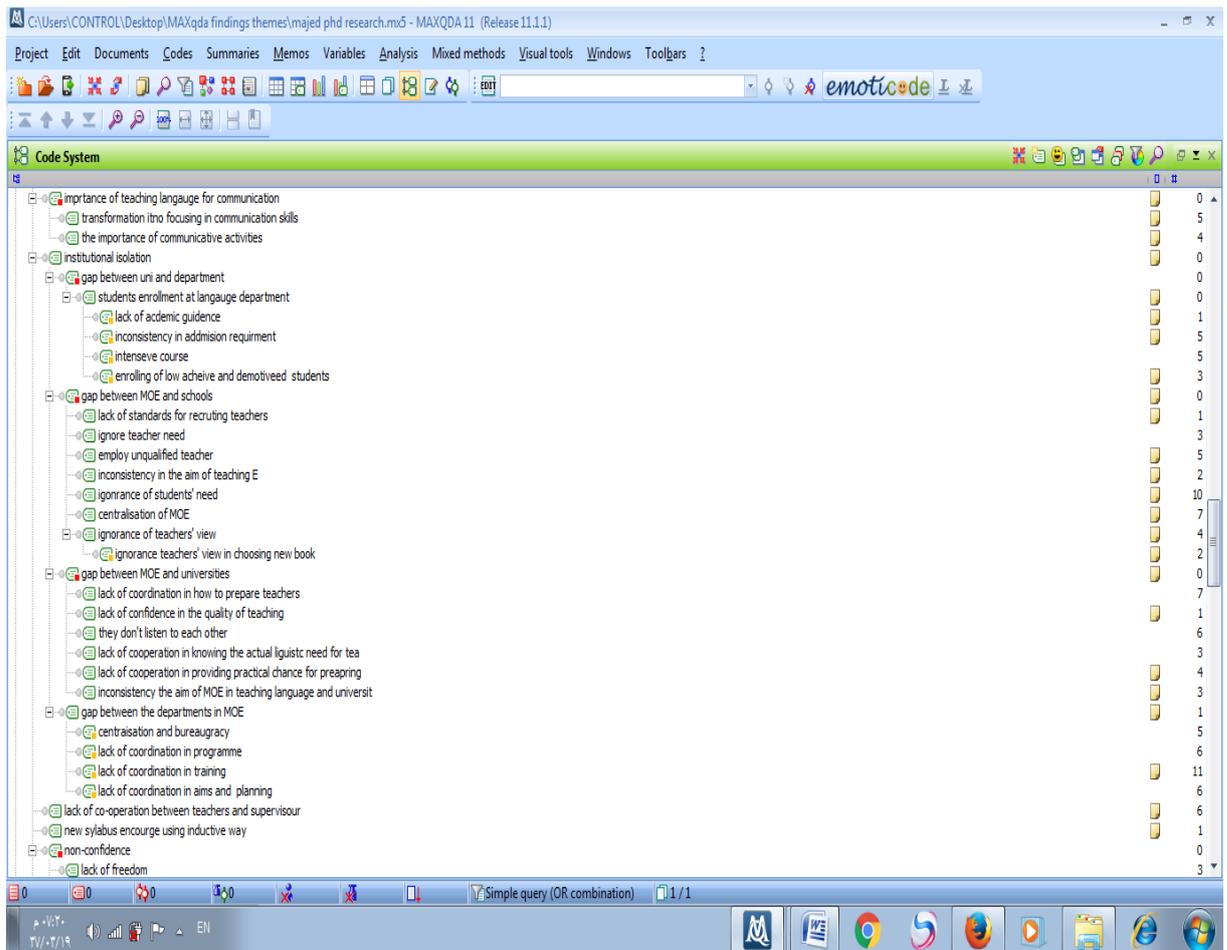
Preparation , and Training	<p>11. . Which method of teaching were you trained to use in your teaching? How do you use it?</p> <p><u>Sub-questions:</u></p> <p>a. Were you trained to teach language skills? How do you teach them?</p> <p>b. Were you trained to teach grammar? How do you teach it?</p> <p>c. Were you trained to teach for communicative purposes?</p>	
Suggestions and recommendation	<p>Part III</p> <p>12. What do you think are ways of overcoming the challenges identified around CLT? Could anything be done in your training or in the formative year?</p> <p>13. Are there alternative ways of teaching and learning English that you think might be helpful in the Saudi context? Please explain your answer.</p> <p>14. What teaching aid or approach do you think is most effective for you in teaching with CLT? Why is this effective?</p> <p>15. Do you use or think about anything (e.g. other approaches to teaching and learning English, other authorities (e.g. books) which is beyond the communicative syllabus? Please explain your answer.</p>	

Appendix 9

Samples of data analysis by using MAXqda software

The screenshot shows the MAXqda software interface with an interview transcription document open. The document text is in Arabic and discusses teaching challenges. A code system is visible on the left, and a diagram on the right shows the relationships between various codes. The diagram includes nodes such as 'uncooperative', 'old traditional view of', 'actual student role', 'transformation into', 'non confident', 'teaching grammar', 'using traditional', 'focus on teaching', 'features of CLT', and 'NOT for teaching'.

Code-ID	Position	Parent code	Code	All coded seg...	Activated co...	Author	Creation date	All coded seg...	Activated co...	Documents
42	1	challenges of u...	challenges of u...	0	0	majed 82	21/04/14 04:12	0.00	0.00	0
106	2	challenges of u...	challenge relate...	2	0	majed 82	22/04/14 02:52	0.21	0.00	1
30	3	challenges of u...	knowledge abo...	0	0	majed 82	21/04/14 03:21	0.00	0.00	0
125	4	challenges of u...	how to assess s...	1	0	majed 82	22/04/14 05:49	0.10	0.00	1
148	5	challenges of u...	suitable for L2 t...	2	0	majed 82	23/04/14 04:50	0.21	0.00	1
35	6	challenges of u...	features of CLT	6	0	majed 82	21/04/14 03:30	0.62	0.00	1
105	7	challenges of u...	misconception a...	5	0	majed 82	22/04/14 02:43	0.52	0.00	1
36	8	challenges of u...	NOT for teachin...	5	0	majed 82	21/04/14 03:31	0.52	0.00	1
31	9	challenges of u...	shortage in tea...	0	0	majed 82	21/04/14 03:22	0.00	0.00	0
128	10	challenges of u...	student-centred	3	0	majed 82	23/04/14 01:28	0.31	0.00	1
67	11	challenges of u...	challenges relat...	0	0	majed 82	21/04/14 05:32	0.00	0.00	0
183	12	challenges of u...	abide to the pr...	1	0	majed 82	24/04/14 10:23	0.10	0.00	1
133	13	challenges of u...	uncooperative ...	3	0	majed 82	23/04/14 02:28	0.31	0.00	1
115	14	challenges of u...	difficut textbook	3	0	majed 82	22/04/14 03:29	0.31	0.00	1
61	15	challenges of u...	large class	11	0	majed 82	21/04/14 05:22	1.14	0.00	1
75	16	challenges of u...	old traditional vi...	4	0	majed 82	21/04/14 05:45	0.41	0.00	1
74	17	challenges of u...	lack of teaching...	9	0	majed 82	21/04/14 05:44	0.93	0.00	1
73	18	challenges of u...	colleague and s...	9	0	majed 82	21/04/14 05:41	0.93	0.00	1
151	19	challenges of u...	misundersatnd...	2	0	majed 82	23/04/14 05:09	0.21	0.00	1
72	20	challenges of u...	challenges relat...	0	0	majed 82	21/04/14 05:39	0.00	0.00	0
154	21	challenges of u...	disregard the i...	2	0	majed 82	23/04/14 05:25	0.21	0.00	1
137	22	challenges of u...	support	2	0	majed 82	23/04/14 02:35	0.21	0.00	1
136	23	challenges of u...	obstacle	3	0	majed 82	23/04/14 02:35	0.31	0.00	1
139	24	challenges of u...	teaching mothe...	0	0	majed 82	23/04/14 02:36	0.00	0.00	0
138	25	challenges of u...	teaching overt ...	2	0	majed 82	23/04/14 02:36	0.21	0.00	1
68	26	challenges of u...	examination sy...	1	0	majed 82	21/04/14 05:33	0.10	0.00	1
262	27	challenges of u...	pressure from p...	1	0	majed 82	28/04/14 01:56	0.10	0.00	1
261	28	challenges of u...	pressure from c...	1	0	majed 82	28/04/14 01:54	0.10	0.00	1
204	29	challenges of u...	focus in gramm...	2	0	majed 82	24/04/14 02:54	0.21	0.00	1
185	30	challenges of u...	ignoring oral skills	5	0	majed 82	24/04/14 10:32	0.52	0.00	1
159	31	challenges of u...	focus on tanga...	2	0	majed 82	23/04/14 05:44	0.21	0.00	1



Appendix 10

MoE's approval letter for conducting the study

الرقم :
التاريخ :
المرفقات :



المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
٢٨٠
إدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بمنطقة الرياض
إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

إلى من يهمه الأمر

اسم الدارس	السجل المدني
ماجد بن عثمان بن عبدالله أبا حسين	١٠١٩٣٦١٩٦١

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد:

تلبية لطلب الدارس الموضحة بياناته أعلاه ؛ فإنه لا مانع لدى إدارة التخطيط والتطوير
بالإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بمنطقة الرياض من تطبيق دراسته في مدينة الرياض والتي
هي بعنوان :
(مدى كفاءة معلمي اللغة الانجليزية ، سنة التجربة ، في استخدام طرق التدريس الحديثة لتدريس
اللغة الانجليزية)

والله ولي التوفيق



Appendix 11
BA plan for English language and Translation College at KSU
Level 1

Course Code	Course Title	Hours
117 Najd	Listening 1	3
118 Najd	Reading 1	4
127 Najd	Vocabulary 1	3
128 Najd	Writing 1	4
171 Najd	Speaking 1	4
191 Najd	Grammar 1	2

Level2

Course Code	Course Title	Hours
129 Najd	Listening 2	3
143 Najd	Reading 2	4
164 Najd	Writing 2	4
174 Najd	Speaking 2	3
182 Najd	Vocabulary 2	2
192 Najd	Grammar 2	2
193 Najd	Dictionary Skills	2

Level3

Course Code	Course Title	Hour
151 Arab	Applied grammar 1	3
158 Arab	Applied Morphology 1	3
214 CS	Computer Application in Translation 1	2
218 Najd	Writing 3	3
241 Najd	Listening3	2
251 Najd	Reading 3	3
271 Najd	Speaking 3	2
298 Najd	Grammar 3	2

Level4

Course Code	Course Title	Hour
215 Arab	Arabic rhetoric	3
217 Arab	Applied grammar 2	3
220 Najd	Writing 4	2
229 Najd	Introduction to translation	2
242 Najd	Listening 4	2
252 Najd	Reading 4	2
272 Najd	Speaking 4	2
299 Najd	Reading in the target language culture 1	2
101 IC	Introduction to Islamic culture	2

Level5

Course Code	Course Title	Hour
268 Arab	Applied grammar 3	3
302 Najd	Stylistics	3
Eng 320	Linguistics	3
319 Eng , 304 Najd	Introduction to semantics	3
305 Najd	Translation in the field of natural sciences	2
306 Najd	Translation in the field of humanities	2

307 Najd	Comparative culture	2
308 Najd	Text linguistics	2

Level6

Course Code	Course Title	Hour
313 Najd	On site translation	2
329 Najd	Bilateral interpretation 1	2
330 Najd	Consecutive interpretation 1	2
331 Najd	Translation in the field of Islamic culture studies	2
332 Najd	Translation of military fields	2
333 Najd	Translation in the field of administration	2
334 Najd	Translation in the field of medicine	2
335 Najd	Translation in the fields of engineering	2
336 Najd	Translation in the field of mass media	2

Level7

Course Code	Course Title	Hour
381 Arab	Applied morphology 2	3
414 Arab CS	Computer application in translation 2	3
401 Najd	Translation in the field of social studies	2
414 Najd	Arabization	2
493 Najd	Reading in the target language culture 2	3
102 IC	The role of Islam in the construction of society	2

Level8

Course Code	Course Title	Hour
441 Arab	Applied grammar 3	3
402 Najd	Translation in the field of political sciences	2
403 Najd	Translation in the field of education	2
404 Najd	Consecutive interpretation 2	2
405 Najd	Translation in the field of Commerce	2
406 Najd	Translation in the field of security	2
429 Najd	Translation in the field of Computer Science	2
103 IC	The Islamic economic system	2

Level9

Course Code	Course Title	Hour
438Najd	Translation in the field of petroleum sciences	2
445Najd	Translation in the field of agriculture	2
446Najd	Translation in the field of law	2
448Najd	Translation in the field of literature	2
449Najd	Project in translation	4

Level10

Course Code	Course Title	Hour
440 Najd	Summary writing and translation	3
443 Najd	Simultaneous interpretation	2
447 Najd	Bilateral interpreting 2	2
449 Najd	Issues and problems in translation	3
104 IC	Fundamentals of the political system in Islam	2

Appendix 12

Teachers' Questionnaire



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Dear participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study that investigate the factors that influence the English language teachers in their formative year in KSA to use innovative teaching methods such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The study is conducted by Majed O Abahussain, a PhD student at TESOL at the School of Education, Stirling University, Scotland, the U.K.

Your participation will be through a questionnaire to find out your experience and understandings of CLT.

Participation in this study is voluntary. I will take care to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study and any comments you make will be kept strictly confidential, and no specific references involving your name or the name of your institute will be made in my study. Any information you give will only be used for the purposes of the study and related publication. Also, all the data gathered during this study will be securely stored in a password protected

computer.

I am looking forward to working with you and thank you in advance for your contributions.

Sincerely,

Majed O Abahussain

PhD student in Edu

Stirling University

Part I: Demographic information:

(1). What is your highest academic degree?

- a. Bachelor of Arts b. Bachelor of Education
c. Bachelor of Languages and Translation d. other.....

(2). Which university and department did you graduate from?

.....

(3). Have you received any other teacher training (such as Postgraduate Diploma in Education) ? Yes / No

If yes, please specify.....

(4). What type of school are you working for?

- a. Primary school
b. Intermediate school
c. Secondary school

(5). How many hours of class do you teach weekly?

.....

(6). What is the average number of students in your class?

- a. Less than 25 b. 26—30 c. 31—35 d. 36—40 e. 41 or more

Part II: Pedagogical

(7). Describe your role as a language teacher in your classroom?

.....
.....

(8). Describe the role of learners in your language classroom?

.....

.....

(9). While teaching, what do you give more emphasis on? Give rating from 7 to 1
with 7 the highest?

- a. Explaining grammar rules ()
- b. Listening ()
- c. Speaking ()
- d. Reading ()
- e. Writing ()
- f. Explaining textbooks ()
- g. Translation into Arabic language ()

(10). What teaching method do you use in your teaching? Please clarify your answer,

.....
.....
.....

(11). What methods of teaching did you experience as a language learner?

.....
.....
.....

(12). Have you tried Communicative Language Teaching method (CLT) in your class?

Yes / No.

If (no), why did not you try it?

If (yes), how did you find using CLT in your classroom?

(13). Have you ever participated in any kind of programme such as workshops or special training programme devoted to using CLT in teaching? Yes / No

if (yes),

- How long.....

-Have you applied what you have trained in your class? yes / no

If no, why?.....

(14). What is involved in CLT methodology in your view?

	statement	Yes	no	Don't know
a	CLT is student-centered approach.			
b	CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy.			
c	CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening skills.			
d	CLT requires teacher to be a high proficiency in English.			
e	CLT is basically an ESL methodology not EFL.			
f	CLT involves no grammar teaching.			
g	CLT can only be used with pair/group work only.			
h	CLT emphasizes communication in L2.			

(15). Do you engage students in any communication activities ? Yes / No.

If yes, tick the ones you apply:

- a. () Problem solving
- b. () Debate
- b. () Pair work
- c. () Group work
- d. () Discussion
- e. other (specify).....

Part III: Challenges/ barriers

(16). The following are some challenges or barriers that face the implementation of CLT.

Did you encounter these challenges or do you think they might be obstacles for you in implementing CLT in Saudi schools?

Please tick the appropriate number; where 1 is challenge, 2 don't know, 3 not challenge

	Statement	1	2	3
a	Teacher does not have sufficient spoken English			
b	Teachers lack the knowledge about the target language (English) culture.			
c	Teachers do not prepare theoretically well in teaching methods (such as CLT) in their university study			
d	Teachers do not prepare practically well in teaching methods (such as CLT) in their university study			
e	Teachers have few chances to get CLT training.			
f	Teachers have little time to develop materials for communicative activities.			
g	Some teachers do not know what CLT means.			
h	Students have low-level English proficiency.			
i	Students resist to engage in communicative activities.			
j	Students lack motivation for developing communicative competence.			
k	Students tend to have a passive style of learning.			
l	There is a lack of logistic support from administration and supervisors.			
m	Teachers lack of authentic materials such as newspapers, stories, movies.			
n	The textbooks are above the students' abilities.			
o	Traditional view on teachers' and learners' role is not match with CLT.			
p	Classes are too large for the effective use of CLT.			
q	Managing class is difficult if teachers use communicative activities.			
r	Traditional grammar-based examinations has a negative impact on the use of CLT.			
s	Concentration in teaching grammar and translation has a negative impact on the use of CLT.			
t	The lack of effective and efficient instruments to assess communicative competence.			

u	The differences between EFL and ESL teaching contexts			
v	Western educational assumptions are not suitable within Arabian contexts.			

(17). Please list any other challenges and difficulties you might face in applying CLT in

your class.
.....
.....
.....

Part IV / suggestions and recommendations:

(18). Please mention any suggestions or recommendations that may help to overcome the challenges that face the implementing of CLT our English classes?

Communicative language teaching method (CLT)	<p>4. The Saudi MOE believes that "a language is learned best when the learners are engaged in real communication." Do you agree with this statement? Why? Why not?</p> <p>5. The Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) is one of the innovative teaching methods that engages students in real communication. <u>Do your supervisees use CLT in their teaching?</u></p> <p>6. Activities that mainly accompany CLT are communicative activities, that have an information gap. Which of the following do your <u>supervisees</u> use in their teaching?</p> <p>Having a debate or role play Group discussion Reading dialogues Speaking in pairs Dictation task Story telling in front of the class Grammar exercise Describing a picture to a partner Fill in the blanks Explaining textbook</p> <p>6. To what extent do you believe that LTE prepared <u>your supervisees</u> to use CLT in teaching?</p> <p>Probe:</p> <p>a. do teachers receive sufficient practical training in CLT during their teaching career?</p> <p>b. do teachers participate in any micro-teaching session on using CLT during their teaching career?</p> <p>c. do teachers engage in any classroom observation of experienced teachers using CLT during their training?</p>	Knowledge about CLT communicative activities Preparation by LTE Support
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Challenges and supports	<p>7. What factors influence the formative year English teachers' choices of teaching methods?</p> <p>probe:</p> <p>a. To what extent do you think that it is necessary to run class by using only the target language? why?</p> <p>b. Literature claims that teachers' language proficiency is important for implementing CLT, do you agree with that?</p> <p>c. Do you believe that the language preparation that teachers receive in LTE is sufficient to increase their language ability to appropriate level? If not, why? How can it be improved?</p> <p>d. Time and teaching load are also big issue in implementing CLT, do agree with that?</p> <p>e. Students' needs in a particular teaching context are important when designing or selecting a CLT based syllabus, do you think students' needs in our context have been taken into consideration in designing school textbooks? Why? why not</p> <p>e. Have you ever come across any of these challenges:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Students have low-level English proficiency. ii. Students resist participating in communicative class activities. iii. Students lack motivation for developing communicative competence. <p>f. How is students' proficiency in English is assessed; Do you think it is the best way to assess them? If not, why not?</p> <p>g. To what extent do you think that a teacher should prepare his students to do well in the final exam?</p> <p>h. Do you think that there is a match or mismatch between the curriculum (syllabus) objectives and final exam purposes? If yes, to what extent?</p> <p>i. Do you think our history, culture, tradition, religious belief or any other issue stand as barriers or as aids to teaching and learning English?</p> <p>j. Teaching a foreign language involves teaching about the foreign culture. Are there any barriers to teaching the foreign culture in Saudi schools? What are they?</p> <p>l. Have you ever come across any of these challenges:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. There is insufficient support from the administration to teachers. ii. Teachers lack authentic materials such as newspapers, magazines, movies ii. The traditional view of teachers' and learners' role is not compatible with CLT. iv. Classes are too large for the effective use of CLT. v. Grammar-based examinations have a negative impact on the use of CLT. vi. There is a lack of effective and efficient instruments to assess communicative competence. <p>m. Do you think CLT is appropriate in the context of teaching and learning English in KSA?</p> <p>n. <u>Do you think there are any cooperation between MOE, school and the local universities at the level of setting the main objectives of teaching and learning English, or at the level of designing or selecting textbook, or choosing teachers? How?</u></p> <p>o. <u>Do think there is any cooperation between the local universities, MOE, and schools at the level of planning and preparing language teacher education programme? How?</u></p>	Teachers' language proficiency Time & load students' proficiency and need Exam system Culture Support
--------------------------------	---	--

Suggestions and recommendation	<p>a. What do you think are ways of overcoming the challenges identified around CLT? Could anything be done in training period or in the formative year?</p> <p>b. Are there alternative ways of teaching and learning English that you think might be helpful in the Saudi context? Please explain your answer.</p> <p>c. What teaching aid or approach do you think is most effective for you in teaching with CLT? Why is this effective?</p> <p>d. Do think about anything (e.g. other approaches to teaching and learning English, other authorities (e.g. books) which is beyond the communicative syllabus? Please explain your answer.</p>	
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APPENDIX 14:

University lecturers Interview

1. What are the entry requirements for enrolling in English department in Saudi universities?

sub-questions:

- a. Do students need to meet any language proficiency requirement for enrolling in English department? If yes what are the minimum requirement? If no why?
- b. Do students set for placement tests before they are officially accepted for enrollment in English department?
- c. Do students receive any intensive course in English before they begin their courses in Level one?

2. language proficiency is important for preparing student-teachers to be effective in their teaching duties. Do you believe that the preparation that student-teachers receive in LTE is enough to increase their language ability? If not, why? How can it be improved?

3. "how to teach" is an important skill in preparing prospective teachers. How are students-teachers prepared to be effective teachers in your department? Do you think it is enough? If not, how can be improve?

4. Some people believed that "a language is learned best when the learners are engaged in real communication." Do you agree with this statement? Why? why not?

5. Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT) is one of the innovative teaching methods that engages students in real communication.

To what extent do you believe that LTE prepares student-teachers to use CLT in teaching?

- a. Do teachers receive sufficient theoretical and practical training on how to use innovative teaching methods such as CLT during their study at the university or at the practicum?
- b. do teachers participate in any micro-teaching session on using CLT during their study at the university?
- c. do teachers engage in any classroom observation for experienced teacher on using CLT?

6. Do you think there are barriers that face the using of innovative teaching methods such as CLT in teaching English language in Saudi schools? If yes, what are they?

7. Do you think there are any cooperation between MOE, school and the local universities at the level of setting the main objectives of teaching and learning English or at the level of designing or selecting textbook? How?

8. Do think there is any cooperation between the local universities, MOE, and schools at the level of planning and preparing language teacher education programme? How?

9. What do you think are ways of overcoming the challenges identified around CLT? Could anything be done in training period or in the formative year?

10. Are there alternative ways of teaching and learning English that you think might be helpful in the Saudi context? Please explain your answer.

11. What teaching aid or approach do you think is most effective for you in teaching with CLT? Why is this effective?

12. Do think about anything (e.g. other approaches to teaching and learning English, other authorities (e.g. books) which is beyond the communicative syllabus? Please explain your answer.

Appendix 15

3

What is involved in CLT methodology in your view?

	yes	no	don't know	Responses	Weighted Average
CLT is student-centered approach.	10 (83.33%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (16.67%)	12	1.33 / 3
CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy.	6 (54.55%)	2 (18.18%)	3 (27.27%)	11	1.73 / 3
CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening skills.	11 (100.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	11	1.00 / 3
CLT requires teacher to be a high proficiency in English.	9 (81.82%)	2 (18.18%)	0 (0.00%)	11	1.18 / 3
CLT is basically an ESL methodology not EFL.	5 (41.67%)	4 (33.33%)	3 (25.00%)	12	1.83 / 3
CLT involves no grammar teaching.	4 (33.33%)	5 (41.67%)	3 (25.00%)	12	1.92 / 3
CLT can only be used with pair/group work only.	3 (25.00%)	6 (50.00%)	3 (25.00%)	12	2.00 / 3
CLT emphasizes communication in L2.	4 (36.36%)	2 (18.18%)	5 (45.45%)	11	2.09 / 3
					1.64 / 3

Do you engage students in any communication activities ?

	Responses	Percentage
yes	8	66.7%
no	4	33.3%

While teaching, what do you give more emphasis on? Give rating from 7 to 1, with 7 the highest?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Responses	Weighted Average
a. Explaining grammar rules	1 (9.09%)	5 (45.45%)	2 (18.18%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (9.09%)	1 (9.09%)	1 (9.09%)	11	3.18 / 7
b. Listening	3 (27.27%)	1 (9.09%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (9.09%)	1 (9.09%)	3 (27.27%)	2 (18.18%)	11	4.18 / 7
c. Speaking	1 (9.09%)	3 (27.27%)	2 (18.18%)	1 (9.09%)	1 (9.09%)	1 (9.09%)	2 (18.18%)	11	3.82 / 7
d. Reading	4 (36.36%)	0 (0.00%)	5 (45.45%)	2 (18.18%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	11	2.45 / 7
e. Writing	0 (0.00%)	1 (9.09%)	1 (9.09%)	5 (45.45%)	4 (36.36%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	11	4.09 / 7
f. Explaining textbooks	2 (18.18%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (9.09%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (27.27%)	3 (27.27%)	2 (18.18%)	11	4.73 / 7
g. Translation into Arabic language	0 (0.00%)	1 (9.09%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (18.18%)	1 (9.09%)	3 (27.27%)	4 (36.36%)	11	5.55 / 7
									4.00 / 7

Appendix 16



UNIVERSITY OF
STIRLING

Information letter and Consent form (interviews)

Dear participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study that investigate the factors that influence the English language teachers in their formative year in KSA to use innovative teaching methods such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The study is conducted by Majed O Abahussain, a PhD student at TESOL at the School of Education, Stirling University, Scotland, the U.K.

Your participation will be through an interview to find out your experience and understandings of CLT. The interview will be conducted face to face and will last approximately 40 minutes.

You were selected as a participant in this study because of your experience and understandings of CLT that will help us to understand the real picture of ELT education in KSA and suggest solution to the problem.

Participation in this study is voluntary. I will take care to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study and any comments you make will be kept strictly confidential, and no specific references involving your name or the name of your institute will be made in my study. Any information you give will only be used for the purposes of the study and related publication. Also, all the data gathered during this study will be securely stored in a password protected computer.

If you have any questions about the study, you can contact me (details below), or my supervisors (Dr. Stokes : anne.stokes@stir.ac.uk or Dr. Fox : alison.fox@stir.ac.uk).

Complaints may be addressed to the Head of the School of Education at Stirling University, r.g.edwards@stir.ac.uk .

If you do participate, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and withdraw your data. If you agree to participate in this study, please complete the following lines.

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

I am looking forward to working with you and thank you in advance for your contributions.

Sincerely,

Majed O Abahussain

PhD student in Edu

Stirling University

m.o.abahussain@stir.ac.uk

Appendix 17:

Example of a teacher interview (transcription):

Interviewer: 1. What are the characteristics of a typical English class you teach?

Participant: English is taught as a foreign language in Saudi schools. So in order to improve the linguistic background of my students, I teach them words in a list from their textbooks. Then I teach them the pronunciation and the spelling of these words. When I feel that students have mastered these words, I move on to teaching them another skill, because I believe it is difficult to focus on the main skill if the students have no basic lexical grounding.

Inte: How do you usually teach a new lesson?

Part: Yeah...in general my teaching techniques rely on presenting the main topic, writing the important words on the board, explaining grammar rules, translating the new words, reading the text and asking some questions for verification.

Inte: What skill(s) or sub-skill(s) do you place more emphasis on? Why?

Part: Aaah, I am inclined in my teaching practice towards teaching grammar and isolated words, because they are easier and clearer than teaching other skills, and a great part of the textbook exercises as well as the final exams focus on these two sub-skills.

Inte: What about the main language skills?

Part: The things that I concentrate most on are reading and writing skills and paying more attention to learning the meaning of the new words by using dictionaries.

Inte: Do you follow any syllabus (textbook etc) instructions during your teaching?

Part: I abide by what is in the textbook, and most of my activities are also based around the textbook material. My questions almost test what students have acquired from the textbook.

Inte: What are the teaching methods and activities that are used in these syllabuses?

Part: Aaah, actually, I did not have any background in which method should be used in teaching such syllabuses. So I tried to vary my teaching methods... without knowing their scientific names. And I may use a method at the beginning of the term, and then use another one at the end of the term.

Inte: What about the activities?

Part: Activities....such as games or dialogues between pairs or groups... but also between groups were so limited because they need organisation, action, movement and large spaces, and students may consider them to be for fun and not for learning. So mostly, I limit these activities to only pair work in order to have control over my class.

Inte: As a language teacher, what do you think is the main role of a teacher in the classroom?

Part: The teacher's role in general is I suppose to be a facilitator of learning....but if you look at the reality of our schools, we can say that a teacher is only a knowledge transmitter.

Inte: Do you think a teacher should correct students' mistakes? If so, do you think students should be instantly corrected or not? Why (not)?

Part: Oh...in correcting my students' mistakes I prefer to use indirect methods. How? Actually in two ways. In the first one, I try to repeat the same sentence after correcting the mistakes, so students know exactly where the mistakes are, without mentioning that they have committed mistakes. And in the second, I ask another student to answer the same question so that his classmate can identify his mistake in an indirect way.

Inte: To what extent do you think that the teacher is responsible for determining the content of what is taught?

Part: Supervisors and administrators always ask teachers to follow the textbook instructions...and there are materials that should be taught within the time limit....so we do not have spare time to allow students to choose what they want to learn to a greater extent. Teachers are responsible for determining the content of what is taught according to the prescribed textbook.

Inte: What do you think the role of the language learners should be?

Part: Aaah.....they should be a negotiator of meaning.....but in reality their role is limited to only being receivers of knowledge....

Inte: How much time do you allocate for your students' participation in classroom activities?

Part: Because I have prescribed material to be finished within a set period of time, I spend most of the lesson time in lecturing and explanation....so students only participate when they have been asked to answer certain questions or at the end of the lesson if something is unclear for them.

Inte: Some people believe that "a language is learned best when the learners are engaged in real communication." Do you agree with this statement? Why? Why not?

Part: Indeed, I think it will help make the student a negotiator rather than a recipient....and in addition, since language learning becomes more practical, these activities help to practice the language more since they provide students with an environment similar to the external environment for exercising the true language; they can thus practice immediately, unlike with traditional methods, which give students information that could be of no use for communication outside school.

Inte: The Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT) is one of the innovative teaching methods that engage students in real communication. What do you know about CLT?

Part: I do not know a lot about it....we have not been taught about it in our department..... most of the educational materials in our department are in Arabic; there is no substance to the teaching methods in English. And to my knowledge, CLT is accessed through external courses; the idea is that through applying CLT, teachers allow students to be involved in activities rather than being passive recipients.

Inte: So according to your knowledge, which of these statements is related to CLT?

Inte: CLT is a student-centred approach.

Part: I think so.

Inte: CLT means verbal interaction between teachers and students and students and other students.

Part: True, it is related to CLT.

Inte: CLT emphasizes fluency over accuracy.

Part: Related to CLT.

Inte: CLT relies heavily on speaking and listening.

Part: True

Inte: CLT requires the teacher to have high proficiency in English.

Part: To a large extent it is true.

Inte: CLT means only group work and pair work.

Part: I do not think so.

Inte: CLT requires higher knowledge of the target language culture.

Part: I think it should be.

Inte: CLT means not teaching grammar.

Part: Yes, I agree with that. Grammar could not be taught with such a method.

Inte: CLT is basically an English as a Second Language, not English as a Foreign Language methodology.

Part: It seems to be used for teaching both.

Inte: To what extent do you believe that LTE prepared you to use CLT in teaching?

Part: I had no experience of using CLT during my pre-service preparation....or in my work experience....or through micro-teaching or observing any teachers who use that method.....And I did not even remember that university lecturers have used this method in their lectures.

Inte: Did you ever participate in any kind of programme, such as workshops or special training devoted to CLT before and/or after joining the teaching profession?

Part: I never joined any training programme on teaching methods, and what we get is a meeting to identify ways of teaching in general....and they are theoretical....and there was no application or follow-up for them.

Inte: Do you think there are barriers to the use of innovative teaching methods such as CLT in your teaching? If yes, what are they?

Part: Yeah I think there are some obstacles....I think the obstacles are....the first is that the teaching environment is not suitable for this kind of method.....student numbers are large.....also there is not enough space in the classroom, as well as the students' level: they do not have the ability to

communicate and thus most prefer the traditional way. Plus, I am the teacher and find it difficult to speak mostly in English given the absence of student understanding.

Inte: Do you believe that the preparation that teachers receive in LTE is enough to increase their language ability? If not, why? How can it be improved?

Part: It is somewhat inadequate that in the first two years the focus is to a large extent on language skills, without any practice. However, in the third and fourth year we move to learning subjects which I believe were not suitable for the development of the language, such as literature, linguistics and the history of language and translation.... If the students do not have a high level of English, they will not be able to benefit from them, and they take up space in the BA plan at the expense of teaching other language skills...unfortunately they focus on the theoretical side onlyand we reach a level of contradiction in our departments in the sense that we study poetry, novels and translation, and yet do not know how to speak the language itself.

Inte: Do you think that students' needs in this context have been taken into consideration in designing school textbooks?

Part: I do not think so....the textbook levels vary beyond the students' levels....to be honest teachers sometimes find these textbooks challenging for them.

Inte: What challenges do you face in teaching these textbooks that are related to students?

Part: Well...I think that their linguistic background is weak.....sometimes teachers have students with no proficiency in English, even though they have been learning English for four years....so teachers are forced to start with them from the beginner level....some of the students do not participate in class, and some even lack the motivation to learn the language; they say that they do not need a language.

Inte: Do you think that there is a match or mismatch between the curriculum (syllabus) objectives and the purposes of the final exam? If yes, to what extent?

Part: I think that the goals of EFL learning and teaching contradict the reality of teaching EFL in our schools.....I think that there is a gap between the MoE aims for teaching EFL (for communication) and the nature of the exam system, which aims to test students' knowledge about the language (knowledge transmission), which is caused by the gap.

Inte: Teaching a foreign language involves teaching about a foreign culture. Are there any barriers to teaching a foreign culture in Saudi schools? What are they?

Part: In the big cities such as Riyadh, most families are interested in letting their children learn about a foreign culture, because they believe that learning about other cultures will increase students' understanding and accelerate their language learning. However, if there are some items that contradict the norms in the Saudi context, such as co-education and intimate relationships, we found that students and their families asked to avoid such things.

Inte: Do you receive any support from others, such as your headteacher, supervisors or colleagues, regarding your teaching?

Part: Sometimes I receive support from my supervisors and hope that this support is intensive.

Inte: What do you think are the most suitable ways of overcoming the challenges identified around CLT? Could anything be done in your training or in the formative year?

Part: Readjust teachers' preparation in both the linguistic and pedagogic sides by introducing more courses in teaching methods as well as increasing the time to apply these methods in reality and to increase students' exposure to the language.... reduce overcrowding in classrooms. ...In addition, there should be an open channel between the MoE and universities and schools to bridge the gap in the design of the EFL curriculum and EFL teachers' preparation.